



ANDREW G. BONNELL

# SHYLOCK IN GERMANY

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Antisemitism and the German Theatre  
from The Enlightenment to the Nazis

SHYLOCK  
IN  
GERMANY

*To my parents*

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from the Enlightenment to the Nazis*

ANDREW G. BONNELL

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# CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	vi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vii
Introduction	1
1. Shylock in Nineteenth-Century and Imperial Germany	5
2. Merchants of Weimar	69
3. Shylock in the “Third Reich”	119
Conclusions	171
Notes	175
Table	223
<i>Bibliography</i>	227
<i>Index</i>	243

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Ludwig Devrient as Shylock	14
2. Bogumil Dawison	17
3. Duke Georg II von Sachsen-Meiningen, Costume design for Shylock, 1886	23
4. Friedrich Mitterwurzer	45
5. Rudolf Schildkraut in the 1911/12 season	51
6. Albert Bassermann, in the 1913 Deutsches Theater production of <i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	55
7. Fritz Kortner as Shylock in the Berlin Staatstheater	79
8. Lothar Müthel's 1943 Vienna Burgtheater production of <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , with Werner Krauss (left) as Shylock	163

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# INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the character of Shylock in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, in particular about the extent to which the presentation of Shylock's character makes the play antisemitic.<sup>1</sup> In so far as the reception of the play is concerned, one might answer that it all depends on how the character is played on the stage. This study is not concerned with rehearsing the arguments about Shakespeare's alleged antisemitism on the one hand, or his Renaissance humanism on the other, but rather with tracing the vicissitudes of the cultural history of the performance of Shylock on the German stage in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In what ways did German versions of Shylock interact with the catastrophic development of antisemitism in Germany in this period; and what alternative cultural patterns, whose potential remained tragically unfulfilled, can be perceived in this history?

Conventionally, studies of the history of the interpretation of specific plays or characters on the stage have focussed on the interpretations of the great actors in particular roles.<sup>2</sup> This is understandable: the performances of famous actors are the best documented, are of intrinsic interest to students of drama, and have often been influential on less renowned players (especially when their interpretation was transmitted through printed prompt books which became textbooks for the stage, or, later, by film). While this study will seek to give due attention to well-known actors such as Ernst von Possart, Albert Bassermann, Rudolf Schildkraut, Fritz Kortner, Werner Krauss, and others, it will seek to place these in a wider context, and consider not only the celebrated productions of leading Berlin theatres, but also the popularity of *The Merchant of Venice* on the

provincial stage. It will attempt to follow the evolution of Shylock through the nineteenth century and in Imperial Germany, from the formative years of the modern German theatre not only as a cultural institution, but also as one which had a significant role as a representative focus of civic life; through the period of the Weimar Republic, an epoch remembered for innovation and experiment, but also marked by an estrangement between an aggressively modernist metropolitan culture and a provincial cultural life which clung more to continuity; and, finally, consider the impact of the Nazi period. In this last period, one might think that the Jewish usurer as stage villain came into his own. Shylock's career in Germany after 1933 was, however, neither as conspicuous nor as unambiguous as one might expect.

There is a risk that the focus on one stage character alone, especially one as notorious as Shylock, might give an all too narrow picture of the depiction of Jews on the German stage. In places, it is therefore necessary to relate the development of depictions of the Venetian money-lender to the ways in which other Jewish characters were portrayed, not infrequently by actors who also played Shylock. In particular, a figure partly conceived as an antipode to Shylock, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's Nathan the Wise, merits our attention. If it is impossible in the compass of this work to give a comprehensive account of Jewish characters on the German stage, I hope to have conveyed something of the complexity of their history.

Some brief comments on the existing literature: the idea for this study first germinated when I was working on Social Democratic involvement in the Freie Volksbühne movement in Imperial Germany,<sup>3</sup> and encountered the different readings of *The Merchant of Venice* prevailing in the 1890s: anti-capitalist versus anti-Jewish, anti-versus philosemitic. John Gross's *Shylock. Four Hundred Years in the Life of a Legend*, persuaded me that there was a potentially rich seam of material to explore here, even if my conclusions differ from his to some extent with respect to Germany.

For anyone working in the area of Shakespeare in Germany up to 1945, Ernst Leopold Stahl's *Shakespeare und das Deutsche Theater*<sup>4</sup> is an indispensable reference. The author's particular prejudices also make it, unintentionally, a primary source for the attitudes of the pre-1945 right-wing conservative *Bildungsbürgertum* (educated middle-classes). Simon Williams' *Shakespeare on the German Stage. Volume I: 1586-1914*<sup>5</sup> is also a valuable guide to the subject for the nineteenth-century (and earlier).

For the Nazi period, Bogusław Drewniak, *Das Theater im NS-Staat. Szenarium deutscher Zeitgeschichte 1933-1945*<sup>6</sup> remains an excellent introduction, while the recent *Theater im "Dritten Reich". Theaterpolitik, Spielplanstruktur, NS-Dramatik*, by Thomas Eicher, Barbara Panse, and Henning Rischbieter,<sup>7</sup> is an encyclopaedic reference work that incorporates the findings of numerous dissertations, and is an essential work for anyone working on the theatre in the Nazi period.

More specific intellectual debts will be apparent from the endnotes. This study finishes in 1945, partly because the story of Shylock in Germany after 1945 requires a separate treatment – after 1945 no-one anywhere would be able to watch *The Merchant of Venice* in quite the same way. It would also require a writer with more intimate knowledge of the contemporary German stage than I can muster. A start has been made on this topic by the late Maria Verch and by Wilhelm Hortmann.<sup>8</sup>



# SHYLOCK IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AND IMPERIAL GERMANY

## Preconditions and evolution of a role

For a country that has traditionally been reluctant to bestow full citizenship on immigrants, Germany has shown a remarkable willingness to claim William Shakespeare as a naturalized German. Indeed, George Steiner has recently written that the “German infatuation with Shakespeare has, since the Enlightenment, touched on lunacy”.<sup>1</sup> Versions of Shakespeare’s plays can be found performed in Germany as far back as the seventeenth century, although his name only became well-known in German-speaking lands in the mid eighteenth century. Enlightenment thinkers such as Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who sought to found a bourgeois and German drama which would break with the sterile conventionality of aristocratic and courtly French neo-classical tragedy, found Shakespeare’s works to be an indispensable foundation for a reform of the theatre. Shakespeare was even more enthusiastically embraced by the writers of the *Sturm und Drang*, and the translation of his works by the Romantic writers August Wilhelm Schlegel and Ludwig Tieck was successful both in providing a usable translation for the German stage and in incorporating Shakespeare into the “canon” of classic German literature.<sup>2</sup>

During the course of the nineteenth century, Shakespeare advanced to being one of the most often performed playwrights on German stages. By the time the German states were unified in 1870/71, a *Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft* (German Shakespeare Society) had

already been constituted, whose members included several members of the ruling houses of German states, Shakespeare scholars, a select few theatre practitioners, and a wider section of the German *Bildungsbürgertum* (the educated, professional strata of the middle class). The leaders of the *Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft* saw no contradiction between the cultivation of Shakespeare studies and strong German national feeling; on the contrary, the society's yearbook for 1871 held up Shakespeare's "patriotism and enthusiasm for the deeds and greatness of his own people" as an example to be emulated, and suggested that the work of the *Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft* offered its members an opportunity to demonstrate the devotion to duty and dedication to the categorical imperative that had enabled Germany to triumph over France.<sup>3</sup> Not only was Shakespeare held to be "Germanic like us", a few years after the foundation of the Reich, during the *Kulturkampf* (Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's conflict with the Catholic church), he was declared to be "the most thorough-going expression of the Protestant spirit".<sup>4</sup> In 1901, at a time of growing tension between the German and the British Empires, the co-editor of the Yearbook of the *Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft* declared that, thanks to the Schlegel-Tieck translation, Shakespeare "permeates our literary life more powerfully than the original in England".<sup>5</sup>

One of the acts of the North German Confederation founded by Bismarck in 1867 as an interim step towards the unification of Germany under Prussian leadership and with the exclusion of Austria, was the abolition of restrictions on the practice of trades (*Gewerbefreiheit*) in 1869. The application of *Gewerbefreiheit* to the theatre meant a break with the previous monopoly of the *Hoftheater* (court theatres), although some of these continued to play a major role in their home cities and even beyond.<sup>6</sup> In the year 1875 alone, for example, 90 theatres or theatre companies were established in North Germany.<sup>7</sup> Increasingly, the dominant type of theatre was the *Stadttheater*, the town or city theatre, which was usually partly subsidized by its municipality, and partly commercial. Just as the *Hoftheater* had served purposes of representation and sociability for the aristocracy, so the *Stadttheater* performed similar functions for the urban middle classes, and lent support to the claims of spokesmen for the *Bürgertum* to be the true bearers of culture and *Bildung* (the German term for education which included participation in classical humanist culture and its conception of the personality formation of the individual) in the German state. Alongside the *Stadttheater* and

*Hoftheater*, commercial private theatres also sprang up, especially in the rapidly growing Reich capital, Berlin.<sup>8</sup> The German Shakespeare Yearbook noted in 1872 the existence of more than twenty theatres in Berlin, which included at least some of the classics in their repertoires: “In the Tonhalle and in the Königstädtische Theater one can get Shakespeare’s *Othello* for three silver groschen admission plus a couple of short comedies as a bonus”.<sup>9</sup> The Königstädtische Theater drew a largely working-class audience (“machine-builders, artisans, and the like”), and the private Nationaltheater, with 2,000 seats, also managed to attract a broad public to classical plays, including a couple of performances of *The Merchant of Venice* in its first few months in late 1871.<sup>10</sup> In the eyes of the Shakespeare Yearbook’s correspondent, “Berlin today bears a miraculous resemblance to Elizabethan London”.<sup>11</sup>

The *Stadttheater* that were becoming an established feature of German cities and towns normally had a mixed repertoire, combining works chosen for their edifying cultural value with the popular hits of the day, as the municipal theatres sought to maintain a balance between upholding the claims of the city’s burghers to be the exponents of *Bildung* and culture, and commercial viability. The pressures resulting from a repertory system, especially in smaller towns where both resources and the potential audience for classical dramas were limited, resulting in infrequent performances of the latter, meant that rehearsals were often perfunctory affairs, and actors would tend to fall back on standardized, stereotyped ways of playing their roles.<sup>12</sup> However, a British observer of Imperial Germany, William Harbutt Dawson, was impressed by the commitment of the German *Stadttheater* to the classics: “Many a provincial theatre of this kind presents more Shakespearean plays in a week than the average English theatre outside London presents in a couple of years”.<sup>13</sup>

The completion of the unification of the German Reich in 1870/71 also coincided with the completion of the “tortuous and thorny path” (in Reinhard Rürup’s expression) to full formal emancipation for Germany’s Jewish population. The North German Confederation’s 1869 law abolishing “all remaining restrictions on civic and citizenship rights imposed on the grounds of religious profession” was extended to cover all the German states (some of which, like Baden, had already passed such laws).<sup>14</sup> If this legal act created little excitement among German Jews, it was largely because it seemed merely the logical completion of a slow process of emancipation which had been



proceeding unevenly across the different German states over several decades: Werner Mosse calls the act “little more than a tidying-up operation”.<sup>15</sup> For decades, gradual *de facto* emancipation, punctuated by liberal reform efforts after the “Wars of Liberation” against Napoleon and during the revolutions of 1848/49, had been accompanied by a process of assimilation to the cultural norms of bourgeois German society on the part of middle-class German Jews who, in the main, came to accept the definition of Judaism as essentially a religious confession which was as compatible with a German national identity as Protestantism or Catholicism, and who came to embrace the mainstream culture’s conception of *Bildung* (as defined above).<sup>16</sup> As Rürup has argued, the movement towards Jewish emancipation was linked to other movements of emancipation of the German bourgeoisie, and the cause of Jewish emancipation would remain vulnerable as long as the movement of the German bourgeoisie towards liberal objectives also remained subject to reverses.<sup>17</sup> This was to become all too apparent when the speculative boom that accompanied the founding of the German *Reich* in the early 1870s ended in a stock-market crash and the onset of economic depression in 1873. By the late 1870s, groups emerged which blamed economic crisis and the failure of the newly founded German nation to surmount its internal class and political conflicts on Jews: in 1879, Wilhelm Marr published his book *The Victory of Judaism over Germanism* and introduced the term “Antisemitism” into public debate through founding a (short-lived and unsuccessful) Antisemitic League. At the same time, the court chaplain Adolf Stoecker’s Christian Social movement sought (ultimately also unsuccessfully) to win the working-class of Berlin away from socialism through the demagogic deployment of antisemitic agitation. In the 1880s and early 1890s, Stoecker and his fellow members of the Christian Social party were to be joined in the Reichstag by other anti-Semites, making populist appeals to the peasantry of Hesse and Brandenburg respectively: Otto Böckel and Hermann Ahlwardt, and their supporters.<sup>18</sup>

However acculturated the German-Jewish bourgeoisie had become by the 1870s, and however complete their formal legal equality with Gentiles, German Jews had to face repeated reminders of the fact that in the eyes of many Germans the difference between Jewish and Gentile citizens remained a “problem”.<sup>19</sup> One of the indicators of the persistence of negative stereotypes of Jews within German culture was the portrayal of Jews on the stage. Hans-Joachim Neubauer has traced

the history of representations of Jews in German dramatic literature for the early nineteenth century, analysing some one hundred plays which appeared in this period, from popular *Judenpossen*, farces lampooning Jews, or *Judenszenen* – digressions, sometimes lengthy ones, with comic Jewish characters in popular plays, to works now considered classic, containing “Jew scenes” or Jewish characters.<sup>20</sup> Most commonly, Jews appeared as grotesque, comic figures, who spoke a stereotypical “*Jargon*”, salted with Yiddish expressions and marked by fractured German syntax. Newly emancipated and assimilated Jews were thus publicly reminded that *Bildung* was not just a matter of educational, intellectual attainments, but also pertained to “*äußere Gestalt, Auftreten, [und] Rede*”: outward appearance, bearing and speech.<sup>21</sup> Jewish speech was often characterized as “*Mauscheln*”, a word which also carries connotations of cheating or swindling.<sup>22</sup> August Wilhelm Iffland’s early performances as Shylock in Mannheim, 1783–1785, were praised by contemporary critics for the way in which he played the role “in a genuine Jewish tone”:

The verse construction of the original was broken up and dissolved into prose, but we owe this dissolution so many humorous jests, so many genuinely Jewish words and turns of phrase, that we hardly like to take issue with it, rather we confess with pleasure that we were drawn along in the general enjoyment and find the new kind of Shylock quite pleasant and enjoyable.<sup>23</sup>

Stereotypes of avaricious merchants and moneylenders abounded: “even in plays which were thoroughly well-meaning, i.e. pro-Jewish in intention, Jewish minor roles remained confined to the world of money”.<sup>24</sup> Jewish father-figures in comedies were frequently depicted, in the tradition of Shylock, as avaricious and linked with money-changing.<sup>25</sup> In tragedies, on the other hand, Jewish fathers were generally not portrayed as merchants or moneylenders (and they spoke High German, unlike Jews in comedies), but they seldom had dramaturgically strong roles. Neubauer writes: “unlike on the stage, the times for such contradictorily fascinating comedy figures as Shylock in the [written] drama are over” in the early nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup>

When Jewish fathers appeared in tragic roles, it was as representatives of the Old Covenant, and of a traditional patriarchal Jewish culture which was seen as having had its day in the era of

emancipation and assimilation.<sup>27</sup> (Jewish mothers rarely made an appearance as distinct characters.)<sup>28</sup> A standard reference work of the German stage, the *Allgemeines Theater-Lexikon*, explicitly stated in 1840: “Modern Jewry is little suited for the higher drama, tragedy”.<sup>29</sup> Male Jewish romantic leads seem to have been virtually taboo as far as the German stage was concerned, at least into the 1840s. Male Jews were not shown as being capable of genuine love, and while Jewesses in plays could fall in love with and marry Gentiles, this meant conversion for the former. The opposite, Christian women converting to Judaism to marry Jews, did not occur on the stage.<sup>30</sup>

Neubauer emphasizes the stereotypical nature of roles allotted to actors – Jewish roles were a stereotype in themselves, and an invitation to overact for easy comic effects, and they were sometimes combined with other stereotypes. For example, when Jewish women appeared in the role of temptress the stereotypical images of Jews and of Jezebels could be mutually reinforcing. Grotesque and comic elements seem to have been common in the portrayal of Jewish characters on the German stage: the actor Ludwig Barnay related in his memoirs that in the 1860s it had still been standard practice to stick on a false crooked nose for playing Jewish characters, and that he had caused a sensation when he played a minor Jewish character without such an appendage in a performance in Riga in 1864.<sup>31</sup> A contemporary of Barnay, Ernst von Possart, played his first Shylock in the Berne Stadttheater in February 1863, in the era of the large false noses. He was described as having to “conceal his excessive youth [Possart was twenty-two at the time] under a long red full-size beard, and an exaggeratedly crooked nose was planted onto the painted child-like face”.<sup>32</sup> Eduard Devrient, nephew of the famous actor Ludwig Devrient, and *Intendant* of the Karlsruhe *Hoftheater*, recorded his dissatisfaction with a stereotypical Shylock of the 1860s: “a grotesque caricature without inner being and vulgarly comic. [...] Arm movements like a windmill, with a big false nose, posture collapsing like a Polcinello doll, while raging in an overbearing fashion”.<sup>33</sup> False noses aside, it is easy to see how stereotyped Jewish characters afforded actors with half an inclination to “ham up” their parts the opportunity to deploy a set of stock mannerisms, accents (along with other linguistic peculiarities, such as irregular syntax, scripted or unscripted) and other stage attributes, in the same way that the stock Irish or Scottish character is so familiar and facile a creation of the English stage.

The Shylocks played on the German stage in the first half of the nineteenth century were thus conceived in a theatrical world in which there was a broad divide between conservative court theatres and rough-and-ready popular stages, although low popular farces could be found on both; in which Jews were generally subjects of caricature and lampoon; and in which the virtuoso declamation of famous performers set the aesthetic standards.

Simon Williams has traced the early history of *The Merchant of Venice*, “one of the most resilient of Shakespeare’s plays on the German stage”, from its first modern performance in Hamburg in 1777.<sup>34</sup> Williams counts Friedrich Ludwig Schröder as “the first notable Shylock in Germany”, whose own adaptation of the play cut out the Jessica episode and almost all of Act V, so that the play culminated in the trial scene. (This was in keeping with the licence with which Shakespearean and other texts were treated at the time; in Schröder’s *Hamlet*, for example, the Prince of Denmark was still alive, along with Laertes, and had succeeded to the throne at the end of the play).<sup>35</sup> According to Williams, Schröder’s Shylock “managed to represent Shylock’s malignity while drawing the audience’s sympathy towards him”.<sup>36</sup>

Another influential early Shylock was Ferdinand Fleck, who played the role in Berlin in 1788 (in Schröder’s version). Ludwig Tieck characterized Fleck’s Shylock as “terrible and ghostlike, but never common, always noble”, although he showed a meaner and more vicious streak in his scene with Tubal.<sup>37</sup> For one contemporary chronicler, Fleck’s Shylock’s “tone and bearing were those of a more noble, or, which is the same thing among this nation, wealthier Jew”.<sup>38</sup>

Williams regards the Shylock interpretation of August Wilhelm Iffland, the director of the Berlin court theatre from 1796 to 1814, as having been rather more antisemitic. (Iffland is often regarded as having set artistic standards for nineteenth-century German actors. He left a ring in his will to be handed down to the greatest living German actor of each successive generation, a custom which has been carried on down to the present.) Iffland’s Shylock, which he played in a guest appearance at Goethe’s Weimar theatre in 1812 as well as more regularly in his own Berlin theatre, lacked “stature”, being “an aggregation of small mannerisms, commonly accepted as typical of the Jews”. Symptomatic of how Iffland made Shylock petty and ridiculous was his choice of the knife with which he threatened to excise the pound of Antonio’s flesh: instead of the customary “large, forbidding

instrument", Iffland used "a small penknife that could hardly be seen from the auditorium".<sup>39</sup> If, as Williams suggests, Iffland's Shylock was the result of his willingness to pander to the prejudices of his audience,<sup>40</sup> it risked bringing him into conflict with those Berlin Jews who constituted a not insignificant minority of that audience. Iffland's Shylock was also criticized at the time, for example by Goethe's friend Karl Friedrich Zelter, for his reduction of Shylock to a grotesque figure of fun, and Iffland's style was no doubt at odds with the austere norms of Weimar classicism.<sup>41</sup> The main reason for Iffland's concessions to the audience, in reducing Shylock from a menacing villain with a sabre to a trivial buffoon with a penknife, may have been less antisemitism (or not only antisemitism) than the audience's squeamishness and (pretensions to) refined sensibilities, which also resulted in other cases of Shakespearean plays being bowdlerized and domesticated. For example, in Iffland's production of *Julius Caesar*, he moved Portia's "voluntary wound/ Here, in the thigh" to her arm, for the sake of "the chaste ears of countesses" (thus Stahl), and replaced intimidating swords with daggers.<sup>42</sup> Othello's choking of Desdemona was too much for the sensibilities of a Berlin critic in 1813, and other critics explicitly made it clear that the trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice* would have been too much for their nerves had it not been for Iffland's mild presentation of the scene.<sup>43</sup> At the start of the nineteenth century, Shakespeare was still often viewed as a cause for concern by those of refined taste, for all his "nobility and depth". Shakespeare was still suspected of "faults, irregularity and lapses in taste, which one might at the most excuse with reference to his barbaric age".<sup>44</sup>

Iffland also came under criticism from Jewish theatregoers for his apparently gratuitously exaggerated Jewish accent in a performance of Richard Cumberland's *The Jew*. The somewhat sentimental philosemitism of Cumberland's play was comprehensively subverted by Iffland's broad rendering of the stage Jew stereotype. Henry Wassermann has argued that Iffland's "sly vulgarisation of the noble Jew" resonated with a Gentile audience slowly coming to terms with Jewish emancipation: underneath the noble Jew, the vulgar and despised Jewish stereotype peeped through, just as wealthy Jews' efforts at assimilation were scrutinised by Gentiles for any sign of despised Jewish characteristics.<sup>45</sup>

Subsequently, there was also a scandal at the beginning of the term of office of Iffland's successor as *Generalintendant*, Graf von Brühl,

over the performance of the insulting anti-Jewish farce *Unser Verkehr*, the box-office success of which (after it had temporarily been banned by the Prussian head of government Baron Hardenberg) confirms the finding of an older study of Iffland's public, that Jews did not hold sway in the Berlin theatre audience.<sup>46</sup> The presence of a significant proportion of assimilated, educated Jews in Berlin theatre audiences would still remain a notable factor in Berlin's theatre history, although in Iffland's time they would seem to have been somewhat less influential than other groups, for example, and perhaps most assertively, young army officers.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, the German Shakespeare scholar Ernst Leopold Stahl was later disdainfully to accuse the Hamburg-born, Braunschweig-based actor Heinrich Marr of opportunistic crowd-pleasing behaviour for changing his usual interpretation of Shylock for a Berlin guest performance in 1830, to give Shylock "a heroic note" in place of his usual depiction of cold malevolence.<sup>48</sup> *Unser Verkehr*, which maliciously lampooned Jewish aspirations for emancipation and cultural assimilation, met less resistance outside Berlin, and "played to packed houses throughout Germany".<sup>49</sup> Some contemporaries saw a connection between the play's success and the wave of antisemitic violence in August 1819 known as the "Hep-Hep" riots, which started in Würzburg, and spread first to other parts of Bavaria, and then to northern German cities and rural areas.<sup>50</sup>

Iffland's interpretation of Shylock has often been contrasted with that of Ludwig Devrient, who played the role in the Berlin National Theatre in May 1815, after Iffland's death, and who has sometimes been described as offering the first "tragic Shylock" to be seen on the German stage.<sup>51</sup> Something of the contrast between the two actors is suggested by contemporary illustrations, which show a slightly slouching Iffland wearing "a blue coat with fur trimming, a caftan and red stockings", while pictures of Devrient show a dramatic and more dynamic, dervish-like figure with a long flowing beard and rich oriental robes, with a piercing gaze, and wielding a much more dangerous-looking knife than the one Iffland allowed himself.<sup>52</sup> If Devrient's emphasis on Shylock's nobility divided critics, as Williams argues, "almost all spectators felt the defeat of Devrient's Shylock as a shattering experience".<sup>53</sup> Contemporaries praised Devrient's ability to play not only Shylock ("like [...] a Jewish tiger"), but also generically "Jewish" roles, and it is sobering to turn from reading the critics' praise for Devrient's High Romantic interpretation of *The Merchant of*

*Venice* to reading about his part as a *Trödeljude* – a Jewish pedlar – in the “Jew farce” *Unser Verkehr*, the first Berlin performance of which was originally planned for 1 July 1815: just weeks after Devrient’s triumph as Shylock.<sup>54</sup>



**1. Ludwig Devrient as Shylock**

Karl Seydelmann, a pioneer of realism in acting in the 1830s, is regarded as having been the first major interpreter of Shylock for the post-Romantic period.<sup>55</sup> Eduard Gans contrasted his upright and proud gait, and his appearance of a man still in his prime with Devrient’s much older, bowed down, and physically less attractive Shylock. Gans saw Seydelmann’s Shylock as a character whose hatred and desire for revenge developed only gradually, as a product of his despised and persecuted position in society.<sup>56</sup> A contemporary critic less sympathetic to Seydelmann missed the “majestic wrath and Jewish fanaticism” that Devrient had embodied, finding that Seydelmann’s Shylock was a “common money-Jew” by comparison.<sup>57</sup> This criticism may essentially reflect the critic’s preference for a Romantic style of acting over a realistic one, but that conversely raises the question of what was to be considered “realistic” in the portrayal of Jews on stage.

While Seydelmann's prompt-book annotations show an effort at conveying some psychological motivation, and gradations of response on Shylock's part to his treatment at the hands of the Venetians, they repeatedly stress the "devilish" element in Shylock's vengefulness. In a gesture imitated by countless subsequent players, Seydelmann's Shylock, "grinning with devilish mockery", took out his knife during the courtroom scene to whet it on the sole of his shoe.<sup>58</sup> While an 1841 observer of Seydelmann as Shylock complained of the way in which the actor switched from speaking "pure German" to falling into "quite vulgar" Jewish tones and was irritated at his displays of changing emotions, a critic writing in the *Allgemeine Theaterchronik* in 1855 found the portrayal more convincing:

Seydelmann depicted the vulgar money-Jew in such a powerfully truthful way, as if the character had just crawled out of the Rialto's garlic heap. His outburst of anger was terrifying; he looked like the brutal devil who would be capable of cutting the flesh out of a living body.<sup>59</sup>

Theodor Döring, born in 1803 as the son of a Prussian salt inspector called Häring, succeeded Seydelmann as the star of Berlin's Königliches Schauspielhaus, as he had previously followed him at Stuttgart. Döring was another mid-century virtuoso who found that Shylock was a particularly effective vehicle for displays of histrionics which would appeal strongly to a contemporary audience. Like Iffland, he also enjoyed (the perhaps greater) popular success for the broad comedy that could be extracted from Cumberland's *The Jew*.<sup>60</sup> Gustav Kühne described his "mighty performance" as Shylock in Leipzig in 1841:

The wandering Jew himself, struggling in vain for death amidst all the tortures of existence, could appear no more terrible than Döring's Shylock, whose savage nature is scarcely raised sufficiently to a plane higher than the level of common personal vengeance by the lofty cause of his "holy people". [...] In the courtroom scene, his animalistic character was fully unleashed, the accentuation of certain elements was taken to such an extreme, and the impression made was so powerful, that the actor was called back tumultuously immediately after the scene, before the act had even finished. An unusual event hereabouts.<sup>61</sup>



Critics differed in their evaluation of the extent to which Döring's Shylock was bestial or whether he expressed the wrath of an injured nation alongside his own personal desire for revenge. They agreed that his spirited rendition of the role was excitably histrionic: "[Shylock] is after all both Jewish and Italian", wrote another critic.<sup>62</sup> Döring's Shylock seems to have been something of a popular staple on the stage of the Royal Theatre in Berlin, where audiences could still see his Shylock in the season of 1877/78, not long before his death after fifty-three seasons on the stage.<sup>63</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting, and controversial, of the succession of nineteenth-century virtuosi Shylocks was Bogumil Dawison, the son of a German-speaking Jewish family, born in Warsaw in 1818, whose stage career, beginning in Warsaw in 1837, was to take him to the Burgtheater in Vienna, then to Dresden and numerous other stages in Germany, and eventually to tours abroad, including to Russia and the United States.<sup>64</sup> Dawison was a noted Richard III, Othello, Mephisto, and Franz Moor (from Schiller's *Die Räuber*), but his Shylock may have been his most memorable role, and one which he seems to have regarded as a particular personal challenge. Dawison is recorded as having performed the role some 40 times from 1855 on, playing in Dresden and as a guest in Weimar, Berlin, Amsterdam, St. Petersburg, and elsewhere.<sup>65</sup> By that time in his career, Dawison was able to use his prestige and box-office appeal as a virtuoso to impose his view of *The Merchant of Venice* on the productions in which he appeared, cutting Act V so as to turn the play into the tragedy of a heroic Shylock. For Shylock, Dawison spoke (at least on some occasions) with a Jewish accent he did not normally use, but he used it strongly and proudly instead of in the wheedling tone of the stereotyped stage Jew. Dawison uncompromisingly depicted Shylock as (in the words of Karl Frenzel, who saw him in Berlin in 1856) "a heroic character, symbol of the Jewish people confronting the Christians in full consciousness of their own humanity [...] a hero of hatred, a martyr to the absolute law as it cruelly injures noble custom and fair humane feelings".<sup>66</sup> Simon Williams considers Dawison's interpretation "possibly the most idealised of all nineteenth-century Shylocks" in Germany.<sup>67</sup> Eduard Devrient complained in 1860, with reference to the leading Jewish actors of the day, who included Dawison and Ludwig Dessoir: "How can it be that Jews – whose hearts are especially tender and sensitive – cannot find a way to express emotion on the stage, but always allow irony to break

through?”.<sup>68</sup> Whatever Devrient’s basis for this generalisation was, it does not seem to have applied to Dawison’s Shylock.



## 2. Bogumil Dawison

### **Shylock during the emergence of a modern German theatre**

As the German theatre began to embark on a series of reforms from the 1870s on, under the influence of the ensemble playing of the Meiningen Court Theatre, and subsequently under the influence of Scandinavian Naturalism, it was to move away from the style of production dominated by individual virtuosi. However, the virtuosi of earlier decades left an influential, albeit varied, legacy when it came to playing roles such as Shylock, and the role would continue to lend itself to a range of different individual interpretations.

In 1870, the year in which the Prussian and allied German armies defeated the forces of Napoleon III, guaranteeing that Germany would be unified under Prussian hegemony, some thirteen performances of *The Merchant of Venice* on nine German stages are recorded. These included two in Berlin, one each in Dresden and Weimar, three by the Meiningen Court theatre, and one at the

prestigious National Theatre in Mannheim.<sup>69</sup> For 1871, the year of the ceremonial founding of the unified Reich at the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles, the figure increased to at least 16 performances by ten theatres (including Riga and Vienna).<sup>70</sup> In 1872, the figure increased further, to nineteen performances counted on a total of twelve stages. Of the nineteen, six performances were held at Berlin's Royal Theatre.<sup>71</sup> As the yearbook of the German Shakespeare Society undertook more systematic surveys of German theatres, it counted 32 performances of *The Merchant of Venice* in the 1872/73 season, making it the fourth most popular Shakespeare play on German stages.<sup>72</sup> The following season, 1873/74, *The Merchant of Venice* increased to 35 performances, and would have been the most frequently performed Shakespeare play in Germany if *Twelfth Night* had not beaten it into that position after being boosted by an unusually big run of 23 performances in Berlin.<sup>73</sup> 55 performances (out of a total 460 Shakespeare performances on German stages that season, making more than one in every nine Shakespeare performances) made *The Merchant* the most popular Shakespeare play of 1874/75, with *Hamlet* coming second on 46.<sup>74</sup> *The Merchant of Venice* remained Germany's most performed Shakespeare play in 1875/76 (47 out of 452 Shakespeare performances), falling into second place (with 38 performances) behind *Hamlet* (with 43) the following season.<sup>75</sup> The relative popularity of *The Merchant of Venice* subsided further in 1877/78, with the play falling into fourth place among Shakespeare's works (with 37 performances out of 428).<sup>76</sup> The decline continued, with *The Merchant of Venice* coming sixth on the list (with 28 performances on 11 stages in 1878/79), although the frequency of performance, both in absolute terms and relative to other Shakespeare plays, picked up again markedly in 1879/80.<sup>77</sup>

The overall figures on the frequency with which Shakespeare's plays were performed in Germany may reflect both the growth in the number of theatrical companies after the abolition of restrictions on trade in 1869 and the growing efficiency of the Shakespeare Society *Yearbook* in gathering regular statistics. It is less easy to explain the dramatic increase in popularity of *The Merchant of Venice* until it became the most frequently performed Shakespeare play in the mid-1870s, before resuming a slightly more modest position in the rankings later in the decade. It is possible that the Crash of 1873 that followed the post-unification speculative boom (the so-called *Gründerzeit*) lent a semblance of topicality to the play, especially given a widespread

tendency in Germany at the time to associate the speculative business activities which led to the crash and the onset of the so-called “great depression” after 1873 with Jewish financiers. In mid-1875, the conservative *Kreuzzeitung*, the authoritative voice of the Prussian Junker aristocracy, launched a savage attack against “*Judenpolitik*”, claiming that Germany was secretly under Jewish domination, and blaming the Jews and liberal economic policies for the depression.<sup>78</sup> As already noted, however, it was not until the end of the 1870s that organized political antisemitism made its presence felt in Germany. 1879 saw the emergence of political antisemitism (and of the term “antisemitism” itself) with the foundation of Wilhelm Marr’s Antisemitic League, the first antisemitic speeches of the Berlin court chaplain Adolf Stoecker, and the Berlin historian Heinrich von Treitschke’s first published article on the “Jewish question”, which contained the soon to be well-known formulation: “The Jews are our misfortune”.<sup>79</sup> This coincides, as it happens, with the striking increase in the number of performances of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1879/80, with a total of 104 performances by 59 companies from 1 July 1879 to the end of 1880, making the play the third most frequently performed Shakespeare play in that period after *Hamlet* and *Othello*.<sup>80</sup> Even allowing for the longer reporting period, the frequency of performances of *The Merchant of Venice* more than doubled compared with the previous season (1878/79), and the number of companies staging the play more than trebled. It would, of course, hardly be possible to demonstrate a direct causal connection between the emergence of organized antisemitism, and the new public currency of “antisemitism” as a political slogan, and the increased interest in *The Merchant of Venice*, but the coincidence is suggestive.

Histories of the modern German theatre commonly begin with the Meiningen Court Theatre. The company benefitted from the enlightened, if autocratic, patronage of Duke Georg II von Sachsen-Meiningen, the ruler of that small and otherwise obscure Thuringian state, who seems to have devoted himself to cultural interests as compensation for his state’s loss of political autonomy in the pseudo-federal Bismarckian Reich. (Ludwig II of Bavaria became famous for following a similar policy, his extravagant and flamboyant patronage of the arts, especially architecture and Richard Wagner, distracting him from his political weakness in the Prussian-dominated empire.)<sup>81</sup> An obituary for Georg II, who died just before the outbreak of the First World War, proclaimed: “after the great work [of unifying the Reich]

was accomplished, he gathered together an army of artists, in order to proclaim in every land, in bloodless triumphs and conquests, the glory of the nation on a major field of culture”.<sup>82</sup> The Meiningen company came to stand for a major reform of nineteenth-century German theatre, particularly through its emphasis on ensemble playing, in place of the virtuoso declamation of individual actors. In addition to the shift to ensemble playing, the Meiningen productions also distinguished themselves by their striving for historical authenticity (to the point of a sometimes obsessively pedantic antiquarianism), and lavish care with set decoration.<sup>83</sup> Georg II’s personal interest in the visual arts, in which he was apparently influenced by the historicist style of the Bavarian court painter Wilhelm von Kaulbach, was reflected in his theatrical productions. Through its many tours within Germany and beyond, from London to Odessa, the Meiningen Court Theatre influenced figures such as Otto Brahm, the leading German exponent of Naturalism on the German stage, and Konstantin Stanislavsky. The company’s repertoire was heavily based on the classics, especially Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* becoming one of the company’s staple productions. By 1890, the Meininger had performed *The Merchant of Venice* 94 times on its tours, with Duke Georg holding the belief that his renovated 1886 production was superior to Henry Irving’s London production, which the Duke saw in 1887.<sup>84</sup> The tours were organized by the company’s gifted Jewish stage manager, Ludwig Chronegk, whose own acting career had included performances as Launcelot Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>85</sup>

An early version of the Meininger *Merchant of Venice* premiered in Berlin, in the Friedrich-Wilhelmstädtisches Theater, on 12 June 1874, a month after the sensational success of their production of *Julius Caesar* in the same city. The production was partly inspired by Charles Kean’s London production, and had been repeatedly tried out in Meiningen (with three performances in 1870, another three in 1872/73, and twice again in 1873/74) before being taken on tour to the Reich capital with Josef Weilenbeck as Shylock.<sup>86</sup> Weilenbeck was by this time an already elderly actor with failing eyesight, but he still carried several major roles for the Meininger, the Duke even considering him for the role of Mark Antony. The production of *The Merchant* was, according to Osborne’s history of the Meiningen Theatre, “quite free of antisemitic touches”, attracting criticism from those reviewers who missed the “demonic”, ugly and vengeful aspects of Shylock’s character, while others were more appreciative of the

“preservation of a certain patriarchal dignity”.<sup>87</sup> The liberal *Vossische Zeitung* felt, however, that Weilenbeck had failed to capture the “psychological truth” and the “tragic element” in Shylock’s character.<sup>88</sup> The progressive liberal *Berliner Volks-Zeitung* (edited by the democratic publicist Aron Bernstein, an adherent of the ideals of the 1848 revolution) expressed reservations about the extent to which the play showed signs of concessions to the “mob antisemitism” of Shakespeare’s day, an all too easily understandable concern in the face of a resurgence of antisemitism in Germany in the 1870s. The *Volks-Zeitung* saw the reason for the play’s lasting appeal in the “alternation of the tragic with the cheerful and comic element”, making a virtue of what sterner critics have seen as the play’s fatal flaw.<sup>89</sup> In general the press praised aspects of the scenery, the staging of crowd scenes and the material side of the production, but the general verdict was that the acting of the ensemble failed to achieve a pleasingly harmonious and poetic overall effect. Weilenbeck’s fading powers aside, the comparison of the cast of the Meininger production with that of the recent Berlin Royal Theatre production fell out to the disadvantage of the former.<sup>90</sup> On the whole, the Meiningers’ 1874 production was not considered a success. The Duke confessed to the Berlin critic Karl Frenzel, who had advised the Duke on the preparations for the Berlin season, that his production had been something of an embarrassing flop, with only two Berlin performances taking place in 1874 and three in 1875.<sup>91</sup>

If the Meiningers’ productions met with mixed critical success in Berlin, they posed enough of a challenge to Berlin’s Königliches Schauspielhaus (Royal Theatre) to cause the latter to try to steal the touring company’s thunder by imitating, or trying to pre-empt, their repertoire, including *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>92</sup> Despite its home-ground advantage, the Prussian royal theatre failed to rout the competition from tiny Saxe-Meiningen. The great novelist Theodor Fontane, who was also a theatre critic of some note, was less than wholly convinced by the Königliches Schauspielhaus production of *The Merchant* which he saw in 1872, with Richard Kahle as Shylock, finding that the actor failed to convey a consistent characterization, only momentarily *becoming* Shylock.<sup>93</sup> In a polemical pamphlet directed at the Royal Theatre, Paul Schlenther wrote that if Kahle played Lessing’s Nathan the Wise, it would be impossible to distinguish from his Shylock.<sup>94</sup>

A new Meininger version of *The Merchant of Venice* was staged in 1881, but was abandoned after 15 performances, to be replaced by a

further renovated version, which premièred in Barmen in April 1886, going on to enjoy a total of 79 performances on the Meiningers' tours.<sup>95</sup> The Shylock played by Max Grube on the Meiningers' 1888 tour seems to have been more broadly comic than Weilenbeck's, with a good deal of gesticulation and eye-rolling; a Belgian critic found him "a curious Shylock, a little epileptic and very expressive; perhaps this is how he should be, since he must be slightly mad to imagine that he would ever obtain the pound of flesh".<sup>96</sup> Another critic remarked on "the surprising humour" in Grube's presentation of Shylock.<sup>97</sup> Grube, who also played Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* on the same tour, seems for his part to have felt that the proliferation of busy extras in the production's highly elaborate stage recreation of Venice distracted from his performance.<sup>98</sup> The 1890 Meininger tour of Russia introduced the then little-known Ludwig Wüllner to the role of Shylock, with a much-applauded debut in Odessa.<sup>99</sup>

The achievements for which the Meiningers were celebrated – faithful adherence to texts on the one hand and emphasis on splendour of sets and historicist commitment to authentic decor on the other – appear to have been somewhat at cross-purposes in their performances of *The Merchant of Venice*. Wolfgang Iser, a pioneer in the study of reception theory, has subjected these performances to an analysis.<sup>100</sup> The opulent scenery, recreating the Rialto, the Ghetto, "with its dilapidated houses, its ragged washing hanging from lines stretched across the streets", and other Venetian scenes, with an attention to art-historical detail enhanced by Duke Georg II's own first-hand observations of Venice,<sup>101</sup> and populated by "a crowd enlarged by hundreds of extras",<sup>102</sup> demanded certain departures from the original text. In the absence in this period of revolving stages, such an investment in scenery could not co-exist with Shakespeare's rapid scene changes, for example, the repeated switches in the action from Venice to Belmont, so that some scenes had to be transposed to consolidate the action at Venice and Belmont respectively, and a few – Scenes II, 8, III, 3, and III, 5 – were cut altogether.<sup>103</sup> Thus the scene (II, 8) in which the minor figures Salerio and Salanio report Shylock's reaction to the loss of his daughter Jessica, crying out: "My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!", while "all the boys in Venice follow





him” through the streets and mock him, was excised, as was Shylock’s confrontation (III, 3) with the arrested Antonio (“I’ll have my bond, speak not against my bond”), and Jessica’s scene (III, 5) with Launcelot Gobbo and Lorenzo at Belmont, in which she banters with the men about “converting Jews to Christians” (and thereby raising the price of pork). As Iser argues, there was a tendency in the Meininger production for the optical effects to overwhelm the text, and for Shakespeare’s metaphorical and descriptive “word-scenery”<sup>104</sup> to become redundant in the face of the lavish sets. Duke Georg II himself laboured over every detail of the design of Shylock’s costume (yellow cloak, yellowish felt hat, etc.),<sup>105</sup> but scenes which contributed to the development of Shylock as a character, or which characterised his relations with the Christians, were sacrificed apparently on the grounds that they added less to the pictorial impact of the play.

One indication of the success which this Meiningen production enjoyed was the fact that the Berlin theatre impresario Paul Lindau, then director of the Meiningen court theatre, chose it for a jubilee performance in honour of the twenty-fifth wedding anniversary of Georg II and his consort Helene (the former actress Ellen Franz) in 1898. An advantage of the play for this occasion was that its large cast list made it possible to include as many former Meininger actors as possible for the gala event.<sup>106</sup>

In the capital of Bismarck’s Reich, the Prussian Royal Theatre continued to hold out against the Meiningers’ innovations, but other Berlin theatres started to modernize under the influence of the Meiningers, notably the Deutsches Theater, founded in 1883. Ludwig Barnay, at one time a frequent player in Meininger productions,<sup>107</sup> was a major figure in the early years of the Deutsches Theater, before founding his own Berliner Theater. Under Barnay’s direction, *The Merchant of Venice* enjoyed considerable success, achieving 15 performances in 1889.<sup>108</sup> Barnay published his own stage adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*, based on the Schlegel translation with a few cuts, and copious additional stage directions and diagrams to show the position of characters. In Barnay’s version, Shylock is supported by the presence of Tubal and two other Jews during the trial scene, which weakened the impression of the solitary Jew’s isolation when confronted by the solidarity of the Christians against him.<sup>109</sup>

In addition to the Royal Theatre, and Barnay’s Deutsches Theater, Berliners could catch *The Merchant of Venice* at the Nationaltheater with Otto Lehfeld as Shylock in the theatre’s inaugural season in 1871, and

in following years.<sup>110</sup> Lehfeld, who was of Jewish descent, was also both a notable King Lear and a formidable Hagen Tronje.<sup>111</sup> His Shylock, however, was said to retain the mean traits of Shylock's character, with speech bordering on *Mauschehr*:

on the other hand, the bent, trotting figure was capable of drawing himself up to his full height when it came to lending voice to the despised member of an oppressed tribe and the injured father. One couldn't really laugh in any scene, even if some elements in the conversation with Antonio as well as those with Tubal and with the wise judge elicited a smile.<sup>112</sup>

Lehfeld's Shylock was criticized in Weimar for failing to meet Shakespeare's intentions. A critic wrote: "Shakespeare's Shylock has none of the pathos, the self-confident, dominating manner of Lehfeld", whose version of Shylock in turn omitted "the full range of his characteristic traits", presumably the most negative ones.<sup>113</sup>

## Vienna

While Berlin's theatres grew in number, and in some cases in standing, the capital of the German-speaking theatrical world had traditionally been Vienna, and the most prestigious German-speaking theatre was still the Burgtheater, Austria's court theatre. In 1882, the Danish literary critic Georg Brandes wrote: "If one wants to see first-rate actors on German soil, one must travel to Vienna and go to the Burgtheater".<sup>114</sup> It was often claimed that the High German spoken on the boards of the Burgtheater was the purest spoken on any German stage, and the Burgtheater claimed to set the standards for German theatres in other respects as well. *The Merchant of Venice* had made regular appearances on the Burgtheater stage since Joseph Schreyvogel's later widely used stage adaptation of the August Wilhelm Schlegel translation of the play premièred in 1827. Schreyvogel's adaptations had to meet the demands of the Austrian censorship as well as those of practicality for performance, and some of his Shakespeare translations suffered heavily from the prudishness of the Austrian authorities, as well as from their intense sensitivity to any profanation of religion or slights to the authority of the state.<sup>115</sup> Ludwig Barnay once claimed that he was banned by the Austrian governor from performing Goethe's *Faust* in Laibach (Ljubljana) as late as 1863, on religious grounds: "But the devil appears in it!", the

governor objected.<sup>116</sup> Lessing's classic plea for tolerance, *Nathan der Weise*, also fell foul of religious censorship. The proposed Burgtheater production of 1815 was thwarted by the objections of the Archbishop of Vienna to much of the play. It was finally performed in 1819 in a much-mutilated form from which everything to which the Archbishop objected (including the central "three rings" allegory) had been deleted, and the play was performed in this form in Vienna until 1846.<sup>117</sup> Schreyvogel's *Merchant* was actually banned in 1822, as the Austrian censorship took a particularly severe line after the anti-liberal Carlsbad Decrees of 1819,<sup>118</sup> but was able to be performed five years later. *The Merchant of Venice* fared better at Schreyvogel's hands than some other Shakespeare plays, and his cuts for the stage did a creditable job of retaining the order of the scenes, but Ernst Leopold Stahl was later to claim that some of the language of the play was toned down to placate "the then already influential Jewish community of Vienna".<sup>119</sup> Religious references were deleted in keeping with the censorship's usual sensitivities: Shylock does not say to Bassanio that he would not pray with him (Act I, Sc.3, l.33); his line "I hate him for he is a Christian" (Act I, Sc.3, l.37) is cut; "our holy Abram" becomes plain "Abram" (Act I, Sc.3, l.67); Shylock and Tubal meet at the bourse, not the synagogue, and Gratiano's jibe at hypocrisy (Act II, Sc.2, l.180-188) is also cut.<sup>120</sup> At any rate the Burgtheater's first Shylock (in the Schreyvogel version), Carl Ludwig Costenoble, was too "philosemitic" for the taste of the eminent German Shakespeare scholar a century later, although, judging from the statistics of performances, Costenoble's Shylock was popular enough with the Burgtheater audience, and the production received warm praise from reviewers.<sup>121</sup>

Costenoble had a string of distinguished successors in the role at the Burgtheater from 1827 until 1840, including Karl Seydelmann, Karl La Roche, who was a popular comic actor, well-known for his Falstaff, and Theodor Döring, as well as a guest appearance from Ludwig Devrient.<sup>122</sup> Costenoble criticised La Roche's Shylock for its failure to capture the "grandiose" and more impassioned moments of the character. La Roche managed to seem casual and laid-back even when declaiming Shylock's speech in Act III, Scene 1: "The curse never fell upon our nation till now, I never felt it till now", in which Shylock laments the loss of his daughter, and while Costenoble praised elements of La Roche's interpretation of the trial scene, he found this scene, too, marred by "vulgar gawking and the common bodily

twisting and turning of a beggar-Jew".<sup>123</sup> The preference for performances in a comic and humorous vein (as opposed to the serious and tragic), seen particularly in the case of La Roche, was typical of the Burgtheater, reflecting both the taste of the Habsburg court and the Austrian aristocracy and the restrictions of a censorship code which excluded suicide, duels, and mention of adultery, religion, and rebellion against lawful authority from the stage. The very word "liberty" (*Freiheit*) was suspect in the eyes of the Austrian authorities, and it is characteristic that in the line: "*Es lebe die Freiheit/ Die Freiheit soll leben*" in *Don Giovanni*, the word "*Freiheit*" was replaced on the Viennese stage until 1848 by "*Fröhlichkeit*" (merriment).<sup>124</sup>

The Burgtheater staged a renewed production of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1845-46, and it was brought back into the repertoire in 1851, under the new director of the Burgtheater, Heinrich Laube. Laube altered the sequence of scenes, which Schreyvogel had sought to preserve as far as possible, consolidating the scenes at Belmont, for example, and drastically abbreviated the 5th Act, so that only the most essential action from that Act followed on immediately from the trial scene. This, in Laube's view "covered up the faults of the final act", avoiding the clash between the tone of the punishment of Shylock and the cheerful comic conclusion of the play. In Laube's view, the modification ensured that "despite the Shylock affair", the impression with which the Burgtheater audience left the theatre after *The Merchant of Venice* was nonetheless "charming and befitting a comedy". The Viennese audience was considered to prefer conflicts to be passed over as harmoniously as possible. Laube's modified version ran on and off for sixteen years at the Burgtheater.<sup>125</sup> Karl La Roche was still available as the comic Shylock, whose successors in the 1860s included Josef Lewinsky, a celebrated Shakespearean actor especially in the roles of Richard III and Iago, who sought to portray a more "serious and tragic" Shylock than La Roche. However, as time went on, Lewinsky's interpretation of Shylock evolved to become less the tragic centre of the play, and to become a more humorous incidental figure.<sup>126</sup>

In 1875, Friedrich Mitterwurzer first appeared as Shylock in the Burgtheater. Mitterwurzer had virtually grown up in the Dresden Hoftheater where his mother was an actress (his father was an opera baritone), in the days of Emil Devrient and Bohumil Dawison.<sup>127</sup> A contemporary critic contrasted Mitterwurzer's performance with the "idealized" Shylocks which had already found a home on the German

stage, Shylocks who could move an audience more by the wrong done to them than by their own misdeeds.

Mitterwurzer broke decisively with this tradition. His Jew was an ugly, vulgar Jew; he played the Jew [*jüdelte*] to such effect that the more naïve part of the audience was several times unable to contain its laughter – not a trace of pathos, from which the representative and avenger of an enslaved, mistreated people could have spoken.

Mitterwurzer attacked the role with a restless energy, in strong contrast to La Roche, but this energy was the expression of malevolent intent from the start.<sup>128</sup> When Salerio asked Mitterwurzer's Shylock what good his bond (the pound of Antonio's flesh) was, Mitterwurzer's reply, "To bait fish withal" (Act III, Sc.1, line 47) was accompanied by a huge grin and graphic two-handed gestures of luring fish in for the kill.<sup>129</sup> Mitterwurzer's hate-filled Shylock, a contrast both to the tragic victim of Lewinsky's interpretation, and to La Roche's buffoon, was praised for its "realism", in its portrayal of Jewish characteristics, not least in the calculating nature of the money-lender. Mitterwurzer himself, in an 1881 essay on "Style", rejected idealized versions of Shylock, whom he described as just a "common moneypeddling Jew, rich beyond all measure, greedy and mendacious".<sup>130</sup> The critic Eugen Guglia wrote: "No-one in the theatre was sorry that this Jew is ultimately done out of what is, formally, his by right, is mocked and made a fool of".<sup>131</sup> As the German-language theatre started to turn towards naturalism, Mitterwurzer's Shylock was to gain in renown.

At the Burgtheater, the eventual successor to Lewinsky (from 1909) in the role of Shylock was Otto Tressler, an "amiably merry character actor" miscast, in Stahl's view, as a "shrieking avenger".<sup>132</sup> Another critic described him as a "thin, shabby Jew, with long strands of thin grey-black beard, and hook-like crooked bony fingers, with bloodshot eyes and a screeching throaty voice", a Shylock whose keynote was "demonic hatred", apparently influenced by the Italian Novelli, all in all something of a departure from the more congenial traditions of the Burgtheater. Lewinsky's more humorous version was still a recent memory. The production was also criticized for the modest, plain, even gloomy sets, which failed to project the grandeur and gaiety of Venice, and the weakness of the true title figure, Antonio, who

became a mere “feeble plaything of a predatory Shylock”, instead of providing a noble and magnanimous counterweight to the figure of the moneylender.<sup>133</sup>

The older literature on the Burgtheater tends to present a nostalgically idealized picture of a temple of the muses which benefitted from a royal patronage sufficiently indulgent to turn the occasional blind eye to breaches of the censorship code, and which enjoyed the support of a cross-section of Viennese society, crossing boundaries of class, ethnicity, or religious denomination. Social historical research qualifies this picture significantly, even if the building of a new Burgtheater (which took from 1872 to 1888, constituting part of the grand Ringstrasse project) enabled a larger cross-section of the bourgeois public to partake of the theatrical pleasures of the court and aristocracy.<sup>134</sup> Nevertheless, one Viennese theatre historian writes: “the rush for places in the new Burgtheater should not make us forget that for the larger part of the Viennese population it was not possible to visit the Hofburgtheater, or only at the cost of some sacrifice”.<sup>135</sup> As in Berlin, the prestigious court theatre and opera house, with their prominently placed buildings proclaiming their representative function, were rapidly joined, as the city’s population grew, by a wide range of other commercial, private and popular theatres.<sup>136</sup> An early experiment at private theatre in Vienna was the Wiener Stadttheater, to which Heinrich Laube moved after being dismissed from the Burgtheater, and where he soon successfully staged his version of *The Merchant of Venice*, calling on a celebrated touring Italian actor, Ernesto Rossi, to play Shylock.<sup>137</sup> In 1889, the Deutsches Volkstheater opened, specializing in remunerative entertainment (often with a nationalistic flavour) such as the popular peasant comedies of Ludwig Anzengruber, but also providing cheap performances of the classics on Monday evenings and Sunday afternoons for young audiences.<sup>138</sup> From 1903 on, *The Merchant of Venice* became a regular part of the Deutsches Volkstheater’s repertoire.<sup>139</sup>

Antisemitism was to make itself felt more strongly in Vienna than in Berlin in the decades before the First World War. At the time Heinrich Laube became director of the Burgtheater, in 1851, there were probably fewer than 16,000 Jews in Vienna. By 1880, there were 74,523, or ten per cent of the city’s population, many of them immigrants from outlying parts of the Austro-Hungarian empire.<sup>140</sup> By the 1880s, the culture of liberal compromise that cushioned the power

structure of the Habsburg monarchy came under increasing strain, and sections of the discontented strata of the Austrian electorate turned to the antisemitism of the Pan-German Georg Ritter von Schönerer, or, in larger numbers, to the Christian Social movement of Karl Lueger, who rose to become the dominant figure in the municipal politics of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna.<sup>141</sup> Under Lueger as Mayor, the Christian Social administration of Vienna was to come to view theatre as having useful political and social functions, in distracting the populace, and in communicating the right religious-moral and patriotic-political messages, reinforcing an Austrian identity that was both “Christian” and “German”.<sup>142</sup> In 1898, Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn founded the overtly “anti-Liberal” and essentially antisemitic Kaiserjubiläums-Stadttheater, which had close links with the Christian Social Party.<sup>143</sup> Generally, its repertoire consisted of works by German (including German-Austrian) playwrights only, but it made an exception for Shakespeare when it came to *The Merchant of Venice*, a “mutilated version” of which the antisemites staged no fewer than eight times in 1899, an unusually high number of performances of a classical play in a single season. According to Richard S. Geehr’s study of Müller-Guttenbrunn’s theatre, Shylock “was portrayed without any redeeming qualities”, a “Jew-baiting scene” was gratuitously inserted into the play, and the deletion of Act V ensured that nothing detracted from the climax of the defeat of the Jew in Act IV. Its first performance in October 1899, which was attended by Karl Lueger himself, along with other Christian Social leaders, coincided with a climactic point in the Dreyfus affair in France, with Captain Dreyfus’s unsuccessful appeal against his conviction for treason.<sup>144</sup> Beating the publicity drum, the right-wing *Deutsches Volksblatt* praised the return of *The Merchant of Venice*, hinting that Jewish influence had been responsible for keeping the play off the Viennese stage (neither the Burgtheater nor the Wiener Stadttheater had staged *The Merchant* since the 1880s).<sup>145</sup> In the weekly *Wiener Volksblatt*, the Christian Social city councillor Hermann Bielolahwek, who had recently called for the sending of all Jews to Devil’s Island, to share Dreyfus’s fate, praised the production, commending it to all antisemites, and writing: “Shylock personifies the entire Jewry of the world; the only thing favourable about this beast in human form is that he did not cloak his ugliness”.<sup>146</sup> The Christian Social press became the target of much mockery, however, when the *Wiener Volksbote* praised the Austrian playwright Grillparzer for writing the play.<sup>147</sup> The antisemitically interpreted *Merchant of Venice* became a

regular item in the repertoire of the Kaiserjubiläums-Stadttheater: it was brought back for two performances in 1900, four in 1901 (along with two performances of the Germanic-enough *Hamlet*), two in 1902, and one in 1903, the year in which Müller-Guttenbrunn relinquished the directorship of the theatre.<sup>148</sup> Müller-Guttenbrunn was to feel that *The Merchant of Venice* and his other anti-Jewish productions did not go far enough, but he had difficulty getting more ferociously antisemitic works past the censors.<sup>149</sup> Müller-Guttenbrunn was one of a number of right-wing and *völkisch* theatre reformers in Austria and Germany, although others tended to look to the provinces to rescue the truly German theatre from the decadent and cosmopolitan influences present in the big cities.<sup>150</sup>

### **Munich: Ernst von Possart**

To the North of Austria, the court theatre of the Bavarian capital, Munich, seems to have been in the doldrums for a while in the mid nineteenth century, especially as far as Shakespeare productions were concerned, although a number of factors, not least the extravagant patronage of the arts exhibited by King Ludwig II, saw its fortunes improve.<sup>151</sup> The *Intendant*, Friedrich Bodenstedt, who was shortly to leave Munich for Meiningen, wrote in 1867 that the Munich court theatre, unless it called on the services of guest *virtuosi*, lacked an actor who could convincingly carry parts such as Othello, Macbeth, or Lear, but noted that the young Ernst Possart had achieved great success as Iago.<sup>152</sup> Originally a Berliner, Possart was to become “South Germany’s most famous actor in the last third of the nineteenth century”.<sup>153</sup>

Ernst von Possart (born into a well-off bourgeois Berlin family, he was ennobled in 1895) had, as already noted, played his first Shylock in Berne in 1863, in the era in which large false noses were apparently still *de rigueur* for Shylocks. The chronicler of his career as Shylock (which eventually included 142 performances), Ludwig Malyoth, noted in 1906 that much had changed between this first performance and his farewell performance at the Munich Hoftheater in September 1905: “to a large extent he has made concessions to modern taste, and in recent times has shown a measured restraint, even in details”. Malyoth described Possart’s later incarnations in the role:

He appears as a tall man in his fifties, with thinning black and silver-grey locks which fall from his forehead and from his ears;



a short full beard divided into two makes the pallid countenance appear thin; large, arched brows cast a shadow over the deep set, mostly screwed-up eyes.

His costume, which was topped off by a large oriental over-garment and a turban, was completed by a yellow (or orange) patch, the size of the palm of one's hand, on his right shoulder: the yellow patch which Jews were obliged to wear in the sixteenth century. Malyoth compared his appearance to that of a pharisee who had stepped out of the *Doré bible*.<sup>154</sup> In his first appearance in Act I, delivering his speech "There be land rats and water rats", von Possart, in Malyoth's words, "characterizes very precisely the speculative spirit of the Jewish broker".<sup>155</sup> The speaking voice of Possart's Shylock ran through the scale of tone from a clear, precise articulation "stripped of Jewish idiom" to a dark, low murmur, and from passionate outbursts to the "*Jargon* of the broker", and falling into a suggestion of *Mauscheln* when he said to Antonio: "Well then, it now appears you need my help" (Act I, Sc. 3, l.109).<sup>156</sup> Malyoth describes a larger than life Shylock, whose every word and gesture was carefully calculated for effect by an experienced virtuoso keen to display his mastery of every nuance of the role.

In his memoirs, Possart reflected on his own evolution in the role of Shylock. His early guest performances as Shylock (and as Carlos in Goethe's *Clavigo*) at the Munich court theatre, where he worked from 1864 to 1871, "found strong applause from the full houses, and friendly recognition from the press. However, for my own part I felt ashamed of the lack of maturity of these representations, especially of the first in *The Merchant of Venice*. I had not yet arrived at a clear notion of what interpretation of Shylock could be proven to be the only correct one to be maintained by an actor. And thus my execution of the part stood on a shaky foundation."<sup>157</sup> For the later theatre historian Stahl, Possart's presentation of Shylock as a "titanic avenger" was a "typical product of the travelling virtuoso's craving for success".<sup>158</sup> Writing in 1906, a Munich observer could recall that as recently as ten years previously, Possart's Shylock "went some way in that direction towards the tame and human, in which theatrical fashion now dresses up this 'wolf', in total contradiction to the author".<sup>159</sup>

The problem, as Possart formulated it, was whether Shylock should be "elevated to be the avenger of his tribe which had been enslaved and tormented for centuries", as Heinrich Heine had it in his essays on

Shakespeare's "Girls and Women" (1838), or whether his "greed for money outweighs his outraged religious belief". As evidence for the second interpretation, Possart adduced the lines:

I hate him for he is a Christian:  
But more, for that in low simplicity  
He lends out money gratis, and brings down  
The rate of usance here in Venice. [Act I, Sc.3]

and the lines uttered after Jessica's flight:

I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear: would she were hears'd at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin. [Act III, Sc.1]

In addition to this textual evidence, Possart insisted on the importance of the play's genre: a comedy, not a tragedy. On the basis of this evidence, Possart concluded that Shakespeare intended Shylock as "nothing more and nothing less than the justly deceived and mocked Jewish usurer, from whom everything – his daughter, his money, his jewels – might be taken, and who was only allowed to keep his miserable life on the condition that he also abjured the faith of his fathers". Arguing that the actor's obligation was to faithfully interpret the author's intention, Possart's later depictions of Shylock were guided by this interpretation, seeking "to combine the usurer's greed for money with the thirst for vengeance and the religious fanaticism of his sect", thereby depriving Shylock of "a part of his tragic greatness" and throwing him back into his original, comic, sphere.<sup>160</sup> And yet, Malyoth, clearly a careful and attentive observer, could write of Possart's "tragic effects" in Act III, Scene 1: "How one could ever understand this scene comically, is hard to understand, when one has Possart before one's eyes". In Malyoth's eyes, von Possart's striving for effect and emotional impact created a Shylock with partly tragic, partly demonic traits, whatever von Possart's intentions were.<sup>161</sup> A Munich critic who cherished the memory of Possart's "demonic" Richard III also appreciated the way in which Possart's Shylock "offers a colourful picture, as inhuman as it is humanly true, of the savage temperament of the vengeful Jew, that luckily shows no trace of the nonsensical recent attempts to prettify this beast of prey".<sup>162</sup>

Possart's interpretation of *The Merchant of Venice* gained wider currency not only through the touring guest performances customary for a nineteenth-century virtuoso (and Possart toured more assiduously than most),<sup>163</sup> but also through his publication of his own stage adaptation of the Schlegel translation, with his cutting and combination of scenes for technical reasons, and his own recommended stage directions. Possart's stage adaptation was first performed at the Munich court theatre on Christmas Day, 1879.<sup>164</sup> Possart's adaptation revealed his attention to both rhetorical and visual effect, the former evident in judicious editing of the Schlegel translation, and the latter in the striving for "fairy-tale splendour" in the staging.<sup>165</sup> Possart's combining of scenes included rolling Act I, Scene 2, with Portia and Nerissa at Belmont into Act II, Scenes 1 and 7, with the Prince of Morocco, just as other adapters had found it expedient to group together the scenes at Belmont. He also combined Act II, Scene 8 (Salerio and Solanio), with Act III, Scene 1, in which he embellished Shylock's entrance by the gratuitous addition of a number of Jews accompanying Shylock and an angry crowd pursuing the Jews, with Shylock forced to flee until the mob is dispersed. A contemporary commentator found that the insertion of this pogrom-like crowd scene ("This pantomime-like event")

makes an extraordinary contribution to making the scene more vivid. In addition, the hatred of the people against the old usurer is characterised in an effective manner. His determination in the Senate scene, to consign the merchant beloved by the people to his death, a deed which would necessarily provoke the crowd against him to the utmost, appears all the more violent and demonic.<sup>166</sup>

Act IV, consisting mainly of the trial scene, follows the Schlegel text closely, but enriched with further Possart stage directions. Tubal is close behind Shylock during the trial scene, exchanging whispers with him. The presence of Tubal during the trial scene, and of additional Jewish extras in some other contemporary stage versions, avoids the picture of Shylock as the lone Jew standing up to a courtroom full of Christians and suggests that Shylock's vengeance is not his alone, but part of a wider, collective Jewish project. Much stage business follows Shylock's line: "We trifle time, I pray thee pursue sentence." (Act IV, Sc.1, l.294). Portia turns to the Doge and senators to obtain their

confirmation of the judgement, Antonio's friends anxiously step up to support him, and Shylock and Tubal are described as gesticulating triumphantly. After Shylock's exclamation: "Most learned judge! A sentence, come prepare.", a line which Possart renders with four exclamation marks, Possart's stage directions describe Shylock advancing on Antonio, who has unbuttoned his coat, with the knife, and as soon as he actually touches Antonio, Portia cries out "Stop!" before reverting to Shakespeare's "Tarry a little, there is something else, —". There is rejoicing in the courtroom, the knife sinks from Shylock's hand, and Tubal discreetly beats a retreat. When Shylock has been refused the return of his principal, the money he had originally lent Antonio, he prepares to leave: "I'll stay no longer question". In Possart's version, he remembers to pick the knife up from the floor before he turns to exit, before Portia says "Tarry Jew". When sentenced to be converted to Christianity, Shylock collapses on the steps.<sup>167</sup> While any stage production would add its own stage directions to Shakespeare's text, Possart's show a definite leaning towards the colourful and melodramatic. In Act V, however, the bawdy by-play is bowdlerized, as was usual in German and Austrian stage versions in the nineteenth century (and Shylock loses his lines: "And others when the bagpipe sings i' th' nose, / Cannot contain their urine", Act IV, Sc. 1, to a similar act of censorship). In the end, it is perhaps impossible to deduce anti- or philo-semitic intentions from Possart's acting, directing and textual adaptation: whether he played Shylock, Iago or Nathan the Wise, Possart was a virtuoso first and foremost, striving for maximum effect from every line and every stage gesture. A reviewer of a new production of Possart's adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* in Munich's Hoftheater wrote that Possart played Shylock "with a success that disarmed all criticism",<sup>168</sup>

Possart's career lasted well into the heyday of Naturalism, and the period in which the Meiningers' reforms were increasingly followed in the greater prevalence of ensemble playing over the individual virtuoso performance, not to mention the attempt from 1889 on of Possart's Munich colleagues Jozsa Savits and Kurt Lautenschläger at a reformed "Shakespeare stage" closer to the spirit of the Shakespearean stage, with less emphasis on illusionistic decoration and with faster scene changes, reforms which Possart resisted, just as he tried to oppose the establishment of the new commercial Deutsches Theater in Munich, with a largely modernist repertoire, lest it provide the royal theatre with unwelcome competition.<sup>169</sup> By 1900, there were complaints that

the Munich court theatre was going stale, with an excessive reliance on the repetition of older productions, even if Possart's own performance was exempted from such criticism.<sup>170</sup> However, Possart was not the only touring virtuoso in the old style. Italian travelling virtuosos enjoyed success in Germany down to the end of the nineteenth century, especially in the more exotic roles such as Othello (played, for example, by Ernesto Rossi) and Shylock (played by Ermete Novelli). Novelli displayed a wild and passionate Shylock. An English critic wrote:

when the sentence is given, 'You must prepare your body for the knife' the mad fury of Shylock, thirsting for blood, is so bestially huge that although the whole audience in court close in to screen his victim from him, they seem hardly guard enough: and Portia's tiny 'Tarry a little!' is no more than one ear of corn blown into the sea.<sup>171</sup>

In contrast to the Meiningers' principle of fidelity to the text, Novelli invented a scene in which Shylock's discovery of Jessica's departure became the occasion for, in Stahl's words, a "great tragic solo number" of histrionics, a turn much imitated by other virtuosos, but Stahl acknowledged the capacities of Novelli and his compatriots, and credited them with some influence on German stagecraft in the period of Naturalism.<sup>172</sup> A contemporary critic, Heinrich Stümcke, was unimpressed by Novelli's Shylock, finding it less powerful than Friedrich Haase's, for example, and less original than Possart's. Stümcke regretted some of Novelli's inventions, such as throwing himself flat on his face before the Doge's throne at the end of the court scene, while the judges stepped over him, "to say nothing of his textual 'improvements'".<sup>173</sup>

Possart's successor in the role of Shylock at the Munich Hoftheater was partly influenced by the Naturalism of the 1890s: Albert Heine (subsequently a mainstay of Vienna's Burgtheater) had previously played Thersites in Ernst von Wolzogen's Naturalist production of *Troilus and Cressida*. The German Shakespeare Yearbook's reviewer found that Heine's Shylock did not yet measure up to Possart's: "the inner old age, in which Shylock's soul, clinging immovably to Mammon, stinks, so to speak, in its decay, even in moments of the most unrestrained passion, failed to find full expression", but the reviewer felt that Heine's Shylock would improve with time.<sup>174</sup> The

following year, the reviewer found Heine taking this “vulpine character” seriously enough: “the few ridiculous sounds, which Herr Heine mixed into the fourth act, are defensible as natural sounds which characterize the Jew’s everyday manner”.<sup>175</sup>

### Other centres

Given Germany’s decentralized cultural landscape, and the strong tradition of some of the *Hoftheater* in the medium-sized and smaller states, any account of nineteenth-century German theatre needs to consider the principal theatres outside such centres as Berlin, Vienna or Munich.

Mannheim, in the relatively liberal South-West state of Baden, was home to one of the more distinguished *Hoftheater*, and one which had a strong Shakespeare tradition. Three of the most frequently played works on the Mannheim stage in the period 1779-1929 were by Shakespeare, including *The Merchant of Venice*, in nineteenth place (with 77 performances).<sup>176</sup> In the early 1880s, Mannheim had 30 Shakespeare plays in its repertoire, even ahead of Vienna’s Burgtheater.<sup>177</sup> Several well-known Shylocks had appeared in Mannheim, from Iffland (1783-1785), to Döring.<sup>178</sup>

By comparison with Mannheim, its Badenese sister city, the Grand Ducal residence of Karlsruhe, had been something of a theatrical backwater in the early nineteenth century, but was put on the map by Eduard Devrient, who was director of the Karlsruhe Court Theatre from 1852 to 1870. Devrient’s Shakespeare productions played no small part in this achievement, with a Shakespeare cycle in 1864-65 including twenty plays in ten months (including *The Merchant of Venice*, given twice).<sup>179</sup> His *Merchant of Venice* emphasized the “gay, opulent spirit of old Italy”, making the 5th Act the worthy culmination of the play’s comic mood. In Ernst Leopold Stahl’s words, Devrient’s interpretation was in contrast to the “more philosemitic Viennese-Berliner conception” of the play, reflecting instead medieval anti-Judaism, and rejecting a view of Shylock as a vengeful hero.<sup>180</sup> Devrient’s Shylock was Rudolph Lange, whose version of the role was praised for its humorous touches.<sup>181</sup> *The Merchant of Venice* increased in popularity at Devrient’s hands: although it was only the eighth most frequently performed Shakespeare play at Karlsruhe in the period 1810 to the end of 1871, box-office figures showed it to be the third most profitable Shakespeare play between 1853 and 1869, during which it played ten times.<sup>182</sup>

Dresden, the Saxon royal residence and so-called “Florence on the Elbe”, was another significant cultural centre. Dresden had a special place in the history of Shakespeare in Germany, thanks to the Romantic poet Ludwig Tieck’s period as dramaturg in Dresden, from 1820 to 1842. Tieck had been a collaborator in the great project of completing August Wilhelm Schlegel’s Shakespeare translation, and had a particular interest in the works of the Bard. During Tieck’s period in Dresden, *The Merchant of Venice* was the most frequently performed work by Shakespeare at the Dresden theatre, with 24 performances.<sup>183</sup> During the next two decades, the play continued to be performed just as regularly, remaining the most popular Shakespeare play up to 1860.<sup>184</sup> Dresden’s regular Shylocks in this period included Friedrich August Werdy (“capable if not brilliant”, according to Stahl); August Ludwig Quanter, a specialist in comic character parts, and a successful Malvolio; Karl Porth, and Bogumil Dawison, along with a number of guest appearances by other actors.<sup>185</sup> From 1861 to 1872, the *Merchant* continued to appear, on average, at least annually on the stage of Dresden’s Royal Court Theatre, with Shylocks including Döring and Lewinsky.

While Dresden was the home of the Saxon royal court and its theatre, Leipzig, the other main Saxon city, was a burgeoning commercial and industrial centre by the early 1870s, with a more robustly bourgeois civic culture. The Leipzig theatre, under the leadership of Friedrich Haase in the early 1870s, was more dependent on commercial considerations than the established court theatres of Mannheim, Karlsruhe, or Dresden. This may have encouraged a tendency to rely on the names of touring guest stars. From 1815 to mid-1871, Leipzig saw a procession of fourteen guest Shylocks, ranging from Ludwig Devrient to Dawison, and accounting for a total of 20 out of 53 performances of the play. The 53 performances, nearly an average of one a year, made *The Merchant of Venice* the third most popular Shakespeare play in Leipzig after *Hamlet* and *The Taming of the Shrew*.<sup>186</sup> The 1871-72 season saw a particularly popular run of *The Merchant*, with Friedrich Haase’s Shylock making nine appearances in the one season.<sup>187</sup> Haase directed a production which emulated Charles Kean’s in its emphasis on grandiose spectacle, elaborate sets and large crowd scenes. As in the case of Kean, critics suggested the emphasis on opulent production values served to compensate for the actor’s limitations and Haase may have overreached himself in being both director and the star actor.<sup>188</sup> In the commercial city of Leipzig, if the

frequency of performances is any guide, Haase's opulent *Merchant* seemed to meet the mood of the boom time, the *Gründerzeit*, of the newly founded Reich, despite the carping of Haase's critics.

The free Hanseatic city of Hamburg was another of Germany's major trading centres, with a growing commercial theatre scene. This led to an interesting legal wrangle over the vexed question of the genre to which *The Merchant of Venice* should be assigned. In 1858, the Thalia-Theater's attempt to stage the play as a benefit for the actor Heinrich Marr was thwarted by the authorities after a court ruled that the play was not a comedy (*Lustspiel*) but a drama (*Schauspiel*), and until 1862 the Thalia-Theater was only licensed to perform comedies.<sup>189</sup> The Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg soon established itself as a significant private theatre after its foundation in 1900, under the directorship of Alfred von Berger, whose Vienna Burgtheater pedigree came through in his productions, despite his transplantation to Northern Germany. The Deutsches Schauspielhaus had an ambitious repertoire with a strong emphasis on the classics, including *The Merchant of Venice*, with Rudolf Schildkraut as Shylock.<sup>190</sup> Schildkraut, a Jewish actor born in Braila in Romania, would make the role one of his greatest successes.

In Germany's banking and financial centre, Frankfurt am Main, *The Merchant of Venice* does not seem to have been especially popular, with no performances of the play being recorded by the Frankfurt Stadttheater from 1870/71 to 1872/73, while it chose eight other Shakespeare plays in those seasons.<sup>191</sup> After the stock-exchange crash of 1873, coincidentally or otherwise, the play came into the repertoire, from the 1873/74 season on.<sup>192</sup>

Long before it became a notable industrial centre, Düsseldorf had become a noted home of the Shakespeare tradition in Germany, thanks to the work of Karl Leberecht Immermann in the 1830s, who sought to emulate Goethe's directorship at the Weimar Court Theatre and to create an exemplary theatre out of a small provincial stage. Immermann brought a number of Shakespeare plays into the Düsseldorf repertoire during his time at the helm of the Düsseldorf Stadttheater, including *The Merchant of Venice*, which Immermann sought to present as a light comedy, in which the 4th Act should be kept relatively restrained so as not to spoil the harmonious serenity of Act V.<sup>193</sup> By 1905, Düsseldorf was a growing, prosperous industrial city, and could also support a major private theatre, the Schauspielhaus, under the direction of Louise Dumont and Gustav



Lindemann, which earnestly pronounced itself dedicated to serious artistic goals.<sup>194</sup> They inaugurated the Schauspielhaus with the then rarely-seen *Judith* by Friedrich Hebbel, with Dumont in the title role.<sup>195</sup> Dumont, a celebrated actress, and her partner Lindemann had previously tried to establish a theatre in Weimar, but had met strong opposition there, in part based on antisemitism on the basis of Lindemann's ancestry. Politically of liberal reformist sympathies, Dumont and Lindemann's friends and associates included the Jewish libertarian socialist Gustav Landauer, and they were also to meet with a degree of hostility from nationalists and antisemites in Düsseldorf.<sup>196</sup> The Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus production of *The Merchant of Venice* premièred on 10 September 1907, and totalled 39 performances until 1914/15.<sup>197</sup>

In Northern Germany, certain court theatres also continued to play their role in the maintenance of a German Shakespeare tradition. At Braunschweig, the practically minded theatre reformer August Klingemann had established the *Merchant* in the repertoire from an early date (Klingemann was active in Braunschweig as a theatre director 1814-1831), despite his belief that the play's construction was deficient – like many other directors, he truncated the 5th Act.<sup>198</sup> In the period 1860-1871/72, Braunschweig saw 9 performances of the *Merchant*, making it second only to *Othello* in popularity among Shakespeare plays (although sharing the second place with *Much Ado about Nothing*).<sup>199</sup> At the Grand Ducal Theatre of Oldenburg, the *Merchant* was also the second most popular Shakespeare play in the period between 1833 and 1872, with 24 performances (second only to *Taming of the Shrew*, although some of the productions of the latter were of the adaptation by Franz von Holbein under the name *Liebe kann alles*, which enjoyed widespread popularity).<sup>200</sup>

The world of the German-speaking theatre extended beyond the borders of Bismarck's Reich and the Habsburg Empire. For example, Riga, provincial capital of the province of Livonia in the Russian Empire, had a German-language theatre to cater for its German population (66,000 out of a total of 282,000 in 1897).<sup>201</sup> The Riga theatre had sufficient standing to attract a director of the calibre of Max Martersteig, who was also a theatre historian of some note, from Mannheim to serve as director in Riga from 1890 to 1896, and guests of the calibre of Friedrich Mitterwurzer, who played Shylock in Riga.<sup>202</sup> If Shakespeare had fallen a little into disuse in Riga before Martersteig, there had been some memorable performances of *The Merchant of*

*Venice* there in previous decades, with guest performances of Shylock from Döring and Dawson, as well as the travelling Afro-American actor Ira Aldridge, who also appeared in a number of performances of *Othello* in Riga. From 1837 to 1872, the *Merchant* had been the second most popular Shakespeare play after *Hamlet*, with 23 performances.<sup>203</sup>

### Naturalism

During the 1880s, German theatre started to come under the influence of foreign writers like Émile Zola and Henrik Ibsen. The concern of contemporary French and Scandinavian authors with social problems and the popularisation of scientific developments in areas such as heredity and psychology contributed to the formation of Naturalism as a literary movement in Germany, which was to achieve its breakthrough with Gerhart Hauptmann's social drama *Vor Sonnenaufgang* (*Before Dawn*) in 1889.<sup>204</sup> Naturalism's effects on theatre practice included more realism in matters such as set design, particularly more social realism in the depiction of the life of contemporary working people; a rejection of many genteel taboos about what could be shown on stage (state censorship permitting, of course); and a general striving for greater verisimilitude, including on the psychological plane. This meant a further move away from the virtuoso tradition: in addition to the Meiningers' emphasis on harmonious ensemble playing, Naturalist directors, such as Otto Brahm, expected actors to portray the characters rather than themselves.<sup>205</sup> Brahm (originally Abrahamsohn, from a Hamburg Jewish background) was principally committed to staging modern plays, somewhat to the detriment of the classics: the motiveless villainy of an Iago, for example, would no longer do, in the light of modern psychology, according to Brahm.<sup>206</sup> However, he did stage a performance of *The Merchant of Venice* in his first season as director of the Deutsches Theater in Berlin in 1894/95.<sup>207</sup> Brahm's Shylock was Emanuel Reicher, one of Berlin's foremost exponents of Naturalist acting, specializing in Ibsen's roles. Reicher was originally from "deepest Galicia", from Bochnia near Cracow, and the (Jewish) critic Julius Bab considered him an example of "the Jewish actor in his purest state", rooted in a still unassimilated Jewish cultural background.<sup>208</sup> As Shylock, Reicher was praised by the Naturalist critic Paul Schlenther for dispensing with "all the tragic coquetterie with which the character is otherwise decked out"; this Shylock conveyed hatred with his eyes. He made "discreet" use of "the humorous effect

of ghetto jargon”, and avoided overplaying lines like “For suff’rance is the badge of all our tribe” (Act I, Sc.3, l.105). Something of the Naturalists’ interest in medical phenomena comes through in Schlenther’s description of how Reicher, at the end of the courtroom scene, made a fainting Shylock look as if he were suddenly drained of blood.<sup>209</sup> The Naturalists valued psychological – and physiological – realism over pathos. Critics less well-disposed towards Naturalism complained that the “horrific” (*grausig*) side of Shylock failed to come through, for all Reicher’s efforts at linguistic and psychological nuance.<sup>210</sup>

The same emphasis on psychological factors, and the influence of social and historical conditions on the formation of character, that inspired Naturalism, can also be seen in a lengthy essay in the German Shakespeare Yearbook of 1882, “On the Character of Shylock”, by Dr. D. Honigmann. Honigmann sought to explain why Shylock’s conduct was psychologically plausible, given the character’s highly developed sense of justice, and the provocations to which he was subjected, and also sought to account for that strong sense of justice in terms of the vital importance of legal rights and privileges for the survival of medieval Jewish communities in Christian Europe. Honigmann showed an awareness of the contemporary context of discussions about Shylock in his conclusion, and especially of the shadow cast over the issue by the rise of antisemitism: Shakespeare, he wrote, had not been motivated by any hateful prejudice in writing *The Merchant of Venice*; this was a comforting thought, “at a time in which the idea of humanity without prejudice is confronted by so many new enemies with an old face, and old enemies with a new face, who should not be allowed the triumph of counting a genius like William Shakespeare among their like-minded comrades”.<sup>211</sup>

As German theatre entered the period of Naturalism, Friedrich Mitterwurzer, whose debut as Shylock at the Burgtheater in Vienna has already been mentioned, offered a version of Shylock which, while conforming outwardly to aspects of traditional stereotyped readings of Shylock, lent a degree of psychological depth to Shylock’s anger against his tormentors. Julius Bab characterized Mitterwurzer’s acting as entirely motivated by empathy with the psychology of his role: “every sound and every gesture came to him solely from the psychological processes of the creature in which he had lost himself, into which [...] he submerged himself to the point of becoming unrecognizable”.<sup>212</sup> In 1890, Richard Föllner described Mitterwurzer as

working with realistic means, while at the same time raising Shylock “out of the wretchedness and misery that was his inheritance to make of him an Old Testament hero”;

if the actor manages to express the speech and manners of the Venetian Jew very much in character, the derision of even the most frivolous mocker would freeze on his lips, as soon as he looked into these features furrowed by the pain of insults, and by greed and hatred.

Fellner stressed the force of Mitterwurzer’s characterization of a Shylock driven by “the sacred obligation of revenge”, and luxuriating in the “delights of hatred”.<sup>213</sup> As an example of the creativity of Mitterwurzer’s psychological approach, Fellner cited his actions when exclaiming after his desertion by Jessica: “I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear: would she were hears’d at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin” (Act III, Sc.1, lines 80-82):

[...] his greedy eyes seem to feast themselves on the gold, and his hands stretch out as if they wanted to dig the precious treasures out of the coffin; then his searching eye roves higher, and as if he had seen the face of the dead girl, a feeling of revulsion before the corpse suddenly passes over his countenance.

His conduct in the trial scene was a *tour de force*: he appeared as a ceremonially dressed nobleman, bejewelled and wearing silk robes. Gradually becoming irritated and impatient as Portia’s speech dragged on, he started involuntarily to finger the handle of his knife, while his face took on a sceptical, disbelieving expression: “he cannot grasp the concept of mercy”. Upon leaving the scene, Mitterwurzer invented a piece of stage business: he tore up the bond while looking at Antonio, “as if he were tearing his own heart in two”.<sup>214</sup> Mitterwurzer had made a study of the role, and argued that it should be played in “sharp and angular” fashion, representing both the “reality of the Jewish situation” and “the utter malice”, and the overpowering desire for revenge, that these conditions had created in him.<sup>215</sup> Williams sums up Mitterwurzer’s Shylock as “impressively morose and turbulently angry”, adding that his performance presented “a deeply pathetic, even tragic experience” within “a framework that ultimately devalues it”,

namely the mockery to which Shylock is exposed by the Christians.<sup>216</sup> Neither Simon Williams, in his account of Shakespeare on the German stage, nor John Gross, considers Mitterwurzer to have been personally antisemitic, particularly in view of Mitterwurzer's support for his Jewish pupil, Rudolf Schildkraut.<sup>217</sup>

One of the by-products of the affinity between Naturalism and ideas of social reform in the late nineteenth-century was the encounter between a group of Berlin writers sympathetic to Naturalism and a group of Berlin workers, members of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), who had formed a reading group, initially as a cover for clandestine meetings during the years of the ban on Socialist party activity. This encounter led to the founding of the Berlin Freie Volksbühne (Free People's Stage), which was intended to bring the best contemporary theatre to a working-class audience. The venture was to outlast the inevitable split between the coterie of non-party intellectuals and the Social Democratic party members.<sup>218</sup> *The Merchant of Venice* was performed for the largely working-class and Social Democratic audience of the Berlin Freie Volksbühne (at least some of whom had already expressed the desire to see "something by Shakespeare")<sup>219</sup> in 1897.

The Social Democratic party was to win over 2 million votes in the 1898 Reichstag elections, a figure which reached 4.25 million by 1912, making the SPD by far Germany's largest party in terms of voting strength (not to mention membership, which reached one million by 1914). The party, which included Karl Marx and Ferdinand Lassalle among its revered founders, and whose theorists and leaders included Eduard Bernstein, Rosa Luxemburg and the hugely popular Berlin member of parliament Paul Singer (all of Jewish descent, albeit non-practitioners of the Jewish faith), rejected antisemitism. No-one has yet managed to prove that the party's leader, the great people's tribune August Bebel, actually called antisemitism "the socialism of fools" (a phrase often attributed to him), but the term characterizes his rejection of antisemitism at the party's 1893 congress at Cologne accurately enough.<sup>220</sup> Bebel saw the rise of antisemitic parties in this period as a reactionary diversionary tactic, trying to deflect anti-capitalist resentment onto a minority group, one which was fully entitled to equal civil rights with other Germans.

The organizers of the Berlin Freie Volksbühne thus played down the antisemitic potential of *The Merchant of Venice* when they presented



4. Friedrich Mitterwurzer

the play to a largely Social Democratic audience, and stressed its broader anti-capitalist message. In the association's monthly journal, which doubled as a theatre programme, members were informed that both Antonio and Shylock were "typically different representatives of the power of capital, who here collide in mortal hostility to each other". Shylock, however, was also "the despised, downtrodden, spat-upon representative of the oppressed Jewish people. [...] For all his infamy, there is a glowing, healthy spirit of revolt in him". The end of the play (or rather, of Act IV, with the unjust treatment of Shylock) was found to be reminiscent of medieval brutality.<sup>221</sup> The Social Democrats sought to combine anti-capitalism and philo-semitism, or at least anti-antisemitism: the Christian capitalists were no better than the Jewish money-lender, who could at least attain some dignity in rebelling against bigotted persecution.

The actual performances for the Volksbühne were directed by Julius Türk, a founding member of the association who had pronounced theatrical ambitions of his own, and took place in the Belle-Alliance Theatre on Sunday afternoons with a cast borrowed from other companies: Gustav Kober as Shylock, from the commercial Theater des Westens, and Maria Holgers as Portia from the Deutsches Theater (where the regular Portia was the renowned Agnes Sorma). Türk himself took the part of Gratiano. The review in the Social Democratic party paper *Vormärts* began by outlining the two currently prevalent ways of playing the character of Shylock: as a "grotesque-comical monster", as had been common in the past, or a more "sentimental" approach to the character, seeing him as a "strong avenger", the latter approach having been made popular "by the efforts of notable German character actors of this century". While Kober's Shylock did not wholly give himself over to pathos, his performance had "moments of gripping tragic force", moments which were rewarded by thunderous applause from the full house: reviewers often commented on how responsive – if "naïve" – the largely working-class audience of the Volksbühne was.<sup>222</sup>

### **Reinhardt, Schildkraut and Bassermann**

By the end of the 1890s, Naturalism was on the wane, as far as literary production was concerned, with a turn towards bourgeois drawing-room plays and the neo-Romanticism of writers like Maeterlinck introducing a shift from social realism to an emphasis on fantasy, dream-worlds and the exotic. The turn of the century saw a number of

technical and artistic innovations affecting leading theatres: the revolving stage was coming into use, encouraging producers to break with heavy and elaborate fixed stage sets; there were attempts to break away from the conventional illusionistic “*Guckkastenbühne*” – the stage as three-sided box; and the overall artistic design of a production began to take on a new importance. Outside Germany, the theatrical reforms of Gordon Craig and the Moscow Art Theatre were under way. Within Germany, the most influential theatre practitioner of the early years of the new century was to be Max Reinhardt (originally named Goldmann), a Viennese migrant to Berlin.

Reinhardt had been brought to Berlin by Otto Brahm, who engaged him as an actor at the Deutsches Theater. In October 1894, Reinhardt played Tubal opposite Emanuel Reicher’s Shylock in Brahm’s production of *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>223</sup> By 1900, Reinhardt began to work as a director as well, giving up acting altogether for directing at the end of 1902. By 1905, Reinhardt was making a name for himself with his productions at the Deutsches Theater, noted for their innovative use of a revolving stage; carefully worked-out design concepts, integrating set and costume design within an overall artistic concept; and Reinhardt’s penchant for the spectacular.<sup>224</sup> His Shakespeare productions, including a dazzlingly successful *Midsummer Night’s Dream* in January 1905 earned him the reputation of being “the great rediscoverer [...] of Shakespeare for the modern German theatre”.<sup>225</sup> Reinhardt’s 1905 production of *The Merchant of Venice* at the Deutsches Theater sought to capitalize on the success of his previous Shakespeare production earlier that year; he was in serious need of a big commercial success, having just purchased the Deutsches Theater from Adolf L’Arronge for a very substantial sum.<sup>226</sup> Fortunately for Reinhardt, the production became one of the most celebrated theatre events of the period. Following its première on 9 November 1905, the production was able to celebrate its hundredth performance less than four months later, on 28 March 1906, reaching a total of 206 performances by the time it closed in 1911.<sup>227</sup> As Berlin became a great metropolis, runs of theatre productions could become longer, as theatres could draw on audiences from out-of-town, something Reinhardt was able to take advantage of, and which helped to make his elaborate productions with their large casts profitable.

Reinhardt’s 1905 *Merchant* initially drew most comment for its thoroughly choreographed crowd scenes, its elaborate sets, stage architecture and the innovative use it made of a revolving stage,



complemented by the set designs of Emil Orlik and music composed for the production by Engelbert Humperdinck. Reinhardt took the Meininger Theatre's leanings towards spectacle a large step further. Some critics considered Reinhardt's stage recreation of Venice the real star of the show: "the singing, humming city with its elegance and the effervescent joy of life", as Arthur Kahane characterized it.<sup>228</sup> Siegfried Jacobsohn wrote: "Venetian joy of life is the dominant tone, with Jewish sorrow only a dissonant note."<sup>229</sup> The Danish critic, Georg Brandes, wrote: "when the play was over, you had been in the fantastic Venice of the Middle Ages. The air was filled with its melodies. And while your ear caught them, colours and forms danced before your eyes [...]"<sup>230</sup> Reinhardt was later to have the opportunity, in 1934 and 1935, of taking his production to Venice, using the actual city as his backdrop. Critics then turned, however, to Rudolf Schildkraut's Shylock. The very fact that Schildkraut appeared in the production's première incidentally generated additional publicity for Reinhardt, in view of Schildkraut's much-reported continuing contractual dispute with his previous employer at the Hamburg Schauspielhaus, Baron Alfred von Berger.<sup>231</sup> The *Berliner Börsen-Courier* found ironical amusement in the idea that an actor who had just become notorious for breach of contract would play that "fanatic of the contract", Shylock.<sup>232</sup>

The *Vossische Zeitung* reported on Schildkraut's 1905 performance: "There stands and falls a man who is convinced, to his very marrow, that he only desires what is his right in his vengeance."<sup>233</sup> The *Vossische* praised the way in which Schildkraut realized "the inner development of the character", whose bitterness against Antonio is transformed by subsequent events – those surrounding Jessica's flight – into a more murderous rage: a Shylock whose desire for vengeance was shown to be psychologically plausible.<sup>234</sup> This reviewer saw Schildkraut's Shylock as the convincing embodiment of archetypal characteristics: "he presents the national Jew of days long since past in all his particular qualities and limitations, with a certain serenity which is the product of shame long endured".<sup>235</sup> In contrast to this interpretation, the writer Heinrich Hart, who had been close to the Social Democratic Freie Volksbühne in its early years, found that Schildkraut "emphasizes the human more than the specifically Jewish", going on to add: "This Shylock lends credibility to the view that Shakespeare basically had much sympathy for the oppressed, in so far as he could reveal it to his public". In Hart's view, *The Merchant of Venice* contained a "hidden

sermon for tolerance and humanity, which gains much in clarity through a performance such as Schildkraut's".<sup>236</sup> The Social Democrat Conrad Schmidt found Schildkraut's Shylock "humanly convincing in every moment".<sup>237</sup> For the *Berliner Tageblatt's* Fritz Engel, Schildkraut's was "the Shylock which we need today": a man whose natural inclination was to be mild-mannered, and who was ready to assimilate into gentile merchant society to the extent that adherence to his religion would permit. This was not a Shylock whose speech and gesture made him stand out in Venetian society – another reviewer made a point of stating that Schildkraut played the part "with almost none of the usual stage-accented *Jargon*", and the correspondent of the German Shakespeare Yearbook found that his "specifically Jewish" characteristics, as far as *Jargon* and gesticulating were concerned, were only deployed discreetly.<sup>238</sup> The *Berliner Börsen-Courier* found Schildkraut's Shylock "absolutely authentically (*urecht*) Jewish in every note and in every expression, but without outward *Gemauschel* or any streak of importunate caricature".<sup>239</sup> This only changes once he is provoked, and he is only driven to desperate measures through grief at his daughter's desertion of him.<sup>240</sup> For Gustav Landauer, Schildkraut was even able to make Shylock's lines wishing Jessica were dead, and his ducats returned to him, humanly understandable: in Schildkraut's version, all Shylock's losses combined into a single feeling of pain and grief.<sup>241</sup> For another observer:

Schildkraut imbued the character with an unspeakable melancholy, which was elemental compared with the ennui of Antonio. Injustice was round him like a shroud. It is no mere chance that this great actor created the most moving King Lear I have ever seen.<sup>242</sup>

For another, Schildkraut's exit at the end of the trial scene was reminiscent of Josef Lewinsky in its "representation, deeply moving in its simplicity, of the complete collapse of a strong personality".<sup>243</sup> Schildkraut's achievement as an actor won almost unanimous critical praise – the Shakespeare Yearbook called it "the result of literary schooling and finely calculating stage thought", although the right-wing *Deutsche Zeitung* took the opportunity to caution against the risk of "making this malicious, cunning and vengeful swindling Jew into a martyr, a speechifying defender of the human rights of the downtrodden".<sup>244</sup> The arch-conservative *Neue Preussische Zeitung* (the

“*Kreuzzeitung*”) deplored what it considered the contemporary habit of interpreting the play as if Shakespeare was “on the side of the Jews”, resulting in caricatures of the Venetians as shallow, amoral pleasure-seekers, and unnecessary idealization of the “avaricious Jew”. Such interpretations pursued the “political aim of saving Shakespeare for philo-Semitism”, supposedly at the expense of aesthetic considerations. But even the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* found favourable words for Schildkraut’s Shylock, their reviewer finding that Schildkraut managed to avoid both exaggeration and sentimentality.<sup>245</sup> Ernst Leopold Stahl dismissed Schildkraut’s Shylock as a “dark, dull ghetto patriarch”.<sup>246</sup>

Maximilian Harden, the editor of *Die Zukunft*, praised aspects of the production in the pages of his journal, although he felt that Schildkraut played down Shylock’s bloodlust too much. He found Schildkraut’s Shylock a “*Schachermauschel*”, a mere money-grubbing (Jewish) usurer, and not “a fellow who would rather take human flesh than money”.<sup>247</sup> He was “no hero and no monster”, but “a man who has become what he had to become”, yet for all the “good details” in the performance “the figure as a whole is too small, too much in the style of the rationalist bourgeois drama”, lacking any touch of the demonic.<sup>248</sup> On the eve of the première, Harden, whose assistance as a *Publizist* Reinhardt had enlisted, complained privately to his friend, the industrialist Walther Rathenau, that he feared that “Shylock is once more being played as a martyr to the mark of Cain; *pour plaire à la juiverie*”.<sup>249</sup> Rathenau, after visiting one of the final rehearsals, replied; “Your fear has been surpassed”, and also criticized Schildkraut for failing to express the demonic element in Shylock, playing him more like “a Jewish religious teacher who runs financial transactions on the side”.<sup>250</sup> But Harden was not surprised by the overwhelmingly positive reviews, including a “hymn to Schildkraut” in the newspapers the day after the première.<sup>251</sup> Harden’s comments indicate his somewhat cynical familiarity with the way in which Berlin’s newspapers could be manipulated, while both men’s comments reflected, perhaps, their reluctance as assimilated Jewish intellectuals to be co-opted into anything that might be construed as an overtly philosemitic demonstration.<sup>252</sup>

Reinhardt’s *Merchant of Venice*, with Schildkraut as Shylock, became the sensation of the season following its triumphant première. Schildkraut’s son Joseph wrote in retrospect (with perhaps forgivable hyperbole) that the production was “Max Reinhardt’s greatest gamble,



5. Rudolf Schildkraut in the 1911/12 season

Rudolf Schildkraut's greatest victory, and Berlin's baptism as an artistic center of European liberalism".<sup>253</sup> For the Polish-born Yiddish-language novelist Schalom Asch, visiting Berlin on the way to settle in Cologne, Reinhardt's *Merchant* and Schildkraut's performance made an "indescribable impression":

I thought I was transported into a fairy-tale land. The sky, the landscape, the trees on the stage, the merry, youthful and fresh girlish mischief, and then – Schildkraut as Shylock! A broad and upright Jew, who stands as firm as a pillar and demands justice. Only the naturalistic nuance of taking his knife to his mouth, bothered me a little. Needless to say, my imagination immediately conjured up all manner of visions – a play of mine on this stage, with Schildkraut in the main role! I wanted to go backstage, to thank Schildkraut.

Asch was thus inspired to write his play *Der Gott der Rache* (*The God of Vengeance*), which was in fact accepted for performance by Reinhardt in 1906, with Schildkraut performing in it.<sup>254</sup>

The influence of Reinhardt's production of *The Merchant of Venice* was magnified by its extensive touring: to Prague, Budapest, Vienna, Munich (at the Künstlertheater, 1910, with Schildkraut as Shylock), Bucharest, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and ultimately a performance "on location" in Venice itself, not to mention four return seasons in Berlin. In the twenty-five years from 1905 to 1930, *The Merchant of Venice* was the second most frequently played Shakespeare work (after *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) by the Deutsches Theater under Reinhardt (including performances for the Volksbühne and the Grosses Schauspielhaus), with a total of 363 performances.<sup>255</sup> The standard of the first season was not always maintained, however: Herbert Ihering found Ferdinand Bonn's Shylock in early 1911 a lamentably hammed-up rendition of the part.<sup>256</sup>

In 1913, the *Merchant of Venice* formed part of Reinhardt's Shakespeare cycle, which also included *Hamlet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear* and *Twelfth Night* – even critical contemporary observers considered Reinhardt's Shakespeare cycle to be both a great artistic success and a commercial success. Reviewers reported storms of applause at the première.<sup>257</sup> Rudolf Schildkraut alternated with Albert Bassermann, widely regarded as the leading German actor at the turn of the century, in the

role of Shylock in Reinhardt's 1913 production, which also included a charming Else Heims as Portia, Alexander Moissi as Gratiano, and Werner Krauss as Lancelot Gobbo. The Jewish theatre critic Julius Bab compared the two Shylocks in his admiring biography of Bassermann:

[...] if Schildkraut was the suffering Jew through and through, and the Jew whose suffering gave birth to a terrible vengeance, Bassermann was an almost grotesque and in any case a gruesome figure, whose imaginative verve is far more suited for the fantasy-like comedy, which is after all what Shakespeare created. While a human being does remain, in whom sorrow and anger strike a human note; this startled, gaunt fellow with the grey, bushy beard and the dangerously hooked nose nonetheless has something of the wolf from the fairy-tale. He was fierce – fierce and strong – and in the end did not collapse, as the sentimental Shylocks tend to do, but walked off with clenched fists, as dangerously threatening as ever.<sup>258</sup>

The *Berliner Tageblatt's* Fritz Engel also compared and contrasted Reinhardt's pair of Shylocks:

Schildkraut is at first tentative and softer, not a comedy Shylock, for that is an impossibility, but a Shylock who is not only a figure in a revenge tragedy. He still has some optimism in him and dignity, the "Jewish heart" is more pronounced, and one believes that this Shylock might perhaps live tolerably well with the others, if they would only let him. Bassermann, a male fury, who lacks only the fox-red beard to be the complete Shylock of Shakespeare's own era, is wholly and only a hater and avenger. He is [...] forever stung by adders, and ready to sting like an adder, the bearer of millenia of pain. Schildkraut's Shylock develops along with the action; Bassermann steps into the plot fully-formed; he could start sharpening the knife as early as the first act. Schildkraut engenders pity, Bassermann fear, and as certain as I am that Schildkraut's Shylock lends a measure of much-needed refinement to this play that trifles with all manner of cruelty, just as much do I bow before the grandiose picture that Bassermann presents.<sup>259</sup>

Another reviewer, Emil Faktor, was almost overwhelmed by Bassermann's acting: "the acting sensation of the evening", like a creature "crawled forth from some cave out of mythology", but also found it "the cruellest Shylock that ever was on the stage". Bassermann played a Shylock such as "probably no actually Jewish Shylock, inhibited by better knowledge of the psyche of a suffering people, could ever play".<sup>260</sup>

Bassermann came from a solid bourgeois family in Baden, and was a cousin of the prominent Liberal parliamentarian Ernst Bassermann. He was a tall actor with a trained athlete's physique and a particularly imposing physical presence, as suggested by Bab's description. For another Jewish witness, Hermann Sinsheimer, writing in England as a refugee from Nazism, the most notable feature of Bassermann's Shylock was the character's intellectual superiority over his adversaries.<sup>261</sup> The prominent critic Siegfried Jacobsohn described Bassermann's Shylock as "a giant of a fellow, [with] powerful hooked nose, hair sticking up, a wild grey beard, threateningly pointed eyebrows, a sorrowful mouth with clean-shaven upper lip, astoundingly deep eyes and noises like a beast of prey". (Photographs confirm the reports of Bassermann's outlandish appearance as Shylock, with extravagant, frizzy side-whiskers, long, staring eyes under beetle-like furry eyebrows, and skull-cap.) If Schildkraut's Shylock occasionally bordered on farcical in his Jewish mannerisms, Jacobsohn thought, Bassermann was "of bronze from start to finish".<sup>262</sup> No antisemite, in Jacobsohn's opinion, would dare to manhandle Bassermann's Shylock.<sup>263</sup>

There is an anecdote recorded about a guest performance of the "fully Aryan" Bassermann in the role of Shylock in Stockholm, in which the younger Jewish actor Ernst Deutsch played the role of Antonio. In the dress rehearsal, when Portia asked her (quite disingenuous) question: "Which is the merchant here? and which the Jew?" (Act IV, Sc.1, l.170), Deutsch interjected: "You may laugh! I'm the merchant", to the general hilarity of all present.<sup>264</sup>

### **Nathans and others**

Bassermann's classical roles also included Nathan in Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*, and it is interesting to compare and contrast his presentation of the two best-known Jewish male roles on the German stage.<sup>265</sup> Bassermann gave the often solemnly played Nathan an unusually light-hearted, comic touch for the production in Reinhardt's *Kammerspiele*,



6. Albert Bassermann, in the 1913 Deutsches Theater production of *The Merchant of Venice*



apparently not entirely successfully.<sup>266</sup> Both roles involved Bassermann playing the character role of an elderly Jewish father, with oriental dress, beard and Jewish facial appearance, but Nathan was as dignified and sympathetic a figure as Bassermann's Shylock was grotesque.

Perhaps not surprisingly, there was a long tradition of virtuoso character actors playing both Shylock and Nathan during their careers, and it is tempting to speculate how much an audience who saw an actor in one role was influenced by the memory of it when they saw him in the other. August Wilhelm Iffland played both Shylock and Nathan (in fact, he was Nathan more often than Shylock), as did Carl Seydelmann. Eduard Gans thought Iffland's Nathan was characterized chiefly by his self-conscious superiority over Christians and Muslims alike, while Seydelmann's Nathan was motivated most strongly by love for his daughter, Recha.<sup>267</sup> Critics concurred that Seydelmann's Nathan was marked by his finer feelings, his tenderness and nobility, but Karl Immermann quibbled that Seydelmann's interpretation failed to bring out more specifically "Jewish" characteristics.<sup>268</sup> Theodor Döring was not only a notably histrionic Shylock, he also played a Nathan that was described by one critic as unusual for the heartfelt human feeling conveyed by the performance, even if the same critic added that it was hard to keep suspending disbelief when one had seen Döring in a comic role the previous evening.<sup>269</sup> A common thread in critical discussions of Nathan was the sense among critics that there was a tension between the universal values of the play and the specifically Jewish identity of Nathan: a Nathan who was played with little resort to Jewish *Jargon* or mannerisms might be criticised for being insufficiently convincing as a Jew, while overtly "Jewish" presentations of Nathan might be queried for failing to give sufficient dignity to the play's universalistic Enlightenment ideals. Siegfried Jacobsohn took the view that only a Jewish actor could capture "the whole Nathan".<sup>270</sup> Jacobsohn found Bassermann, for example, unconvincing as Nathan: "He had never travelled through the desert with camels, never bought precious cloths and was really only summoned to Saladin to give an exemplary exposition of a parable". For Jacobsohn, Bassermann played a figure who could not have had the name Nathan, but who might have been called "something like Friedrich Christian Wilhelm". It was, Jacobsohn conceded, a dilemma: Nathan was a free-thinker and a cosmopolitan, so "too much of the stock Jew would not do", but for Nathan to be not Jewish at all was even worse.<sup>271</sup>

Despite his comic-grotesque reading of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, Ernst von Possart took a very different approach to *Nathan der Weise*, in which he enjoyed considerable success in the title-role. Both Shylock and Nathan belonged to his standing repertoire of roles for his numerous guest appearances on tour to theatres all over Germany.<sup>272</sup> He attributed a large part of this success to the quality of Lessing's text, and the power of Nathan's account of the persecution of the Jews to move an audience to tears.<sup>273</sup> However, even when he was just twenty-four, the press gave much of the credit to his acting in the role of Nathan, for his "sublime gentleness, with a dignity and calm that greatly added to our respect for this actor's considerable talent".<sup>274</sup> Critics even found a certain strength and manliness in Possart's Nathan that were often lacking in portrayals of the wise old man.<sup>275</sup> One indication that Possart was not personally prejudiced against Jews is the final chapter of his memoirs: a warm tribute to his friend the Munich Kapellmeister Hermann Levi, the son of a "venerable chief rabbi from Giessen".<sup>276</sup> A 1927 study of Possart's acting career noted that Possart appeared relatively frequently in Jewish roles – but these included comic caricatures: apart from Shylock and Nathan, he played the unprincipled journalist Schmock in Gustav Freytag's *Die Journalisten* (*The Journalists*), Rabbi Sichel in *Freund Fritz*, and the "lottery collector and corn-surgeon Hirsch", in a comedy by A. Mels.<sup>277</sup> Like Possart, Ludwig Wüllner, another widely travelled virtuoso, included both Shylock and Nathan in his staple repertoire.<sup>278</sup>

Another virtuoso whose version of Nathan toured German theatres was Adolf Sonnenthal, an actor of Jewish Hungarian descent who rose to be one of the stars of the Burgtheater. Sonnenthal took to the role of Nathan in his sixties. His depiction emphasized less the character's patriarchal wisdom than his good-heartedness, and he seems to have added a patina of Viennese charm, aristocratic worldliness and Burgtheater suavity to the role.<sup>279</sup> A reviewer wrote: "Sonnenthal and Nathan have met each other half-way, and what Nathan has set aside in wisdom in this encounter, Sonnenthal has effusively repaid with emotion".<sup>280</sup> Viennese theatre-goers were wont to compare Sonnenthal's Nathan with the interpretation of the role by Josef Lewinsky, whose Nathan remained grounded in the practical commonsense of a simple merchant, giving rise to the comment: "Lewinsky played Nathan the Wise, Sonnenthal played Nathan the Good-natured".<sup>281</sup> For Heinrich Stümcke, reporting on Sonnenthal's

triumph as Nathan in Berlin in 1902: "The fundamental tone of his performance is the genuine, overflowing goodness, the mild-tempered wisdom of the royal merchant and philosopher, for whom nothing human has remained alien." His performance was free of "anything rabbinical", indulgence in Talmudic dialectics, or excessive gesticulation.<sup>282</sup> Sonnenthal's other guest performances as Nathan included an appearance for the festival production of the Rheinische Goethe-Verein in Düsseldorf's Stadttheater in 1901. The performance was a great success, and the Viennese guest was crowned with a laurel wreath at its end. However, while the Prussian and Imperial Crown Prince attended the preceding performance in the Düsseldorf cycle of classical plays, Kleist's *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, a play whose central theme is obedience to one's king and commander, he is not recorded as staying for Nathan.<sup>283</sup> It was said that at the time of Sonnenthal's death in Prague in 1909, he had been studying the role of Shylock with the intention of playing the Jew as an upright and wronged "tragic hero seeking naught but what was his by right".<sup>284</sup>

While Shylock and Nathan could be viewed as antipodes in ideological terms, the actors playing them often represented the same *Fach*, or role type: elderly father. They even had certain characteristics in common: both were capitalists, both were widowers, and both were fathers of daughters who marry Christians. Elderly, dressed in caftans, and widowed, neither Shylock nor Nathan threatened theatrical stereotypes which denied strongly masculine roles to Jewish characters. However, from today's vantage point, it is easy to overstate criticism of *Nathan*, as with philosemitic efforts in German culture in general. If philosemitism failed to free itself fully from the limitations of conventional, stereotypical views of Jewishness, its representatives sought to counter the more directly harmful manifestations of antisemitic prejudice. Despite its limitations, *Nathan der Weise* was counted at the time as a potential asset by German Jews faced with the emergence of antisemitism. In 1881, as noted by George Mosse, "some leaders of the Jewish community called for subscriptions to a Lessing monument in order to remind Germans of the tradition of the Enlightenment and counter the growing fanaticism of the times".<sup>285</sup> Mosse even described *Nathan der Weise* as the "Magna Charta of German Jewry", with its popularization of the promises of Enlightenment and *Bildung*.<sup>286</sup> Conversely, *Nathan der Weise* constituted a standing provocation to antisemites. Shortly after a fire in Vienna's Burgtheater in December 1881 killed 400 people, Richard Wagner

“joked” to his wife Cosima that “all Jews should be burned in a performance of *Nathan*”.<sup>287</sup>

There were, of course, other Jewish roles apart from Shylock and Nathan. For example, in December 1904, Max Reinhardt’s production of Richard Beer-Hofmann’s *Der Graf von Charolais*, featured Reinhardt himself in the Shylock-like part of “*der rote Itzig*”, who enjoyed great success, especially with a set-piece philosemantic speech.<sup>288</sup> However, there were few other strong male Jewish roles available. There were, however, strong Jewish female roles: the heroines of the Old Testament, for example. Female lead roles for Jewish characters could also be sexy: the female romantic lead might play a Jewish character, even if the male romantic lead never did. The unspoken taboo was on the Jewish male as sexual protagonist, while female sensuality could be accommodated within the stereotypes about the Orient being associated with the feminine and the sensual.

Thus, for example, Franz Grillparzer’s *Die Jüdin von Toledo* (*The Jewess of Toledo*), which premièred in Prague in November 1872 and was performed by Vienna’s Burgtheater two months later, with Charlotte Wolter in the title role, presented a female protagonist whose chief characteristic was sensuality, even if she was considered to lack “depth or spiritual nobility”.<sup>289</sup> Grillparzer’s hot-blooded Jewess Rahel awakened dangerous passions in King Alfonso of Castile, causing him to forget his royal duties. Wolter, an actress of mature years who specialized in tragic roles, was generally considered miscast as the capricious and seductive young Rahel. Adolf Sonnenthal, as the King, saved the production, but it was retired after seven performances.<sup>290</sup> *Die Jüdin von Toledo* enjoyed greater success in Berlin, at the Deutsches Theater, in 1888, with Josef Kainz as the King and Agnes Sorma as Rahel, “in splendid costumes and brownish tint as a beautiful Jewess [...]. This beautiful, wild, moody, much-desired, even possessive, Rahel”.<sup>291</sup> After this success in Berlin, *Die Jüdin von Toledo* became a regular, and successful, item in the repertoire of German theatres in the decade from 1899/1900 to 1910.<sup>292</sup> The Jewess in Kainz’s 1888 Viennese appearance in the play was Babette Reinhold, whom a critic described as fulfilling all the requirements of the role: “realistic and a fairy-tale figure at the same time, less a spoilt, stubborn child than the precocious but never adult, simultaneously without artifice and coquettish, Oriental child-woman, a being halfway between the primitive and the refined, playful, pampered, dallying and prattling, without any intellectual counterweight given over entirely to the

impulses of her senses...”: a creature dominated entirely by instincts, with “an almost animal play instinct”.<sup>293</sup> In other words, Rahel was less a person than a fantasy figure of female sexuality whose exotic origins allowed an audience to imagine her as free from conventional bourgeois restraints.

The new Burgtheater building in 1888 was inaugurated with a performance of another Grillparzer play, his unfinished work *Esther*.<sup>294</sup> *Esther* had already been performed at the Burgtheater under Laube, having been first performed at Vienna’s Operntheater as a two-act drama (1867-1868 season). Laube described Esther as “a Jewess, natural, clever, almost wise” and “good and lovable”, as was the King. Laube’s production of the love story, with Adolf Sonnenthal as the King, and Friederike Bogner as Esther, was a great success.<sup>295</sup> It has been suggested that Grillparzer had initially abandoned *Esther* in 1840 because he feared difficulties with the notorious Austrian censorship.<sup>296</sup> That plays with (sympathetically treated) Jewish subjects could experience difficulties on the Austrian stage in Grillparzer’s day is confirmed by Laube’s struggle with the authorities when he wished to put Mosenthal’s *Deborah*, which portrayed “a heroic Jewess in conflict with social prejudices”, on at the Burgtheater. “A Jew play!”, Graf Dietrichstein objected. Laube pointed out that the Burgtheater performed plenty of plays with Moorish characters, to which the count replied that the Jewish question was much “closer to home” than the decline of the Moors in Spain. Once *Deborah* was permitted (in 1864), however, it became a success with the public.<sup>297</sup>

Outside Vienna, the Meiningen production of *Esther* once featured a young Hedwig Dohm in the title role, an actress of Jewish descent, remembered by Max Grube for her “charming tone, her fine oriental beauty, and her wonderful eyes”.<sup>298</sup>

Along with Grillparzer, Friedrich Hebbel also wrote works based on biblical stories, which featured strong Jewish female roles, such as *Judith* or *Herodes und Mariamme*, based on a story in Josephus. (He also wrote the grossly antisemitic comedy *Der Diamant*, *The Diamond*.) One of the most famous Judiths was Tilla Durieux, in Max Reinhardt’s production, a role in which she was praised for portraying “all the passion of the strong woman”. Durieux’s Judith traced the development of the character from an innocent young girl to a woman increasingly aware of the power of her sexuality.<sup>299</sup> Lion Feuchtwanger considered that Durieux’s “strong sexual qualities” might easily have misled her into playing Judith as a Salome writ large, had she not

cleverly modulated the performance before the climax.<sup>300</sup> With her exotic, elf-like beauty, Durieux was in fact also a celebrated Salome. Durieux's scanty costume in the role was widely imitated by a veritable wave of Salomes, both in the Oscar Wilde play and the Strauss opera version.<sup>301</sup> Apart from Durieux, they included Gertrud Eysoldt, who was said to specialize in "mysteriously murderous creatures, full of demonic sexuality".<sup>302</sup> She was an early Lulu in Wedekind's *Erdegeist* (*Earth Spirit*).

The seductive exoticism of such characters had a strong appeal as *Jugendstil*, Germany's art nouveau, came into vogue. There were hostile reactions against this, of course. The Catholic magazine *Hochland* lamented the lifting of the police ban on performances of Wilde's *Salome*: "The German people will thus have the good fortune to see this thoroughly sick and perverted play of an at best sick, if not criminal, writer go through countless performances".<sup>303</sup> When Hugo von Hofmannsthal's version of *Elektra* appeared, *Hochland* once again deplored "the perversities of the Jewish maid Salome and the Jewified Elektra".<sup>304</sup>

The popularity of exotic and orientalist subjects also coincided with the German Empire's growing interest in both the Near and the Far East. The scholarly discoveries and treasure-hunting expeditions of the imperialist age of German archaeology furnished theatres with the visual data with which to recreate opulent oriental palaces and temples, and equally rich costumes. Plays on biblical themes did require a certain dignity, which necessitated some restraint in the portrayal of Jewish characters: *Die Schaubühne* observed, commenting on Reinhardt's production of *Judith* with Durieux (and with Joseph Schildkraut as Daniel), that: "it is, of course, wrong to get the people of Bethulia to act the Jew [*jüdeln*] too much", although some talking with one's hands contributed to the sense of "national authenticity".<sup>305</sup>

By the *fin de siècle*, the association of Jewishness with femininity – the opposition of the strong and healthy Aryan male to the feminine, the Jewish and the unhealthy or the decadent, was becoming a staple of German and Austrian culture, as can be seen in the runaway publishing success of Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character* (1903). On the stage, more or less neutered male Jewish characters coexisted with the female stereotype of the *belle juive*, a dangerous seductress, who represented a threat to the non-Jewish male (both Salome and Judith decapitate men).<sup>306</sup>

The Viennese Jewish playwright Arthur Schnitzler gave the German-language theatre a fully realized Jewish protagonist free from stereotyping in his 1912 “ironic comedy” *Professor Bernhardi*, which centred around the plight of an assimilated and secularized Jewish doctor who refuses a priest access to a mortally ill patient (she is in a euphoric state, unaware of her imminent death, and Bernhardi does not wish to take away her last moment of happiness). Bernhardi then becomes attacked on all sides by clericals and antisemites, but is too high-minded (and stubborn) to defend himself successfully against them.<sup>307</sup> Having been banned in Vienna, where it was not performed until December 1918, *Professor Bernhardi* premièred in the Kleines Theater in November 1912 under Viktor Barnowsky’s direction, with the Leipzig-based actor Bruno Decarli in the title role.<sup>308</sup>

Traditional Jewish stereotypes persisted, however. For example, in 1916, Hermann Sudermann’s play, *Die gut geschnittene Ecke* (*The Nice Corner Block*), which dealt with frustrated artistic idealism in the face of moral and aesthetic corruption and real estate speculation in pre-1914 Berlin, had its wartime première in the Lessing-Theater. The play’s cast includes an amoral, mercenary Jewish journalist, Jeiteles, described as a bow-legged little man, but clever, whose *Mauscheln* is accompanied by gesticulating hands and feet. Jeiteles was one of the many descendants of the character Schmock in Gustav Freytag’s 1854 comedy *Die Journalisten*. Schmock’s name became a byword for the venal Jewish “press reptile”.<sup>309</sup> Sudermann had once been a leading Naturalist playwright, whose socially critical plays had aroused the ire of the Berlin Police President in the early 1890s. By the outbreak of the First World War, however, he had become a conservative and nationalistically chauvinist writer.

### **Shylocks across the Reich, 1900-1914**

Richard S. Levy has traced the decline in the fortunes of political antisemitism in Germany after the mid-1890s, a period in which economic conditions improved, and naval expansion and patriotic agitation rallied support for pro-government parties. Despite a temporary recovery in the Reichstag elections of 1907, the demagogic antisemitic parties, increasingly leaderless, disorganized and slow to adapt to changing political conditions, experienced a collapse in support by the time of the 1912 election. More significantly, they failed to achieve their objective of reversing Jewish emancipation.<sup>310</sup> During this period, however, antisemitism was absorbed into the

mainstream of German conservative politics (while it was a major force in Austria). The Conservative Party had adopted an explicitly antisemitic programme in 1892,<sup>311</sup> and the student fraternities in which Germany's professional elites experienced a crucial part of their process of socialization increasingly came under the influence of antisemitic ideas. (Again, antisemitism in Austria was even more pronounced, with right-wing, *deutschnational* student corporations adopting a resolution in 1896 that pronounced Jews incapable of meeting the requirements of the code of honour governing duelling.)<sup>312</sup>

After being the most frequently performed Shakespeare play in 1891, *The Merchant of Venice* spent most of the 1890s at fourth or fifth place. The play regained popularity in 1902, moving to second-most often staged Shakespeare play, and was the third most often performed from 1902 to 1904. In 1905, the *Merchant* was played 151 times by 57 theatres, including 38 performances by Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater, Berlin, making the *Merchant* the most popular Shakespeare play after *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which had been staged by only 40 companies, but which had enjoyed a run of 221 performances in Reinhardt's production. In 1906, Reinhardt lifted *The Merchant of Venice* to first place in the statistics of Shakespeare performances: of the 319 performances staged by 73 companies, the Deutsches Theater alone put on 138 performances of the play. This made 1906 the year in which the most performances of *The Merchant of Venice* ever took place. From 1907 to 1914, no doubt partly thanks to Reinhardt's influence, *The Merchant of Venice* remained popular on German stages, remaining the second most popular Shakespeare play every year except 1909 and 1910 (when it was third and fourth most popular respectively).<sup>313</sup> Across Germany and Austria (and including some German-language theatres outside these countries), the decade 1911-1920 saw a total of 1,242 performances of *The Merchant of Venice*, second in popularity among Shakespeare's plays only to *Hamlet* (1,374 performances).<sup>314</sup>

While major metropolitan theatres like Max Reinhardt's were influential, securing extensive nation-wide press coverage for their big productions, many productions of *The Merchant of Venice* were still put on by small provincial theatres all over the Reich. As the quality of productions in Berlin and other centres, such as Munich and Dresden improved, the backwardness and conservatism of smaller provincial theatres became more and more palpable.<sup>315</sup> Theatres with royal



patronage were far from immune to this perception, especially as Berlin's court theatre increasingly fell behind its competitors. The May Festspiele in Wiesbaden's Royal Theatre, attended by Kaiser Wilhelm II, put on a heavily historicist production of *The Merchant of Venice* with sets by the Viennese painter F.A. Rottonara, which was condemned by the critics as fossilized *Meiningeri*. In keeping with the personal aesthetic preferences of the Kaiser, most of the production's effort went into outwardly opulent sets and the slavish reproduction of historical detail in the sets.<sup>316</sup> The character of Shylock at the Kaiser's Hoftheater in Berlin was played by Max Pohl as a creeping rogue with exaggerated Jewish characteristics, including stage Yiddish speech ("Eastern *jargon*"), a completely alien figure, for whom the audience could feel no sympathy. Overdoing Jewish roles with "humorously" exaggerated Jewish speech and mannerisms seems to have been Pohl's stock in trade, and it was generally well received among the Hoftheater's audience.<sup>317</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century, as now, many people had their first, and often only, experience of Shakespeare at school. *The Merchant of Venice* was reckoned one of the three most frequently studied Shakespeare plays set as school texts, along with *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*.<sup>318</sup> It was also considered to be the most commonly read Shakespeare play in girls' schools: partly because the history plays and tragedies were seen as too weighty for girls' schools, while the romantic comedy in *The Merchant* was deemed more appropriate. However, the "victory of feminine mother-wit" and the figure of Portia were also seen as contributing to the play's appeal to young women. As German women started to enter the professions and the universities from the 1890s on, the character of Portia, who successfully infiltrates the male-dominated legal profession, had perhaps a special topical significance.<sup>319</sup>

### Wartime

The First World War was proclaimed by the economic and social theorist Werner Sombart (who was becoming increasingly antisemitic in his views) to be a struggle between English shopkeepers and German heroes (*Händler und Helden*).<sup>320</sup> The war represented a potential crisis for the community of Shakespeare's admirers in Germany, however the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft proved equal to the challenge, at least rhetorically. The society's annual report for 1914/15 included an extract from a letter from one of the members of the

executive, Professor Hans Hecht (now in the uniform of an *Oberleutnant* and battery commander with the 63<sup>rd</sup> Field Artillery Regiment). Reflecting on the meaning of the fact that Germany had “no more bitter foe than the descendants of our poet”, indeed, he went on, “we feel that in this war our armies truly hate only *one* enemy: the English”, and yet, the German friends of Shakespeare continue to celebrate him, with undiminished devotion. For Hecht, in an age of short-sighted and dishonourable English foreign policy, Shakespeare had become “in the higher and highest sense ours”. Germans were the true heirs of Shakespeare, whose countrymen had shown themselves willing to betray their German racial cousins for the sake of material profit. In 1914, “the year of the triumph of the German spirit”, Shakespeare was declared to be on the side of German heroes rather than that of English merchants.<sup>321</sup> Germany’s most distinguished living playwright, Gerhart Hauptmann, was also enlisted for the cultural war effort, giving an address to the society on “Germany and Shakespeare”, which concluded:

No people, not even the English, have the same right to Shakespeare as that which the German people have won. Shakespeare’s characters are a part of our world, his soul has become one with ours: even if he was born and buried in England, Germany is thus the country in which he is truly alive.<sup>322</sup>

In a similar vein, the critic Herbert Ihering wrote in September 1914:

The poet who most splendidly expresses the spirit of these days is Shakespeare. He is no Englishman. It is no foreign indulgence when we perform him. It is national pride to present the dramatist whom we have won for ourselves, and to show now of all times that he belongs to us.<sup>323</sup>

In keeping with the tone of the rhetoric of 1914, the German Shakespeare Yearbook contained reflections on *The Merchant of Venice* which claimed to reconstruct not only the sources used by Shakespeare for the plot of the play, but also to show that Shakespeare’s own attitude to the “grotesque figure” of the Jewish merchant was unambiguously negative, “even if some commentators and some actors have falsified the unequivocal meaning of the drama

through the importation into it of modern-liberal tendencies and have ascribed humanly touching characteristics to the hard-hearted usurer".<sup>324</sup>

Although German Jews, on the whole, participated no less enthusiastically in the patriotic "Spirit of 1914" as their Gentile compatriots, the war years in Germany saw a rise in antisemitism, despite official discouragement, in the interests of domestic harmony, of public expressions of antisemitism. Under wartime conditions, authoritarianism, xenophobia, and suspicion of potential "enemies within" gave assistance to the antisemitic German Right, and antisemitism manifested itself in episodes such as the army's inflammatory census of Jews in the armed forces in 1916.<sup>325</sup> The advances in emancipation, toleration and attainment of equal rights for German Jews before 1914 were looking increasingly fragile.

Despite the valiant efforts of Germany's intellectual and cultural élite to enlist Shakespeare in the war for German *Kultur*, the number of performances of Shakespeare's plays declined during the first half of the war. The German Shakespeare Yearbook registered 1,133 Shakespeare performances by 190 theatres in 1913, 983 performances by 155 theatres in 1914, and 675 performances by 94 theatres in 1915. 1916 saw a recovery, with 1,179 performances by 108 theatres, some of which chose to mark the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death in 1616 by staging his works, followed by 990 performances by 123 theatres in 1917, and 1035 performances by 280 theatres in 1918.<sup>326</sup>

One could speculate on the reasons for the decline in performance figures for the first two war years, before the partly anniversary-driven recovery: perhaps a combination of wartime austerity (Shakespeare plays with their large casts were expensive to stage) and anti-English sentiment, despite the ostensible naturalization of the Bard in Germany? However, austerity cannot have been decisive in this case, as performance figures improved while economic conditions worsened in the second half of the war. It seems most likely that Shakespeare was simply crowded out by the wave of patriotic and martial dramas that followed the outbreak of the war. The same outpouring of patriotic exaltation among Germany's middle classes that led to an estimated one and a half million poems on the war being written and sent to newspapers in August 1914 alone (according to the estimate of the drama critic Julius Bab),<sup>327</sup> also led to a rash of patriotic and warlike plays on the stages of German theatres, which had briefly closed after the war began. Some 86 plays were composed on the

theme of the “Spirit of 1914”, and not only were they written, they were also performed: 45 such plays were performed in Berlin (out of a total of 72 productions) from September to December 1914, including works such as *Mobilization. A Festival Play from a Serious Time*, *The First of August*, *The Franc-Tireur* and *Vorwärts mit Gott*.<sup>328</sup> The rash of patriotic and warlike productions was by no means confined to the Reich capital. In Trier, for example, where the town theatre was designated “Home Front Theatre of the VIII Army Corps”, titles such as *The Holy War*, *The Night of St. Quentin*, and *German Loyalty* initially dominated the wartime programme.<sup>329</sup> As the euphoria of August dissipated and the public became more aware of the realities of the Great War, the enthusiasm for such fare ebbed away, with the vogue for these plays passing away by early 1915.<sup>330</sup>

Max Reinhardt, whose ensemble started to lose members with the outbreak of war, with men being called-up or volunteering for military service,<sup>331</sup> was not exempt from the trend towards patriotic programming, selecting Heinrich von Kleist’s *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* to open his 1914-15 season, and following it with Gutzkow’s *Zopf und Schwert*, before tentatively returning to his usual repertoire, and Shakespeare.<sup>332</sup> Reinhardt marked the Shakespeare tercentenary in 1916 with a Shakespeare cycle of nine plays, and also took his Shakespeare repertoire (including his production of *The Merchant of Venice*) to the imposing and capacious new theatre of the Volksbühne on the Bülowplatz, which Reinhardt leased and directed from 1915 to 1918. The 24 performances of *The Merchant* in the Volksbühne in 1915 helped to make the play the most frequently performed work by Shakespeare on German stages that year, although it dropped to sixth place in 1916 and seventh in 1917.<sup>333</sup>

The Viennese theatres also marked the Shakespeare tercentenary with productions of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1916. In the Burgtheater, Ludwig Wüllner gave an unusually solemn rendition of Shylock. Having recently played Nathan the Wise, there were “reminiscences” of that character, and of Rembrandt’s portraits of Jews, in his initially rather “contemplative” Shylock. Only with some effort, after Jessica’s flight, did his performance take on a more forceful and vigorous aspect.<sup>334</sup> In Vienna’s Deutsches Volkstheater, Fritz Kortner, a young actor of Viennese Jewish descent who was to become one of the great Shylocks of the 1920s, had to play the role after only one rehearsal: a critic found Kortner a “genuine acting talent”, but in need of more

modulation, noting how Kortner started off with only “discreetly-accented *Jargon*”, but ended up yelling too much.<sup>335</sup>

In the 1918 revival of Reinhardt’s *Merchant*, Shylock was played by Alexander Moissi, one of the more exotic figures of the German theatre at that time, of mixed Albanian-Italian descent, and an actor who was either praised for his almost “feminine” sensitivity or derided as epicene and lacking manliness. The Viennese critic Alfred Polgar thought that “Moissi’s body and face are the most supple of instruments for the music of the soul”.<sup>336</sup> Moissi had been a hyperactive, potentially scene-stealing Gratiano in Reinhardt’s 1913 *Merchant*.<sup>337</sup> The 1918 production’s run opened in the Deutsches Theater on 8 November 1918, literally on the eve of the end of the German Empire.<sup>338</sup> At the same time, in Vienna, also on the eve of the revolution that brought down the house of Habsburg, Rudolf Schildkraut was playing Shylock as a “tragic monster” in the Vienna Volksbühne.<sup>339</sup> The Berlin critic Herbert Ihering, who found Moissi’s Shylock an interesting “experiment” but a little too caught up in superficiality, commented on that evening’s performance: “It was uncanny to experience [Moissi’s] voluptuous sing-song voice and this performance as the finale of an aesthetically Romantic theatre on the eve of revolution”.<sup>340</sup> For Siegfried Jacobsohn, Moissi’s Shylock was proof of how much Reinhardt’s style of theatre was rooted in the departing *ancien régime* and its well-fed bourgeoisie. Now, “theatre as an end in itself is finished for a few decades”.<sup>341</sup>

## MERCHANTS OF WEIMAR

### New beginnings

The abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II on 9 November 1918, and the departure of the other crowned heads of the German states, left Germany a republic. With the Republic came a reorganisation of the German theatre landscape. Of twenty-six royal and ducal or grand-ducal court theatres, twenty became state or provincial theatres (*Staats- or Landestheater*), while five joined the existing *Stadttheater* under the administration of municipal authorities.<sup>1</sup> This was a difficult and often fraught process, with theatres subject not only to the political uncertainties of the revolutionary period from November 1918 to January 1919, but also to continuing disputes over property rights. A similar process occurred in the new Austrian republic, where the *Kaiserlich-königliches Hofburgtheater* became simply the *Burgtheater*. Postwar heating fuel shortages forced Austrian theatres to close temporarily, then to cut back on performances in the winter of 1918-1919, and adverse economic conditions would hamper Viennese theatres into the early 1920s.<sup>2</sup>

In Berlin, the revolution temporarily stopped performances in the Royal Theatre and Opera. Unrest in the streets and the temporary occupation of the buildings by revolutionary soldiers and workers caused the cancellation of Schiller's *Die Räuber* (*The Robbers*) and *The Marriage of Figaro* on 9 November 1918. Political unrest continued to cause occasional disruption to the theatre, soon to be renamed the Prussian State Theatre, into 1919.<sup>3</sup> In Düsseldorf, the direction of the private *Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus* under Louise Dumont and Gustav Lindemann had to fend off a challenge to their authority from the local workers' council, with employees raising claims concerning the right to determine programme and casting, as well as more

narrowly defined employment issues. The conflict lasted three months, before Lindemann and Dumont were able to resume control.<sup>4</sup> At other theatres, such as Essen, there was also conflict between *Intendanten* (director-managers) and local workers' councils.<sup>5</sup>

From January 1919, the National Assembly used the house of Weimar's National Theatre, far from the turmoil of revolutionary Berlin, to deliberate over the constitution of the new republic. The National Theatre had previously been the Grand Ducal Court Theatre, and was now under new management after the ousting of the previous director Carl von Schirach, who was too closely identified with the dethroned Grand Duke.<sup>6</sup> (Schirach was, however, to remain active in Weimar's cultural politics, for example through his membership of the executive of the German Shakespeare Society. He polemicized persistently against Ernst Hardt, his successor, and demanded that "alien racial elements should be swept out [of all German theatres] with an iron broom".)<sup>7</sup> Perhaps some of the founders of the Weimar Republic hoped that some of the cultural prestige of the setting, Goethe's former workplace, would rub off onto the new constitution (even if Goethe's old theatre building had been replaced by a new structure a decade earlier). The deliberations of the National Assembly forced the cancellation of the annual general meeting of the German Shakespeare Society, which had been planned to take place in those surroundings, under the patronage of the Grand Duke.

The republic's liberal constitution nurtured hopes for equal civil rights for all citizens – Article 109 stated that all Germans were equal before the law, and Articles 135 to 141 guaranteed religious liberty and equality of all religious bodies in the eyes of the state, but the prominent participation of many individuals of Jewish descent in the politics of the republic met with a virulent right-wing antisemitic backlash in the first few years of the republic. Not only were left-wing revolutionaries like Rosa Luxemburg, Gustav Landauer or Kurt Eisner murdered by counter-revolutionary troops, the organizer of the war economy and republican foreign minister, Walter Rathenau, was also murdered by far-right wing assassins in 1922.

The revolution of 1918-19 did not just change the nomenclature of Germany's foremost public theatres, it also opened up the state theatres to the revolution in German theatre that was developing during the First World War, particularly in the form of expressionism. Although expressionism had already developed as a distinctive direction in painting and poetry (and had perhaps even reached its

apogee in these art forms) before 1914, and pioneering expressionist productions like Reinhard Sorge's *Der Bettler* (*The Beggar*, at Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater, 1917) had already taken place in leading private theatres during the war, the more collective and performance-dependent art-form of theatre needed more time, and changed conditions, before the avant-garde wave of expressionist drama could reach the major public theatres. Although the techniques and style of expressionist theatre, as with Naturalism before it, were originally practised chiefly in the works of the proponents of the new avant-garde tendency, like Sorge, Walter Hasenclever, Georg Kaiser, and Ernst Toller, it also came to affect the way the classics were staged. Freed from the dead hand of "more or less educated, mainly ex-military courtiers" (in John Willett's perhaps slightly unkind words),<sup>8</sup> the former court theatres, among others, became open to all manner of experimentation under their new directors. The Berlin critic Herbert Ihering wrote: "The theatre only needed to be relieved of the pressures of war, and plays and productions came sizzling out of it. Everything that had been accumulating in the censor's cupboard now shot up like a cloud of steam when the valve is opened."<sup>9</sup> The triumph of the new, avant-garde modernist theatre on the major stages of Germany's cities did not occur without continuing resistance from those attached to aesthetic and political old régimes, however, and the theatre would become a surrogate battleground for supporters and enemies of the new republic.

Nowhere was this conflict more intense than in the capital, Berlin, where the nationalist and *völkisch* right were quick to blame Jews for the allegedly unwholesome flourishing of modernism in the arts in general and on the stage in particular. A dichotomy between Berlin and the provinces was already a commonplace before the advent of the republic. One contemporary commentator on the theatre wrote in 1918:

Berlin's theatrical life is controlled by Jewish directors, that of the province by Christian-Germanic directors. The fact is simple to explain, given that there are relatively more Jews in Berlin than in the provinces. The provincial stages are run by appointed *Intendanten* or are municipal theatres tendered out by the municipality to a suitable applicant. The provinces, however, which are virtually all antisemitic, tend to exclude Jews. No court theatre employs a Jewish *Intendant*. The court theatres would also



be very loath to make exceptions. Those private theatres which might come into consideration in the provinces, can also be leased by Jews only with difficulty, because they would then be exposed to problems even in obtaining a licence and above all in their dealings with the authorities and the public. The antisemitic movement alone is to blame for the fact that the artistic life of Berlin is overrun with Jews, and that a salutary dispersion into the provinces cannot take place. Thus Jewish directors work almost exclusively in Berlin.<sup>10</sup>

While this writer no doubt overgeneralized, both about the extent of “Jewish influence” in Berlin and that of antisemitism outside Berlin, the passage reflects perceptions not uncommon at the time.

In any case, the new modernist repertoire did not sweep the provincial theatres. For many theatres, Shakespeare was a reliable stand-by, and in 1919 the number of Shakespeare performances on German stages was back to the highest pre-war level, with 1,349 Shakespeare performances in that year, by 284 companies, including 109 of *The Merchant of Venice* by 30 companies.<sup>11</sup> Reinhardt’s Deutsches Theater registered the most performances of *The Merchant* in 1919, with a total of 13.<sup>12</sup>

### **Kortner versus Krauss**

In the 1920s, Berliners could choose between two contrasting interpretations of Shylock: there was the Shylock of Werner Krauss, who played the role in the 1921 revival of Max Reinhardt’s production of *The Merchant of Venice*, and that of Fritz Kortner, the Austrian-born Jewish actor who became one of the foremost Shakespearean actors in Germany in the 1920s.

Born in a small town in Coburg-Gotha, the son of a postal official, in 1884, Krauss started his acting career playing in many small provincial theatres, before (following appearances in Aachen, Nürnberg and Dresden) joining Reinhardt’s Deutsches Theater in 1913, where his early roles included Lancelot Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>13</sup> In 1920, Krauss had starred as Caligari in the expressionist silent film *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, playing the role with sinister relish. His 1921 performance in *The Merchant of Venice* took place in the huge, arena-like Grosses Schauspielhaus, which Reinhardt had had erected on the site of the old Zirkus Schumann, and which was a noted feat of

Expressionist architecture with its stalactite-like ceiling designed by Hans Poelzig. Krauss's Shylock was described by one critic as follows:

with rude, broad steps, sometimes almost hopping, he paces across the stage; more yelling than speaking, wildly grotesque, almost comical in his morbid grief over the loss of his daughter, thus Werner Krauss portrays Shylock. Surprisingly, he only eases off in one part (Act III: [...] I am a Jew. Hath a Jew not hands, organs, dimensions [...]); this speech, which other actors raise to the level of an accusation against all of humanity, is spoken by Krauss almost by the way in a conversational tone. Beside this Shylock all other performances [in this production] must pale.<sup>14</sup>

A Munich critic, however, found Krauss's Shylock, in a guest performance at the Munich Staatstheater, remaining defiant and arrogant right up to his exit at the end of the court scene, at odds not only with custom, but with Shakespeare's text ("I am not well", Act IV, I, Sc.1.392).<sup>15</sup>

In the eyes of the German Shakespeare scholar, Ernst Leopold Stahl, an eyewitness to many of the major Shakespeare productions in the Weimar period, Krauss's "now famous dangerous Shylock" signalled the breakthrough in Krauss's career, despite the disadvantages associated with playing in the semi-arena of the Grosses Schauspielhaus, in which some of "the magic of the original production" was lost.<sup>16</sup> In Ernst Heilborn's view, "the arena is conducive to exaggeration".<sup>17</sup> Siegfried Jacobsohn deplored the way in which the move to the Grosses Schauspielhaus, while lucrative for Reinhardt because of the theatre's large capacity, failed to suit the production's tone of "tender love poetry, melancholy merriment, [and] quick repartee". The circus-like ambience produced incongruities: "Music rolls out incessantly: a mix of opera, ballet, pantomime and faerie music. During Jessica's nocturnal abduction, a band of dancing children pours forth across the forecourt. Gratiano, the chief antisemite, chases the defeated Jew around the ring. [...] Before the courtroom scene, a cheery overture is inserted, so that we don't take Shylock's fate too seriously. Reinhardt can't help it: we do anyway." Jacobsohn compared Krauss's Shylock with Eugen Klöpfer's, who alternated with him in the role, to the advantage of the former. Klöpfer's performance showed that he was not familiar with the demands of the cavernous theatre's arena, while Krauss's "youthful

Shylock", with his shock of red hair, broadly exaggerated his movements and gestures to suit the stage. Jacobsohn was highly impressed by Krauss's reactions to Shylock's defeat in the courtroom, which formed an effective contrast to the previous overplaying of the character.<sup>18</sup> For Monty Jacobs, of the *Vossische Zeitung*, Krauss's Shylock was "a world apart from those actors who had the usurer of Venice breathing the patriarchal air of the wise Nathan". This Shylock's sailor-like rolling gait and vulgar manner suggested to Jacobs that it was more a case of a plebeian resenting the cavaliers than a Jew oppressed by Christians, and Krauss hence represented a return to the tradition of the Shakespearean clown.<sup>19</sup> Alfred Kerr saw him as "a strolling horror picture".<sup>20</sup> Herbert Ihering was so impressed by the way Krauss's Shylock utilized the space of the arena that he saw the performance as a harbinger of a new relationship between the actor and the performance space, that would transcend the limitations of the "peep-show" stage with its imaginary fourth wall.<sup>21</sup> In Ihering's view, Krauss's "performance revealed an elemental inner tension, which enabled him to get away with the "cynical impertinences" that he incorporated into the role of Shylock. Klöpfer's Shylock was capable of feeling pain, unlike Krauss's, but Ihering elevated Krauss as a true "player", with a touch of the demonic in his acting, compared with the more "bourgeois" theatricality of Klöpfer.<sup>22</sup> Alfred Kerr blamed the circus arena for the fact that the subtleties of Klöpfer's performance were not seen to their best advantage: Klöpfer's Shylock was not a boldly-etched woodcut figure (even if he did make a big show of sharpening his knife on the floor of the courtroom and then jamming it into a wooden bench), no "bogeyman or clownish Shylock for the gallery and the right-wing political parties". This quiet (at least in comparison with Krauss) and tenacious character was "Shakespeare's hidden Shylock not his commercial Shylock for the public".<sup>23</sup> Like Herbert Ihering, Emil Faktor found something almost demonic in Krauss's Shylock, who was transformed "from a human being into a Jew lusting for profit and hating unselfishness, and from a Jew into this insane devil Shylock". The fact that Krauss's Shylock received "demonstrative applause from certain quarters" led Faktor to wonder "whether the play was a felicitous choice in this present time of racist agitation". However, he was able to overcome his reservations with the help of the reflection that "Werner Krauss's genius raised the figure above and beyond the possibilities of cheap agitation".<sup>24</sup> For Ernst Heilborn, Krauss, with his "broad and brutal" face, and his

hefty and strong physique, was reminiscent of “the type of Polish-Jewish butcher that one has seen in the alleys of Warsaw”, but he took on the dimensions of a Moloch as he fed on his own desire for revenge.<sup>25</sup>

While Krauss’s Shylock was stomping around the Grosses Schauspielhaus, Fritz Kortner was playing a “naïve-doltish, good-humouredly savage, drink-sozzled Caliban” in *The Tempest* at the Staatstheater.<sup>26</sup> Kortner had just delivered a compelling performance as Richard III for the pioneering expressionist director Leopold Jessner, who was then in the process of revolutionizing the Staatstheater on the Gendarmenmarkt, the former Royal Theatre. Later in 1921, Kortner was Othello. Kortner was the son (born in 1892) of the Jewish owner of a small jeweller’s shop in Vienna. At sixteen, he attended the Acting School attached to the Burgtheater, undeterred by his teacher’s advice that with his “*Ponim*” (effectively, his “ugly Jewish mug”) he should give up the idea of an acting career.<sup>27</sup> As a young man in Vienna, he saw Schildkraut’s performance as Shylock in a touring production by Reinhardt’s Deutsches Theater. He was “shaken to his core” by Schildkraut’s Shylock, which Kortner saw as a character patiently tolerating injustice until he could bear it no longer, when his anger erupted in a terrifying outburst. “In his sheer brute force and desert wildness, something hitherto never experienced in Vienna, [Schildkraut’s Shylock] remains a monument of the actor’s art”. Kortner never forgot the experience, “even when I played it quite differently”. Later, perhaps much later, Kortner was to be critical of Reinhardt’s *Merchant* for its essentially uncritical picture of a society in which everyone was merry and charming, with Shylock the sole “regrettable” exception.<sup>28</sup> After just one season at Mannheim’s Hoftheater, one of Germany’s best court theatres, the young Kortner joined Reinhardt’s ensemble in Berlin in 1911, joining the Deutsches Theater’s tour of the Russian empire (on which Kortner led the chorus in *Oedipus*). In 1913, Kortner left Reinhardt to take up a series of roles in Vienna and Berlin. These included Shylock at the Vienna Deutsches Volkstheater in 1916, where (given the Volkstheater’s rapidly rotating classical repertoire) he was obliged to play Shylock after only one rehearsal.<sup>29</sup>

In 1923, the year in which Germany’s hyperinflation reached astronomical proportions, the German theatre industry was also hard hit by the economic crisis. Some theatres had to close, others were hit by actors’ strikes. In this climate, a group of actors, prominent among

them Fritz Kortner, together with the director Berthold Viertel, formed an ensemble company, known as “*Die Truppe*”, “a ‘troop’ of republican autonomous actors”, in Alfred Döblin’s words, which put on six productions at the Lustspielhaus in 1923/24, including *The Merchant of Venice* on 12 September. Two Bauhaus-trained artists, Franz Singer and Frieda Dicker, designed the sets.<sup>30</sup> Fritz Kortner played Shylock, while Paul Bildt played Antonio, Lothar Müthel was Bassanio, and Johanna Hofer (soon to be Kortner’s wife) was Portia.

The critical reception of Viertel’s production was cool, seeing the Bauhaus-influenced design elements as a gratuitous manifestation of the current craze for the Russian avant-garde, in particular, as influenced by Alexander Tairov’s Kamerny Theater, which had toured in Germany earlier that year.<sup>31</sup> However, Kortner, according to Monty Jacobs:

freed himself from the obligatory Russian costume and his Shylock stood out like an island from the swarm of imitators. A Shylock true to the spirit of Shakespeare’s era, a bad bogeyman, wrapped up and bulging in his yellow cloak. When he bows in rhythmic prayer, sitting next to Tubal, and racked with torment, he is at his richest. In the courtroom scene he growls like a tiger, and at the end he crawls off like a wounded beast into the thicket.<sup>32</sup>

The *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*’s Franz Köppen also singled out Kortner’s Shylock as the outstanding element in the production (paradoxically, given the commitment of “*Die Truppe*” to the ideal of ensemble playing, Kortner’s solo performance seems to have saved the show):

broad and weighty, like a primeval being from the age of sagas [...], Kortner’s Shylock forces himself into the playful, hedonistic frivolity of this egoistic and sensual world, instinctively resistant to any compromise. [...] a man of his race, great and forceful in his demanding hatred in the midst of a compact majority of pallid, irresponsible, decadent pleasure-seekers. In the ranks of the great Shylocks, Kortner is perhaps the simplest, least nuanced, most human (because he is at the same time the most animal and instinctive).

It was Kortner alone, according to Köppen, who moved the audience to applause throughout the evening.<sup>33</sup> Köppen's review calls attention to Kortner's impressive physical presence. One can get a sense of this from his scenes in G.W. Pabst's film, *Pandora's Box*, in which he plays Lulu's (Louise Brooks') doomed sugar-daddy Dr. Schön. The camera makes much of Kortner's imposing bulk. However, it was his powerful voice that left the most lasting impression on the critic Julius Bab.<sup>34</sup> Norbert Falk was also struck both by Kortner's physical presence and threatening emotional energy: "It is a dark, caustic Shylock; a dark storm-cloud, in which thunder and lightning lurk, he strolls thick-set and heavy through the people of do-nothings and debtors".<sup>35</sup> Köppen was later to credit Kortner with helping to re-establish acting as a masculine art ("in an age of feminine weakness").<sup>36</sup>

Like the other critics, Alfred Döblin, later the author of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, commented on the colourful "constructivist and cubistic" costumes and sets, concurring with Monty Jacobs' opinion that they were derivative of Alexander Tairov's work, while the acting remained generally conventional: "Viertel is a cross between Reinhardt and Tairov in this *Merchant*". While appreciative of Kortner's talents, which made "splendid theatre" out of a potentially incoherent production, Döblin found *The Merchant of Venice* beyond redemption nonetheless: "A frightful work, incidentally, anti-Jewish, crying out for a pogrom. No mercy does Shakespeare have for Shylock."<sup>37</sup> Kortner himself felt that Viertel's direction of the production had been unsuccessful.<sup>38</sup> Their collaboration proved to be short-lived, ending with that production of *The Merchant of Venice*.

Several months later, in May 1924, Kortner played Shylock again, this time in his old home town of Vienna, and this time for Max Reinhardt, who was playing the gala inaugural season in Reinhardt's new Theater in der Josefstadt consisting of *The Merchant* and Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* (with Kortner as Wurm). The production of *The Merchant*, with stage designs by Oskar Strnad, ran for twelve performances.<sup>39</sup> Reinhardt seemed content to overlook Kortner's earlier break with the Deutsches Theater, but artistic differences between Reinhardt and Kortner kept surfacing. Kortner valued some of Reinhardt's insightful directorial touches, but felt that Reinhardt "neutralized this revolutionary, freedom-loving play with too much of the baroque". After *The Merchant of Venice*, Kortner abandoned his

contract with Reinhardt, to play in Bertolt Brecht's *Im Dickicht der Städte* (*In the Jungle of Cities*), a bold move at that time.<sup>40</sup>

Reviewers of *The Merchant of Venice* were able to perceive the tension between the Reinhardt approach to the play and Kortner's interpretation of the Shylock role. The Viennese critic Alfred Polgar wrote: "[Reinhardt] lets the Shylock tragedy get caught up and carried away by the whirl of the comedy. The tragedy asserts itself, thanks to the demonic element in the actor Kortner." Polgar described the comedic aspects of the play as colourful and effervescent, with Reinhardt heaping on the froth. The costumes and Strnad's sets, which included high revolving towers packed into the available space, all conveyed the wealth and opulence of Renaissance Venice. Against this background:

Kortner plays Shylock as an elemental being in search of psychological motivation. Around his wild instincts he builds a superstructure of emotional and rational justifications. His Shylock has the truth of nature plus the higher artistic truth of the symbolic. What the figure, full of strength and irritability, full of nerve and muscle, lacks is heart. For one needs that in order to play someone who has none. In any case, Shylock is a whole fellow, a wolf, who doesn't howl with the people.<sup>41</sup>

If this Shylock was distinctly un-Venetian, or even an anti-Venetian, the Viennese Kortner was paradoxically also an un-Viennese Shylock, lacking in that reassuring Viennese quality of "*Herz*", heart. Another reviewer complained that this Shylock displayed no wit and no paternal warmth, and also felt that Kortner's Shylock did not sit easily in Reinhardt's comedy.<sup>42</sup>

In November 1927, Kortner played Shylock again in the Staatstheater in Berlin, under the direction of Jürgen Fehling, and opposite Elisabeth Bergner as Portia. Kortner's memoirs – which, intelligently written and reflective, rise above the collections of stage anecdotes often published by retired thespians – recount the intense debates between Fehling and himself over the presentation of Shylock. Fehling was apparently determined that Shylock's character should be softened and his story presented as one man's tragedy, in a way which would not give nourishment to the antisemitism that was already starting to make itself felt at that time, while Kortner wanted an unsentimental depiction which would spare neither Shylock nor the



7. Fritz Kortner as Shylock in the Berlin Staatstheater



Venetians, whose frivolous greed and hypocrisy had helped to make Shylock what he had become: "I ardently wanted to be a Shylock who, after being treated inhumanly by Christian society, turns to inhumanity himself. [...] I [...] wanted the reckoning, the unmasking of un-Christian hatred, the exposing of a rotten morality behind the intoxicating glittering and carefree pageant".<sup>43</sup>

Kortner managed to make Fehling give way, and felt vindicated when "*Der Stürmer* [Julius Streicher's grossly antisemitic scandal sheet] spat poison" in its response to the performance. Kortner's judgement: the play "felt frighteningly contemporary".<sup>44</sup> The Berlin critic Alfred Kerr made it clear that he regarded himself as on Shylock's side against the Venetian Christians, whom Kerr regarded as pimps and gigolos, and hypocrites to boot. Kortner himself had a similarly low opinion of the Venetian Christians in the play. Kerr rated Kortner's tragic Shylock in Fehling's production (a production which also benefited from having the much-celebrated Bergner as Portia)<sup>45</sup> as surpassing all previous representations of Shylock. For Kerr:

Kortner is the hero of an inextinguishable tragedy. An old man. With more cares than hatred, initially. Only in the deep recesses of his consciousness is there the feeling of brutal injustice borne for ever [...] from thugs who are sometimes merry, sometimes restrained.

There is no speaker in Germany who could utter the words of the man who bleeds when he is pricked, so grippingly, so simply, with such urgency, so deeply felt, as this fellow. Something unique – ; beyond Schildkraut, beyond Krauss, beyond Bassermann, beyond [...] I have seen no-one, who equals him.

[...]

When he covers his head at the end. When he ... does not walk; but is defeated. (But by whom?) Yelling all around. He covers his head.<sup>46</sup>

Herbert Ihering saw in Kortner's performance the makings of a great Lear.<sup>47</sup>

According to Monty Jacobs:

Fritz Kortner let the Jew suffer in dignity. An oppressed man, who oppresses others in turn, when he has the power to do so. Wonderful, how the artist does not even need to try to avoid the cliff of sentimentality. For his world is one of woe and suffering, but without self-pity. Thus he found the way to a majesty of pain, to a dignity of hatred, like scarcely a Shylock before him. At the end, all wildness cried out in this Shylock one more time. He flung his phylactery to the ground, his hatred was towering.

This Shylock was a “monarch of human suffering”. Jacobs was impressed by the contrast between Shylock’s world and the glittering Venice of the Christians. Tubal was “a ghetto Jew from Warsaw”, while Belmont was “a bright fairyland”. Portia and Shylock inhabited the “over-world of roses and the underworld of thorns” respectively. There was a strong sense of confrontation between Shylock and the Venetians, who “whistle and howl when Shylock enters the hall”. For his part, Shylock did not whet his knife on his boot-sole (“like all Shylocks”), but made a big show of taking off his caftan, revealing a tattered vest, to prepare himself for the butchering of Antonio.<sup>48</sup> Franz Köppen also emphasized the irreconcilable clash of the two worlds in the play: the frivolous Christian society, dedicated to music and pleasure, and Shylock’s wholly antagonistic response to it. Köppen found nothing petty in Shylock’s hatred, and an element of tragedy in the way that “his own flesh and blood betrays him to this world of thoughtlessness, frivolity and dalliance” (Köppen also thought Elisabeth Bergner’s exquisite Portia was wasted on the dowry-hunter Bassanio).<sup>49</sup> Norbert Falk was struck by the physical contrast between Kortner, who resembled a dangerous beast of prey, twitching with suppressed rage and passion, and the small figure of Bergner as Portia, who confronted him in the courtroom scene as if in an arena, even though Falk found Fehling’s production generally lacking in dramatic tension.<sup>50</sup> The *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* acknowledged the impressiveness of Kortner’s achievement – “sympathy is awakened and follows him as he mutely crawls off, an aura of tragedy surrounding him” – but objected that this “softer” interpretation of Shylock was “much too modern”, and missed Shakespeare’s point.<sup>51</sup>

Ernst Sehrt has pointed out that a distinctive feature of Kortner’s Shylock was that the character is shown to be possessed of genuine, sincerely felt religious feelings, even if they reflect a rigidly dogmatic conception of religious law.<sup>52</sup> Kortner’s Shylock wore the side-locks of

an observant Jew in ringlets, wore a prayer-shawl over his head when he prayed, murmuring in Hebrew, and sang psalms. Berthold Viertel found this religiosity of Shylock alarmingly uncanny.<sup>53</sup> If there was something frightening about this Shylock's evocation of strict religious law, it bestowed more gravity on the character than the frivolous Christians were able to muster, and made Shylock's forced conversion at the end all the more serious.

In autumn 1929, Fehling's production of *The Merchant of Venice* was adapted for a run in the Schiller-Theater in Berlin, once more with Kortner, and some of the same cast as the 1927 Staatstheater production, but with Marte Hein replacing Bergner as Portia. Kortner, "big, powerful, compelling", dominated the stage even more than he had previously: "without him the play would not collapse [...] but the performance, the production [...] and these picture-book sets would not be capable of filling the evening in grand style".<sup>54</sup> The consensus of most critics was that Kortner rose head and shoulders over the rest of the cast in a production that otherwise seemed weaker the second time around. This production of *The Merchant* coincidentally took place against the background of a right-wing campaign of vilification against Kortner, whom the actor Veit Harlan had accused, erroneously, of sexual assault against Harlan's then wife Hilde Körber. For the Nazi and antisemitic nationalist press, for whom Kortner symbolized much of what they detested about modernist, left-wing, urban and Jewish Weimar culture, the claims that the prominent Jewish actor had assaulted a blonde "Aryan" actress were irresistible, and tabloid scandal sheets went along for the ride. Kortner interpreted the resounding applause for his performance as Shylock, starting with his first entrance onto the stage, as a protest against the attempt to hunt him down, and a demonstration of support by the Berlin audience for the persecuted.<sup>55</sup> Despite this triumph, and other successful roles, including Schnitzler's Professor Bernhardt, the increasingly hostile political climate and the impact of the Depression on theatres contributed to a gradual drying-up of roles for Kortner from then on.<sup>56</sup>

Werner Krauss was Shylock again for the Bayrisches Staatsschauspiel in 1930. Ernst Leopold Stahl, who was active as a dramaturg at the Bayrisches Staatsschauspiel from 1924 to 1933 saw Krauss as standing in the tradition of Iffland:

Iffland had played [...] a scheming Jewish haggler, with broad comic effects, in a strongly antisemitic conception. We only became acquainted with such a one again in 1930, in Werner Krauss (on the occasion of the festival performances of the Bayrisches Staatsschauspiel in Munich and in a further developed version, in the direction of the grotesque, at the Viennese Burgtheater. In Munich, Krauss played an insolent, arrogant Shylock, unbroken by misfortune.<sup>57</sup>

Krauss repeated this Shylock in Munich in the summer of 1931, for the Shakespeare cycle of the Residenz-Theater. Again, his Shylock was anything but a tragic figure, and strode from the stage after the courtroom scene with his butcher's knife hoisted jauntily over his shoulder as if already anticipating his next opportunity to cause trouble. This Shylock had a grey beard with a red streak in it, extravagantly vulgar manners and bearing, and a tendency to *Mauscheln* in his speech, a trait that was if anything exceeded by the gesticulating and "Yiddish"-talking Tubal in the production.<sup>58</sup> A year after the Nazi party's first major national electoral success, in the "capital of the Nazi movement", Krauss did not flinch from playing to antisemitic prejudices. By early 1932, rumours circulated linking Krauss to the Nazi party, with claims that Krauss harboured pro-Nazi sympathies and that Goebbels had already singled him out as a potential star of the theatre of the "Third Reich".<sup>59</sup>

### **Shylock on film**

The 1923 film of *The Merchant of Venice* premièred in Berlin's Mozartsaal in October 1923 – close to the peak of the hyperinflation. The film, directed and produced by Peter Paul Felner was described by the German Shakespeare scholar Stahl as "the hitherto greatest and relatively most successful effort of the German film industry at filming Shakespeare".<sup>60</sup> It was not the first effort at a film version of *The Merchant of Venice*: in 1913, Rudolf Schildkraut had played the title role in a contemporary adaptation entitled *The Shylock of Cracow*, in a treatment written by the Viennese author Felix Salten (best known as the author of *Bambi*).<sup>61</sup> Felner's 1923 version was a lavish production, with a large cast of extras, whose deployment was possibly partly inspired by Reinhardt's productions, and incorporated some location shots of Venice itself, where some of the outdoor scenes were filmed. The full-length silent feature film (in eight acts, totalling 2,806 metres)

had a distinguished cast: alongside Werner Krauss as Shylock, the cast also included one of the German silent cinema's most celebrated leading ladies, Henny Porten, as a slightly matronly Portia, Max Schreck – unrecognizable from his recent role as the vampire in *Nosferatu* – as the Doge presiding over the courtroom scene, Harry Liedtke as Bassanio, Carl Ebert as Antonio (Ebert had played the role in Reinhardt's 1913 Berlin production) and Ferdinand von Alten as the Prince of Aragon.<sup>62</sup>

Peter Paul Felner took significant liberties with the play, so much so that the version shown in America, with English intertitles, was not entitled *The Merchant of Venice*, but *The Jew of Mestri [sic]*. Felner's screenplay claimed descent from Pietro Aretino, Giovanni Fiorentino, and Masuccio, as well as Shakespeare, legitimizing his changes to the story by invoking older versions, which Shakespeare himself had adapted.<sup>63</sup> The names of the characters were also changed in the English-language version: Shylock became "Mordecai", Portia was "Beatrice", Bassanio was "Giannetto", Antonio "Benito", and Jessica "Rachela". Because the film differs considerably, and in many details, from the play, and because it is rarely seen, a detailed description might be useful.

The film opens with the scene of the Jewish market on the Rialto. Whenever the Rialto is shown in the film, it is populated with a swarm of highly excitable Jewish merchants in dark caftans, who gesticulate and rush about in a state of constant unrest. The Jews in the film are characterized immediately, and throughout, as alien in dress and appearance, and as emotional and volatile. The central figure in the bustle on the Rialto is Shylock ("Mordecai" in the English-language version). He is dressed in a caftan and cloak, with a skull-cap, and is somewhat corpulent. This is Krauss's "Eastern Jew". The film then cuts to a rendezvous between Jessica ("Rachela", played by Claire Pommer<sup>64</sup>) and Lorenzo in a piazza. While she is meeting Lorenzo, Shylock and Tubal in an indoor scene (the indoor scenes in Shylock's house, or other Jewish dwellings, are always gloomy in this film, and form a contrast to the sunny outdoor scenes of Christian Venice) are shown haggling over Jessica's dowry: she is to be married to Tubal's son, Elias, a tall, thin, rather saturnine young Talmudic scholar, in an arranged marriage. For a spirited young woman, Lorenzo is clearly the more appealing choice. Elias and Jessica are introduced in the next scene, a festive "Sabbath" meal (the servants rushing around to serve the dinner are presumably Christians). Everyone is boisterously jovial

except the betrothed couple, and Jessica steals away to catch a glimpse of Lorenzo under her window. When she breaks down in tears, her mother comes in to comfort her, telling her that: "Such is the fate of all the women of our tribe". Her marriage to Shylock had also been arranged thus, and she claims to be "not unhappy". Felner differs from Shakespeare in putting Shylock's wife on the scene, instead of Shylock being a widower from the start. He also differs in making the Jessica-Lorenzo love story more central to the play: the first "act" of the film is mainly dedicated to it, and to introducing the arranged marriage to the saturnine Elias.

The focus shifts in the next "act" to the social life of the Christian Venetians. Bassanio ("Giannetto") is introduced as a poor but carefree young nobleman, who is first shown carousing in a wineshop with friends. He is, however, then arrested for his unpaid debts. Antonio ("Benito") is shown at the harbour, supervising his fleet of merchant ships, when Giannetto is brought to him. Antonio buys his freedom on the spot, paying his debt, and takes him to meet the Lady of Belmont. Meanwhile, there is a brief love-scene between Lorenzo and Jessica, with Lorenzo climbing up to her balcony to arrange a rendezvous on the Grand Lagoon. Back at Belmont, we are shown the Prince of Aragon, a wealthy "popinjay" (thus the English intertitle), a suitor of Lady Beatrice. Back at Shylock's house, in gloomy contrast to the light and festive atmosphere of Belmont, Shylock, with his eyes closed, disdains to listen to Jessica's lamentations, turning away and making a dismissive hand gesture. We then see her at her rendezvous with Lorenzo at the Grand Lagoon.

After some time has obviously elapsed, we see Shylock in discussion with Tubal. Tubal is worried that the wedding might not be going ahead, but Shylock reassures him, and when Jessica enters, he tells her that the wedding has been brought forward and will take place three days hence. Jessica is distraught, and her servant "Marco" (a lone Gobbo, apparently) offers to help her, advising her that in her position, if he were in love, he would change his religion: "Religion can be changed like the season", he tells her. Shylock tells his wife that as the marriage will now be in three days' time, he will need to get back the ducats he has previously lent to Antonio ("Benito"). Shylock's wife takes on the task of collecting the debt and confronts the merry band of debtors on their way to Belmont. She demands the money back with the due interest, only to have the Christians laugh at

her. She curses them, brandishes a stick and waves it at them, and then collapses, passing out.

Back at the Rialto, once again bustling with a crowd of incessantly haggling Jews, the servant Marco rushes up to bring Shylock the news of his wife's collapse. Shylock rushes through the streets of Venice, dropping his cloak on the way. When he reaches his wife, the young Christians are still there and manifestly unconcerned at her condition, and he threatens them: "you will pay". He carries his wife back home in his outstretched arms, eyes nearly closed in a fixed, sorrowful face.

In an abrupt contrast, the scene switches back to Belmont where young men are paying court to Portia ("Beatrice"). The film omits the Prince of Morocco (although Portia is attended by a young "Moorish" servant, a black boy wearing an absurdly oversized turban, who breaks into Sambo-like gestures when excited). It also omits Portia's test of the three caskets. This weakens the story in so far as there is no preparation for Portia's courtroom achievements: nothing establishes her as wise or intelligent before the courtroom scene, indeed, her impulsive engagement to the "popinjay" Aragon, just as abruptly cancelled, suggests rather the contrary. Cutting back to Shylock's house, he is shown distraught at his wife's bedside. A rather less distraught Jessica is shown in a gondola on the lagoon with Lorenzo. When she returns, an angry Shylock dismisses the unreliable servant "Marco". Back at Belmont, Bassanio is paying court to Portia, and when the film cuts back to Shylock's house, he and Jessica are in mourning at what is now his wife's bedside.<sup>65</sup>

According to the intertitles, a few days have passed at Belmont, when Portia, who had shown herself partial to Bassanio, is informed by his rival, Aragon, that he has been deceiving her by pretending to be wealthy, and is in fact a pauper. Aragon offers to marry her instead, and, apparently piqued by Bassanio's deception, she accepts his proposal and immediately announces her betrothal (to the great excitement of her African servant boy). The news of Aragon's success reaches Antonio's house in the middle of revels, but Portia soon has second thoughts, and decides that she should at least try to verify Aragon's information about the impecunious Bassanio. She evades Aragon, who is waiting outside her balcony, to go and make enquiries of Antonio. At Antonio's palazzo, Bassanio is disconsolate and oblivious to the attentions of two young female dancers who drape themselves over him. When Portia arrives, Antonio denies that Bassanio is broke, saying ambiguously that half his (Antonio's) ships

might be Bassanio's. When Bassanio enters the room where the conversation is taking place, Portia embraces him.

This resolution is only temporary, however: in the next "act" news arrives that one of Antonio's ships has been sunk and another has been captured by pirates. A crowd of women and children in distress crowd around the entrance to Antonio's palazzo, pleading for assistance, and he generously doles out money and jewels for them. Inside, Antonio then has to tell Bassanio that he now has no money and sends him to the Rialto to borrow some, saying that he, Antonio, will sign the bond. Meanwhile, at Belmont, Portia breaks off the engagement with Aragon. Bassanio, looking for Shylock, finds the servant Marco/ Gobbo, who takes him to the Rialto. Shylock is originally not interested in lending money to Bassanio, but another Jew takes him aside and tells him that this might be a chance to take revenge on Antonio, who was likely to be Bassanio's guarantor. The Christians had killed Shylock's wife, were trying to steal his daughter – a loan with a "bond of flesh" could be a chance for revenge. In a sinister (dark, indoors) scene, Shylock and two other Jews draw up the bond. When Bassanio and Antonio arrive, Shylock is defiant: "many times have you mocked and spat upon me", he tells the Christians. Antonio says that he is willing to pay the penalty if he is unable to repay the loan. The penalty specified by Shylock: "an even pound of flesh cut from whatever part of your body suits my jest". Krauss as Shylock rolls his eyes, in almost orgiastic facial expressions. Krauss's Shylock does not hit upon the idea of the bond himself, but once he grasps it, he is consumed by the prospect of revenge. Krauss's Shylock is less a calculating moneylender than a creature completely in the thrall of his destructive passion for vengeance. Bassanio tries to dissuade Antonio from running the risk of the bond, but Antonio dismisses his concerns, and screws up his nose, as if being handed something unclean, when Shylock stretches out his arm to hand him the bag of money.

The next act opens with carnival scenes in the streets, canals and lagoons of Venice. Regular intercutting between Shylock's gloomy house and the festive scenes outside underline the contrast between the Christians and the Jews. Shylock and Jessica are at home, with Marco/ Gobbo back in service as a reward for leading Bassanio to Shylock. Marco is once again active as a go-between, taking a message to Lorenzo from Jessica: "Come for me tonight". When Shylock goes out, Jessica steals out of the house to meet Lorenzo, and they



disappear into the dancing crowds milling in the streets. When Shylock returns to his dark home, he discovers that Jessica has gone. He rushes around, distraught, waving his arms in the air. Staggering out of his house, he is quickly surrounded by the dancing, masked revellers, some carrying torches. He collapses in front of his house and the crowd moves on regardless, leaving him lying alone on the ground. Cut to carnival scenes on the Piazza San Marco.

The next act starts “on the very day that Benito’s [Antonio’s] bond fell due”. Antonio and Bassanio sit in Antonio’s palazzo looking glum: Antonio’s remaining ships have been wrecked. On the Rialto, the excitement among the Jews is great when the news of Antonio’s misfortune arrives. An ecstatic Shylock cries out “Jehovah be praised”, and then calls for a warrant. Shylock is seen running through the streets. Back at his home, he pores over the bond again and again, almost caressing it lovingly. At this moment, a more than usually gloomy Elias brings the news that Jessica has become a Christian. Shylock clutches at his heart, goes fish-eyed, staggers around in a daze, in a state of near collapse. Propping himself up on a bench, he manages to light a small oil lamp and places it in a niche, saying a prayer “for the soul of my dead daughter”, and beating at his heart with his fist.

Back at Antonio’s, a messenger comes to inform him of his arrest, and a gondola takes him away. Cut to another gondola, in which a despairing Elias stands. The camera moves from the gondola to the water in the gondola, and fades out.

In Shylock’s house, Shylock and Tubal are again plotting revenge: “They killed my wife. They dishonoured my flesh. They stole my daughter. The hour of revenge is at hand”. Tubal is gleeful.

At Belmont, Portia and Bassanio are also sharing a moment of happiness. She gives him a ring as a sign of her love. Bassanio finally confesses that he is not really rich, to which she responds, indignantly: “Do you think that the love of Beatrice [Portia] can be bought?”.

Cut to Tubal mourning over the corpse of Elias.

Back at Belmont, feasting and celebrations are interrupted by Aragon bringing the news that Antonio’s life is now forfeited. Portia tells Bassanio to take her gold to save him.

Back in his house, Shylock studies the bond intently.

At Tubal’s, Elias is mourned by his father, Shylock, and other Jews. Jessica enters, but everyone ignores her, including Shylock. She pleads with him to spare Antonio, but he steadfastly refuses to look her, a

dead expression coming over his face like a mask. She offers to give back all her jewels, and takes the jewelled braids out of her hair to lay them at her father's feet, but he maintains his fixed look, eyes averted from her. She leaves, distraught.

The climactic act, introduced by the intertitle, "The Day of Judgement", is the courtroom scene. The scene is the grand hall of the Doge's palace, with banks of seats for the public on the sides of the hall, as if for a sporting contest. First, Antonio is led in, then a group of Jews is shown arriving outside the palace. Also outside the palace, Jessica waits for the Doge and when he arrives, leading a procession of dignitaries, she pleads on her knees for her father's debtor to be spared. However, the laws of Venice must be observed, and the procession continues. Inside, a tumult breaks out when Shylock arrives. The crowd shout and shake their fists, but Shylock is visibly unimpressed, sauntering around the hall with hands behind his back, evidently brimming with confidence and good cheer. After the Doge and his entourage take their places, Antonio steps forward and declares that he is willing to meet his fate if the law requires it. With a half-crazed stare on his face, Shylock brandishes the bond aggressively, saying: "My deeds shall be upon my own head. I demand the law, I demand the penalty".

The lawyers then arrive: Portia and her maid disguised with spectacles and dark lawyers' robes, and they present the Doge with a letter from one Barratolo, explaining that the "learned young doctor" will plead the case. Shylock sits down on a bench and, while the crowd behind him seethes with rage, crosses one leg over his knee at a rakish right angle, draws a long, curved knife out of his boot, and starts to strop the knife ostentatiously on the sole of his boot. Then he tests the sharpness of the blade against his thumb. The crowd behind Shylock has to be restrained by the guards' halberds. Shylock is openly insolent and contemptuous, wholly confident of his case, as Portia cross-examines him. There is a great disturbance when Bassanio rushes forward, offering Shylock three times the sum owed, or even tenfold. Shylock dismisses the offer. Jumping onto a bench under the podium where Portia stands, he cries out: "Revenge is sweeter meat than gold, and I demand the forfeit that is in the bond". Portia scrutinizes the bond, holding it up in the air, while Shylock jumps up and down on the bench grasping for the piece of paper just out of his reach. The friends of Bassanio and Antonio plead for mercy, for the law to be set aside, but Portia announces that the law is the law, and cannot be

altered. Shylock praises the wisdom of the judge, throws up his arms in exaltation, then rubs his hands together. Portia asks if there is a balance in the courtroom, to weigh an exact pound of flesh. As if in a diabolical Harpo Marx routine, Shylock just happens to have a pair of scales in the cloak which he holds in his left hand. He pulls them out ceremoniously, and holds them up in the air, displaying them to the crowd, whipping the spectators up into a frenzy, which Shylock appears to relish enormously.

When Portia passes the sentence, awarding Shylock the pound of flesh stated in the bond, he is triumphant. In a protracted sequence, he walks forward slowly and deliberately towards Antonio. The camera shows him from side-on, with the curved knife held behind his back. As he comes face to face with Antonio, who stands baring his chest, the knife is brandished openly, and Shylock makes a great show of rolling up his sleeve. Bassanio rushes forward again, taking up position in front of Antonio, offering to take his place, but with an impatient gesture of his left hand, which is bent like a claw, Shylock impatiently gestures for him to step aside. Bassanio reluctantly complies, and Shylock resumes his slow, deliberate advance towards Antonio, the knife raised high in the air, and is finally about to plunge it into Antonio's chest, when he is suddenly stopped by Portia's warning not to take anything not in the bond, or his life – and goods, will be forfeit. Shylock takes on a paralysed look, with a fish-eyed stare, and the crowd bursts through the cordon of guards to mob him and release Antonio. A small group of grim-faced guards has to surround Shylock to protect him from the anger of the crowd. Portia tells a grateful Bassanio that she will accept no payment from him except his ring.

Following Act V of the original, the film moves to Belmont, where the Christians' celebrations can begin. Portia has changed out of her disguise, and feigns overjoyed surprise to hear of Antonio's release, mingled with chagrin at hearing that Bassanio has parted with her ring. Portia and her maid then don spectacles and robes to re-enact their masquerade, and reveal the identity of the learned young *doctor juris* to general rejoicing. An intertitle informs the viewer that a few days have passed, and then "the dark canals were gay with the merry-making of a double wedding". Shots of gondolas decked in flowers follow, including some gondolas passing Shylock's house. In the play, Shylock is not seen again after the courtroom scene, but the film intercuts shots of the double wedding festivities with shots of a gloomy Shylock

in his dark house: first, sitting under his window, then sitting with the Talmud on his lap, seeking, in vain, it seems, consolation in scripture (in this secular-minded version of *The Merchant of Venice* Shylock is not ordered to convert to Christianity). Pictures of the loving couple Jessica and Lorenzo are followed by the one-word intertitle “desolation”, which introduces Shylock staggering out of his front door, his face a rigid, staring mask of grief (for Herbert Ihering’s taste, Krauss was all too obviously putting on a pose for the camera in such shots, without actually building the motivation for emotional expression).<sup>66</sup> He sways and leans over the canal and then closes his eyes. This looks like the end of the film, but in the print in the Filmarchiv Berlin, the viewer is returned to the celebrations at Belmont, ships are seen coming into harbour (presumably Antonio’s, back from the bottom of the sea), and there is a final shot of the Doge’s palace – suggesting, perhaps, the restoration of order.

Felner’s film differs in a number of ways from Shakespeare: the Jessica-Lorenzo subplot is made more central, perhaps to provide a love story in keeping with the expectations of cinematic convention; and Shylock’s wife is alive at the start of the film. Her death provides Shylock’s hatred of the Christians with additional motivation, but the scene of the short stout, black-clad matron brandishing her stick at the group of young Christians is initially comical, and her subsequent collapse and death are so unconvincing, that this incident does not suffice to change the dominant register of the film from comedy to tragedy. Ihering found the film superficial, like a filmed record of an inadequate stage performance – his main complaint was that the characters, Jewish and Christian alike, were shown as isolated figures enacting certain emotions, without their social context or the relationship between them ever really becoming manifest.<sup>67</sup> As far as the presentation of Shylock is concerned, he is regularly shown as one of the Jewish community. Tubal, for example, is given more prominence than in the play, and Shylock does not act alone, but as the representative of a whole community of Jews: the seething crowd on the Rialto. Krauss’s Shylock seems to be less a reasoning being than a creature of emotion: others need to give him the idea of using Antonio’s financial difficulties to create a chance for revenge. But once Shylock is possessed by this idea, all his conduct seems dominated by an almost lustful craving for revenge. In the courtroom scene, Krauss gives a picture of almost crazed bloodlust, combined with extreme oscillation between arrogant confidence that he is legally in the right,

and obsequiousness before his “judge”, that it is difficult to imagine how his later Nazi-era performances could have gone further.

1923 also saw the première of a film version of *Nathan der Weise*, directed by Manfred Noa for the Bavaria-Atelier in Munich. Unfortunately, showings of the film in Munich were soon stopped after protests by the Nazi movement, which was already strong in the Bavarian capital, where the “Beer Hall Putsch” was to take place later that year. Ironically, given his later affinities with the Nazis, this film also starred Werner Krauss.<sup>68</sup> The right-leaning *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, preoccupied with the patriotic agitation that followed the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr in January 1923, felt that:

The words of the text preaching humanity and humanitarianism slide past us in their remoteness from the present day, and while contemplating the well-known action [of the play] we think of how the poet’s ideal is being violated on the Rhine and in the Ruhr.<sup>69</sup>

The Nazi party newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, predictably condemned the film as an attempt by the “Jewish supreme leadership” to counter the growing success of the “radical political movement” against Jewry, and to depict antisemitism as a source of injustice. The *Völkischer Beobachter*, which made a special point of alleging that the film was anti-Catholic, saw the screening of the “humanitarian swindle film” in “antisemitic-national-Christian Munich”, the “stronghold of the antisemitic movement”, as especially provocative.<sup>70</sup>

Lessing’s worthy but wordy play was perhaps not well served by the medium of silent cinema. According to a reviewer in *Die Weltbühne*, Krauss’s performance as Nathan was powerful, but the play’s central passage, the parable of the rings, was botched, being portrayed: “in very pale silhouette-like fashion, in the manner of perfume advertisements, and pictorially quite incomprehensible”. The visual representation of battle scenes from the Crusades and the Oriental decoration were the predominant elements in the film, at the expense of Lessing’s ideas.<sup>71</sup>

### **The crisis years**

The first few years of the Weimar Republic, from early 1919 to the end of 1923, were years of crisis: political violence and instability, reflected in the rapid turnover of Weimar cabinets, and the inflation,

which accelerated to become galloping hyper-inflation in 1923. By October 1923, Alfred Döblin was describing how he took a bundle of million-mark notes to the theatre to buy a ticket.<sup>72</sup> Until the peak of the hyperinflation, and the austerity that accompanied the subsequent period of currency stabilization, the German theatre was quite resilient. (Until inflation got completely out of hand, it may even have encouraged spending on entertainment, as saving cash made less and less sense.)

The early 1920s saw a record number of Shakespeare productions on the German stage, expensive though they were, with their generally large casts. From 1,349 performances of Shakespeare (by 284 theatre companies) in 1919, the number of performances increased to 1,622 (by 175 companies) in 1920 and to 1,997 (by 191 companies) in 1921, declining in 1922 to 1,882 performances (by 171 companies), to peak at 2,020 performances (by 168 companies) in 1923.<sup>73</sup> For the German Shakespeare Yearbook, the growth in performances of Shakespeare's plays since the end of the Great War was "an unmistakable sign of how deeply anchored Shakespeare is in the heart of the German people, world war and hatred between peoples notwithstanding".<sup>74</sup>

The career of *The Merchant of Venice* in this period followed the general trajectory of the popularity of Shakespeare's plays. In 1919, *The Merchant* was played 109 times (by 30 companies), making it the fifth most popular Shakespeare play that year. In 1920, it was the most popular Shakespeare play, with 202 performances (by 45 companies). In 1921 it was in second place behind *Hamlet*, but with an increased number of performances (259, again by 45 companies). The *Merchant*, with its theme of usury, remained in second place during the high-inflation years 1922 and 1923, with 223 performances (by 41 companies) in 1922 and 247 (by 37 companies) in 1923.<sup>75</sup>

Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater had featured the most performances of *The Merchant* in 1919, including a series of performances with Moissi being replaced as Shylock by Paul Wegener, a Prussian whose broad Slavic physiognomy was enhanced with a false nose for this role, and whose Shylock resembled "a fat, avaricious peasant. An ungainly troll [...]. A wicked uncle out of a fairy-tale [...]. A demon of pettiness [...]"<sup>76</sup> In 1920 the Munich Schauspielhaus registered a remarkable 52 performances of *The Merchant of Venice*, introducing the Jewish actor Alexander Granach to the role, while Essen was second with 17.<sup>77</sup> In 1921, Berlin's Grosses Schauspielhaus played *The Merchant* 48 times, with the Neues Theater of Frankfurt am Main following up with 22

performances.<sup>78</sup> The Frankfurt Neues Theater performance was praised for its balance between light and shade, between merriment and high spirits in the right places, and darkness in the Shylock scenes.<sup>79</sup> Another production that gained critical attention in 1921 was Willy Becker's production in the Düsseldorf Stadttheater, which was praised in very similar terms.<sup>80</sup> A report on Augsburg's production of *The Merchant* in September 1921, which made use of stylized set construction, lamented the many empty seats, apparently evidence of a waning interest in the classics.<sup>81</sup>

In Bochum, however, the director Saladin Schmitt, a former theatre critic who had led the German Theatre in occupied Belgium during the First World War,<sup>82</sup> earned a reputation for seriously cultivating a classical repertoire. Under Schmitt's direction, the grimy Ruhr mining and industrial town, which had lacked any permanent municipal theatre before 1919, was becoming one of Western Germany's leading theatrical centres.<sup>83</sup> Schmitt's 1921 production with Edelbert Gareis was warmly reviewed in the Shakespeare Yearbook:

The performance gave a more faithful and immediate expression to the spirit of Shakespeare than the traditional Shylock-tragedies. The whole atmosphere was a mixture of fabulous and burlesque elements. The Shylock (Edelbert Gareis) was more a fairy-tale villain than a genuinely Old Testament character [...]. He eschewed the cheap device of the Jewish grimace nearly entirely, and yet managed to generate a comic effect, for example, even in the court scene. He emphasised less the tragedy of suffering than the unattractiveness of passion; in no way was he the conventional martyr that commentators always make of the hard-hearted usurer.<sup>84</sup>

The light, comic tone of Schmitt's production was assisted by skilled use of the revolving stage, with Lorenzo and Jessica's flight in a gondola, for example, taking place in front of the open revolving stage, simulating movement through the canals as the bridges of Venice went by.<sup>85</sup>

In Vienna, Albert Heine's 1921 Burgtheater production managed a very respectable 14 performances, and continued to run until 1929, by which time it had totalled 43. Heine's production broke with naturalistic set decoration, replacing it with flats reproducing images from Venetian paintings (an innovation that may have been inspired

by the Burgtheater's need to economize at this time). This allowed an increase in the tempo of the scenes, albeit at the expense of cutting Act III, Sc.3 (in which Shylock insists "I'll have my bond").<sup>86</sup> There was an element of fantasy in the set design: Shylock's dwelling was in a green and gilt corner turret, thus avoiding, it was said, any hint of "ghetto realism".<sup>87</sup>

Heine's own portrayal of Shylock, which Oskar Maurus Fontana found to be striking in individual scenes, but failing to add up to a humanly convincing whole,<sup>88</sup> gave way in the Burgtheater to a guest appearance by the veteran Dutch actor Louis Bouwmeester, then almost eighty years old, in March 1921. Bouwmeester's naturalistic style of acting was felt to be somewhat at odds with the production's emphasis on the decorative, quite aside from the fact that he spoke Dutch while the other cast members stuck with German. It was something of a return to nineteenth-century virtuoso theatre. However, Bouwmeester's Shylock made a big impression:

A face faded and furrowed by eternal sorrow, toil, agitation; the heavily grizzled beard pulled almost horizontal by his constantly restless fingers, under the strong eyebrows piercing, burning eyes – a Jewish head, like one from a Rembrandt print. And this quite uncanny figure in constant movement. [...]

Bouwmeester's Shylock reminded one critic of Bassermann's: "a great conception of the character which grasped the essential and expressed it in countless individual traits". This Shylock was unambiguously a "hard and malevolent usurer", "much harder than Schildkraut's Shylock". Despite the slightly antiquated style of Bouwmeester's Shylock, Albert Heine's suffered in comparison, for being too much a performance on one note, sheer malevolence, with no attempt at developing the character.<sup>89</sup> Alfred Polgar found Heine's Shylock dramatically rendered enough, with sufficient movement and the right intonation, but lacking "colour, intensity, depth". The production as a whole was full of comic effects, but failed to be amusing.<sup>90</sup>

In 1922, Breslau's Lobe-Theater topped the list of theatres with the most performances of *The Merchant of Venice*, with 18 performances of *The Merchant of Venice*, followed by the 16 performances of the Württembergische Volksbühne, which were spread over nearly as many small theatres in South-West Germany. *The Merchant of Venice* was proving highly popular in the provinces at this time, as the



inflation gathered pace. The small town of Annaberg in the Erzgebirge even staged 13 performances of the play (including one in Geyer and one in Schwarzenberg).<sup>91</sup>

A feature of these years was the emergence of *Wanderbühnen*, travelling theatre companies, whose work was to include taking the classics, including Shakespeare, to small towns and rural districts: these travelling companies “rejected the experimentation with the classics then so popular on the established stages”, primarily because their provincial audience was essentially opposed to it. The dramaturg and Shakespeare scholar Ernst Leopold Stahl was himself instrumental in setting up a *Wanderbühne* in 1919 to take German-language theatre performances to the Allied-occupied German territory West of the Rhine, another example of Shakespeare being pressed into the service of German patriotism and nationalism. Stahl considered that the Künstlerische Volksbühne für Pfalz und Saar, which he helped to create, had a “national mission” to fulfill.<sup>92</sup> In 1921-1922, another travelling company, the Rheinische Landesbühne, took *The Merchant of Venice* not only to Cologne, but also to several smaller towns in the Rhineland and Westphalia.<sup>93</sup> In 1923, the Landestheater Süd-Ost Preussen, centred on Allenstein, took 9 performances of *The Merchant* to nearly as many small towns in its region.<sup>94</sup> In the same year, Stahl’s Künstlerische Volksbühne, now renamed the Landestheater für Pfalz und Saargebiet, managed a total of 26 performances of *The Merchant of Venice* (no doubt in a conservative and non-philosemitic version) in over twenty South-West German provincial towns, becoming the company to stage the most performances of that play in 1923. Hannover’s Schauburg staged 18 performances, and the play’s big run in Breslau’s Lobe-Theater continued, with another 17 performances in 1923.<sup>95</sup>

### Uneasy stability

After the reform of the German currency at the end of 1923 ended the hyperinflation, a period of relative economic stability followed, underwritten by foreign loans and the renegotiation of German reparations debts under the 1924 Dawes Plan. For many middle-class Germans, this was still a period of relative austerity, and workers started to experience a squeeze through the post-inflation rationalization of German industry. The municipal authorities that ran Germany’s *Stadttheater* also had to start trimming their budgets. One of

Reinhardt's lieutenants, Arthur Kahane, complained of a decline of the artistic theatre in the first half of the 1920s:

Economic exigencies; diminished appreciation of cultural values, one of the consequences of the war; competition by the financially stronger film industry; resulting corruption and indifference among the actors; growth of labor and other industrial organisations, as detrimental to real art as the trusts of the moneyed interests in the theatrical business – all these factors are digging the grave of the artistic theatre.<sup>96</sup>

The Weimar Republic's years of relative stability were accompanied by a decline in the number of Shakespeare performances, at least partly due to these economic factors. In 1924, there were 1,891, falling away slightly from 1923's peak of 2,020, by 183 theatre companies.<sup>97</sup> The number of performances declined steadily over the next few years, reaching 1,586 by 149 companies in 1928.<sup>98</sup> The frequency with which *The Merchant of Venice* was performed declined from 1924 to 1926, amounting to 212 (by 34 companies) in 1924, 185 by 26 companies in 1925, to 86 by just 15 companies in 1926. In 1927, however, productions of *The Merchant* more than doubled, to 195 (by 26 companies), making it the most frequently performed Shakespeare play that year. In 1928, there were 153 productions by 25 companies, putting *The Merchant* in third place.<sup>99</sup>

In 1924, the Dresden Schauspielhaus put on the most performances of *The Merchant of Venice* (22), followed closely by Berlin's commercial theatre in the East End of the city, the Rose-Theater (21). Vienna's Theater in der Josefstadt staged *The Merchant* 12 times.<sup>100</sup>

In 1925, Hamburg's Deutsches Schauspielhaus made the biggest contribution to the performance statistics for *The Merchant of Venice*, with 23 of the 185 performances that year, with the Stuttgart-based, touring Württembergische Volksbühne coming second with 17, taking the play to small south-western towns from Aalen to Urach.<sup>101</sup>

As the Württemberg example indicates, the travelling theatres serving provincial small-town Germany continued to include *The Merchant of Venice* in their repertoire: the Nordmark Verbandstheater in Schleswig took the play to Husum and Rendsburg in 1924.<sup>102</sup> The Mecklenburg Städtebund-Theater played *The Merchant* in Neubrandenburg and several other small towns in 1925.<sup>103</sup>

Of the mere 86 performances of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1926, 26 were on the stage of Berlin's Volksbühne on the Bülowplatz, with Leipzig's Schauspielhaus in second place with 9 performances.<sup>104</sup> The Berlin Volksbühne began its run of *The Merchant* under the direction of Fritz Holl on 14 October 1925, with the Jewish actor Alexander Granach (born in an East Galician *shtetl* in 1893) as Shylock and Agnes Straub as Portia, who had previously played the role in Berlin's Staatstheater.<sup>105</sup> The prominent critic Herbert Ihering's feelings about Granach's Shylock were mixed: on the whole, it was a strong piece of work, but Ihering felt that there was an unresolved tension in Granach's performance between theatrical routine and the actor's inwardly felt, original interpretation of the role. Outwardly, Granach's Shylock was prone to fall into clownish stage business that reminded Ihering of Krauss's boldly-outlined villainous Shylock, at other moments, Granach's quietly melodious undertone came through, then one could hear "the steppe and distance and the humanity of an Ahasuerus".<sup>106</sup> Alfred Klaar commended the Volksbühne for not following the custom of some theatres and finishing the play at the end of Act IV (and the courtroom defeat of Shylock), thus preserving the comedic nature of the play. "Nonetheless", Klaar added, "the profound human dimension of Shylock, and the tragic side of his avenger's nature penetrated deeply into the mind of the audience, and as the curtain closed on the merry complications of the final act, they did not tire of summoning the Jew, who had long since disappeared from the stage, back out again". Granach's earthy and energetic performance of the role did not evoke the dignity and pride of some other Shylocks, but in the courtroom scene, Granach's Shylock was so convinced that he was in the right that he evoked a certain "heroic mood", which made his collapse after the verdict all the more "shattering".<sup>107</sup> The *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* ranked Granach with the great exponents of the role, such as Schildkraut, Max Pohl, Bassermann, Krauss and Kortner. Granach brought out Shylock's greed, lust for vengeance, and meanness, but made these qualities humanly comprehensible in the light of his treatment by the Christians.<sup>108</sup> Another critic singled out Granach's fatherly qualities as reminiscent of Schildkraut, while Kurt Pinthus, who considered Werner Krauss's "swaying, croaking, whipped, demonic clown" to be the most courageously authentic rendition of the Shakespearean Shylock, also saw Granach's Shylock as a successor to Schildkraut's, albeit a less matured and less potent version.<sup>109</sup> Other critics also

sought to compare and contrast Schildkraut and Granach, not least because of their similar Eastern European Jewish origins. Julius Bab thought that Granach brought “his Jewishness and his coruscating temperament” to the role, but that his acting still tended towards overdone “expressionist” effects. His vitality and temperament, compelling though they were in themselves, needed more modulation before he could match the classical exponents of the role.<sup>110</sup>

That Granach consciously invested something of his own Jewish identity in the role is confirmed by his 1949 “autobiographical novel”, *Da geht ein Mensch* (*There Goes a Man*), in which Granach described how since his youth he had felt especially moved by the character of Shylock, and made the perfection of the role his life’s mission. For Granach, even if Shylock’s function in the comedy was only to act as a dark foil to the sunny life of the Christian Viennese gentilefolk:

God and Shakespeare did not make creatures of paper, they gave them flesh and blood. Even if the playwright didn’t like Shylock, out of the justice of his genius he took his black fool unto himself and out of his extravagant, everlasting riches, endowed him with a human greatness and a tragic loneliness, that makes this merry, singing, idling, money-borrowing, girl-stealing company around Antonio into petty wastrels.

Granach relates that he decided that in order to play the role, he needed to imagine what became of Shylock after the final curtain, and so he imagined a Shylock who never genuinely admitted defeat, but who escaped with whatever wealth he could carry in a boat to Amsterdam, and then travelled to Ukraine, where he remarried and became an honoured patriarch – some of whose descendants became actors, and these actors discovered Shakespeare and learned to play Shylock as the victim and accuser of a rotten society that persecuted him... Granach imagined himself as descended from an East Galician Shylock.<sup>111</sup>

In 1927, Berlin’s Staatstheater (Schauspielhaus) saw 23 performances of Fehling’s production of *The Merchant*, with Kortner and Bergner, but the provincial touring companies were, at least quantitatively, close behind, with the Bayerische Landesbühne, based in Munich, taking 22 performances to 19 towns in Bavaria, and the Pommersche Landesbühne in the North-east putting on 21 performances in towns such as Kolberg and Schlawe, and a dozen

others.<sup>112</sup> The Bayerische Landesbühne, under the artistic direction of Ernst Leopold Stahl and Otto Kustermann, followed a pronounced anti-modernist line. It was self-consciously “anti-Berlin”, seeing itself as setting out to contest the Reich capital’s dominance in the theatrical world. Stahl’s commitment to a programme of “apolitical” cultural edification of South Germany ensured Shakespeare’s place in what otherwise tended to be a highly national-chauvinist programme.<sup>113</sup> It can be safely surmised (not least on the basis of Stahl’s critical writings on other productions of the play) that the *Merchant of Venice* performances offered in rural Bavaria by the travelling Landesbühne eschewed both modernist formal innovation and Berlin-style philosemitic experiments.

The critic Herbert Ihering complained about a glut in performances of *The Merchant of Venice* when Fehling staged the play in Berlin’s Staatstheater:

If theatres are having trouble with their repertoires, they put on [Schiller’s] *Kabale und Liebe*, [Ibsen’s] *Peer Gynt*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* or *The Merchant of Venice*. [...]

In recent years Berlin has seen hundreds of performances of *The Merchant*. During this time, or for even longer, many works of world literature have not been played in Berlin. Many works which it is the duty of the Staatstheater to bring to life. And thus it swings onto the old, creaking programme carousel of the other Berlin theatres. [...]

*The Merchant of Venice* cannot be staged over and over again at short intervals. Even masterworks cannot withstand becoming hackneyed, even masterworks need a rest. A moratorium on *The Merchant of Venice* for six years, and the theatre will show a new face.<sup>114</sup>

Berlin’s Staatstheater continued its successful run of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1928, registering another 25 performances, while the Schlesisches Landestheater took 19 performances of the play to a dozen small towns in Silesia. The Landestheater in Gotha also scored a significant 14 performances, which included visits to Eisenach, Langensalza and Waltershausen.<sup>115</sup>

## Weimar

After the failure of the Beer Hall Putsch in Munich in November 1923, Thuringia began to replace Bavaria as the state most congenial to the NSDAP. It was in Thuringia, under a right-wing minority government that governed with support from the Nazi Party in 1930-31, that the “unholy alliance of *völkisch* and other radical rightwing circles with the national-conservative political, social and *bildungsbürgerlich* elites” that was a fundamental precondition for Hitler’s rise to power was rehearsed, with the two sides of the alliance sharing a common hostility to the Republic, not least in the sphere of cultural politics. The NSDAP even held its party rally in the Thuringian capital Weimar in 1926.<sup>116</sup> The Weimar National Theatre was a prize target for the cultural political efforts of the Nazis and their right-wing allies. The Deputy Gauleiter of Thuringia and Nazi newspaper editor, Hans Severus Ziegler, campaigned vigorously against the inclusion of works by Jewish or left-wing authors in the theatre’s programme, calling for a more patriotic German repertoire. Shakespeare was considered acceptable by Ziegler (especially the histories).<sup>117</sup>

It was against this backdrop that the Weimar National Theatre, still home to the German Shakespeare Society, staged *The Merchant of Venice* in a new version directed by Dr. Friedrich Sebrecht in 1926. The production was one of those whose tone was “gracious high spirits and the robust, colourful splendour of the Renaissance”. Hans Illiger as Antonio was described as the embodiment of the “proud, noble Venetian”. So dignified were the noble Christians in this production, that even Gratiano, played by Bernhard Vollmer, “had enough taste to abstain from the usual *lazzzi* [jests] in the courtroom scene”. Even the Prince of Morocco, often the subject of some levity, was portrayed as “a noble, richly apparelled Moorish prince”. Max Brock’s Shylock was “neither a martyr of religious persecution nor a grotesque monster”, rather, according to the report in the German Shakespeare Yearbook: “Thanks to his artistic sensibility, he found the right tone in the unforced combination of both the elements from which the character of the common avaricious Jew and the irreconcilable hater of Christians is composed”. Brock’s Shylock was praised as an authentic recreation of the Renaissance Jewish type intended by Shakespeare, but, despite the production’s emphasis on grace and gaiety, the reviewer found himself unable to suppress a feeling of sympathy for the condemned man at the end of the

courtroom scene, even if he would not go as far as the young Englishwoman in Heine's anecdote, who exclaimed: "The poor man is wronged".<sup>118</sup> The production enjoyed considerable popular success in Weimar: after the 1926 première, it ran for 15 more performances the following year, plus half a dozen guest performances in the university town of Jena, before *Antony and Cleopatra* took its place in the repertoire.<sup>119</sup>

The town of Weimar became a particular focus of the Nazi cultural front organization, the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*, a body that succeeded in enlisting support from a wider group of conservative, nationalist and *völkisch* personalities, in addition to its core NSDAP base. The Weimar chapter of the Kampfbund was founded in March 1928, and included Ziegler, Carl von Schirach, the *völkisch* literature historian Adolf Bartels, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche and the architect Paul Schultze-Naumburg, and maintained links with the German Shakespeare Society.<sup>120</sup> When the right-wing coalition between Nazis and conservatives came to power in Thuringia in 1930, with Wilhelm Frick as interior minister proceeding to implement Nazi policies in the cultural sphere (including the notorious ban on jazz as "Negerkultur"), Ziegler took personal control of the Weimar National Theatre, banning all "Jewish" writers from its stage (including that secular Gentile, Bertolt Brecht, in this category).<sup>121</sup> Even after Ziegler was replaced by his predecessor following the temporary collapse of the rightist coalition, the Weimar National Theatre remained a focus of Nazi cultural politics: in 1932, marking the tenth anniversary of Mussolini's March on Rome, the Italian dictator's (co-authored) play on Napoleon *A Hundred Days*, received its German première in Weimar in the presence of Hitler and a number of prominent Nazi leaders and Kampfbund luminaries.<sup>122</sup> *The Merchant of Venice* did not return to the Weimar National Theatre after 1927, *Intendant* Franz Ulbrich contenting himself with a production of *King John* as his contribution to the cultivation of the Shakespearean repertoire in 1932.<sup>123</sup>

### **The Merchant of Berlin**

Another metamorphosis of Shylock in the Weimar Republic that is worth mentioning was Walter Mehring's play adapting the Shakespearean material: *The Merchant of Berlin* (subtitled "A History Play from the German Inflation"), set in the inflation year of 1923 and premièring on Erwin Piscator's stage at Berlin's Theater am

Nollendorfplatz in 1929 (on 6 September), the year of the Great Crash. Mehring was a poet perhaps best known for his satirical cabaret chansons. His adaptation followed the left-wing tradition of reading the material as primarily anti-capitalist, rather than as anti-Jewish.<sup>124</sup> Piscator wrote in his programme notes:

A further difficulty arose: in *The Merchant of Berlin* an East European Jew stands in the center of the action. The historical circumstances make him guilty along with the others. The ‘Socialism of Fools’, as August Bebel once called anti-Semitism, is perilously close. As we saw it, Kaftan [the Jewish protagonist] belonged to the second, tragicomic stage. [Piscator conceived of the play in “three stages: a tragic stage (proletariat), a tragicomic stage (middle class) and a grotesque stage (upper classes and the military).]<sup>125</sup> An advocate of capitalism who perishes with capitalism. A racketeer whose cupidity is only thinly veiled by his ethical motive, his love for his sick daughter.

More concisely, Piscator summed up his view as follows: “For us, Kaftan was an exploiter, or at least another beneficiary, and his racial or religious affiliations were a matter of indifference to us.” He conceded, however, in his book on political theatre, that the public failed to see the play the same way.<sup>126</sup> As Steven Aschheim has suggested, *The Merchant of Berlin* was one example of leftist writers using ghetto Jews “as a foil to uncover some of the major hypocrisies of postwar bourgeois German morality and society”.<sup>127</sup>

In Shakespeare’s play, the merchant is, of course, the Gentile Antonio (although in its review of Mehring’s play, the Berlin boulevard paper *B.Z. am Mittag* made the common mistake of assuming that it was Shylock, referring to the “racial relationship of the two eponymous protagonists”).<sup>128</sup> In Mehring’s updated version, the merchant is the Eastern European Jew, Simon Chajim Kaftan, who arrives in inflation-era Berlin with a hundred US dollars concealed in the lining of his cap. The jokily named Kaftan displays the speech patterns of the unassimilated Eastern Jew: his speech is full of Yiddish words and expressions and his German syntax is mangled. As Kaftan, Paul Baratoff of the New York Yiddish Theatre coped ably with the demands of the role, but there is some doubt as to how well the audience could have understood some of the script.<sup>129</sup> Kaftan has some similarities to Shylock, along with some differences: Shylock’s



first words on stage are the concise “Three thousand ducats, well”. Kaftan’s first speech is more rambling and prolix, but it culminates in his praise for the dollar, a dollar which could be exchanged for ten thousand marks and which could buy great wealth in inflation-stricken Berlin.<sup>130</sup> Where Shylock keeps up with the news from the Rialto, Kaftan follows the Berlin bourse and the foreign exchange market. The Grenadierstrasse in Berlin’s old East End, home to many poor Eastern Jews, takes the place of the Venice ghetto. Like Shylock, Kaftan has a daughter, Jessi (short for Jessika?), who is ill and convalescing in Switzerland when the play begins. Kaftan claims that he needs to make money to care for her. Jessi later arrives on the scene, with the “*Bubikopf*” (short bob) hairstyle fashionable among emancipated young Berlin women of the 1920s. Like her Venetian counterpart, she is later seduced by a Gentile, adding to her father’s sense of isolation. Kaftan echoes Shylock’s lament for his lost daughter and his lost ducats: “where are you Jessi my dollars?”<sup>131</sup> The usurer Shylock lends money to Christian merchants for their risky (but apparently legitimate) trading ventures; Kaftan is a small-time currency speculator with big ambitions, who falls into the net of a cartel of wealthy and influential Gentile inflation profiteers, including a right-wing lawyer named Müller and high-ranking army officers in Potsdam. Mehring inverts the antisemitic stereotype of the behind-the-scenes Jewish “wire-puller”: the Gentile profiteers require a Jewish front-man to protect their own respectability. Like Shylock, Kaftan’s marginal social status makes him an indispensable, yet ultimately disposable and replaceable, accessory for the capitalists with real social and political power. Mehring even includes an overt allusion to *The Merchant of Venice*: at a reception in Kaftan’s Berlin residence, party-goers praise an actor from the Staatstheater:

- You were fantastic as Shylock!

[...]

- Especially in the Rialto scene! With all the repulsive characteristics of the Galician Jew!

The vain actor’s reply in effect turns the joke back on the antisemites: “You should see me as Moltke some time!” The same thespian skills that conjured up an antisemitic caricature could also portray an idol of Prussian militarism.<sup>132</sup> Like Shylock with his worthless bond, Kaftan

ends up empty-handed and outcast, as the end of the inflation, coinciding with a right-wing putsch attempt, anti-Jewish pogroms in Berlin's Jewish quarter,<sup>133</sup> and the death of his daughter Jessi, leaves him ruined.<sup>134</sup>

John Willett described *The Merchant of Berlin* as an “unwieldy, mildly satirical” play.<sup>135</sup> It certainly proved itself to be unwieldy: Mehring's already voluminous text was extended by Piscator's desire to augment the proletarian perspective otherwise lacking in the drama by including cantatas sung by a chorus of workers (with music by Hanns Eisler). The elaborate three-tier sets (designed by the Bauhaus artist Laszlo Moholy-Nagy), intended to symbolize class divisions, were connected by two conveyor belts. Piscator had used a conveyor belt to great effect in his production of *The Adventures of the Good Soldier Švejk* with the comic actor Max Pallenberg. In *The Merchant of Berlin*, they seem to have helped mainly to slow down the action, with the performance lasting from 7.30 to 11.45p.m.<sup>136</sup> The critic Monty Jacobs lamented:

A whole system of conveyor belts, lengthwise and crosswise, along with bridges swaying from the flies, trapdoors rising up to meet them – in short an up and down, exhausting for eye and ear, confusion, a railway shunting yard.<sup>137</sup>

This unwieldiness and the expensiveness of the production would drive the Piscatorbühne into debt, with *The Merchant of Berlin*'s run finishing on 15 October 1929. However, if Willett was later to find the satire mild, another commentator on Piscator has written that in 1929 the play “offended all shades of opinion”.<sup>138</sup>

The right-wing *Deutsche Zeitung* wrote:

These Piscators are getting bolder. [...]

These Piscators, their patrons and protectors work with poison gas. They have gassed the cities and are moving out slowly into the country. Rage is no longer an adequate gas mask: retaliate with poison gas of your own.

[...]

Drag Jews onto the stage. Show their deceitfulness. Show their destructive spirit. Show their squalid little business minds. Show the merchant of Berlin who is not from Berlin, who is living today on the Kurfürstendamm and in the villas in Grünewald. (In spite of Mehring and Piscator).

Tear them down. Stop at nothing. Mutilate their most cherished feelings as they have mutilated yours. Pay them back in the same coin. But don't forget that in these very circles they are accustomed to demand high rates of interest.

What a pleasure it will be to be able to pay them back at last!<sup>139</sup>

Piscator's foes on the right often assumed that such a prominent exponent of "*Kulturbolschewismus*" must be Jewish, although he was in fact descended from a long line of Protestant pastors and theologians, going back almost as far as the Reformation.<sup>140</sup> Walter Mehring, the creator of Simon Chajim Kaftan, was Jewish.

On the left, *Die Linkskurve*, the organ of the Communist-aligned League of Proletarian-Revolutionary Writers (BPRS), described the play as ideologically a retrograde step, "even for Walter Mehring". Mehring had taken "the most revolutionary period of German post-war history, that of the inflation" and examined it "not from the class standpoint, but from a constructed racial standpoint, that of the Berlin Jews of that time". Piscator's unusually capital-intensive stage machinery also came in for criticism from the *Linkskurve's* Marxist critic, who regarded it as totally inappropriate for a revolutionary theatre as it was unaffordable for the proletarian theatre (it soon proved to be unaffordable for the Piscatorbühne as well), and about as "revolutionary" as the "conveyor belt of rationalized industry or the technical extravagance of a Thyssen or a Krupp".<sup>141</sup> The Social Democratic *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, on the other hand, praised Mehring's play, even if Piscator's machinery was felt to be intrusive.<sup>142</sup>

For its part, the newspaper of the Jewish Central-Verein (Central Association), advised German Jews who cared about their honour to avoid attending the play's performance. Compared with the categorical rejection of Mehring's "untruthful and tendentious play" by the editorial board, the actual review by Hans Oppenheimer was rather more nuanced and differentiated, acknowledging, for example, that in his re-working of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, Mehring had

avoided the play's mixture of the comic and tragic genres and opted for the tragic. But Oppenheimer believed that no good could possibly come of the production, except perhaps for the career of Paul Baratoff for his virtuoso acting performance, and he sincerely hoped the production would be a flop (welcoming the first night's indications that it might be). Oppenheimer expressed the fear that Mehring's satire would be misunderstood by the mass of the audience, who would simply see the play as the unflattering depiction of a Jew by a Jewish author, in particular, an audience might misconstrue what Oppenheimer himself described as the "splendid caricature" in Mehring's surreal-grotesque scene depicting the ultra-rightists' fantasy of a conclave of the Elders of Zion being dispersed by the shade of Frederick the Great.<sup>143</sup> Similar fears were expressed by another Jewish newspaper, which headed its article on the play: "How Jews unwittingly create anti-Jewish hatred".<sup>144</sup> The *Jüdische Rundschau* also regretted any attention that the production might still receive from the public and especially regretted the fact that Mehring seemed to attribute to Jews a more prominent role in the inflation than they had actually been responsible for: "Aryan" businessmen like Hugo Stinnes had been much more successful at manipulating the inflation phenomenon for their profit.<sup>145</sup> This was, of course, largely Mehring's point, but the Jewish press, feeling increasingly in the defensive in a period of aggressively rising antisemitism, found any suggestion of a link between Jews and financial trickery extremely unfortunate.<sup>146</sup>

The *Berliner Tageblatt's* Alfred Kerr was much more positive: despite some reservations – Piscator dragged out the action too much, the reasons for the fall of Kaftan could have been made more convincing, and Kaftan was a little too passive to be wholly believable – Kerr greeted the play as a work that finally had something relevant to say about the present, as well as praising Mehring's mastery of language. George Bernard Shaw might have classified it as an "unpleasant play", Kerr suggested, but he found it first and foremost an honest play. He also considered Kaftan's Jewishness little more than an incidental detail.<sup>147</sup> Writing for Germany's other leading liberal newspaper, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Bernhard Diebold also managed to arrive at an objective and balanced assessment of the production. He found words of praise for the courage of Mehring's satire, and Mehring's capacity to rise above tendentiousness in his sovereign treatment of the material, even if he found the play wanting in drama. Diebold was favourably impressed by aspects of Piscator's production – above all the

recreation of urban street life on the stage, even if, inevitably, he thought it all went on for too long. However, he found the image of “the gigantic red-bearded figure in the long caftan” wandering through the streets of Berlin East “unforgettable”. Diebold also praised Barattoff as a “master of discretion”: “One pities him more than one hates him”. In conclusion, Diebold suggested that both the “Aryan” Müller and the Jew Kaftan could be viewed as the “Merchants of Berlin”: “Georg Kaiser would call this play ‘Twice Times Shylock’”.<sup>148</sup>

Full-blown right-wing hysteria broke out over one of the final scenes of the play. With inflation past, street-sweepers sweep up a pile of worthless paper with the comment that it was once worth a fortune, now it was “Rubbish [*Dreck* – possibly stronger, “filth”]! Away with it!” A steel helmet then came under the broom: “*Dreck!* Away with it!”, and finally a corpse lying on the street: “That was once a man! That once had a steel helmet! [...] *Dreck!* Away with it!”.<sup>149</sup> In the context of the play, Mehring’s point was the way in which capitalism, and the power-brokers in the military and economic establishment, could render anything in society worthless, from money to human beings. For the right-wing press, this scene constituted nothing but a calculated insult to the German soldier, especially as the actor playing the street-sweeper on the first night had gratuitously kicked the “corpse” for good measure (which had not been required by Mehring’s text). As well as expressing outrage at the symbolic desecration, the *Nachtausgabe* described the scene in terms which suggested that Piscator was seeking to justify the murder of German soldiers.<sup>150</sup> The *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* splashed the headline “*Dreck!* Away with it!” across the top of the centre of the front page. The *Lokal-Anzeiger* accused Mehring and Piscator of dragging

everything German and Christian, everything that the uniform, the Prussian-German past and tradition [stand for] into the mud. Potsdam and the bells of the Garrison Church, the Great King [Frederick], the generals, our marches, our holy songs, our flags: *Dreck*, away with it!<sup>151</sup>

Even after Piscator hastily deleted the offending incident with the field-grey corpse in subsequent performances, the *Berliner Lokal-Zeitung* continued to campaign against the play for its denigration of Frederick the Great, the military and the spirit of Potsdam. One writer in the paper permitted himself the observation that Mehring could not be

expected to understand the old Prussian officer corps as “such circles will remain closed to him for ever” (presumably because of his Jewish descent), then expressed his respect for the restraint and discipline of a troop of Nazi SA men who passed the theatre on their way through the Nollendorfplatz, and quoted an “East Asian” gentleman (presumably a connoisseur of Oswald Spengler) who is said to have seen the play and expressed his glee at the graphic evidence of the decline of the West and the fine prospects of the “yellow race”.<sup>152</sup> In the right-wing *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (which had been the property of Hugo Stinnes during the inflation years), Paul Fechter recommended that such “*Schweinereien*” (disgraceful filth) be referred to higher authorities (and presumably banned).<sup>153</sup>

It made little difference that Walter Mehring explained the corpse scene as another Shakespearean allusion, to the grave-digger scene in *Hamlet*, adding the comment that “in this country satire has to come with user’s instructions”.<sup>154</sup> Piscator had no doubt sought provocation to some extent with his treatment of the military and militarism in the production. The extreme vitriolic response, not only from the Nazi press, but from the conservative and nationalist press more broadly, seems to have been intensified by the fact that the provocation came from a Jewish *littérateur*, and from the fact that Prussian officers and patriotic Christians were being represented as occupying the same ethical plane as an East European Jewish merchant.

*The Merchant of Berlin* was, of course, not the only new drama in the Weimar period to include a Jewish protagonist. In September 1928, Hermann Ungar’s *Der rote General* (*The Red General*) had its première in Berlin’s Theater in der Königgrätzer Strasse. Set in the Russian Civil War, the play dealt with the fate of a Bolshevik commander called Podkamjenski (reminiscent of Trotsky), whose Jewish father is killed in a pogrom initiated by a divisional commander called Brutzkin, a popular “man of the people”, of peasant stock. The Bolshevik leadership chooses to support Brutzkin for political reasons, and Podkamjenski, sent abroad on a political mission, falls victim to a White Guard assassin. Podkamjenski was played in a powerful performance by Fritz Kortner.<sup>155</sup> Walter Mehring criticized Ungar for setting his exploration of the topic of antisemitism in Soviet Russia. Ungar denied any anti-Soviet intentions, claiming that he merely wished to show the universality of the problem of antisemitism. Mehring pointed out that Lenin had taken measures to stamp out antisemitic pogroms in 1918 and argued that closer to home, in

Germany, right-wing pogroms had claimed non-Jewish and Jewish victims alike (for example, Rosa Luxemburg, unmourned by Jews in the bourgeoisie, Mehring claimed). Mehring added: “and doesn’t the assimilated [Jew] despise the newly immigrated Eastern Jew?”. For Mehring, Ungar’s drama was problematical in its emphasis on antisemitism at the expense of class or political analysis.<sup>156</sup> More to the right of the political spectrum, Franz Servaes in the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* saw the play as too sympathetic towards the Russian revolution and criticized the negative depiction of the White Guardists “and the clear denigration of the Aryan element” in the play.<sup>157</sup> Goebbels’ *Der Angriff* was uninhibitedly venomous in its attack on the Jewish play, “Cohn-Kortner” and everyone associated with the play, responding to a comment by Alfred Kerr about “bestial antisemitism” with the declaration that “antisemitism represents a thoroughly healthy reflex reaction of the blood, it is a part of Nature.”<sup>158</sup>

The young Jewish author Paul Kornfeld wrote a play called *Jud Süß*, which was first performed in Berlin in October 1930, at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, directed by Leopold Jessner, with Ernst Deutsch in the title role. Like the 1925 novel of the same name by Lion Feuchtwanger, Kornfeld’s play was based on the historical figure of Joseph Süß Oppenheimer, “court Jew” and financial advisor of the Duke of Württemberg in the early eighteenth century. Feuchtwanger had also written a play on Oppenheimer, also entitled *Jud Süß*, in 1917 – his first attempt at the subject. Despite problems with wartime censorship, Feuchtwanger’s play premiered in Munich in 1917, and was also performed in Vienna in 1919 at the Komödienhaus with Joseph Schildkraut in the title role.<sup>159</sup> Building on Feuchtwanger’s example, in Kornfeld’s play Süß becomes a tragic figure: the play emphasizes the prejudice and ignorance with which the Jew is confronted, in the face of which he maintains a certain dignity (declining to “*mauscheln*” on demand when taunted by court lackeys at the beginning). Süß’s outstanding characteristics are ambition (which drives him to cut himself off from the rest of the Jewish community as he rises in court society) and a boundless energy. But he seems to be largely without malice and is no worse than court society makes him – the more he acculturates himself to the lax morals and habitual corruption of the court, the more he is resented by his rivals, and the people blame him for his oppressive tax régime, and not the spendthrift duke in whose interest the taxes are raised. A plot to kill

Süss results in the poisoning of the duke by mistake, but Süss is framed for the killing and executed anyway.<sup>160</sup>

Kornfeld's choice of subject matter, like Walter Mehring's *Kaufmann von Berlin*, was received with some misgivings on the part of Jewish organisations, with one writer in the *Central-Verein Zeitung* taking the position that anything that gave more prominence to the "Jewish question" was likely to have negative consequences, while a reviewer in the same paper confessed to similar fears in the face of a play about Joseph Süss Oppenheimer, but found that Kornfeld's work had overcome the pitfalls that he had feared.<sup>161</sup> The Communist *Rote Fahne* dismissed the play as a glorification of a "Jewish black marketeer", but the Social Democratic flagship newspaper *Vorwärts* gave Jessner's production a much more positive reception.<sup>162</sup> One critic found the representation of the Jew as scapegoat "very contemporary", indeed, transparently so, and predicted that it would be banned in Thuringia.<sup>163</sup> The *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* complained that in a play in which an exploited populace rebelled against a powerful parvenu of alien race, the author, Kornfeld, evidently sided with the latter, rather than the "original German populace who had been cheated and bled white" by the Jew Süss.<sup>164</sup> The right-wing backlash against Kornfeld's play even extended to the nationalist journalist Eugen Ortner writing another, antisemitic version of *Jud Süss* in response to Kornfeld's. Ortner's version was staged in Breslau in November 1931.<sup>165</sup>

In addition to these plays by Jewish authors on Jewish themes and characters, the Weimar period also saw a number of plays with Jewish figures by non-Jewish writers. These included *Affäre Dreyfus* (*The Dreyfus Case*) by Wilhelm Herzog and Hans J. Rehfisch, which enjoyed a successful first run in Berlin's Volksbühne in 1929.<sup>166</sup> The play stuck closely to the historical documentation and chronology, and its themes of antisemitism and the political manipulation of the justice system both had a particular contemporary resonance. Georg Kaiser's *Die jüdische Witwe* (*The Jewish Widow*), a "Biblical comedy" providing a more sexually frank treatment of the Judith legend than Friedrich Hebbel, had been published in 1911 but only premièred in 1921 in Meiningen and Nordhausen (where the audience reaction to the play was strongly negative),<sup>167</sup> and was performed again in Berlin's Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in 1925-26. Oskar Homolka's *Holofernes* wore a swastika on his costume in the Berlin production. With the Nazi party at a low ebb at this time, the gag did not seem dangerous. Karl Heinz Martin's production also played with stereotypes by inserting a



“Nordic blonde” Judith, Else Eckersberg, into the otherwise “black-haired Oriental milieu”.<sup>168</sup> Elvira Grözinger has noted that Kaiser’s depiction of the Judith figure as a man-eating nymphomaniac is intended as a parody on traditional prejudices, but has suggested that the effect of the play might remain ambivalent.<sup>169</sup> As well as these works, the existing repertoire continued to be played, running the gamut from more or less antisemitic comedies such as Freytag’s *Die Journalisten* and Sudermann’s *Die gutgeschnittene Ecke* to Gutzkow’s *Uriel Acosta* (performed in Berlin in 1930 by the Habima – the Moscow Jewish Artists’ Theatre) and Lessing’s *Nathan der Weise* at the other end of the spectrum. Productions of *Nathan* included festival performances for the 1929 bicentenary of Lessing’s birth, featuring Ludwig Wüllner in Frankfurt am Main, Marburg and Stuttgart, and a number of performances in Berlin, including by the Staatstheater, the Schiller-Theater and the Volksbühne.<sup>170</sup> However, despite what should have been the auspicious occasion of the Lessing bicentenary, performances of *Nathan der Weise* were conspicuously scarce in Germany as a whole from 1929 to 1933, with a mere seven productions recorded for the entire period, by Thomas Eicher’s reckoning.<sup>171</sup> Lessing’s plea for tolerance and equality was falling on hard times.

### Years of depression

As the Weimar Republic entered the year 1929, the economic situation was looking generally favourable: an American economist made the sanguine prediction that “Germany’s expansion will continue in coming years”, and that the expansion was likely to be “genuine and sustained”.<sup>172</sup> However, Germany’s heavy reliance on foreign capital, especially in the form of American loans, and an increase in unemployment following the rationalization of industry in the second half of the 1920s, rendered Germany particularly vulnerable to the economic shock that emanated from the Wall Street Crash in October 1929. The economic crisis brought renewed political instability with it: after the broad-based coalition government under the Social Democratic Chancellor Hermann Müller split in 1930 over the issue of the financing of unemployment insurance, Müller’s successor Heinrich Brüning called a fatally ill-timed election which resulted in the Nazi Party gaining 107 Reichstag seats, catapulting the NSDAP into national significance.

If the years of inflation in the early 1920s had not prevented theatrical life from flourishing, the depression from 1929 onwards had much more stringent effects. Local municipal authorities, which had been able to rid themselves of debt during the devaluation of the currency in the early 1920s, found their budgets increasingly squeezed as depression-era revenues fell and demand for local government welfare services increased dramatically. The result was increasing austerity for municipally subsidized *Stadttheater*, while many commercial theatres were forced to close. The number of privately-run theatres in Germany fell from 91 in 1928/29 to 56 in 1932/33.<sup>173</sup> Audience numbers fell dramatically, with attendance numbers in German municipal theatres (*Stadttheater*) falling from 19,250,000 in the 1926/27 season to 11,029,000 in 1931/32.<sup>174</sup> The number of functioning theatres in Berlin fell from 48 in 1928 to 34 in 1932.<sup>175</sup>

Productions of Shakespeare became less frequent, as their comparatively large casts made them expensive to stage. Ernst Leopold Stahl was inclined to blame the leadership of the Berlin theatres for the decline in Shakespeare performance figures, but he also recognized that another cause was the “unfavourable economic situation of the upper stratum of the bourgeois class in those years, as the then key support of interest in Shakespeare in Germany”.<sup>176</sup> The German Shakespeare Yearbook registered the continuing decline in the number of performances: 1,365 performances in 1929 (221 fewer than the previous year), by 144 companies. The number of performances recovered slightly in 1930, rising to 1,466, but the number of theatres performing Shakespeare fell to 133. 1931 saw a renewed fall to 1,302 performances by 114 companies, with only 1,034 performances by 100 companies in 1932.<sup>177</sup> In addition to the economic pressures of the depression, another factor which affected the number of Shakespeare performances in 1932 was the centenary of the death of Goethe, a milestone which all serious theatres sought to observe, in some cases at the temporary expense of other classical authors, including Shakespeare. Although, as Stahl observed: “This applies more to the great tragedies than to the comedies, for which Goethe offers no substitute”.<sup>178</sup>

The performance figures for *The Merchant of Venice* were in proportion to the lower total number of Shakespeare productions, but they remained relatively steady during most of the depression: 134 performances by 19 companies in 1929 (making *The Merchant* the third most popular Shakespeare play); 130 by 24 companies in 1930 (fifth);

138 by 21 in 1931 (third again); and dropping to 125 by 16 in 1932 (fourth).<sup>179</sup>

In 1929, Berlin's Schiller-Theater put on the most performances of *The Merchant*, with 35 of the 134 performances that year being played on its stage. Essen was in second place, with 17 performances (or 18 in the season 1928/29), a remarkable total given the smaller potential audience and the straitened circumstances of the theatre in the Ruhr region. Guest appearances by Caspar Neher may have been a drawcard here. Erfurt's Stadttheater managed 11 performances.<sup>180</sup> *The Merchant of Venice* was also discovered in a new medium: the Süddeutsche Rundfunk broadcast the Shylock scenes on 21 May 1929.<sup>181</sup>

In 1930, the most performances of *The Merchant of Venice* by one company was 11 by the Dresden Schauspielhaus, with Kassel's Staatstheater putting on 10 performances. The Nordmark-Landestheater, based in Schleswig and the Sondershausen Landestheater continued the tradition of taking touring productions to small provincial towns.<sup>182</sup> Ernst Leopold Stahl, writing for the German Shakespeare Yearbook, singled out for praise the Grenzlandtheater in Aachen directed by H.K. Strohm, for their success in staging *The Merchant of Venice* – 6 performances in 1930, despite the adverse economic circumstances, which were starting to oblige the Aachen theatre to turn to more popular light entertainment.<sup>183</sup> Again, *The Merchant of Venice* was featured on the radio: in 1930, by the Nordische Rundfunk, serving Northern Germany.<sup>184</sup>

In 1931, there were 24 performances of *The Merchant of Venice* in Frankfurt am Main (of the 138 counted in that year), and Saladin Schmitt in Bochum put on 12.<sup>185</sup> The former saw Shylock played by the Jewish actor Kurt Katsch in a performance praised for its presentation of Shylock as a flesh-and-blood figure, "neither a criminal nor a tragic saint". One critic felt the production was too given to editorializing on the present situation of the Jews, but acknowledged that the Frankfurt audience applauded enthusiastically during the play, with "endless ovations" at its conclusion.<sup>186</sup> It is estimated that at least half the theatre subscribers in Frankfurt were Jewish, and Jews played a very significant part in Frankfurt's civic and cultural life, so it is hardly surprising that the Frankfurt theatre (which had also recently seen *Nathan der Weise*) eschewed demonstrations of antisemitism.<sup>187</sup> The Frankfurt production, directed by Intendant Alwin Kronacher, availed itself of Hans Rothe's modernized text of the play, as well as

Engelbert Humperdinck's music.<sup>188</sup> The Bochum production was Schmitt's first production of *The Merchant* since 1921, and he once again made use of the revolving stage to depict the interconnections between the different parts of Venice. Hermann Heuser was well-received as Shylock, as was the Portia of Deli Maria Teichen.<sup>189</sup> The *Bochumer Anzeiger* saw the play as a testimony to Shakespeare's aristocratic convictions, as a fable, set in the world of the nobility, and governed by the contrast between "spirit and money, heart and greed, self-sacrifice and vengefulness, meanness and noblesse", with Shylock embodying all the negative characteristics. Heuser was, however, praised for humanizing Shylock, indeed making him into a caring bourgeois father at certain moments.<sup>190</sup> The Rheinisches Städtebund-Theater put on 11 performances of *The Merchant* in 9 Rhineland towns, and staged another 8 performances the following year.<sup>191</sup> Munich's Residenz-Theater put on 9 performances of *The Merchant of Venice* (plus a further 5 in 1932) as part of a Shakespeare cycle. Ernst Leopold Stahl commended the production by Friedrich Ulmer for its harmonious balance between the Portia scenes and the Shylock scenes, "so that the dangerous weighting of many productions of *The Merchant* towards one or the other group of scenes is happily avoided". The Jew was not allowed to steal this show, although Werner Krauss's antisemitic caricature, rendered with broad humorous effect, must have come close to doing so.<sup>192</sup> 1931 also saw afternoon performances of *The Merchant of Venice* for school-age audiences by the "Higher Schools' Theatre" in the Berliner Theater, with the stage veteran Ludwig Wüllner as Shylock (and Gerda Maurus as Portia). Franz Köppen found the seventy-two-year-old Wüllner's performance a little like viewing a "valuable museum piece" – this was very much old-school acting, with little attempt at psychological motivation – but fascinating and admirable none the less.<sup>193</sup> Walter Steinthal was less favourably impressed, seeing in the production a perniciously tendentious presentation of the "Jewish question":

Ludwig Wüllner, the venerably mediocre singer-actor from the Bismarckian era, wheedles [*mauschell*] and roars in hoarse guttural noises with a Kovno accent for three hours – and for four weeks fifteen hundred schoolchildren, under the supervision of the Prussian Ministry of Education, are transported into a kind of reverse ritual murder hysteria.

In Steinthal's view, Shakespeare, by presenting two contrasting Jewish characters in Shylock and Jessica, had intended the opposite effect to this state-sponsored production for schools: Shakespeare had demonstrated the fallacy of theories of blood and race. Steinthal went on to wonder when the Berlin State Theater would perform the "long overdue" *Nathan der Weise*.<sup>194</sup>

In 1932, the Cologne Schauspielhaus staged 19 of the 125 performances of *The Merchant of Venice* in that year, followed by Leipzig's Altes Theater with 13. There seems to have been a change in the wind discernible already in these 1932 productions, with comic Shylocks travestied to the point of being dehumanized. In Cologne, the production directed by Fritz Holl stayed in the comic vein, and Walter Richter's Shylock accordingly had "none of the demonic magnificence" of more tragic Shylocks.<sup>195</sup> A reviewer for the *Kölnische Zeitung* wrote:

His very outward appearance was more repulsive, verminous than terrible: a thin, sickly pale, dirty face, whose straggly beard seemed to have some sort of unappetizing lichen adhering to it, below which [there was] a clumsy, fat body, that propelled itself by flat-footed waddling and staggering. That the sentencing of such a Shylock could not achieve the same profound reaction as one with more heroic tendencies, is obvious, so that one could accept it without qualms of conscience as the due punishment for a mean cast of mind.<sup>196</sup>

In Leipzig, the familiar contrast was emphasized between the world of light, merriment, colour and music associated with Portia and Belmont and "the world of Shylock [...] dark, dull, colourless, shadowed by cares and dark passions".<sup>197</sup> Shylock also appeared 10 times each in the Nürnberg Schauspielhaus and the Potsdam Schauspielhaus. The Frankfurt production continued its run from late 1931, with another 9 productions in 1932.<sup>198</sup>

A strong cultural divide is apparent in the Weimar period: Berlin's theatres, experimental, modernist, and sometimes left-leaning, came under constant attack from right-wing critics such as Alfred Mühr and Richard Biedrzyński, not to mention the Nazi press. Common to these critics was a rejection not only of "cultural Bolshevism" but of what was perceived to be excessive Jewish influence in the Berlin theatres. Critics had a field day with modernist productions such as Jessner's

1932 *Othello*, ten years after his expressionist version starring Fritz Kortner, this time with Heinrich George as a highly expressive black African “Moor” and Werner Krauss in a bravura performance as a cynically comical Iago. Conservative writers identified Berlin as the source of the worst excesses of modernism. In the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse*, Felix Salten wrote: “For years it has been more or less the intention of Berlin directors to distort the classics, to falsify their meaning, to scratch away all their beauty, banalize their nobility, and to generally use and abuse these crown jewels of the spirit in a pseudo-revolutionary fashion”.<sup>199</sup> Although Munich and other cities such as Bochum under the influence of Saladin Schmitt made important contributions to the theatrical culture of the Weimar Republic, the major cultural battleground was the Reich capital. And most of Germany’s small and medium-sized municipal theatres were slow to embrace the experiments of the Weimar Republic, with some theatre companies (like the Bayerische Landesbühne) self-consciously adopting a position of opposition to Berlin modernism. Ernst Leopold Stahl found that “there were thus also, in the hectic third decade, strong countervailing forces at work, which from within the Reich, but only very rarely in Berlin (for example, Fehling), worked against modish extravagances”.<sup>200</sup> “The secret of success is easy to reveal,” according to the director of the Städtische Schauspielhaus, Hannover, Dr Georg Altman, referring to his production of *Twelfth Night*, “people have the need to enjoy naïve art, unencumbered by problems and politics, and free from erotic innuendo”.<sup>201</sup> On the other side of the argument, Kurt Tucholsky complained in *Die Weltbühne* that the fate of the Bauhaus in Dessau showed that: “The moment an artistic institution is dependent on the municipal authorities or state authorities in the provinces, it is the end of it”. There were, of course, exceptions, but in the majority of cases – in Tucholsky’s view – the interests of conservative, if not reactionary, local officials prevailed over artistic innovation.<sup>202</sup>

Shakespeare, and *The Merchant of Venice*, were often the subjects of such conflicts. In 1925, Eugen Kilian complained about the craze for experimentation with Shakespeare. He criticized not only technical innovations such as use of the revolving stage to simulate Lorenzo’s and Jessica’s flight in a gondola, and the playing of the Prince of Morocco as an exuberant “black Negro type” instead of as a “noble Moor”, but also any attempt to play Shylock as a sympathetic character, or the avenger of his people, instead of as a deservedly

defeated comic villain. Only the latter, Kilian insisted, was true to Shakespeare's intentions.<sup>203</sup> Objections to some of the more adventurous avant-garde Shakespeare productions, with "Hamlet in tails" (in one much-debated instance), or borrowings from jazz, *Negerkultur*, cubism or "Bolshevik" culture, were not necessarily confined to the far right or the ultra-conservative.<sup>204</sup> But by the end of the Weimar Republic battle-lines were increasingly being drawn up between Berlin and the provinces, modernism and cultural conservatism, left and right, antisemitism and Enlightenment universalism. These oppositions did not always coincide (Berlin had, after all, been home to its own antisemitic movement since the 1880s), but the process of polarization became increasingly acute in a period of economic depression, erosion of normal parliamentary politics and growing political extremism. Shulamit Volkov has suggested that during the Imperial German period two opposite "cultural codes" evolved in Germany, antisemitism and emancipation, whereby the two opposing terms became shorthand and a common denominator for a whole set of cultural, political and social divisions. These divisions, as Volkov suggests, became even sharper in the highly polarized climate of the Weimar Republic.<sup>205</sup> In the process, German antisemitism became increasingly radicalized on the basis of a hardening doctrine of biological racism, as was to become evident from 1933 onwards.

## SHYLOCK IN THE “THIRD REICH”

### **Nathan’s last bow**

After President Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler Chancellor, and head of a coalition government including other right-wing groups and conservative appointees, on 30 January 1933, the Nazi consolidation of power proceeded swiftly. The dissolution of the Reichstag for fresh elections and the burning of the Reichstag building were followed by the passage of an Enabling Law giving Hitler sweeping dictatorial powers. The Nazi government began to implement the process of *Gleichschaltung*, of bringing the various areas of public life under the control of the Nazi-led authorities and enforcing conformity with Nazi ideology. This was to include all sectors of German cultural life. With many theatres being run by state and municipal authorities, Jewish employees of theatres fell under the scope of the Nazi régime’s first significant anti-Jewish law, the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service of 7 April 1933. In addition to dismissing officials whose previous political activity did not “provide the guarantee that they will at all times and without reservation act in the interests of the national state” (§4), it decreed that “officials who are of non-Aryan descent are to be retired” (§3.1).<sup>1</sup> A second legal basis for the expulsion of Jews from employment in German cultural life was given with the establishment in September 1933 of the *Reichskulturkammer* (Reich Chamber of Culture) as the peak organisational body of all organisations of professionals and employees active in cultural occupations, and its subsidiary chambers, including the Reich Theatre Chamber. Paragraph 10 of the First Implementation Decree of the *Kulturkammer* Law empowered all the



subsidiary chambers to refuse membership (which was a precondition for employment in the cultural sector) to persons who did “not possess the necessary reliability and aptitude for the practice of [their] activity”.<sup>2</sup> Without actually mentioning Jews, this was elastic enough to give Goebbels, as head of the Reichskulturkammer, authority to ban anyone on political or racist grounds. For pragmatic reasons, the various chambers did not attempt to expel all Jewish members immediately, but by the time of the proclamation of the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935, most chambers had begun to purge Jewish members. The Theatre Chamber’s main purge was conducted in late 1935 and 1936, with 535 members expelled (for various reasons, including “race”) by 1938, although some “part-Jews” and persons with Jewish spouses remained after that date.<sup>3</sup> If the official, bureaucratic “de-Jewification” of the German theatre proceeded slowly and in fits and starts, other pressures were brought to bear. In some places, zealous local authorities, or those which found themselves subject to harassment by local Nazi activists, rid themselves of Jewish theatrical personnel without being directed by the Reich Theatre Chamber to do so (as in the case of Gustav Hartung, *Intendant* of the Hessian State Theatre, Darmstadt).<sup>4</sup> In Düsseldorf, the Schauspielhaus was subject to *Gleichschaltung* and “Aryanization”: while Louise Dumont had died in May 1932, her partner Gustav Lindemann, the former teacher of Gustaf Gründgens, was *persona non grata* with the new régime on the grounds of his Jewish descent and he was removed from his position by the new municipal authorities.<sup>5</sup> Across the Reich, 75 theatre directors were either dismissed on grounds of ancestry, politics, or simply to make room for a more pro-Nazi candidate, or transferred to another theatre, while 47 remained in their positions.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the purge of Jewish personnel from the German theatre, the stage was to be “cleansed” of Jewish works, and of those works which included sympathetic portrayals of Jews. One of the most prominent victims of this purge was Lessing’s Enlightenment classic *Nathan der Weise*. This play swiftly disappeared from the repertoire of the German theatre, the Nazi literary critic Will Vesper even writing to the Reichsdramaturg denouncing the standard almanac of the German stage for failing to delete *Nathan* from its lists of theatrical anniversaries. In his response to Vesper, Eberhard Wolfgang Möller, one of the Reichsdramaturg’s subordinate officials, pointed out: “one line on Nathan doesn’t alter the fact that we have seen to it that it is

no longer performed".<sup>7</sup> The last performance – with one exception – of *Nathan* was by the Bremen Stadttheater on 6 March 1933.<sup>8</sup>

The exception to the unwritten blanket ban on *Nathan der Weise* was the performance in October 1933 for the Berlin Jewish *Kulturbund*, with Kurt Katsch playing Nathan.<sup>9</sup> The Kulturbund was a kind of Jewish cultural reservation allowed to exist under the supervision of Hans Hinkel, one of Goebbels' most trusted cultural bureaucrats, a Nazi party member since 1921 (number 287) and subsequently an SS officer (from August 1934, ultimately reaching the rank of *Gruppenführer*).<sup>10</sup> It had a certain welfare function, allowing Jewish performers who were losing their previous positions to be supported by the wider Jewish community, and a propagandistic, window-dressing function: as Jews were progressively excluded from participation in German cultural life, the régime was able to point to the fact that the Jewish community could still conduct its own cultural affairs.<sup>11</sup> The Kulturbund, branches of which also existed outside Berlin, was, of course, never wholly autonomous. Hinkel progressively restricted the choice of repertoire of the Kulturbund, refusing to allow Jews to sully the German classics by performing them on their stage. A drama on the fate of Jews threatened by pogroms in Tsarist Russia was also banned, on the grounds that the parallels to the situation of Jews in contemporary Germany might be too obvious.<sup>12</sup> Jews were only banned from attending other theatres in 1938, two days after the so-called *Reichskristallnacht*, although this measure was difficult to police until the compulsory wearing of yellow stars in September 1941, the same month in which the Kulturbund was finally dissolved.<sup>13</sup> The following month, Jewish emigration from Germany was banned, and deportations commenced to the ghettos in occupied Poland, and thence to mass shootings or, later, death camps.

The historian of the Kulturbund, Herbert Freeden, described the performance of *Nathan der Weise* on 1 October 1933 in the Berliner Theater in the Charlottenstrasse as "one of the great experiences in Berlin's Jewish community in those years", with an audience reminiscent of a Reinhardt première of the old days (despite exhortations from the Kulturbund to dress and behave in a way that would not attract any unfavourable attention. The audience were also requested to refrain from political conversations).<sup>14</sup> At the end of the play, the director Carl Loewenberg left Nathan alone on the stage, after the happily reunited Christian family had departed. The Zionist-leaning *Jüdische Rundschau*, which had initially been sceptical about the

Kulturbund's choice of *Nathan*, praised this twist in the production's tail:

After the recognition scene which bordered on the ridiculous... Loewenberg has the whole company of new-found relatives... in their colourful costumes and in a merry mood... go off into the palace, while Nathan's tall figure remains in the foreground, in shadows and isolated and then slowly turns back into his house, to his prayer stool. This ending points to something of the reality of the Jewish fate.<sup>15</sup>

The more assimilationist *CV-Zeitung*, on the other hand, which otherwise strongly approved of the choice to present Lessing's play and praised the production, questioned the insertion of this "weighty, tragic accent", which left one fearing the worst for Nathan.<sup>16</sup> The *Israelitisches Familienblatt* also took exception to the ending and to the way in which the "Jewish note" in the play was emphasized, for example, by repeated demonstrations of Nathan's religiosity – he first appeared humming a Hasidic song, adds the words "*Baruch haba*"<sup>17</sup> to Lessing's text, and is seen praying. For Katsch, the emphasis on religious trappings was a little like playing in a temple.<sup>18</sup> One witness of the performance recalled a rabbi reciting a prayer, as well as a box in the theatre full of Gestapo officials in civilian clothes.<sup>19</sup>

That the audience was more socially heterogenous than the Reinhardt premières of the old days is indicated by the recollections of Ruth Anselm, a dancer and actress married to the set designer Heinz Condell, who heard a member of the audience say to his wife, "Now I know why they killed Lessing" – a reference to the recent murder of the leftist intellectual Professor Theodor Lessing by the Nazis.<sup>20</sup> The remark suggests that something of the play's message came across, despite all the controversy. Ernest Lenart, who played the Templar, later remembered the performance as more than an artistic success:

We had a feeling of togetherness, we were among our own kind, one had the feeling, it was the start of something new. It was unique. Lessing's great poem of understanding – we still believed in it then. We had no idea what was going to come later.<sup>21</sup>

### Shylock in exile

The Nazi takeover of power resulted in a wave of emigration among the Jewish figures who had played a prominent role in German cultural and intellectual life in the Weimar Republic.<sup>22</sup> Fritz Kortner happened to be about to embark on a tour of Eastern Europe and Scandinavia the day after Hitler became Chancellor. Instead of returning to Germany, his exile took him to Vienna, London, and, in 1937, the United States.<sup>23</sup> Kortner appeared in a few film roles, but only in one stage production during his exile: a version of Hebbel's *Herodes und Mariamne* in Detroit and Washington. The production's success fell far short of the triumph that Kortner had experienced in the role of Herod in 1920s Berlin.<sup>24</sup>

In April 1933, Ernst Deutsch, Tilla Durieux, Alexander Moissi, Albert and Else Bassermann, and the critic Alfred Polgar and his wife all took the same train from Germany to Prague.<sup>25</sup> Bassermann was classified as “Aryan”, but went into exile out of solidarity with his Jewish wife. Bassermann had appeared in the première of Nazi playwright Hanns Johst's *Schlageter* in April 1933 (on Hitler's birthday), but when he was about to return to Germany from Vienna later that year he discovered that he would no longer be permitted to take the stage with his wife.<sup>26</sup> In 1936, Bassermann was still able to play Nathan in Reinhardt's Theater in der Josefstadt in Vienna to enthusiastic applause, with his wife Else in the role of Daja and Albert Heine as the patriarch.<sup>27</sup> After the *Anschluss* of Austria in 1938, the Bassermanns, like other anti-Nazi exiles, were uprooted a second time, and they settled in the United States in 1939. Along with numerous film roles, Bassermann lent his voice to the anti-Nazi propaganda efforts of émigré German-language radio broadcasting, giving a reading of the parable of the rings from *Nathan der Weise* in December 1942.<sup>28</sup>

Alexander Granach went into exile from Germany and was subsequently also exiled from Austria. He joined the Yiddish theatre in Warsaw, where his roles included Friedrich Wolf's Professor Mamlock and Shylock. One witness recorded:

I was carried away by the passion and the histrionic accomplishment of Granach. The way he elevated the lament over the disappearance of Shylock's daughter Jessica in the third act to a great accusation against antisemitism and cried it out – it was magnificent. I had seen Fritz Kortner as Shylock in Berlin.

But he played him more as an aristocrat, as a noble man. Granach was more down to earth, more naïve. He played him as a Jew from the countryside, who had grown wealthy from usury but who had remained uneducated.<sup>29</sup>

Granach went on to direct his own production of *The Merchant* in Łódź, using film sequences in Piscator's style, apparently successfully.<sup>30</sup> He subsequently toured his Yiddish Shylock in the Soviet Union, in Kiev in 1936.<sup>31</sup>

Kurt Katsch, who had played Shylock in Frankfurt in 1931/32 and then Nathan for the Jewish Kulturbund, and Martin Brandt, who had played Saladin in the latter performance, were later also among those fortunate enough to emigrate to the United States, where they were able to make a living playing stock Nazis in Hollywood war films.<sup>32</sup> Ernest Lenart, the Templar in the Kulturbund *Nathan* production, was also able to reach the United States in 1936.<sup>33</sup>

Max Reinhardt's last production in his Deutsches Theater, Berlin, was a staging of Hofmannsthal's *Grosses Welttheater* on 1 March 1933. A week later, he left Germany, never to return.<sup>34</sup> Through their trusted intermediary, Werner Krauss, the new Nazi rulers of Germany sought to sound out Reinhardt as to whether he would accept a kind of "honorary Aryan" status in order that he could continue to contribute cultural prestige to the Reich capital. Reinhardt declined. In June 1933, Reinhardt wrote a formal letter to the "National Socialist Government of Germany" from Oxford, in which he gave an account of his life's work and formally entrusted the Deutsches Theater to the German state.<sup>35</sup> Reinhardt still had his Theater in der Josefstadt in Vienna and his festivals in Salzburg, but left Austria too for the United States in October 1937, when the Nazi annexation of Austria appeared imminent. Reinhardt spent much of the interval between his two exiles on international tours. In July 1934, Reinhardt directed a production of *The Merchant of Venice* in Venice itself, on the Campo San Trovaso, played in Italian with an Italian cast as part of the Venice Biennale. Reinhardt wrote:

The setting was ideal: a quiet piazza in front of the Church of San Trovaso, a canal, the Rio Ognisanto, over which the arch of a bridge formed a balustrade, on the other bank old residential houses, a high wall, behind which trees gave shade to a palazzo. A splendid gate provided the counterpoint on this stage to the

"Casa Shylock", which was rented for the duration of the rehearsals and performances.<sup>36</sup>

Once again, Reinhardt applied his attention to the details of how to direct the part of Shylock, carefully working out the staging of the scene in which Shylock returns home in good spirits only to experience the sudden shock and horror of losing both his daughter and his fortune. Shylock made full use of the space of the Campo as he ran out of his house in despair and up to the canal, foaming at the mouth and rending his garment, until he collapsed on the bridge.<sup>37</sup> The description of the performance by the wife of the Italian ambassador to Germany stressed the humanity of the Italian actor Benassi's Shylock, "frightful in his hatred and painful in his collapse".<sup>38</sup> It is possible that Reinhardt's appreciation of Shylock's sense of loss had become even keener since his first production nearly three decades previously. Having sought back then to create the illusion of late-Renaissance Venice on his stage, Reinhardt was now able to use the real city as his backdrop: illusion had become reality. Ironically, Reinhardt was also helping to foster the packaged image of Venice that the Italian Fascist régime was seeking to promote internationally through the Biennale.<sup>39</sup> Mussolini's anti-Jewish legislation was still four years away.

Another notable sequel to the history of Shylock in the theatre of the Weimar Republic was the production of *The Merchant of Venice* in Tel Aviv in 1936 by the pioneer of the expressionist theatre in Berlin, Leopold Jessner, who had arrived as a Jewish refugee in Palestine. The Habimah theatre group, later to become the National Theatre of Israel, engaged Jessner initially for two productions: *The Merchant* and Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*.<sup>40</sup> The production made obvious topical references to contemporary antisemitic persecution – in the opening scene, set in a café, a tenor sang a melody associated with antisemitic slogans, and Shylock was marked with a yellow badge.<sup>41</sup> According to a witness, Jessner did not present "a ghetto-Shylock, dark, creeping, defeated – here is a fighter, the avenger of his people, who believes that his God will let him triumph one day, who is not broken by the unjust judgement". Jessner stripped back the production, dispensing with the swarms of extras that Reinhardt had deployed, making the conflict between Shylock and his persecutors as stark as possible.<sup>42</sup> He deployed his signature stairway (the "*Jessner-Treppe*") connecting different levels of the set in such a way as to put Shylock at the apex

of the set during the trial scene, higher than the other characters, even the judge. During his speech, the other characters remained frozen – an unusual assertion of Shylock's dominance even in the Act in which he is defeated.<sup>43</sup> Two actors, Aharon Meskin and Shim'on Finkel, alternated in the role of Shylock. According to Israeli scholar, Avraham Oz, neither allowed any trace of comedy: "Meskin was a heroic figure, making use of his commanding physical stature and resounding voice; Finkel emphasized Shylock's spiteful bitterness".<sup>44</sup> Despite these interpretations of Shylock, the choice of play and aspects of the production sparked off a heated public controversy in Tel Aviv.<sup>45</sup>

### Jews on the "Jew-free" stage

Having purged the repertoire of works by Jews, plays considered philosemitic (such as *Nathan der Weise*), and those of leftist and émigré writers, Nazi cultural bureaucrats had to fill the gaps thus created. More positively, they had to develop a repertoire that would reflect the values of the "national awakening". Quantitatively speaking, this did not present an insuperable difficulty. Some established writers were willing to put their pens at the service of the Nazi state, of whom the most prominent in the new literary firmament was the Nazi playwright Hanns Johst, author of the play *Schlageter*,<sup>46</sup> dedicated to the eponymous nationalist martyr who had been executed by the French for sabotage in the occupied Ruhr in 1923. Johst became President of the German (previously Prussian) Academy of Literature, and of the Reich Literature Chamber, among other Nazi honours. There were also numerous unpublished writers who were convinced that the time had come for their hitherto rejected verse dramas on the Nibelungen, or similar themes from Germanic mythology, to find an audience.<sup>47</sup> The problem was more qualitative: both commercial and state- and municipal-run theatres still needed to attract paying customers, and were averse to paying for obscure propagandistic works. As is shown by his policies concerning the film industry, Goebbels was also well aware of the need to conceal propaganda in attractively packaged entertainments. Attempts by Nazi ideological purists to revive supposedly ancient Germanic forms of ritualized outdoor theatre, which in fact combined elements of classical Greek tragedy and medieval mystery plays in the so-called *Thingspiele*, were soon quietly abandoned, remaining, as Wolfgang Benz states, "marginal and episodic".<sup>48</sup> The established bourgeois theatre remained in place, partly

because of the public's preferences, partly because Nazi leaders such as Goebbels and Göring, who as Minister-president of Prussia presided over the Prussian State Theatre, valued the cultural prestige which accrued to Germany's foremost theatres and which might reflect on the régime which continued to patronize them.

Nonetheless, the Reichsdramaturg, Rainer Schlösser, operating under Propaganda Minister Goebbels, sought progressively to Nazify the repertoire.<sup>49</sup> It was a standard response, when assessing proposed programmes submitted by theatres (a process that became obligatory for all German theatres), for the Reichsdramaturg to recommend that theatres include more works by "younger, national writers". One of the beneficiaries of this policy was Eberhard Wolfgang Möller. It was doubly politic for theatres to perform works by Möller, who was not only an approved young Nazi writer, and a veteran of the Berlin SA, but also a *Referent* in the theatre section of the Reich Propaganda Ministry, and therefore a part of the same bureaucracy as the Reichsdramaturg, whose imprimatur had to be obtained for all theatre programmes.<sup>50</sup> Möller's plays included two which were particularly antisemitic: *Rothschild siegt bei Waterloo* (first performed 1934), possibly the most successful antisemitic stage work of the period, and his earlier *Der Panamaskandal* (which had premièred in 1930).

*Rothschild siegt bei Waterloo* experienced a double première, opening simultaneously in Aachen and Weimar in October 1934.<sup>51</sup> It took its plot from the long-lived legend about Nathan Rothschild making a vast sum of money by successfully speculating on the outcome of the battle of Waterloo after he obtained the first exclusive intelligence of the result, or, in the version followed by Möller, witnessed the battle himself and made sure that he was the first man back to London with the news, which he initially falsified in the interests of his speculation.<sup>52</sup> The play's first scene shows Rothschild at the battlefield of Waterloo, looking for a "box-seat" for the coming battle, and announcing the advent of a "third great power" (finance capital: presumably along with the French and British empires). Rothschild shows no feeling for the dead and wounded in the battle: his concern is with his money, which is all he can see at stake in the battle:

My money, O'Pinnel [his office manager], cash money, English, French, Prussian, Austrian money, money in rank and file, ducats in line of march, you understand?<sup>53</sup>



The emphasis is on the antisemitic stereotype of the Jew who lacks any loyalty to a country, money being his only allegiance, and he sees the soldiers at Waterloo purely as representative of so much currency. The anachronistic reference to ducats has the purpose of establishing Rothschild's lineage as a descendant, at least in spirit, of Shylock, whose first line in *The Merchant of Venice* (Act I, Sc.3) is "Three thousand ducats, well". The kinship was evident to the critics, one of whom entitled his review (of the production in Weimar directed by Hans Severus Ziegler) "Shylock on the battlefield".<sup>54</sup> Another characterized Möller's Nathan Rothschild as "a Shylock possessed by a demonic urge for power".<sup>55</sup>

Elisabeth Frenzel, a Nazi academic on the staff of Alfred Rosenberg's office for the monitoring of German cultural production, who compiled a substantial work on Jewish characters on the German stage, wrote that Möller had "quite consciously chosen the only way to write a play about Jews today", i.e. a satire based on historical material. A tragedy about the Jews would be impossible in the new Germany, since tragic conflicts require equal antagonists, and a writer would run the risk, which even Shakespeare did not avoid when the audience can feel pity for Shylock, of a tragic shock being caused by the fate of the Jew. Satire, on the other hand, distorts the characteristics of the Jew to the point of the grotesque, in the case of Möller's Rothschild play, the "repulsiveness of the Jewish desire for unfair advantages".<sup>56</sup>

While Möller's *Rothschild* was first broadcast as a radio play, Aachen and Weimar seem to have vied for the dubious honour of giving the stage première. Both theatres were more than usually politically conformist in the Third Reich: Aachen was prone to boast of its political importance as a "front-line theatre" on Germany's threatened Western frontier, which helped it to secure generous subsidies from the Reich. (The personnel of the Aachen theatre included as music director the young Herbert von Karajan, who had the unusual distinction of having joined the NSDAP not once but twice.) Weimar, the sacred site of German classicism as well as the birthplace of Germany's first liberal democratic republic, had fallen into Nazi hands even before Hitler became Chancellor.<sup>57</sup> By 1933, the Weimar theatre was in the hands of people eager to conform to the ideological demands of the Nazi state. The ideological tendentiousness of the Aachen production is indicated by contemporary reviews. One reviewer seems to have dared some discreet criticism, writing: "The production was not easy for the Aachen *Intendant* Dr [Edgar] Gross,

since the material is naturally prone to lead to an involuntary emphasis of its contemporary relevance".<sup>58</sup> There are indications, however, that the theatre-going public of Aachen did not always share their theatre's ideological zeal: in the same season as Möller's *Rothschild*, the Aachen theatre staged a play set in a women's Reich Labour Service camp, *FAD Kroschenen*, only to première in a half-empty house.<sup>59</sup> Möller's *Rothschild* itself failed to fill the house, doing conspicuously worse than Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and recording the worst audiences of any play in the first half of the 1934/35 season.<sup>60</sup> An account of the Weimar première even ventured the observation that Möller's play met with a mixed reception: "While a part of the audience applauded vigorously, another part quickly left the house as if they had remained uninterested".<sup>61</sup> Reich Dramaturg Rainer Schlösser and his colleague, the playwright Möller, presided in person over the Weimar première.<sup>62</sup>

The Münchner Kammerspiele, which had been well-known for their liberal and artistically progressive profile before 1933, were less eager to conform than the Weimar theatre, but were unable to avoid making a demonstration of loyalty to the new state by performing Möller's *Rothschild* play once only as part of the Reichs-Theaterfestwoche in May 1936 (a cultural-political festival which in that year took place under the influence of feverish pre-Olympic Games propaganda, and which was well attended by Munich's Nazi elite, along with Rainer Schlösser, Hanns Johst and the author Möller). *Die Bühne*, the organ of the Reich Theatre Chamber, praised the way in which the production exposed the spirit of capitalism, reporting lasting applause for the "courageous dramatic statement of National Socialist principles", with repeated curtain calls.<sup>63</sup> Theatre reviews in the Third Reich were, however, obliged to be positive by 1936, especially when it came to works by National Socialist writers. One historian of the Münchner Kammerspiele argues that this production was exceptional as far as the Münchner Kammerspiele were concerned, and has also argued that aspects of the production were more restrained than they might have been under the direction of convinced Nazis (while Friedrich Domin's *Rothschild* was a cartoon villain in the production, he only partially resembled the antisemitic stereotype, not being fitted out with the "Jewish nose", for example).<sup>64</sup>

In total, *Rothschild siegt bei Waterloo* was produced 34 times over eight seasons.<sup>65</sup> In addition to the productions already mentioned, these included performances in Potsdam (1936), by the Rose-Theater, Berlin

(1936), and for the Bochum Theatre Week devoted to “Dramatists of the Hitler Youth” in 1937. The production by the private Rose-Theater, which was the first Berlin theatre to show Möller’s *Rothschild*, featured Georg August Koch in the title role, who apparently made a meal of the part, starting off with “the gestures of the petty Jewish swindler” and taking it to “devilish magnitude”.<sup>66</sup> Another critic wrote: “Georg August Koch as Rothschild takes advantage of all the possibilities of this *Über-Shylock*, and realizes them with a tangible relish in his acting”.<sup>67</sup> A further critic also characterized Koch’s Rothschild as a “larger-than-life Shylock” (and a “Satan in human form”).<sup>68</sup> In some cases, theatres were essentially directed to perform the work, but it did not succeed in attracting enough spectators to gain long runs. It was last staged in March 1943 in Kattowitz.<sup>69</sup>

Möller’s *Der Panama-Skandal* was also set in a historical context: the historical scandal in 1889 involving speculation over de Lesseps’ plans for a Panama canal. Here too, the villain is a Jewish banker. The play was first performed in 1930, in the wake of the Wall Street Crash, at which time the attempt to make Jewish financiers responsible for economic catastrophe was obviously supposed to have contemporary resonance. *Der Panama-Skandal* enjoyed subsequent performances in the Third Reich, including in the once-prestigious Deutsches Theater, Berlin in 1935.<sup>70</sup> *Der Panama-Skandal* was performed by 16 theatres up to the 1937/38 season.<sup>71</sup>

In Möller’s *Der Untergang Karthagos*, an antisemitic note is also present, with Frenzel describing the inhabitants of Carthage as “cowardly, disarmament-happy, trading and negotiating Semitic shopkeepers, reminiscent of the phenomena of the System period [*Systemzeit*: Nazi euphemism for the Weimar republic]”.<sup>72</sup> Premiering in Hamburg’s Thalia-Theater during the Reich Theatre Days of the Hitler Youth in 1938, this satire on pre-1933 Germany did not prove to be sufficiently effective on the stage to have a long run.<sup>73</sup>

Apart from the works of Eberhard Wolfgang Möller, relatively few new antisemitic plays appeared on the German stage from 1933 to 1945. One work which was relatively more successful, at least in terms of number of performances, was Dietrich Loder’s *Konjunktur* (subtitled: “Revolutionskomödie 1933”), a dramatized account of the Nazi seizure of power from January 1933, just before Hitler’s appointment to the Chancellorship, to the Enabling Law which gave Hitler dictatorial powers. The hero of this play was a uniformed SA leader (Loder himself had been in the SA since 1923), and the villain

was a Jewish "asphalt *littérateur*" (as the Nazi jargon put it) called Dr. Leo Schoeninger, with obscure but presumably sinister connections abroad. At the play's conclusion, Schoeninger's treasonous intrigues have been thwarted, and he has, ominously enough, been placed in "protective custody" indefinitely.<sup>74</sup> *Konjunktur* premièred at the Munich Residenztheater on 29 June 1933, and was put on by 50 theatres, but it only experienced two productions after the 1933/34 season (by the Stadttheater Saarbrücken and by the Stadttheater Greifswald, both in 1936), fading subsequently from the repertoire.

As Barbara Panse has shown, blatantly propagandistic antisemitic works were generally blocked by the Reichsdramaturg's office after the first year of the "national revolution". In the case of *Nur nicht weich werden, Susanne* (*Don't Weaken, Susanne*), by Willi Krause (under the pseudonym of Peter Hagen), the Reichsdramaturg rejected the play (despite Krause's position as editor of Goebbels' newspaper *Der Angriff* and Reichsfilmdramaturg) on the grounds that such a display of antisemitism on the stage, while not objectionable in principle, would be "completely superfluous from a domestic political point of view and harmful in foreign policy terms". The play (which dealt with the perils encountered by a young actress "in the clutches of film-industry Jews") would be superfluous, since the "Jews' influence" in Germany had already been "completely eliminated".<sup>75</sup>

This is not to say that antisemitic works disappeared from the German stage after the first couple of years of the régime. They still featured in the repertoire of the highly ideologically committed *Wanderbühnen*, the travelling theatre troupes which toured rural areas and provincial towns with a programme of Nazi agit-prop theatre.<sup>76</sup> Barbara Panse has also identified a number of plays by Nazi authors in which Jews have minor roles, including: Sigmund Graff's *Die Prüfung des Meister Tilman* (premièred 1939, in the Volksbühne Berlin, on the sixteenth-century sculptor and wood-carver, Tilman Riemenschneider); and Hanns Johst's *Propheten* (also set during the Lutheran Reformation, written in 1922, but performed by 13 theatres after 1933).<sup>77</sup> Significantly, such plays were given historical settings, Jews having been banished from the German present, and Jews appeared in them as avaricious, with their greed for money contrasting with the struggles of Germans for artistic (as in *Meister Tilman*) or national (as in *Propheten*) renewal.

Jewish characters were not confined to the jejune products of Nazi authors, however. If Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* and other plays in

which Jewish characters were treated sympathetically disappeared from view, there were still a number of plays in the classical (and not-so-classical) repertoire which included Jewish figures. The Hildesheim theatre, under the zealously pro-Nazi director William Bühler, even exhumed the hoary early nineteenth-century “Jew farce”, *Unser Verkehr*.<sup>78</sup>

The German classics contained a number of roles which could be exploited to portray antisemitic clichés. Friedrich Schiller was the classical German author who was second only to Goethe in the degree to which he was revered by the educated German middle classes, and who was naturally targeted for appropriation by the Nazi cultural establishment. (There were limits to this appropriation, however: the line of Marquis von Posa in *Don Carlos*: “Geben Sie Gedankenfreiheit!” could, and did, give rise to embarrassing outbreaks of applause in the theatre, and *Wilhelm Tell*, with its theme of tyrannicide, was quietly banned from theatres and schoolrooms in 1941.)<sup>79</sup> Schiller is not usually considered to have been antisemitic. However, his youthful *Sturm und Drang* drama *Die Räuber* includes a character called Moritz Spiegelberg who occupies a similar role to that of Thersites among Homer’s heroes; he is the craven knave among the bold and noble-hearted social bandits of Schiller’s drama, and there are suggestions in Schiller’s text that he happens to be Jewish.<sup>80</sup> In the Nazi period, it became customary to play Spiegelberg as a stock stage Jew, with red wig and exaggerated Jewish mannerisms. So much so, in fact, that when the Prussian Staatstheater in Berlin performed *Die Räuber* in 1944 without such embellishments to the figure of Spiegelberg, and with some of the references to Spiegelberg’s Jewishness omitted, it attracted some comment. The theatre’s director Gustaf Gründgens (known to posterity as the model for Hendrik Höfgen in Klaus Mann’s *Mephisto* and István Szabó’s film of the novel) received a denunciatory letter from a Nazi Reichstag deputy complaining:

If in the days of Jewish emancipation and Jewish rule people were understandably shy of presenting Spiegelberg on stage as a Jew, despite the intentions of the author, today, when National Socialist Germany finds itself in a life and death struggle with world Jewry, there is every reason to portray this criminal the way Schiller wanted him: as a Jew. In my opinion the German public has a right to see that such a politically significant occurrence, and one of such current relevance, in a Schiller

performance in the fifth year of our war against world Jewry is not simply swept under the carpet.<sup>81</sup>

As early as 1930, a Nazi theatre troupe sponsored by Goebbels in his capacity as Nazi *Gauleiter* for Berlin gave expression to his slogan: "The alien rabble must get out of German art" by staging a production of *Die Räuber* which featured a derogatory depiction of a Jewish Spiegelberg.<sup>82</sup> When Reinhardt's former Grosses Schauspielhaus was ceremonially re-opened as the Theater der Nation in January 1934 in the presence of Goebbels, Hess, and Labour Front leader Robert Ley, a special performance of *Die Räuber* was put on by the director Hanns Niedecken-Gebhardt, with Heinrich George in the role of Franz Moor and Alexander Golling as Spiegelberg. The *Berliner Illustrierte* described the latter as: "the crafty Jew, pitch black in his hair and in his soul, a malicious fellow with a big lying mouth and a cowardly traitor".<sup>83</sup> The 1939 production of *Die Räuber* in Heidelberg, directed by the *Intendant* of the Vienna Volkstheater, Bruno Iltz, also emphasized Spiegelberg's Jewish identity.<sup>84</sup> By 1941, it had become customary for Spiegelberg to resemble "a fox-red Judas type", and variations from that stereotype attracted comment.<sup>85</sup> *Die Räuber* was performed 1,132 times by a total of 149 theatres during the Nazi period.<sup>86</sup>

Gustav Freytag's comedy, *Die Journalisten*, his satire on small-town politics from the mid-nineteenth century, was another popular work whose antisemitic potential was exploited in this period. *Die Journalisten* made something of a comeback in the Nazi period, with performances including a caricatured Schmock – the unprincipled Jewish journalist-for-hire. Productions included one by the privately owned Rose-Theater Berlin. Although private, the Rose-Theater was generously subsidized by the Reich.<sup>87</sup> As far as one can judge from reviews, the Rose-Theater's Schmock, played by Alfred Ganzer, avoided overplaying the part and did not emphasize the negative, antisemitic potential of the role.<sup>88</sup> The play was performed as late as June 1941 by the Kleines Haus of the Berlin Staatstheater, with a red-headed, unmistakably "Jewish" Schmock.<sup>89</sup>

In 1941, the Rose-Theater, which had followed *Die Journalisten* with Möller's *Rothschild* in 1936, also performed a production of Hermann Sudermann's play *Die gutgeschnittene Ecke*, which, as noted in Chapter One, has its theme the opposition between the idealistic search for true art, and the corrupting influence of capitalist speculation, which is seen as the work of Jews. If the Rose-Theater's 1935 *Journalisten* had

not struck contemporary viewers (albeit in the year of the anti-Jewish Nuremberg Laws) as notably antisemitic, the same could not be claimed for the 1941 version of *Die gutgeschnittene Ecke*. The play's setting was changed from the Empire to the Weimar Republic, or the "System period", as Nazi writers called it, or "a degenerate age" according to the Rose-Theater's programme notes. The part of the Jewish speculator was taken "with rare self-denial", as one clearly antisemitic reviewer put it, by Hans Rose, brother of the director Paul Rose and a former co-director of the theatre.<sup>90</sup> Hans Rose and the other actors playing Jews, such as Rudi Leube as Jeiteles, seem to have played up the antisemitic possibilities of their roles, in a production that the Nazi press praised for its depiction of a "degenerate period".<sup>91</sup> By contrast, Grillparzer's *Die Jüdin von Toledo* disappeared from the repertoire by 1943, the stereotypical trope of the sexy Jewess falling victim to the Nuremberg Laws. Reich Dramaturg Rainer Schlösser wrote to the President of the Grillparzer-Gesellschaft in Vienna that he felt that *Die Jüdin von Toledo* was not suitable for a Grillparzer festival in the fourth year of war: "as far as the *Jüdin* is concerned, I consider it at the present time a highly delicate matter to allow her to give free rein to her charms for four acts, in relation to which all that needs to be said, from our point of view, is said in the last scene".<sup>92</sup>

The mid-nineteenth century classic playwright Friedrich Hebbel was a difficult case for the régime. His works with Nordic characters and themes were exalted, but his plays based on Old Testament themes and Jewish mythology were dropped from the repertoire, although *Herodes und Mariamne* still appeared in Frankfurt am Main in 1937 and for the last time in the "Third Reich" in Hamburg in 1938.<sup>93</sup> On the occasion of Saladin Schmitt's prestigious and festive Hebbel Week in Bochum in 1937, the theatre was advised that it would not be "opportune" to include *Judith* or *Herodes und Mariamne* in the programme (*Die Nibelungen* was fine, on the other hand).<sup>94</sup> One of Hebbel's least successful works, however, was dredged up from obscurity, reportedly by the Amt Rosenberg: *Der Diamant* of 1841.<sup>95</sup> In this comedy, a diamond which has magic powers, and on which the fate of a princess, a whole dynasty, and the country depends, is, after incidents too tedious to recount, stolen by a Jewish pedlar. Threatened with disembowelment, the Jew flees to the forest, where his fright finally has the necessary emetic effect. As one modern critic has written: "This play has never been deemed a success by anyone except Hebbel",<sup>96</sup> and, perhaps, the Amt Rosenberg. *Der Diamant* was

performed 85 times between 1939 and 1944 inclusive, compared with 19 from 1918 to January 1933 (during which time performances were confined to Neustrelitz, Frankfurt am Main, Lübeck and Dessau).<sup>97</sup> Nazi-era productions included one in Berlin's Theater in der Saarlandstrasse, and one in the 1942 Hebbel Week in Vienna, at Vienna's Exlbühne (Theater in der Praterstrasse), again under the patronage of Gauleiter and Reichsstatthalter (governor) Baldur von Schirach.<sup>98</sup> If the potential antisemitism in Hebbel's original play is to some extent relativized by the greed and lack of scruples displayed by many of the Christian characters, the productions in Germany between 1939 and 1944 pulled out all stops to make the play a tendentious work of antisemitic propaganda.<sup>99</sup> The 1939 production of the Landestheater Saar-Pfalz in Kaiserslautern, under the direction of the Nazi party member Dr Erich Schuhmacher,<sup>100</sup> adapted Hebbel's text to make the play centre more clearly on the conflict between the Jew Benjamin, played by Felix Lademann as bearer of "the demonic principle itself" and the healthy instincts of his peasant antagonist. At stake was no less than the well-being and safety of the state. The Jew declines to sacrifice himself for the good of the state, leaving the Christians to debate whether it is better to obey the letter of the law or to break it to preserve the state by killing the Jew. Only weeks after Hitler had "prophesied" the destruction of the Jews of Europe in the event of another war, in the Reichstag on 30 January 1939, the Kaiserslautern theatre aired the merits of killing a Jew in order to protect the state in time of war.<sup>101</sup>

The mass murder of Europe's Jews was already under way, with several trainloads of Berlin's Jews sent to the ghettos and killing grounds in the East since October 1941, when the Theater in der Saarlandstrasse, the state-owned smaller house of the Volksbühne, performed *Der Diamant* in February-March 1942. The dramaturg Bernd Rehse had already tried out his adaptation of the play in Chemnitz in November 1940.<sup>102</sup> For some reason, during the play's run in the Saarlandstrasse, the first actor to play the Jew Benjamin, Josef Sieber, who portrayed a "ghost-like old Jew" was replaced by Ludwig Linkmann. One review commented on his "smarmy slyness and his devious cunning" and another wrote:

So grotesque is his get-up, so nimble is he in every movement, so artful is he in his appearance and gestures, that the audience is



quick to pick up on sarcastic references to the present situation, and is amused by them.<sup>103</sup>

A few tentative conclusions from this survey: with some exceptions, for example, pressure to perform Möller's works, explicable perhaps partly in terms of his own position in the cultural bureaucracy, and the Amt Rosenberg's promotion of *Der Diamant* during the war years, German theatres were under little or no pressure to perform antisemitic works during the Nazi period, as opposed to works reflecting Nazi ideology in general. Where theatres mounted antisemitic productions (other than those of Möller), they seem to have been largely doing so on their own initiative, sometimes on the initiative of particularly zealous Nazi appointees in the theatres. This does not of course mean that Goebbels' underlings in the cultural bureaucracy were not antisemitic, but that – on the whole – they regarded the stage as an inappropriate venue for blatant antisemitic propaganda. Unnecessary and, from the Nazi point of view, superfluous in view of the successful execution of anti-Jewish policies domestically, it would also be damaging in terms of Germany's image abroad. Apart from Goebbels' belief that propaganda should not seem too obvious, there was also a desire to keep the theatre as a sphere of cultural activity which would reflect prestige on the régime (especially as far as the leading Berlin theatres were concerned). Artists and performers did not have to carry a party-book to be useful to the Nazi state.<sup>104</sup> The more Germany's leading theatres could be seen to be keeping up traditional cultural standards (with discreet deletions from the repertoire, naturally) the better they could fulfill their representational function. In the "split consciousness"<sup>105</sup> that was typically engendered in the "Third Reich", the theatre had the role of maintaining the appearance of bourgeois normality, of distraction from everyday concerns, and upholding the prestige of German culture, even as pressures for the ideological "*Gleichschaltung*" grew.

If there seems therefore to have been room to manoeuvre, with a discernible difference between the conduct of theatres run by Nazi zealots and that of certain others, this room to manoeuvre came up against strict limits. As sympathetic or neutral portrayals of Jews became impossible, theatres had the choice between defamatory representations of Jews or becoming complicit in the disappearance of Jews from German life and culture. Theatres had the freedom to either attack Jews or make them invisible.

When Jews were shown on stage, it was almost always with the emphasis on the "Jewish" characteristics of avarice and materialism. Here, as Adorno and Horkheimer pointed out, the antisemitic stigmatization of Jews occupying the sphere of circulation of capital (with the trope of Jewish financiers, speculators and middlemen causing economic trouble for everyone else) was a functional counterpart to the idealization and romanticization of the sphere of production, the location of the *Volksgemeinschaft* of Nazi propaganda, from which Jews were excluded.<sup>106</sup> It is worth noting that another standard trope of antisemitic propaganda, including that of the Nazis, alleged sexual rapacity, seems to have been absent altogether from the stage.<sup>107</sup> It is possible that the physical, live enactment of pornographic antisemitic propaganda would have been considered too offensive, both in terms of Nazi racial thought and in terms of the standards of obscenity applying to the theatre, which were still rooted in bourgeois norms of what could respectably be represented in the public sphere.

The taboo on depictions of Jewish sexual rapacity did not apply equally to the cinema, however. Although rejected for stage performance, *Nur nicht weich werden, Susanne* was filmed in late 1934 (appearing in 1935) by the director Arzen von Cserépy.<sup>108</sup> And *Jud Süß* (1940) showed not only the greed of its Jewish protagonist but his lust for the blonde Aryan woman.<sup>109</sup> Even in the cinema, such overt antisemitic features were relatively rare, although Nazi values, including racial ideology, permeated most of film production.

Elisabeth Frenzel ended her study on Jewish characters with the chilling conclusion that in future Jews would only appear on the German stage in historical works: "The final precondition [for the depiction of Jewish characters on the German stage], the existence of the Jew in German public life, is increasingly losing its significance since the Jewish legislation of the Third Reich". There remained, however, "the international power of Jewry as an enemy in the struggle, and in so far as a great drama on foreign affairs or a timeless drama of *Weltanschauung* might appear in Germany, this [enemy] might occupy a main role".<sup>110</sup> The disappearance of Jewish figures from the German stage, or their confinement to a distant past, suited the Nazi régime well enough, but its ideological watchdogs remained vigilant.

### Shakespeare, Nordic poet

The German tradition of naturalizing Shakespeare as a German poet was revived and given an overtly racist twist in the Nazi period. Surely

the creator of Hamlet had to be a “Nordic” poet *par excellence*.<sup>111</sup> Shakespeare’s racial origins were even the subject of a book-length study in 1937, which praised his “perfect Nordic forehead”, even if it was “somewhat marred by Mediterranean eyes and hair and chin of a doubtful origin”.<sup>112</sup>

The German Shakespeare Society continued its work, enjoying a good degree of official patronage from the Nazi cultural functionary Hans Severus Ziegler, the Foreign Ministry’s cultural section, and the Reich Dramaturg Dr Rainer Schlösser, who took up a position on the Society’s executive.<sup>113</sup> Such patronage notwithstanding, the German Shakespeare Society experienced a decline in membership after 1933, which was officially attributed to economic causes.<sup>114</sup> In 1936, the Society’s executive was joined by the prominent Nazi racial theorist Hans Günther, who gave a lecture to members the following year on “Shakespeare’s Girls and Women”, which he used for an object lesson in Nazi eugenic theory (and gender role assumptions), arguing among other things that Shakespeare’s “exemplary women”, like Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, embodied “Nordic-Germanic” physical and spiritual qualities, while the Jewish Jessica exhibited only a “paltry inner life”, rendering her an unsuitable partner for a racially superior youth (which might have come as news to Lorenzo).<sup>115</sup> By 1939 the executive included another proponent of “racial science”, the antisemitic philosopher Professor Max Wundt of Tübingen, author of a 1933 treatise on *Der ewige Jude* (the eternal Jew), and a critical essay on *Nathan der Weise*, who later wrote a work purporting to identify the exact “racial” descent of all known German philosophers, and the influence of their racial identity on their thought.<sup>116</sup> In his essay on Günther and the German Shakespeare Society, Gerwin Strobl has perhaps overstated the divide between Nazi ideologues and the “high-minded circle of *Bildungsbürger*” that made up the learned Society.<sup>117</sup> While there were no doubt differences between the two groups, there was also some overlap: both shared a conservative aversion to the modernist experiments of the Weimar period, and there was some shared anti-Jewish prejudice, evident in the post-1945 work of such a stalwart of the Society as Ernst Leopold Stahl (who is nearly uniformly negative in his evaluations of Jewish actors in his 1947 *Shakespeare und das Deutsche Theater*).

The Shakespeare Society’s President, Werner Deetjen, proclaimed in 1934 that in a Germany in which “the heroic” had regained its rightful place, Shakespeare was more at home than ever. According to

Deetjen, Shakespeare's "doctrine of the state is clearly Germanic, and his attitude towards life is always heroic".<sup>118</sup> Deetjen celebrated the phenomenon of a "Shakespeare Renaissance" in Germany after 1933, which was distinguished by a "conscious turning away from the conditions that one felt were unhealthy in previous years".<sup>119</sup> In a lecture to the German Shakespeare Society in 1936, Heinz Kindermann argued that the strong connections between Shakespeare and Germany, all the more evident "in the epoch of the German rebirth", indicated more than mere aesthetic affinities: "Way beyond these, it is a matter of the ties of blood".<sup>120</sup> According to Kindermann, "Shakespeare's figures are created as clearly Nordic people, with their Nordic horizon of life and the world".<sup>121</sup> Speaking at the Second German Shakespeare Week at Bochum in 1937, with Rudolf Hess among others in attendance, the Gauleiter for South Westphalia, Joseph Wagner, claimed that the German people had never been so close to Shakespeare's spirit as it was under National Socialism: "Even if Shakespeare is a son of the Anglo-Saxon island [or of "our Nordic brother-people", as Wagner puts it elsewhere], we Germans still knowingly count him among our forebears, as by blood and by his nature he stands as close to us as any great German poet and thinker".<sup>122</sup> Rainer Schlösser spoke at the same occasion on "The German Shakespeare", arguing that the great artists of the world were those who were most true to their racial origins, so that Shakespeare was English before he was anything else, but Germans' obvious affinity with Shakespeare was testimony to ties of blood: "we recognize in Shakespeare the same racial fundamental Nordic element from which we have learned to derive the highest values of our own people". In support of this view, Schlösser cited the *völkisch* literary historian Adolf Bartels, Hans Günther, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and Alfred Rosenberg. For Günther, for example, the "native hue of resolution" had to be a Nordic trait.<sup>123</sup> German literary scholarship followed the lead of Alfred Rosenberg in ascribing "a strong consciousness of Nordic racial values" to Shakespeare.<sup>124</sup>

The "Shakespeare Renaissance" of which Nazi critics boasted was partly a result of theatres trying to fill the gaps in their repertoires left by banned works with safe and reliable classics. There was also a qualitative side to claims of a "Shakespeare Renaissance": Ernst Leopold Stahl, for example, writing in the German Shakespeare Yearbook, expressed his satisfaction at the passing away of the "wilfull experimentation of directors" that had marked the Weimar Republican

stage, and the “renunciation of all kinds of sensationalism and lack of objectivity in staging”, as well as the occasional excesses of self-indulgent virtuosity of certain actors. Cleansed of such externally imposed impurities, “Shakespeare’s fundamentally Nordic-Germanic stance” could be more fully realized.<sup>125</sup>

One expression of the new anti-modernism was that the Shakespeare translations in modern diction by Hans Rothe came under criticism soon after the Nazi takeover. Dr. Walter Stang, Alfred Rosenberg’s theatre specialist, used the official Nazi organ the *Völkischer Beobachter* to attack Rothe for allegedly putting himself before the spirit of the original<sup>126</sup>. In a similar vein, Ernst Leopold Stahl criticized the “big city irony” in Rothe’s *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which he considered bore only a distant resemblance with the Shakespearean original.<sup>127</sup> Even the SS newspaper, *Das Schwarze Korps*, joined the campaign in November 1935, asking: “Who will save Shakespeare from Hans Rothe?”<sup>128</sup> Rothe’s translations started to disappear, until they were finally officially banned in 1936.<sup>129</sup> A production of *A Comedy of Errors* in Rothe’s version was still played in Danzig as late as 1939, to the chagrin of the German Shakespeare Yearbook, which conceded that the adaptation was suited to the stage but nonetheless criticized it for excessive liberties with Shakespeare.<sup>130</sup>

After the outbreak of war, the question of Shakespeare’s place on the German stage while England was an enemy belligerent arose as it had during the First World War. The president of the German Shakespeare society, Professor Wolfgang Keller, invoked Gerhart Hauptmann’s 1915 claim that Shakespeare could no longer be claimed by any one nation or party, going on to argue that Germany now had the better claim to Shakespeare than England had. Shakespeare’s England had been a heroic land under authoritarian leadership, and bore no resemblance to the democratic and plutocratic British Empire of 1940. The new Germany was truer to the Germanic virtues of Elizabethan England: “heroic, soldierly, young and upwardly striving, hungering for deeds and adventures”. As a confirmation of this claim to Germany’s superior claim to Shakespeare’s legacy, Keller claimed that only one London theatre had played a Shakespeare play in the winter season of 1939/40, and that had been a modernized travesty of *Julius Caesar*, while many German theatres, even popular commercial theatres, achieved full houses for Shakespeare productions that eschewed fashionable experimentation. Keller even cited a German flak battery that rehearsed scenes from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* for

a Christmas 1939 performance, while claiming that a soccer team captain called William Shakespeare was now better known in England than the Bard of Stratford.<sup>131</sup> In 1940, the Nazi writer Hermann Burte declared:

Shakespeare belongs as much to us as he does to the English; indeed we know him and perform his plays better than they do. And we boldly assert that as Germans of 1940 we in truth are closer to the spirit of the Elizabethan English and their genius William than the Englishmen of today, behind whose throne lurks and rules that Shylock whom Shakespeare recognized and rejected.<sup>132</sup>

In addition to Shakespeare's continued prominence on the stage in Germany, his plays also continued to be read in schools, including *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>133</sup> *The Merchant of Venice* was not only taught in literature classes, it was also recommended as a text for lessons in racial science in the schools, as one literary source among others (e.g. nineteenth-century German works like Gustav Freytag's *Debit and Credit*) cited as providing exemplary portrayals of Jewish racial characteristics.<sup>134</sup> In 1940, Wolfgang Keller published a new edition of the Schlegel translation of the play for schools.<sup>135</sup> Also in 1940, in the Nazi youth journal *Wille und Macht*, Hitler Youth leader Baldur von Schirach justified the Germans' capacity to appropriate Shakespeare from the English enemy as a sign of strength, while Goebbels' cultural functionary Herbert Frenzel praised the benefits of Germany's status as Shakespeare's adoptive fatherland, but ominously added that this did not mean that Shakespeare was indispensable for the German stage.<sup>136</sup> In February and March 1941, the periodical *Die Bühne* carried articles which argued that Shakespeare was now neglected in his own country and was only honoured sufficiently in Germany. "The case of Shakespeare and Goethe shows, what a *Kulturation* is and what a people of grocers is", declared *Die Bühne*. The March issue reproduced a cartoon from Goebbels' weekly paper *Das Reich*, which showed Shakespeare, Goethe and Wagner reposing in the clouds "in Olympus". The German Olympians asked Shakespeare: "Well, dear Master Shakespeare, you are played very often in Germany? How does it stand with us in England?", to which Shakespeare responded: "There has been little difference there for a long time, dear masters – all three of us are not played there".<sup>137</sup>

It was in March 1941, however, that the war finally took its toll on Germany's special relationship with William Shakespeare. From that month on, every Shakespeare production needed to be expressly approved by the office of the Reich Dramaturg, the Shakespeare Week planned for that month in Weimar was cancelled, and the number of Shakespeare productions in the Greater German Reich went into a sharp decline, with just 34 in 1941/42 (compared with 107 in 1937/38). During 1941 there was even a temporary ban on performances of Shakespeare, although by early 1942, these restrictions were being applied less strictly, and the number of Shakespeare productions increased to 54 in the 1942/43 season.<sup>138</sup>

### Shylock in the Third Reich

The Nazi takeover of power occurred during the 1932/33 theatre season, when a number of theatres already had *The Merchant of Venice* on their programmes for early 1933. There seemed little need to remove it hastily from the repertoire, but theatres that went ahead with the production would have to tread carefully at best in the presentation of Shylock.

The production of *The Merchant of Venice* in Heidelberg in March 1933, directed by Erich Alexander Winds, clearly strove to avoid any "Tendenz" – any suggestion of tendentiousness. Shylock was played by the *Intendant* Erwin Hahn in a farewell performance before his departure to take over the Münchner Volkstheater (a pre-Nazi appointment which would prove short-lived). Hahn's Shylock was expressive, if restrained in his use of gestures, and emphatically Eastern Jewish in his speech.<sup>139</sup> The Heidelberg production ran for six performances.<sup>140</sup> In Bonn, the municipal theatre put on a production of *The Merchant* that eschewed lavish sets and comic business to present an interpretation that stressed the seriousness of the play's action, with the Shylock of the former *Intendant* Albert Fischer emphasizing Shylock's open hatred for the Christians.<sup>141</sup> The Bonn theatre had played Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* as late as 1932, and had come under attack from the Nazi press for the number of plays by Jewish and republican authors in its repertoire, but it was prompt to change to a more "national" repertoire after January 1933.<sup>142</sup> The Hannover municipal theatre chose *The Merchant of Venice* for a special 1933 Christmas performance – the emphatically comic style of the performance was to be in keeping with a festive mood, with a repeat performances a few days later, and into January 1934. Hans Ebert

played Shylock.<sup>143</sup> The Hannover production was acclaimed for its highly elaborate stage sets, with six different scenes built up on a revolving stage that rotated with the curtains open. Shylock's rage at the loss of his daughter, described by Solanio but not depicted on stage in the original text, was shown on stage in this production, "without adding a word that didn't come from Shakespeare" (thus the audience got to see Shylock himself exclaiming "My daughter! O my ducats!", Act II, sc.8, rather than just hearing it second-hand).<sup>144</sup> The Leipzig Altes Theater continued its run of its light-hearted *Merchant* production from late 1932, with another five performances in 1933.<sup>145</sup> The Leipzig production was revived for another two performances in 1934, for the occasion of a guest performance by the apparently indefatigable veteran "tragic character actor of the Meininger school", Ludwig Wüllner. It seems unlikely that Wüllner would have departed radically from his earlier presentation of the role: a critic described the evening's performance as a "special experience on account of the masterly crafting of the words and the profound humanity and great dignity of the guest of venerable years".<sup>146</sup> Once again, the attraction of seeing Wüllner on stage seems to have had less to do with his interpretation of this or that Jewish figure, and more to do with the experience of witnessing living theatre history in Wüllner's person. However, another reviewer, while finding an element of restraint in Wüllner's performance ("He *mauschelte* with restraint"), congratulated Wüllner precisely for avoiding "the danger of 'humanizing' a figure, who stands beyond any human feelings", the Jewish "subhuman" ("Untermensch") Shylock.<sup>147</sup>

Perhaps the most surprising finding from a study of *The Merchant of Venice* in the Third Reich is that John Gross' statement (in his history of the Shylock figure), following Joseph Wulf, that the play "enjoyed special popularity from the outset" of the Nazi régime is incorrect.<sup>148</sup> The *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* for 1936 recorded that "*The Merchant of Venice*, especially popular before 1933 [...] is at present receding into the background. In 1933, it played on 20 stages, on 12 in 1934, and 8 in 1935".<sup>149</sup> The decline continued in the pre-war years, with 5 theatres performing *The Merchant* a total of 41 times in 1936, 3 theatres and 45 performances in 1937, 4 theatres with only 22 performances in 1938, and 3 theatres with 23 performances in 1939.<sup>150</sup> By one reckoning, *The Merchant of Venice* went from being the third most frequently performed Shakespeare play from September 1929 to January 1933 (with 36 productions in that period) to ninth most frequently



performed from February 1933 to August 1944, before theatres were closed down in Nazi Germany, a total of 33 productions over the whole period.<sup>151</sup> The decline in the play's popularity may perhaps be explained by a combination of factors: theatre companies, directors, and actors may have been reluctant to make the choice between either turning the play into gross propaganda or risking official displeasure, and there is evidence that some companies were uncertain about whether the play was still permitted or not.<sup>152</sup> Wilhelm Hortmann has recently written that: "The most flattering explanation [for the falling-off of the frequency of performances of *The Merchant of Venice*] is that a sense of shame stopped most theatre managements from adding insult to injury, and it is worth noting that there does not seem to have been more than a single production of the play in Berlin during the whole [Nazi] period [that of the Rose-Theater in 1942]".<sup>153</sup> Producers of the play in the "Third Reich" were also confronted with a number of difficulties: Shylock is given the opportunity to humanize himself ("Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions?..."); the union of Lorenzo, a Christian, and Jessica, Shylock's daughter, constituted an offence against the 1935 Nuremberg Laws; and there was the "danger" noted by Elisabeth Frenzel, that an audience might feel some pity for the defeated and abjectly humiliated Shylock. As one writer on German Shakespeare reception put it in 1938: "In an age of heightened racial awareness, *The Merchant of Venice* has to be handled with great care, which is why its appearance on the stage has become rarer in the last few years".<sup>154</sup>

The writer and translator Hermann Kroepelin, whose Shakespeare-Verlag in Berlin sought to gain the support of the *Reichskulturkammer* for its project of producing a new modernized translation of Shakespeare's works, suggested that one way around the punishable "mixture of Aryan blood with Jewish blood" in *The Merchant of Venice* would be to make Jessica conscious of her family ties once again after Shylock's collapse so that she breaks her engagement with Lorenzo to return to her father. Kroepelin considered the changes to the text that this would necessitate justifiable as they were "in Shakespeare's spirit". Kroepelin also suggested that this addition was preferable to making Shylock a cuckold by giving Jessica another father – that would still leave her with a Jewish mother.<sup>155</sup> Kroepelin's solution does not seem to have been adopted on the stage. Instead, some productions chose another device to make the play conform to the Nuremberg laws: Jessica was found to be an adopted daughter originally from a

Christian family. By a cruel twist of irony, this plot device could have been borrowed from Lessing's philosemitic *Nathan der Weise*, in which Recha is found to have been adopted by Nathan. Another alternative was to dispense with Act V, in which the happy couples pair off, altogether.

In early 1939, Rainer Schlösser suggested to the Erfurt municipal theatre that Launcelot's scene with Jessica (Act III, Sc.5) in which he says: "Marry, you may partly hope that your father got you not, that you are not the Jew's daughter", be revised to confirm Launcelot's suggestion that she was not Shylock's natural daughter.<sup>156</sup> This advice was followed by a more comprehensive revision that then constituted an officially authorized version of the play.

Schlösser's version deleted a number of lines in which Shylock was permitted to try to justify himself. In Shylock's first scene on stage (Act I, Sc.3), the lines were cut (from l.27 to l.35) in which Shylock refuses to go and eat pork with Antonio and Bassanio, including:

[...] to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into: I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. [...]

The idea of marriage between a Jewess and a non-Jew had to be suppressed, as in Act II, Sc.3, in which Launcelot's speech was excised (in his scene with Jessica, in which she sends him to Lorenzo with a letter, l.10-14):

*Launcelot*: Adieu! Tears exhibit my tongue, most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! – if a Christian do not play the knave and get thee, I am much deceived; [...]

In the same scene, Jessica declared herself "ashamed to be the Jew's child", instead of "my father's child" (l.17); but instead of adding "though I am a daughter to his blood" (l.18), she stated the opposite: "For I am not a daughter to his blood/ And also not to his manners". It followed from this that Jessica's promise to "Become a Christian" (l.21) was deleted.

In the following scene (Act II, Sc.4), Lorenzo no longer referred to Jessica directing him "How I shall take her from her father's house" (l.30); instead, he says "the Jew's house", and the reference to "the Jew

her father” in line 33 was also cut. Shylock’s “gentle daughter” (l.34) became “his assumed daughter”, and the line: “That she is issue to a faithless Jew” (l.37) was once again turned into its opposite: “That she is not issue to a faithless Jew”. Launcelot’s jest in Act, Sc.5 (l.41-42):

There will come a Christian by  
Will be worth a Jewes eye

was deleted. Schlegel’s standard German translation was less ambiguous:

Denn vorbegehn wird ein Christ  
Wert, daß ihn ’ne Jüdin küßt.

literally:

There will come a Christian by  
Will be worth a Jewess’s kiss.

For the Reich Dramaturg, no doubt an obvious incitement to the crime of “race defilement”. In the same scene, Jessica’s last lines are changed from:

*Jessica*: Farewell, – and if my fortune be not crost,  
I have a father, you a daughter, lost.

to:

*Jessica*: Farewell, – and if my fortune be not crost,  
I will soon be rid of you and free.

Consistent with the denial of Shylock’s paternity of Jessica, Lorenzo’s jest over his soon-to-be father-in-law: “Here dwells my father Jew” (Act II, Sc.6, l.25) became simply: “Here dwells the Jew”. Gratiano’s pun in calling Jessica “a gentle, and no Jew” (Act II, Sc.6, l.51) had not survived in Schlegel’s translation, which had Gratiano calling her “a goddess, and no Jew”. Schlösser simply had Gratiano call her a goddess, once again deleting the reference to Jewishness. Shylock’s own reference to Jessica as “My own flesh and blood” (Act III, Sc.1,

l.31) was naturally censored, along with the subsequent banter on the theme from Solanio and Salerio.

As well as "Aryanizing" Shylock's daughter, the Reich Dramaturg stripped him of his best lines in his defence. After, "To bait fish withal, if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge", Shylock's entire self-justification in Act 3, Sc.1 (lines 48-66), from "he hath disgraced me", including the famous speech: "Hath a Jew not eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions", fell to the Reich Dramaturg's blue pencil. A Jew could not be allowed to lay claim to humanity in Germany in 1939. In the trial scene, in Act IV, Sc.1, further references to Jessica as Shylock's daughter were deleted and in Gratiano's mocking of Shylock: "In christ'ning shalt thou have two godfathers" (l.394), the reference to baptism was removed. Baptism was no longer any help to Jews whose Jewishness was defined by the Nazis as an unchanging biological fact. Instead, Gratiano ominously says that Shylock will have two witnesses at his investigation, suggesting that Shylock would soon be in custody.<sup>157</sup>

A year after the sanitized version of *The Merchant of Venice* was produced in Erfurt, Rainer Schlösser commended it to Goebbels, as a text that had "removed any racial-political difficulties" that the play might otherwise have presented, and asked whether the play might now be more widely performed, noting that the Rose-Theater ("in an out-of-the way location after all" in Berlin's East End) was interested in putting it on. Goebbels agreed, although he favoured a more prominent theatre, such as the Volksbühne, for the Berlin première. The suggested Volksbühne production did not eventuate, however.<sup>158</sup>

The degree of violence that was done to Shakespeare's text indicates how fraught with complications a production of *The Merchant of Venice* could be in Germany after 1933. These difficulties did not prevent some theatre companies taking on the play, albeit with corresponding amendments to the Jessica episode, and playing Shylock as a completely grotesque and comic figure. In the provinces, in Detmold, the theatre seems to have staged a *Merchant of Venice* adapted to what one critic euphemistically referred to as "the spirit of our time" as early as October 1933, while the Nazi *Lippische Staatszeitung* found that it presented Shylock correctly, emphasizing such "Jewish" characteristics as "cunning, craftiness, hate and destruction": proof that Shakespeare had a feeling for "racial purity".<sup>159</sup> Another reviewer described the actor Alois Herrmann as

deliberately making “a demon of revenge out of the figure”, avoiding comic touches such as *Mauscheln* and gesticulating, but this reviewer sought to put a milder construction on the performance by putting the interpretation into historical perspective: for Shakespeare, in an England without Jews, the Jew was just a bogeyman, “not an ethnically characterized stratum of people”, so that a vaguely demonic version of the character could claim to be in the spirit of Shakespeare’s original intentions.<sup>160</sup>

Out of the 69 productions of *The Merchant of Venice* on German-language stages in 1934, nearly a third, 22, were performed by the Deutsche Bühne in the Lobe-Theater in Breslau.<sup>161</sup> After the previous director of the Lobe-Theater, Paul Barnay, was roughed up by SA men and subsequently forced into emigration, this large Breslau theatre seems to have been rapidly Nazified, with an even higher number of approved Nazi works in the programme than was necessary to satisfy the Propaganda Ministry.<sup>162</sup> It seems reasonable to assume that the Breslau production was explicitly antisemitic (the Lobe-Theater also staged Möller’s *Rothschild siegt bei Waterloo* in 1934). The Hannover Schauspielhaus, where the *Intendant* was the Party member Alfons Pape, who pledged to Hinkel that he would “work with all my strength towards the rebuilding of the German theatre as intended by our people’s Chancellor and in the spirit of national cultural renewal”, continued the run started at Christmas 1933 and staged *The Merchant* 12 times.<sup>163</sup> Chemnitz saw *The Merchant* 8 times in 1934 in its Schauspielhaus (with a reportedly nuanced Shylock by Karl Weinig, who seems to have avoided extremes in his interpretation of the role).<sup>164</sup> Other 1934 German productions (apart from Leipzig, already mentioned) were in Coburg, Darmstadt, Dessau, Gotha-Sondershausen, Konstanz, Meiningen, and Stolp in Pomerania – all provincial centres, although including one, Meiningen, with a rich theatre tradition.<sup>165</sup>

The German Shakespeare Yearbook recorded 39 performances of *The Merchant of Venice* for 1935, the year in which the Nuremberg Laws formalized a second-class citizenship for German Jews and banned “inter-racial” marriage or sexual relations. The total of eight theatre companies playing *The Merchant* included one in Linz in Austria and a travelling troupe of English-language actors, the English Players, in St Gallen, so that only six productions were actually by German theatres.<sup>166</sup> The most numerous performances of *The Merchant* in 1935 were those by the Bremen Staatstheater, whose 14 performances of

the play as a "pure comedy" included two in Lüneburg, and one each in Delmenhorst and Vegesack.<sup>167</sup> Koblenz staged *The Merchant* 8 times, Freiberg in Saxony 7, and Hannover 4 times. Hanau's theatre managed three performances, including one in Aschaffenburg.<sup>168</sup>

In 1936, a year in which the number of Shakespeare productions in Germany declined significantly overall, only five German theatres staged *The Merchant of Venice*, with a total of 41 performances. Bremen's production experienced another 4 performances, including one in Cuxhaven,<sup>169</sup> and Freiberg in Saxony put on another three performances. The most performances of the play were staged by the Landestheater Saarpfalz, based in Kaiserslautern, which took its production on a tour of the Palatinate region, including a number of very small towns, to take its number of performances of *The Merchant* to 17 in 1936. Another 14 performances of the play were recorded in the Schauspielhaus of Königsberg in East Prussia. Ernst Leopold Stahl characterized the Königsberg production as a "pure comedy" version. A Königsberg critic, commenting on the production of the Königsberg Schauspielhaus under director Hans Tügel, took pains to refute the "liberalistic view" of Shylock as a martyr to a bunch of frivolous wastrels, before crediting Shakespeare with having, apparently unconsciously, divined the essence of the racial oppositions which were at the heart of the play's action. For the *Berliner Tageblatt*, the Königsberg production conveyed a "manly and insistent lesson about true and false law" – the false law evidently being Shylock's insistence on the letter of his bond, presumably intended to be seen as typically Jewish Talmudic sophistry.<sup>170</sup> The other production of *The Merchant of Venice* was in Schaffhausen (three performances).<sup>171</sup>

In 1937, only three companies staged *The Merchant of Venice*, with a total of 45 performances, 30 of which were by one touring provincial company, the Offenburg-based Badische Bühne. In addition to Offenburg, the Badische Bühne took its production to 28 small towns in Baden, from Achern to Wiesloch. The other 1937 productions were by the Hannover Städtisches Schauspielhaus (9 performances, directed by Alfons Pape) and by the Bremerhaven theatre (6 performances).<sup>172</sup> The Hannover Schauspielhaus audience was said to be visibly pleased by Hans Ebert's reprise of his "uncannily threatening" portrayal of Shylock (previously seen in the 1933/34 season).<sup>173</sup> The portrait photograph in the Hannover theatre's programme guide of Ebert (who by the end of the 1937/38 season was to receive the accolade of *Staatsschauspieler* from Hitler) as Shylock, succeeds in making him look

particularly sinister: with black skull-cap, goatee and ringlets and meanly narrowed eyes.<sup>174</sup>

1938 saw intensified persecution of Jews by the Nazi regime, especially following the *Anschluss* of Austria in March, persecution that reached a temporary climax in the murders, arson and mass imprisonments of the “*Reichskristallnacht*” in November. Despite this, the number of performances of *The Merchant of Venice* declined even further, even allowing for a general decline in the frequency of Shakespeare productions during 1938. The Hannover Schauspielhaus production saw another 5 evenings (making a total of 14 in the 1937/38 season), while Hildesheim saw 9 performances, Lübeck 2, and Elbing 6 (including one in Braunsberg and one in Marienburg).<sup>175</sup> In his history of the theatre in Nazi Germany, Boguslaw Drewniak singles out Wulf Leisner’s Lübeck production, which appeared in the month of the “*Reichskristallnacht*”, as one of the most egregiously antisemitic of the Nazi period.<sup>176</sup> The German Shakespeare Yearbook confined itself to commenting that the production contrasted with “the previous custom of apology for the Jew”, emphasizing instead the “tone of enigmatic comedy” in the play.<sup>177</sup> The Lübeck theatre was under the direction of one Robert Bürkner, a Nazi party member and SA officer who seems to have enjoyed the particular favour of the Propaganda Ministry. Ironically, just three months after his theatre celebrated *Kristallnacht* with *The Merchant of Venice*, he was expelled from the NSDAP after it was discovered that he had a Jewish grandmother, and it took a special exemption from Goebbels for him to remain in his position.<sup>178</sup> Five weeks after the “*Reichskristallnacht*”, on 15 December, Breslau radio broadcast an excerpt from *The Merchant*, entitled “The Judgement” (Act IV), which it repeated in April 1939.<sup>179</sup> These propagandistic responses to the pogrom seem to have been relatively rare, however, most theatres apparently preferring discreetly to distance themselves from *The Merchant of Venice* and other plays with Jewish subject matter.

In 1939, once again only three provincial companies tried their hand at *The Merchant of Venice*. Breslau, once home to a large, well-assimilated Jewish community, saw another production of the play by the touring Schlesische Landesbühne, which staged 5 performances, including 2 in Neusalz. Lübeck saw another 5 performances, and Erfurt’s Deutsches Volkstheater put on the other 13 performances of *The Merchant* for 1939.<sup>180</sup> Under its new *Intendant*, the Nazi activist Leonhard Geer (party member since 1931), Erfurt’s theatre exceeded

the required norms for Nazi and patriotic plays in its programme.<sup>181</sup> A reviewer of the Erfurt production, an acclaimed contribution to Thuringia's *Gaukulturwoche*, took pains to distance it from some earlier versions of *The Merchant of Venice*:

Shylock as a tragic figure - this view was able to establish itself in a time for which the Jewish problem lacked urgency, and which, in its liberalistic broadmindedness and philo-Semitic preconceptions, was all too inclined to see in Shakespeare's usurer the representative of a suppressed and enslaved people, and to gloss over his boundless lust for vengeance as an outburst of impassioned resolve to take revenge.

This tendentiously "enlightened" interpretation was rejected by Erfurt's theatre, which viewed Shakespeare's work "from the perspective of the cultural-political insights and demands of the present day", and stripped Shylock of his disguise of tragic martyr, exposing him instead as "the lucre-Jew without heart or conscience, driven by blind hatred and diabolic destructive urges [*Vernichtungsdrang*]". Significantly, this is not a Shylock who can be motivated by paternal sentiment – Jessica is only an adopted daughter, and he laments only the loss of his ducats. This Shylock was not "characterized by any 'human' traits". This plot refinement was a way around the impossibility – for Nazi ideology – of concluding the play with a marriage between the daughter of a Jew and an Aryan. Erwin Kleist's Shylock was described as "highly vivid in its acting and gesticulation" expressing "the consuming rage of uncanny drives and passions".<sup>182</sup> Some of the Erfurt performances were for the benefit of theatre parties of the *Kraft durch Freude* (i.e. the Nazi Labour Front leisure organisation) and the Nazi women's organisation.<sup>183</sup>

The frequency with which *The Merchant of Venice* was staged increased to 7 theatres and 42 performances in 1940, at a time when the Weimar-based *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* lamented a general decline in the number of German Shakespeare productions, but *The Merchant of Venice* was still ranked twelfth in a list of 22 Shakespeare plays performed that year, a ranking little changed from the pre-war years (and higher than 1938 and 1939). The main effect of the war on the German Shakespeare repertoire was that comedies such as *The Taming of the Shrew* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* displaced *Hamlet* from its time-honoured ranking as the most popular play, mirroring the trend



towards lighter, more escapist entertainment in the cinema during the war years.<sup>184</sup> (It is not inconceivable that the vogue for *The Taming of the Shrew* not only met this demand for light comedy, but also reflected the fact that the play was found well suited to the Nazi period's anti-feminist backlash against Weimar-era women's emancipation.)

In 1940, the touring players of the Schlesische Landesbühne (Spielgruppe Glogau), took their Breslau-based production of *The Merchant of Venice* to Grünberg, Guhrau, Sagan and Sprottau, totalling 8 performances (in addition to the 5 in 1939). In general, the number of Shakespeare productions by touring theatre groups was in decline from the outbreak of war on, a major factor in the smaller number of Shakespeare performances in 1940, but the Silesian *Merchant* resisted this trend. The Aachen theatre also put on 8 performances in 1940. The Halberstadt theatre played *The Merchant* 5 times, and the once venerable Meiningen state theatre put on three performances. *The Merchant of Venice* was particularly popular in the Sudetenland, with two performances in Brüx, four in Teplitz-Schönau, and 12 by the Troppau theatre (including one each in Olmütz and Jägerndorf).<sup>185</sup>

The Aachen municipal theatre enjoyed a special status as a "front-line theatre" after the outbreak of war in September 1939, and the recently appointed *Intendant* Otto Kirchner made a particular point of ideological conformity to the wishes of his patrons in the Propaganda Ministry, to whom he promised "to commit [himself] to a true and National Socialist theatre [...] in faithful fulfilment of my duty to the Führer".<sup>186</sup> The 1940 Aachen production, directed by Kirchner, was praised by the local press for its restoration of Shakespeare's (alleged) original intention: to create a comedy which would allow the victims of the Jewish usurers on the London bourse to have the satisfaction of seeing a Jew tricked and outwitted. Shylock was no longer to be allowed to dominate the stage as a tragic figure, as he had when Ernst von Possart had played the role a few decades previously, the *Aachener Anzeiger* recalling his performance in the town. Instead, the focus was on the sport of the witty Venetians, who exposed the inferiority of the Jew to public ridicule, and enjoined the public to abhor the Jew's low desires. Otto Hermann Kempert played a Shylock who was an interloper into an otherwise harmonious world, "brilliantly making the most of the role even in this interpretation, even as he played it in a manner which ran counter to everyone's sympathy".<sup>187</sup> The regional Nazi party newspaper, the *Westdeutscher Beobachter*, was satisfied that Shylock appeared as a "creature that arouses our revulsion".<sup>188</sup>

For the next three years, 1941-1943, only a handful of productions of *The Merchant of Venice* are recorded: in September 1942, both Berlin's private Rose-Theater and the Göttingen theatre performed the play, with the Shakespeare Yearbook noting the contrast between the comic style, characterized as amounting to *commedia dell'arte*, in the Rose-Theater, under Paul Rose's direction and Gustav Rudolf Sellner's production, "which did not manage without elements of the serious, the tragic". The Yearbook added that "no actor of Shylock let pass any opportunities for drastic stage-business (down to the stropping of the knife on the soles of his shoes)"<sup>189</sup> Drewniak counts the Göttingen production, "serious" as it may have been, as one of the blatantly antisemitic stagings of the work.<sup>190</sup> Sellner appears to have been an upwardly mobile Nazi loyalist, eager to please possible sponsors in the party, and his zeal was soon to be rewarded by his promotion to the directorship of the more important Hannover theatre.<sup>191</sup>

### **The Jew of Malta**

For Nazi theatre directors in search of antisemitic material free of the difficulties presented by Shakespeare, his contemporary Christopher Marlowe offered the less ambiguous *The Jew of Malta*. The Deutsches Nationaltheater in Weimar, that shrine of German classicism and the birthplace of Germany's first democratic republic, which had been undergoing Nazification since 1930, put on an adaptation of *The Jew of Malta* in March 1939, before an audience distinguished by "numerous personalities of the party, state and cultural life". Barabas was played by Walter Grüntzig (no stranger to Jewish roles – he had also been Schmock in Freytag's *Journalisten* in 1935), whose performance was praised as "exemplary". The director was Lutz Heinle. The theatre's dramaturg in chief, Otto zur Nedden, had retained the "superhuman cruelties" attributed to the Jew Barabas in Marlowe's original, but had dug deeper by demonstrating the degree to which Barabas' character was "racially determined". One reviewer wrote: "This Barabas is now no longer just a mere villain, he becomes a destroyer out of inner necessity [...] alongside the Shylock trait of holding onto material property at all costs, there comes the elemental desire to destroy, an urge to annihilate, which requires no reason".<sup>192</sup> The term *Vernichtungsdrang*: urge to destroy or annihilate, recurs here, after already being applied by the same newspaper to the 1939 Erfurt Shylock. Could this be a case of projection, in which antisemites pre-emptively ascribe a desire to annihilate to their victims? A parallel to

this might be Goebbels' reference in his major speech shortly after Stalingrad in February 1943, in which he announced a new phase of "Total War", to "Jewish liquidation commandos" which, he claimed, were already visible behind the advancing Soviet divisions – a mirror image in his own imagination of the Nazi *Einsatzgruppen*, which followed the Wehrmacht into the Soviet Union, conducting mass shootings of Jews, and perhaps a veiled way of letting his audience in on the secret of the *Einsatzgruppen*, making them complicit so that they would become terrified of the retribution that defeat might bring.<sup>193</sup> Similarly, a reviewer of the Weimar *Jude von Malta* described Barabas as "the truly diabolical incarnation of race hatred" – the Jews were to be held to blame for racism as well as everything else.<sup>194</sup>

The programme notes of the Deutsches Nationaltheater, Weimar, described the play as "highly topical", even if it also showed that the English had been aware of the "Jewish problem" 400 years previously, and described the protagonist, Barabas, as someone "devoid of any human quality". Barabas' qualities include "*Vernichtungsfanatismus*": fanatical desire to annihilate, in particular, non-Jews. The play was said to have exposed "typically Jewish qualities, such as hunger for money, vengefulness, destruction for the sake of destruction", and Marlowe was said to have produced the "most superb depiction of the Jewish racial type so far in world literature", and to have even surpassed "his, as a poet, otherwise far greater successor, Shakespeare".<sup>195</sup> A reviewer compared Barabas with Shylock in the following terms:

A look at Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, written under the influence of *The Jew of Malta*, is instructive. While Shakespeare's genius, through the greater depth in the development of his characters, may have created the far superior poetic achievement, he lets the unambiguous delineation of the Jewish character become eclipsed by his tendency to emphasize the universally human.<sup>196</sup>

This passage reflected zur Nedden's own views, which he set out in his published essays on the theatre:

Whether, and to what extent, the figure of Shylock in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* was endowed with political significance in terms of enlightening people about the nature and dangers of Jewry – the attempted poisoning of Queen Elizabeth

by the Jewish physician Lopez occurred in the years in which the play appeared – is hard to decide today. What is certain is that the immediate intellectual forerunner of Shylock, the Jew Barabas in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, represents one of the most splendid characterizations of Jewish greed for money, vengefulness and anarchy, known to the dramatic literature of the world, delving more deeply than all modern attempts at giving form on the stage to the Jewish problem, and therefore still today it points the way forward for the future.<sup>197</sup>

The German Shakespeare Society was treated to a special performance of zur Nedden's adaptation of *The Jew of Malta* on 24 April 1939, which was praised by the Society's President Werner Deetjen as a "splendid" performance of a successfully stage-worthy text.<sup>198</sup> Deetjen's successor Wolfgang Keller also praised the stageworthiness of zur Nedden's version, although not unreservedly (regretting zur Nedden's omission of the character Pilia-Borza). Keller noted how, in "reshaping Marlowe's Jewish tragedy in a manner befitting our times", zur Nedden brought all the negative characteristics of the Jew Barabas into bolder relief, "so that one has to ask oneself whether this repulsive Jew can still be a tragic figure at all". Zur Nedden completely exonerates the Knights of Malta from any culpability in their plundering of the Jews: "Light and shadow are sharply divided here, so that the Christians are wholly in the light, the Jews solely in shadow". Barabas' daughter Abigail, who Keller notes was a forerunner of Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice*, is turned into a Christian orphan raised by Barabas, while Barabas' malevolent Turkish slave Ithamore becomes a part-Jewish "*Mischling*". Zur Nedden also added a synagogue scene which Keller found "highly effective on the stage", in which Barabas as a kind of pseudo-rabbi leads the assembled Jews in prayer (which sounds not unlike the parodic synagogue scene in the film *Jud Süß*).<sup>199</sup> Barabas was made into a leader of the Jewish community, perhaps in order that instead of being seen as an isolated individual struggling against a stronger society of Gentiles, he represented a larger Jewish threat. The unambiguously positive presentation of the Christian characters in this adaptation served as a foil to Jewish perfidy, thus the Governor of Malta exemplified "clear simplicity and soldierly bearing".<sup>200</sup> As Germany approached another European war, zur Nedden offered a lesson in "the tendency of the Jewish mentality towards high treason against the master race

[*Herrenvolke*]”.<sup>201</sup> One Nazi critic even projected the desire for world domination onto the Jews in the play: instead of Barabas acting as an individual Jew who chooses to betray Malta to the ‘Turks, zur Nedden’s adaptation gave a characterization of “Jewry as a whole”. Barabas “wants to provide a base for his people, from which the entire world is to be conquered”, and therefore plots to submit the island of Malta to the final dictatorship of the Jews.<sup>202</sup>

Less ideologically fervent theatres hesitated to follow Weimar’s lead: the Münchner Kammerspiele successfully fended off the suggestion that they produce *Der Jude von Malta*, pleading plausibly enough that Professor Nedden’s adaptation was insufficiently stageworthy, even though they had been unable to avoid staging Eberhard Wolfgang Möller’s *Rothschild siegt bei Waterloo*.<sup>203</sup> The Vienna Burgtheater was even urged by Heinrich Himmler personally to stage zur Nedden’s *Jude von Malta*, “on account of its great current cultural topicality”.<sup>204</sup>

### **Rose-Theater Berlin, 1942**

When Paul Rose staged his production of *The Merchant of Venice*, which premièred on 31 August 1942 in Berlin’s Rose-Theater, the only production of the play to be performed in Berlin during the Nazi period, he did not shrink from planting clques of extras in his theatre to ensure that the exaggerated caricature of the stage Jew played by Georg August Koch, in broad *commedia dell’arte* style, received a vocal hostile audience reception. The *Völkischer Beobachter* described the result approvingly:

Before the tribunal, which dealt such annihilating [*vernichtende*] disgrace out to the Jew insisting on his right, [Shakespeare’s spirit] stood up as an accuser of the race. And Paul Rose let the people’s voice come down from the gallery, with cries of outrage and piercing whistles, and at this point an echo from the stalls gave emphasis to the climax of the evening.

After the showdown of the trial scene, the familiar anti-climax of Act V received the kitsch treatment:

The ending with the idyll of the three loving couples on the terrace, bathed in moonlight, is then steeped in the mood of a summer night, to which [Engelbert] Humperdinck’s background

music, played on the renovated house organ, was very well suited, and a mute Puck with a tail along with four elves lead the play off the stage.<sup>205</sup>

The fifth act had a function after all: after the contrived outbreak of mob antisemitism, the audience could lull themselves back into the enjoyment of their own honest capacity for sentimentality. The casting out of Berlin's Jews (deportations to mass killing grounds had been under way for nearly a year) would not be permitted to spoil the happy end for the mainstream of the *Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community).

The production missed no chance for broad comic effect, with Georg August Koch performing the now time-honoured gesture of stropping his knife on the soles of his shoes. According to the Shakespeare Yearbook, Koch's Shylock was "strongly expressive in speech and gesture".<sup>206</sup> A photograph of Koch as Shylock shows a cartoonish figure: wide staring eyes under exaggerated beetle brows, black skull-cap and large unkempt reddish forked beard.<sup>207</sup> The *Völkischer Beobachter* characterized Koch's Shylock as "a genuine replica of the here submissive, there arrogant, mean, Talmudically dangerous Jew", adding that Herzlieb Kohut "as Shylock's adoptive daughter" made a shining contrast.<sup>208</sup> Rose's production was promoted as the story of "the usurious Jew, the devious adversary of the honest merchant Antonio".<sup>209</sup> Even Wolfgang Znamenacek's set designs for the Rose-Theater production tell a story: while most of them reflect the usual emphasis on the sunny, festive and luxurious life of the Venetian Christians, among them is a somewhat threatening depiction of a night-time scene outside Shylock's house – a small booth-like structure with a pointed-arched window and marked with a yellow star of David on top – a clearly marked *Judenhaus*, like the ones to which the Jewish inhabitants of German towns had been confined. A couple of figures wearing *commedia dell'arte*-style Venetian carnival masks (Gratiano and Salerio?) occupy the foreground, one with a kind of lute, while other figures rush around agitatedly in the background, some bearing torches. This probably shows Act II, scene 6, with the elopement of Jessica (a man and woman are seen fleetingly at the top of steps in the background, perhaps about to go off-stage). As an illustration of the scene of Jessica's flight, the picture makes sense – the torchbearers rushing around the house marked with the star nonetheless look like they are rehearsing for a pogrom.<sup>210</sup>

In some respects, the motivation for Rose's production is curious. A study of the Rose-Theater has found an "ambivalent relationship of the Roses towards Jews", or even "a certain proximity" to Nazi antisemitism.<sup>211</sup> The Rose-Theater's *Merchant of Venice* followed antisemitic productions earlier in the Nazi period of Sudermann's *Die gutgeschnittene Ecke* and Möller's *Rothschild* (to which one could perhaps add Freytag's *Journalisten*, although the antisemitic side of this play does not seem to have been played up heavily by the Roses). The choice to perform these works seems to have been the theatre's alone, without prompting from the Reich Dramaturg. After the war, Paul Rose was to claim that he had been essentially obliged to perform *The Merchant of Venice*, but documents show him seeking permission from the Reich Dramaturg to perform it – as early as 1937, in fact.<sup>212</sup> There is some suggestion that he wanted to revive the memory of the old Max Reinhardt production with the moving interpretation by Rudolf Schildkraut – Rose's nostalgic recollections portray him as something of a self-conscious custodian of Berlin's theatre heritage.<sup>213</sup> But if this is the case, the choice of Georg August Koch, an old NSDAP member and a professed anti-Semite, was an odd choice for the role of Shylock. On the other hand, as a party member, Koch seems to have felt relatively isolated in Rose's company. After the war, Rose was also able to produce witnesses to support his claim that he had kept Jewish and part-Jewish members of his company on for as long as possible, and had personally given them material assistance after he was forced to dismiss them. Thus Hedwig Siegert, who was Jewish, testified after the war that Rose had given employment to her "Mischling" sons at a time when they were supposedly barred from employment by the regime.<sup>214</sup> Rose is said to have continued giving work and financial support to his former dramaturg Heinz Michaelis, when Michaelis was banned from practising his profession on grounds of being Jewish.<sup>215</sup> Rose also employed the "half-Jew" Bruno Schoenfeld, the former *Intendant* of the Schleswig Nordmark-Landestheater, as an actor in 1940, when he was having difficulty getting employment in theatres.<sup>216</sup> Heinrich Kunz-Krause, orchestra leader of the Rose-Theater, had a Jewish wife. When he read a newspaper report on 1 December 1943 stating (for the time being, erroneously) that all "non-Aryans" without exception were about to be sent to concentration camps, he committed suicide together with his wife rather than be separated from her. He left Rose a heartfelt letter nominating him sole executor of his estate, and one of his heirs. Kunz-Krause's letter was also cited

in Rose's attempt to clear his name from accusations of antisemitism or pro-Nazi sentiments after the war.<sup>217</sup> Ironically, Kunz-Krause was also responsible for the music in the 1942 *Merchant of Venice* production. On the other side of the ledger, Rose was known to have enjoyed a good relationship with Reich Dramaturg Rainer Schlösser, who had given generous financial subsidies to the Rose-Theater, and a book manuscript written by Rose, *Der sezzierte Pegasus* (*Pegasus dissected*) contained antisemitic passages.<sup>218</sup>

One way to make sense of Rose's conduct during this period is to see his highest priority as being the preservation of the family firm – one of Berlin's best-known private theatres. This involved a good deal of trimming to adapt to the prevailing political circumstances, something which is apparent in the Rose-Theater's repertoire. One of Rose's colleagues in the Berlin theatre world declared in 1946: "It would be wrong to regard him as an opportunist on this account. The success and standing of his theatre, that had long been in his family, meant the whole of his life to him".<sup>219</sup> At the same time, as a good patriarchal head of the family business, he was concerned for the welfare of his employees. It is not inconceivable that Rose might have harboured antisemitic prejudices in general, while still behaving humanely towards his Jewish or part-Jewish employees, or employees married to Jews. His attempts to please the political masters of Berlin's theatres did not, however, avert the subsequent nationalization of the Rose-Theater (at the hands of the city of Berlin) at the beginning of 1943, although Rose was allowed to remain as *Intendant*, and was also given control of the Lessing-Theater for a period.

If there is some ambiguity about Paul Rose's attitudes towards Jews and relationship to Nazism, there is none about Georg August Koch, who played Shylock in Rose's production. Koch was a heavy-set leading man, a similar physical type to the bull-like Heinrich George, but was tending more and more towards character parts as his career continued.<sup>220</sup> Koch had been a Nazi Party member since April 1933, and also paid "passive" membership dues to the SS.<sup>221</sup> Koch was clearly personally antisemitic.<sup>222</sup> He was also frustrated in his ambitions, feeling that his great talents were always being unfairly denied recognition. In July 1933, he sought an interview with Hans Hinkel, at that time State Commissioner for the Prussian State Theatres, offering his services to the Reich in some prominent capacity as an experienced and educated man of the theatre, and as an "Aryan man", who had suffered enormously at the hands of Jewish



and “feminist” elements before 1933.<sup>223</sup> In 1939/40, Koch besieged the Reich Dramaturg and other prominent theatre officials with increasingly long letters in which he claimed he had been unjustly passed over for preferment, emphasizing that his type of forthright, manly, military character had been denigrated during the Weimar years by “Jews of the stamp of Kortner, Deutsch, Granach, Schildkraut, etc.”<sup>224</sup> The same Koch had no compunction about writing to denazification authorities in 1946 to characterize himself as an “obsessive Pan-European, pacifist, opponent of militarists” and long-term “philosemite”, whose best friends before 1933 had without exception been Jewish.<sup>225</sup> Koch seems to have felt that people at the Rose-Theater were somehow conspiring against him. He apparently believed that he could have had a film career to rival Heinrich George’s if it had not been for his excessive workload at the theatre, and, he suspected, sabotage of his ambitions by unknown persons at the theatre, who failed to pass on messages from producers.<sup>226</sup> A Propaganda Ministry official assisting Rainer Schlösser, Ernst Keppler, commented on Koch:

G.A. Koch is a special case! I have known him very well for 30 years! [...] Koch is a good actor, but he wants to play Lear and Wallenstein, while his strength is as a comic father. [...]

As a person, he is rather hard to take. A lot of Michael Kohlhaas [Heinrich von Kleist’s fanatical seeker after justice] in him. Easily provoked and certainly not a comfortable member to get along with.<sup>227</sup>

Koch even appealed directly to Goebbels (not failing to mention his role as Rothschild), which resulted in the Reich Dramaturg’s office using their best efforts to find him further employment.<sup>228</sup> Despite what Rose may have suggested later, Koch’s pro-Nazi and antisemitic views were not exactly secret, as shown by a February 1942 article he wrote for the periodical *Deutsche Dramaturgie*, in which he denounced modern dramatic movements in sub-Nietzschean prose as the product of the *ressentiment* of the lower classes, egged on by Jewish will for power, which had been especially successful in Berlin.<sup>229</sup>

The balance of evidence is strong enough that Koch intended his Shylock to be antisemitic, and the fact that Koch was a Nazi who was clearly somewhat alienated from most of his colleagues makes it all the

less likely that he would have been trusted to be a party to any belated philosemitic demonstration to arouse pity for the Jews, which Paul Rose rather feebly tried to claim had been his intention after the war when he tried to explain the orchestrated whistling and catcalls in the trial scene in his production of *The Merchant*.<sup>230</sup>

### **Krauss at the Burgtheater**

The most notorious production of *The Merchant of Venice* was the 1943 Viennese Burgtheater production under the patronage of the Nazi Gauleiter Baldur von Schirach, starring Werner Krauss, who had already featured prominently in the 1940 antisemitic feature film *Jud Süß*. Werner Krauss was to become notorious for his role as Rabbi Löw, and multiple other Jewish roles, in *Jud Süß* (a film which became compulsory viewing for the SS and German police in the winter of 1940/41, on Heinrich Himmler’s orders).<sup>231</sup> The director of *Jud Süß*, Veit Harlan, explained in a film magazine in January 1940 that this multiple casting was not a display of virtuosity for its own sake but had the purpose of showing how the various Jewish “temperaments and characters, the devout patriarch, the crafty cheat, the usurious merchant, etc. all ultimately derive from the same root.” This root was to be made manifest in the central scene of the film: a depiction of the Purim festival: “which the Jews interpret as the feast of revenge against the *goyim*, the Christians”.<sup>232</sup> It is not surprising, then, that John Gross sees “nothing fortuitous about the choice of Werner Krauss for the leading role” in the performance of *The Merchant of Venice* staged in Vienna’s Burgtheater in 1943 at the behest of von Schirach.<sup>233</sup>

Reports of this production which reached the German emigré newspaper *Die Zeitung* in London spoke of a performance “according to the guidelines of *Der Stürmer*”, Julius Streicher’s notoriously coarse antisemitic paper, with improvisations “borrowed not from Shakespeare, but rather speeches by Ley”, the alcoholic boss of the Reich Labour Front, who also had a reputation for crudity.<sup>234</sup> The Nazi Party’s official paper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, effectively damned Krauss with copious praise:

Words are inadequate to describe the linguistic and mimic variety of Werner Krauss’s Shylock [...] Every fibre of his body seems impregnated with Jewish blood; he mumbles, slavers, gurgles, grunts and squawks with alarming authenticity, scurries back and forth like a rat, though he does so the hard way –

knock-kneed; one literally smells his bad breath, feels the itching under his caftan and senses the nausea that overcomes him at the end of the court scene. Everything demonic is submerged in the impotent rage of the little ghetto usurer; in the wobbling of his body, in the frantic blinking of his eyelids and the arching of his arms, he becomes a caricature, especially together with the no less realistic Tubal of Ferdinand Maierhofer. An infernal puppet show.<sup>235</sup>

Elsewhere, the Nazi critic Richard Biedrzyński wrote: “something revoltingly alien, amazingly repellent, creeps across the stage”.<sup>236</sup> Biedrzyński enthused that Krauss played the Jew as no Jew could, for want of sufficient imagination.<sup>237</sup> For another, Krauss’s performance, which had been announced as “a complete break with the representation of Shylock practised for 50 years”, indeed, correcting the interpretations since Novelli that had suggested that Shakespeare had intended “a psychological or even sentimentalized representation of Jewishness”, Krauss’s “oversized comic presentation of loathsomeness [*Abscheulichkeit*]” “combines with the pathological image of the Eastern Jewish racial type, the whole outer and inner uncleanness of the man, while stressing the element of danger in the humour”. Krauss wore a bright red wig and beard, a greasy caftan with a yellow prayer shawl wrapped around it, and displayed a pale pink face with “unsteady sharp, beady eyes”, gesturing with claw-like hands. As for Maria Kramer’s Jessica and Fred Liewehr’s Lorenzo – they made an “idyllic pair of lovers”, once it was established that, as Launcelot Gobbo said, she was not the Jew’s daughter.<sup>238</sup> Siegfried Melchinger, in the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt*, praised director Lothar Müthel for restoring the proper balance of the play as a comedy, even if he found the tempo of the production rather too hectic. Melchinger gave another graphic description of Krauss’s Shylock, adding: “behind the Jew there appears the wicked man of the fairy tale, the never earthly cannibal, the bogeyman, who at the end, like a witch, has to be pushed into the oven”. Melchinger concluded: “The audience were immediately in the best of moods. The success of the comedy of *The Merchant of Venice* was approval, often tempestuous, for Lothar Müthel’s significant deed”.<sup>239</sup> Müthel’s production ran through a total of 25 performances.<sup>240</sup>

Of those most responsible for this production, Baldur von Schirach, sometimes referred to as one of the more “civilized” of the

Nazi leaders, had, a few months earlier, claimed that the deportation of “tens and tens of thousands of Jews” from Vienna had been an “active contribution to European culture”.<sup>241</sup> Von Schirach fancied himself as a patron of the arts. According to his wife, in her postwar memoirs, he welcomed the position in Vienna as an opportunity to “devote more time to the arts than to politics”.<sup>242</sup> Von Schirach may have inherited an interest in the theatre from his father, Carl Bailly Norris von Schirach, a former Prussian cavalry officer, who, after leaving the army, became the *Generalintendant* of the Weimar Court Theatre, a position which he lost upon the abdication of the Grand Duke in the revolution of 1918/19, as already noted.<sup>243</sup>



**8. Lothar Müthel's 1943 Vienna Burgtheater production of *The Merchant of Venice*, with Werner Krauss (left) as Shylock**

Lothar Müthel had been appointed director of the Viennese Burgtheater from 1 May 1939, as Goebbels' own hand-picked choice, and remained in the position until the end of the war. Müthel was a seasoned actor, who had a significant career in the Weimar Republic behind him. Among his many roles, he had been Launcelot Gobbo to Fritz Kortner's Shylock in 1927. In 1933, he was among those figures from the theatre world who were quick to identify with the new régime. Characterized by Ernst Leopold Stahl as “this thoroughly artistic and eminently musical Müthel, this admirer of Johann Sebastian Bach and Stefan George”, Müthel attained the prestigious

titles of *Staatsschauspieler* and *Reichskultursenator*, and would officiate loyally at various state ceremonies, for example, reciting a text from *Mein Kampf* or verses from a prize-winning poet of the SA, while himself wearing the brown shirt of the party uniform, which he was entitled to wear as a member since April 1933. He had reportedly expressed pro-Nazi sympathies even before 1933, indeed as early as 1930.<sup>244</sup>

Werner Krauss had received almost every honour the Nazi state could bestow upon an actor: he had been Vice President of the Reichstheaterkammer, he had been awarded the title *Staatsschauspieler*, he was a *Reichskultursenator*, recipient of the Goethe Medal, and had been named an honorary member of the Prussian State Theatres by Göring.<sup>245</sup> As early as 1937, reflecting on Krauss's accommodation with the Nazi regime, Berthold Viertel (now an émigré from Germany) wrote that Krauss "was always German-nationalist and a cultural antisemite".<sup>246</sup> After 1945, a succession of witnesses testified to denazification officials that Krauss had long been an antisemite.<sup>247</sup>

### Minsk

In his encyclopaedic 1947 work on Shakespeare on the German stage, Ernst Leopold Stahl refers to a 1943 performance of *The Merchant of Venice* by the Deutsches Theater in Minsk, with Ulrich von der Trenck as Shylock. Along with the German Wehrmacht, Shakespeare "penetrated into the most distant regions that had scarcely ever felt the breath of his spirit before". German troops carried their "enthusiasm for Shakespeare" all over occupied Europe.<sup>248</sup>

The rehearsals for the Minsk production took place during the liquidation of the last Jewish ghettos in Byelorussia. Some of the back-stage workers and lighting technicians were German Jews, whose work for the theatre seems to have only extended their lives by a few weeks. The programme notes for the production, not surprisingly, emphasized the significance of the play as a contribution to the understanding of the "Jewish question":

Although the age of Shakespeare did not yet possess the scientific basis for the understanding of racial questions which we have gained through Mendel's laws of heredity, the brilliant poetic intuition of the great dramatist created in the usurer Shylock the very archetype of the Jew, whose infernal hatred,

based on the appearance of a legal claim, demands the blood and life of his foe.

The notes referred to the “closeness to contemporary problems [...] since we in the East experience the Jewish-Aryan problem more directly than in the Reich”. Once again, and most strikingly given the background of Nazi mass murder in the Reich, the phenomenon of inversion and projection comes through in the text, attributing genocidal intent to the victims of genocide:

[...] the poetic visionary power that arises from an unbroken instinct of the blood has erected an image of the Jew and of his demonic urge for annihilation, that has a timeless and universal validity and that touches us with its dark symbolism more than ever in the present fateful struggle.<sup>249</sup>

During the rehearsals for the play, the young Hamburg actress Inge Stolten, who played Nerissa, found she had to turn to alcohol to cope with acting in *The Merchant of Venice* under the conditions prevailing in Byelorussia. At this time, she learned through a chance meeting with a female SS stenographer of the murderous activities of the *Einsatzgruppen*. In one performance, the harmony of the play’s last act was suddenly broken by an explosion – partisans had planted a bomb in the soldiers’ cinema in another wing of the theatre building. Stolten noticed that when performances resumed, the Jewish technical personnel had all been replaced by German soldiers.<sup>250</sup>

No more productions of *The Merchant of Venice* are recorded in the Greater German Reich or German-occupied Europe. As the war dragged on into the year 1944, the significance of the theatre was rapidly diminishing, as theatre personnel were called up and buildings were destroyed by bombing all over Germany. In August 1944, Goebbels decreed that in the context of the “total war” mobilization of all available resources and manpower, theatres in the Reich would be closed down as of 1 September 1944.<sup>251</sup> Surviving theatre buildings would be used as cinemas – Goebbels had not given up on the propaganda potential of the cinema, as his substantial investment in Veit Harlan’s last-ditch epic *Kolberg* indicates.

Four weeks after the closing of all theatres in the Reich on Goebbels’ orders, on the other side of the world in an internment camp in Victoria, Australia, a group of interned Germans in Tatura

Camp 3, dominated by a camp committee consisting of committed NSDAP members, staged an amateur performance of *Der Kaufmann von Venedig* in the Schlegel translation on 27 September 1944, the only play by a non-German author to be put on in the camp. Details of the performance are not recorded, but the fact that the programme notes included racist quotations from Hans Günther and Alfred Rosenberg is suggestive. Fortunately, the Jewish refugees who had previously occupied a segregated part of the camp had mostly left by that time.<sup>252</sup>

### From *Jud Süß* to *The Merchant of Venice*

As noted above, *Jud Süß*, directed by Veit Harlan, was the most notorious antisemitic film of the Nazi period, and one of the few German feature films to be explicitly centred on antisemitism. There were others, notably Erich Waschneck's *Die Rothschilds* (*The Rothschilds*) and Fritz Hippler's propaganda "documentary" *Der ewige Jude* (*The Eternal Jew*), with its dissolves identifying Jews with rats. *Jud Süß* was by far the most prominent and successful antisemitic feature film, with an estimated audience of up to ten million in Germany, and another ten million in Nazi-occupied Europe and neutral countries, a testimony to the film's wide distribution and to the pulling-power of some of Germany's best-known film stars: Werner Krauss, Ferdinand Marian, Heinrich George, and Kristina Söderbaum.<sup>253</sup> This Nazi reworking of the Joseph Oppenheimer story no doubt owed some of its effect to its significant breach of a long-standing stage taboo – Oppenheimer, played by the darkly handsome matinee idol Ferdinand Marian, is shown seizing the blonde Dorothea (Söderbaum) in order to rape her, an unusual example of an eroticized male Jewish protagonist, and a rare, and for the time shocking, acting out of an antisemitic trope. To get an idea of the impact this might have had in an audience in Nazi Germany, one might imagine the reception in the Southern states of the United States in the 1940s if Clark Gable had played an African-American in *Gone with the Wind* and had proceeded to ravish Scarlett O'Hara in that guise.

Despite this deliberately shocking taboo breach, *Jud Süß* displayed a revealing break with the literary tradition around the character of Oppenheimer. Although Harlan's film is generally closer to Wilhelm Hauff's *Novelle* of 1827 than to the historical facts about the banker Oppenheimer, he omits Hauff's important sub-plot involving Oppenheimer's sister Lea, a dark-eyed oriental *belle juive* whom he attempts to marry off to the Christian young man Gustav.<sup>254</sup> Once

again, the *belle juive* was one stereotype that had become too sensitive after the Nuremberg laws. Like her literary cousin Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice*, Lea would have to yield to these laws' prohibition on "race defilement".

There is some evidence that Ferdinand Marian took on the title role of the film with some reluctance, in contrast to Krauss and the director Harlan.<sup>255</sup> Krauss seems to have been enthused by the chance to play all the Jewish characters except for that of "Süss". In a display of acquisitiveness and a gift for haggling that would rival any Venetian usurer, Krauss, whose fee had been capped at a maximum RM30,000 per film at the outbreak of war by the Reich's Special Trustee for the Cultural Professions as a wartime austerity measure, succeeded in getting his fee increased to RM50,000.<sup>256</sup> Harlan's fee as director was increased by RM10,000 for *Jud Süß*.<sup>257</sup>

In October 1944, a month after the "total war" preached by Goebbels had resulted in the closing of all German theatres, Veit Harlan, who was still in the process of completing *Kolberg*, his lavishly produced colour feature film calling for last-ditch resistance to invasion, proposed a film version of *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>258</sup> It is perhaps a comment on Joseph Goebbels' priorities as Nazi Germany approached total defeat that he embraced this concept. Following *Jud Süß*, *Kolberg*, and other major features, *The Merchant of Venice* was to have been among the most prestigious films produced in the Third Reich, at least in terms of the personnel involved. It would have reunited some of the key figures who had been involved in *Jud Süß*: Harlan as director, his wife, Kristina Söderbaum, and Werner Krauss, who would once again play Shylock. Filming for *Der Kaufmann von Venedig* was planned to start the following month, November 1944.

For the war correspondent turned *Reichsfilm dramaturg*, Kurt Frowein, reporting his evaluation of Harlan's screenplay to Goebbels, the propaganda value of the material was self-evident. Harlan had skilfully avoided the pitfalls inherent in filming a work for the stage, partly by introducing a framing device by which Shakespeare himself would appear in a prelude, "in the social context of his time", and improvise the work, "prompted by a specific occasion". Shakespeare would reappear at suitable moments in the course of the film. The language of the Schlegel translation would be kept, and the main part of the film "keeps precisely to Shakespeare and represents the skilful abridgement of his poem down to a playing time of 1 ¾ hours".<sup>259</sup>



The “specific occasion” which supposedly prompted Shakespeare to write *The Merchant of Venice* was concocted by Harlan along the following lines:

When Lord Powel [*sic*] gives the beautiful Lady Southampton a precious diamond ring at a festive gathering, one of the guests cannot conceal his horror: the poet, theatre director and actor William Shakespeare. He knows that Powel has no fortune, but has once again put himself in the power of a Jewish usurer. At the same time, he is pained that his friend can find no quieter and deeper sign of love than gleaming gold. In silence, he burns his own homage to the fair lady – a sonnet. Suddenly, the company is outraged by hearing the news of a murder attempt against the Queen. The culprit is a Jew. Above the men’s dispute about judgement and justice, Lady Southampton requests the poet to judge the matter not on mere grounds of reason, but to descend to the deep causes, where blood weighs more than intellect. And Shakespeare, who, thus called upon, beholds the truth, seeks a merciful veil for the gruesome reality, a veil, behind which this reality will become a higher truth. Lady Southampton hands him the veil from her shoulder, and now the great thespian carries the friends off into sunny Italy, to Venice.<sup>260</sup>

The historical verisimilitude of Harlan’s portrayal of Shakespeare’s “social context” is risible, even if it does allude to the theory that the Portuguese Jew Roderigo Lopez, executed for allegedly plotting to kill Queen Elizabeth, was the inspiration for Shakespeare’s Shylock. At the same time, the combination of sentimental kitsch and crude pogrom-mongering in this single paragraph make it a telling specimen of Nazi aesthetics. The frame story makes it clear that this *Kaufmann von Venedig* will judge the Jews for their materialism, for the way they corrupt the finest ideals and the intimate relationships of non-Jews, the power they wield in society by underhanded methods, and last, but clearly not least, the murderous threat that they pose to the lives of Gentiles, the social order and the safety of the state. And that was only the Prelude.<sup>261</sup>

Goebbels’ only significant objection to Harlan’s screenplay was to take exception to the stagey effect of keeping the language of the Schlegel-Tieck translation in the film.<sup>262</sup> This version of *The Merchant of*

*Venice* was intended to seem "realistic". Hans Hinkel, now the *Reichsfilmintendant* and an SS-*Gruppenführer*, reported to Goebbels in early December 1944 about progress with the final revisions to *Kolberg* and the planning for the *Kaufmann von Venedig*. Harlan wished to retain the diction of August Wilhelm Schlegel in the latter film. Harlan claimed after the war that Goebbels, in an effort to demonstrate "that the *English* genius Shakespeare had had an antisemitic attitude 350 years ago", demanded the changes with this end in mind. At the time, Hinkel's succinct assessment of Harlan's defence of his script was that what Harlan really wanted was a personal audience with the Propaganda Minister.<sup>263</sup>

Frome subsequently found Harlan's revised version, "freed from the Romantic flourishes of the Schlegel-Tieck translation", essentially satisfactory, and "cast in a prose which communicates itself in a pleasing and comprehensible manner to the modern ear, without sacrificing anything of Shakespeare's richness of thought". The character of Shylock, however, had been left with "unusual turns of phrase, departing from everyday language". This was found to be in order, since: "Harlan had quite deliberately not avoided bizarre images and unusual word order, in order to bring out the Jewishness in the intonation and manner of speech all the more precisely".<sup>264</sup>

Filming for *Der Kaufmann von Venedig* was supposed to start at the end of November 1944 and finish in mid-March 1945.<sup>265</sup> But events were overtaking Goebbels' film empire: during January 1945, copies of *Kolberg* were rushed to beleaguered German garrisons from La Rochelle to Danzig, and when the Red Army took Kolberg itself in mid-March, Goebbels had mention of the fact suppressed in the military situation reports.<sup>266</sup> Events were also overtaking the machinery of genocide: Auschwitz was liberated by the Red Army on 27 January 1945. But even after the liberation of the extermination camps, Jews continued to be murdered on death marches and in the concentration camps on German soil, until the final and total defeat of the Nazi régime.



## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of a study such as this one are inevitably incomplete and tentative. Theatre productions can only ever be partially reconstructed from reviews, photos, set designs, or other evidence. As stage productions are collective works of art, ascription of intention to individual actors or directors can be problematical, and evaluating audience reception is always fraught with difficulties. On the basis of the material surveyed for this work, the following provisional findings might at least be sketched out here.

Stage Shylocks in Germany from 1777 to 1944 combined a number of features of prevalent anti-Jewish stereotyping. Stage convention assigned the role of Shylock to character actors specializing in elderly fathers, and normally not to male romantic leads. This conformed to the most common pattern of casting male Jewish roles as unmanly, whereas female Jewish roles were much more likely to be eroticised, stressing exotic fantasies of female sexuality. Even the positive figure of Lessing's Nathan conformed to this role-type, or *Fach*, making him at least partly Shylock's cousin, as well as his antipode.

The emphasis on Shylock as avaricious moneylender served a scapegoat function during the rise of industrial capitalism in nineteenth-century Germany: the stigmatisation of Jewish finance capital allowed the honest Christian merchants to appear in all the more positive a light. During the Nazi period, especially by 1939 with the approach of war, the emphasis is less on Shylock's avarice and more on his lust for power and blood. If earlier Shylocks served as figures on whom the economic vices of capitalist society could be projected, Nazi productions of Shylock put an even greater emphasis on projecting Nazi desire for domination and murderous intent onto

the Jews. However, *The Merchant of Venice* did not lend itself to Nazi uses as readily as might be assumed. Only a minority of theatres run by particularly zealous (or opportunistic?) servants of the regime chose to bend the play in the ways needed for such a purpose.

One finding is somewhat negative: while the history of Shylock on the German stage offers ample evidence for the persistence and deep-rootedness of antisemitic stereotypes of Jews, there is little basis in this material for assuming that German cultural history is dominated by what Daniel Goldhagen called "eliminationist antisemitism". There is no irresistible tidal wave of cultural antisemitism peaking in 1933 and continuing through up to the "Final Solution".

It is possible to discern one line of continuity from the series of comic, grotesque and monstrous Shylocks to Nazi propaganda, a line of continuity most notoriously exemplified in the career of Werner Krauss. This fatal strand of continuity undeniably existed and played some role, however unquantifiable, in the unfolding of events leading to genocide. At the same time, the history of German stage representations of Shylock (and other Jewish figures) is more complex than such a focus would show. Moreover, the question of matching this history with the development of political antisemitism in Germany before 1933 is even more complex. After a period of growth in the 1880s and 1890s, antisemitic parties seemed headed for oblivion before the First World War (even though antisemitism remained broadly diffused through German right-wing circles). The extent to which antisemitism contributed to Hitler's electoral support before 1933 remains controversial. Without antisemitism, the Holocaust would not have been possible, but the path from specific manifestations of cultural antisemitism to the Holocaust only seems straight in retrospect. To make this point is not, of course, to seek to exculpate anyone who helped to perpetuate destructive stereotypes.

Rather than a straight, inexorable line of development of cultural antisemitism in Germany, the best scholarship suggests that antisemitism functioned on three different levels: there was sufficient latent antisemitism in the general population to prevent any widespread sense of solidarity with Jews once they became the target of Nazi persecution, but this still required a gradual process of several years of exclusion of Jews from the general community after the Nazis took power. (We should remember the large proportion of Germans who, before 1933, voted for socialist or liberal parties which opposed

antisemitism). Secondly, antisemitism was functional for the Nazi movement in that it provided a unifying ideological common denominator to a socially heterogeneous movement which had an otherwise inchoate, contradictory political programme. Thirdly, a key section of the Nazi elite, first and foremost Hitler himself (and Goebbels), genuinely believed in radical notions of “eliminationist antisemitism”.

Similarly, one can easily construct a history of the representations of Shylock on the German stage as the history of Germans’ depiction of the Jew as “Other”. Such an emphasis might, however, occlude the part Jews themselves played in German cultural life (especially, perhaps, in the theatrical life of Berlin), including theatre directors such as Reinhardt and Jessner, actors such as Schildkraut and Kortner, and numerous critics, some of whom worked for newspapers owned by Jews. Wolfgang Benz has argued cogently and persuasively against the term “German-Jewish symbiosis” to describe pre-1933 German society.<sup>1</sup> It would, however, be permissible to say that there were complex patterns of mutual entanglement and involvement, as even a brief survey of the slice of cultural history discussed above suggests.

Another finding, which is not exactly counter-intuitive, is that in the first third of the twentieth century there is a significant difference in cultural attitudes between Germany’s metropolitan centres, especially Berlin, and the provinces. Anti-modernist attitudes in provincial towns often took Berlin’s avant-garde cultural life, cosmopolitanism and left-of-centre politics as symptomatic of a decline in national virtue, for which antisemites were quick to blame Jews.

The history of representations of Jews on the German stage is suggestive of paths not taken, of possibilities unfulfilled. Even Shylock was the subject of contested readings, even if the criticism could be raised that philosemitic versions of the figure remained burdened by continuing assumptions about essentially “Jewish” character. German philosemitism was also marked by the asymmetrical expectations which both secular Enlightenment liberal and Christian versions of tolerance and assimilation placed on Jews. But one should nevertheless not view Shylock in isolation and overlook the German Enlightenment tradition represented by Lessing’s *Nathan der Weise*, even granting its limitations. We need to understand why this particular part of Enlightenment tradition proved too weak in

Germany, but it does not serve historical understanding to write this tradition out of the record.

Finally, this study of German attempts to act Shylock on stage is not able to provide any definitive answer to the question of how antisemitic *The Merchant of Venice* is, or what Shakespeare himself thought of Jews, for that matter.<sup>2</sup> But what remains remarkable about Shakespeare's play, is not the fact that it can be interpreted in very different ways, which has become a commonplace about literary texts in general, but the fact that despite the play's durable contribution to the currency of negative stereotyping of Jews, Shakespeare endowed his Shylock with an ineradicable kernel of humanity which meant that the play ultimately proved harder for the propagandists of genocidal anti-Jewish ideology to instrumentalize than we might have assumed. The play can be used and misused in a number of ways, but unless it is significantly rewritten or cut down, there remains a certain element of resistance in the text.

# NOTES

## Introduction

<sup>1</sup> See especially Hermann Sinsheimer, *Shylock. The History of a Character or the Myth of the Jew*, London, 1947; John Gross, *Shylock. Four Hundred Years in the Life of a Legend*, London, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> See Gross, *op. cit.*; on Shylock's stage history in the English-speaking world, see also Toby Lelyveld, *Shylock on the Stage*, London, 1961; James C. Bulman, *The Merchant of Venice*, Manchester and New York, 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Bonnell, *The People's Stage in Imperial Germany. Social Democracy and Culture 1890-1914*, London/ New York, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Stuttgart, 1947.

<sup>5</sup> Cambridge, 1990.

<sup>6</sup> Düsseldorf, 1983.

<sup>7</sup> Seelze-Velber, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Maria Verch, "Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice on the German stage after 1945", in *eadem*, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Frankfurt/M., 1993, pp.130-143; Wilhelm Hortmann, with Maik Hamburger, *Shakespeare on the German Stage. The twentieth century*, Cambridge, 1998.

## Chapter One

<sup>1</sup> George Steiner, "Theirs by right, ours by mistake", *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 October 1998, p.23.

<sup>2</sup> See Simon Williams, *Shakespeare on the German Stage. Volume I: 1586-1914*, Cambridge, 1990, especially pp.7-26, 147-152. See also Roy Pascal, *Shakespeare in Germany, 1740-1815*, Cambridge, 1937.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Elze, "Vorwort", *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft* [hereafter *SJb.*], 6, 1871, pp.v-vi; on the German nationalist appropriation of Shakespeare, see also Werner Habicht, "Shakespeare in Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Making of a Myth", in Modris Eksteins and Hildegard



Hammerschmidt, eds., *Nineteenth-Century Germany: A Symposium*, Tübingen, 1983, pp.152-153.

<sup>4</sup> According to Albert Lindner, "Shakespeare und kein Ende", *Frankfurter Zeitung und Handelsblatt*, no.267, 23 September 1876, Morgenblatt.

<sup>5</sup> A. Brandl, "Ludwig Fulda, Paul Heyse und Adolf Wilbrandt über die Schlegel-Tiecksche Shakespeare-Übersetzung", *SJb.*, 37, 1901, p.xxxvii.

<sup>6</sup> Ute Daniel, *Hoftheater. Zur Geschichte des Theaters und der Höfe im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart, 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Konrad Dussel, *Ein neues, ein heroisches Theater? Nationalsozialistische Theaterpolitik und ihre Auswirkungen in der Provinz*, Bonn, 1988, p.21.

<sup>8</sup> See *ibid.*, pp.21-26, for a useful summary of these developments. Also Ruth Freydank, *Theater in Berlin von den Anfängen bis 1945*, Berlin, 1988, pp.286-289, 314; Gerhard Wahnrau, *Berlin: Stadt der Theater. Der Chronik I. Teil*, Berlin, 1957.

<sup>9</sup> Johannes Meissner, "Die Shakespeare-Aufführungen in Berlin", *SJb.*, 7, 1872, p.340.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.341-342.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.341.

<sup>12</sup> Wilhelm Hortmann, with Maik Hamburger, *Shakespeare on the German Stage. The twentieth century*, Cambridge, 1998, pp.9-10; cf. William Harbutt Dawson, *Municipal Life and Government in Germany*, London, 1916, pp.284-289; Ernst Leopold Stahl, *Shakespeare und das Deutsche Theater*, Stuttgart, 1947, pp.546-547. As Dawson notes, *Stadttheater* could be either owned and run by the municipality, or owned by the city and leased to a private operator, or be privately run and subsidised by the municipality.

<sup>13</sup> Dawson, *Municipal Life*, p.289.

<sup>14</sup> Reinhard Rürup, "The Tortuous and Thorny Path to Legal Equality: 'Jew Laws' and Emancipatory Legislation in Germany from the Late Eighteenth Century", *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* (hereafter LBIYB), 31, 1986; Werner E. Mosse, "From 'Schutzjuden' to 'Deutsche Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens': The Long and Bumpy Road of Jewish Emancipation in Germany", in Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, eds., *Paths of Emancipation. Jews, States, and Citizenship*, Princeton NJ, 1995, pp.59-93, quotation from law p.87. On Baden, see Reinhard Rürup, *Emancipation und Antisemitismus. Studien zur 'Judenfrage' der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt/ M., 1987, Ch.III; Dagmar Herzog, *Intimacy and Exclusion. Religious Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Baden*, Princeton, NJ, 1996, Ch.2. Herzog particularly stresses the ambivalent attitude of many liberals towards Jews and Judaism.

<sup>15</sup> Mosse, *op. cit.*, p.87.

<sup>16</sup> On this process, see David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840*, Oxford, 1987; on the centrality of the notion of *Bildung*, along with bourgeois notions of respectability, in the identity formation of emancipated Jews, see also George L. Mosse, "Jewish Emancipation: Between *Bildung* and Respectability", in Jehuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg, eds., *The Jewish Response to German Culture. From the Enlightenment to the Second World War*,

Hanover, NH and London, 1985, pp.1-16; idem, *German Jews beyond Judaism*, Bloomington, Indiana, 1985; in response to Mosse, Shulamit Volkov, "The Ambivalence of *Bildung*: Jews and Other Germans", in Klaus L. Berghahn, ed., *The German-Jewish Dialogue Reconsidered*, New York, Bern, etc., 1996.

<sup>17</sup> Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus*, esp. Ch.III.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, esp. Ch.III, IV; on Marr, see Moshe Zimmermann, *Wilhelm Marr. The Patriarch of Antisemitism*, New York/ Oxford, 1986; Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Antisemitism in Germany and Austria*, New York, London, Sydney, 1964, here especially pp.76-126; Richard S. Levy, *The Downfall of the Antisemitic Political Parties in Imperial Germany*, New Haven and London, 1975, Ch.1-4. On the transformations of antisemitism in nineteenth-century Germany, see also Werner Jochmann, "Struktur und Funktion des deutschen Antisemitismus", in Werner E. Mosse with Arnold Paucker, ed., *Juden im Wilhelminischen Deutschland 1890-1914*, Tübingen, 1976, pp.389-477.

<sup>19</sup> See Henry Wassermann, "The *Fliegende Blätter* as a Source for the Social History of German Jewry", *LBIYB*, 28, 1983, pp.93-138.

<sup>20</sup> Hans-Joachim Neubauer, *Judenfiguren. Drama und Theater im frühen 19. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt/M./ New York, 1994; see also Ritchie Robertson, *The 'Jewish Question' in German Literature 1749-1939. Emancipation and its Discontents*, Oxford/ New York, 1999, pp.203-208.

<sup>21</sup> Rudolf Vierhaus' formulation cited in Volkov, "Ambivalence of *Bildung*", p.91.

<sup>22</sup> On the use of Jewish speech as a means of stigmatizing Jews, see Elvira Grözinger, "'Judenmauschel'. Der antisemitische Sprachgebrauch und die jüdische Identität", in *eadem*, *Die schöne Jüdin. Klischees, Mythen und Vorurteile über Juden in der Literatur*, Berlin/ Vienna, 2003, pp.29-58.

<sup>23</sup> Cited in *SJb.*, 9, 1874, pp.300-301.

<sup>24</sup> Neubauer, *op. cit.*, p.49.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p.59. Cf. also p.110: "Ultimately the farce only allows its Jewish figures a single social role: that of the Jew as eternal usurer and haggler".

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.60,61.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.61.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.61f.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p.86.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.85-90, 96f.

<sup>31</sup> Ludwig Barnay, *Erinnerungen*, Berlin, 1954, p.120.

<sup>32</sup> Ludwig Malyoth, "Ernst v. Possart: Shylock", *SJb.*, 42, 1906, p.94.

<sup>33</sup> Rolf Kabel, ed., *Eduard Devrient aus seinen Tagebüchern. Karlsruhe 1852-1870*, Weimar, 1964, p.498 (diary entry for 16 October 1866, describing the Shylock of Rudolf Lange).

<sup>34</sup> Simon Williams, *Shakespeare on the German Stage. Volume I: 1586-1914*, Cambridge, 1990, pp.132-146, quotation here p.132. The prehistory of *The Merchant of Venice* in Germany goes back to the tours of Germany by troupes of English Comedians in the early seventeenth century, however, possibly as early as 1607 in Passau, and 1608 in Graz. A performance of *Der Jud von*

*Venedig* is recorded in Halle in 1611, and Dresden saw a *Comödia von Josepho Juden von Venedigk* in 1626. It is not clear to what extent these plays were based on Shakespeare's *Merchant* (or on Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, or both). Shortly after the Thirty Years' War, one Christoph Blümel produced a very free German adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*, which was clearly antisemitic. *Ibid.*, pp.34f; Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.11f, 21f, 29.

<sup>35</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.90; Simon Williams, *German Actors of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Westport, Conn./ London, 1985, p.60.

<sup>36</sup> Williams, *Shakespeare*, p.133; cf. Johann Friedrich Schütze, *Hamburgische Theater-Geschichte*, Hamburg, 1794 (reprint Leipzig, 1975), p.461. Stahl noted that Schröder "added a philosemitic statement to the play, in keeping with the [Enlightenment] *Zeitgeist*". Stahl also detected the influence of Enlightenment philosemitism in a 1783 Mannheim production of *The Merchant of Venice*. Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.93, 162.

<sup>37</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.219; Williams, *op. cit.*, p.137.

<sup>38</sup> Ch. A. von Bertram's *Annalen des Theaters*, cited in Monty Jacobs, ed., *Deutsche Schauspielkunst*, Leipzig, 1913, p.344. It is worth recording that the attempt of the writer Johann Jakob Engel and the director F. Ramler, friends of G. E. Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn, to preface this production of *The Merchant of Venice* with a didactic and apologetic preface, in order to forestall an antisemitic interpretation of the play, was roundly rejected by the Berlin first-night audience. Arno Paul, "Die Formierung des jüdischen Theaterpublikums in Berlin im späten 18. Jahrhundert. Eine quellenkritische Skizze", in Hans-Peter Bayerdörfer, ed., *Theatralia Judaica. Emanzipation und Antisemitismus als Momente der Theatergeschichte. Von der Lessing-Zeit bis zur Shoah*, Tübingen, 1992, pp.69f.

<sup>39</sup> Williams, *Shakespeare*, pp.94, 133-135.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p.135. For reflections on Iffland's Shylock in its theatre-historical context, see also Elmar Goerden, "Der Andere. Fragmente einer Bühnengeschichte Shylocks im deutschen und englischen Theater des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts", in Bayerdörfer, *op. cit.*, pp.136-142.

<sup>41</sup> Hans de Leeuwe, "Shakespeares Shylock. Europäische Darsteller einer berühmten Rolle", *Kleine Schriften der Gesellschaft für Theatergeschichte*, Heft 23, Berlin, 1969, p.9; Zelter also excerpted in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp.346f.

<sup>42</sup> See Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.214.

<sup>43</sup> Rudolf Weil, *Das Berliner Theaterpublikum unter A.W. Ifflands Direktion (1796 bis 1814)* (=Schriften der Gesellschaft für Theatergeschichte 44), Berlin, 1932, pp.162, 130n171.

<sup>44</sup> Heinrich Blümner, *Geschichte des Theaters in Leipzig*, Leipzig, 1818 (reprint Leipzig, 1979), p.292.

<sup>45</sup> Wassermann, *op. cit.*, p.105-107, quotation p.106.

<sup>46</sup> Weil, *op. cit.*, pp.109, 126-128; on the scandal over *Unser Verkehr*, see Neubauer, *op. cit.*, pp.113-120; Wassermann, *op. cit.*, pp.107-109. The play was performed 21 times from September 1815 to August 1816 at the Royal

Theatre in Berlin. C. Schäffer and C. Hartmann, eds., *Die Königlichen Theater in Berlin. Statistischer Rückblick*, Berlin, 1886, p.86.

<sup>47</sup> The influence of the educated, assimilated Jewish section of the Berlin theatre-going public is stressed by Max Martersteig, *Das deutsche Theater im neunzehnten Jahrhundert. Eine kulturgeschichtliche Darstellung*, Leipzig, 1924, pp.226-230; cf. Weil, *op. cit.*, p.126. Arno Paul's more recent study, "Die Formierung des jüdischen Theaterpublikums", pp.64-84, confirms that well-educated Jews constituted a significant section of Berlin's theatre public, but finds that they did not seek to exercise any distinct collective influence on the theatre as a community, tending rather to exercise restraint in responding to controversy.

<sup>48</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.300.

<sup>49</sup> Robertson, *op. cit.*, p.206.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p.208; on the "Hep-Hep" riots, see Helmut Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, Frankfurt/ M., 1988, pp.66-71; Jacob Katz, *Die Hep-Hep-Verfolgungen des Jahres 1819*, Berlin, 1994; Stefan Rohrbacher, "The 'Hep Hep' Riots of 1819: Anti-Jewish Ideology, Agitation, and Violence", in Christhard Hoffmann, Werner Bergmann and Helmut Walser Smith, eds., *Exclusionary Violence. Antisemitic riots in Modern German History*, Ann Arbor, 2002.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, S. Troizkij, *Karl Seydelmann: Die Anfänge der realistischen Schauspielkunst*, Berlin, 1949, p.152; also Georg Altman, *Ludwig Devrient. Leben und Werke eines Schauspielers*, Berlin, 1929, p.214-218; de Leeuwe, *op. cit.*, p.12; Williams, *Shakespeare*, pp.137f; comparisons of Iffland and Devrient by contemporaries in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp.347f; Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.222 (citing August Haake); see also Goerden, *op. cit.*, pp.141-144.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, Williams, *Shakespeare*, pp.134, 136 (quotation p.135); Jacobs, *op. cit.*, facing p.348.

<sup>53</sup> Williams, *Shakespeare*, p.138.

<sup>54</sup> On Devrient's capacity to play Jewish characters, communicating the "*Geist des Judentums*" [spirit of Jewry], see the sources in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp.347-353 ("Jewish tiger" quotation: Eduard von Bauernfeld, p.353); Neubauer, *op. cit.*, pp.71, 113-120. Neubauer also includes an illustration (p.88) of Ludwig Devrient as Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, described as the "paradigmatic" Jewish figure (pp.86f).

<sup>55</sup> Williams, *Shakespeare*, pp.138-141; Troizkij, *op. cit.*, pp.149-161.

<sup>56</sup> Eduard Gans (1835), excerpted in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp.355-356; cf. also the description of Seydelmann's Shylock by H.Th. Röttscher, cited in Troizkij, *op. cit.*, pp. 154f.

<sup>57</sup> Gustav Kühne (1838), in , Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp.357.

<sup>58</sup> Karl Seydelmann, (ed. Ministerium für Kultur [DDR]), *Aus seinen Rollenheften und Briefen*, Dresden, n.d., pp. 40-58, quotation p.57; cf. also Eduard Devrient's critical description in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp.357f.

<sup>59</sup> Both quoted in Seydelmann, *op. cit.*, p.41n.

<sup>60</sup> Rudolf Genée, "Theodor Döring. Zur hundertsten Wiederkehr seines Geburtstages (9. Januar 1903)", *Bühne und Welt*, Vol.5, ii, 1902-03, p.266.

<sup>61</sup> Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p.359. Kühne also described Döring's Shylock as resembling the sort of "mean Jew [...] who rolls around under the garlic heaps on the Rialto": obviously a recurrent locution in this period. Cf. the account in Carl Wexel, *Theodor Döring als Mensch und Künstler. Blätter der Erinnerung*, Berlin, n.d. [1878], pp.82-88.

<sup>62</sup> J. Lasker (Berlin, August 1843), in *ibid.*, p.360.

<sup>63</sup> The Royal Theatre's 1871/72 season included a healthy 7 performances of *The Merchant of Venice* with Döring as Shylock. *SJb.*, 8, 1873, p.310. For 1877/78, see *SJb.*, Vol.14, 1879, pp.319, 327-328 (obituary).

<sup>64</sup> Peter Kollek, *Bogumil Dawison, Porträt und Deutung eines genialen Schauspielers*, Kastellaun, 1978.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.175f, 255.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.175-178; Frenzel cited from Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp.360-361; cf. the more negative assessment by Eduard Devrient, *ibid.*, pp.361f. The German Shakespeare-scholar Ernst Leopold Stahl, in his indispensable reference work on Shakespeare and the German theatre that was published in 1947, but which still bears traces of the *lingua tertii imperii* (to use Victor Klemperer's term), was to describe Dawison as follows: "More primitive Jewishness of far more Eastern nature and origin [than in the case of Dawison's contemporary Ludwig Dessoir], passionate, riven with ambition and completely without restraint, discharged itself in the Warsaw-born Bogumil Dawison". Stahl rejected what he considered the superficial and meretricious style of acting of Dawison, citing with approval Burgtheater director Heinrich Laube's judgement that "Dawison's Polish-Jewish nature" was incapable of comprehending the "*Urgermanische*" element within Hamlet. Stahl believed that the "essential nature" (*Wesen*) of Dessoir and Dawison made them more suited to "intriguers' roles like Richard III". Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.232, 233, 238. Elsewhere (p.322), Stahl characterizes Laube (in contrast) as a "*Vollarier*", a person of "pure Aryan" descent; Heinrich Laube, *Das Burgtheater. Ein Beitrag zur Deutschen Theater-Geschichte*, Leipzig, 1868, pp.213, 244.

<sup>67</sup> Williams, *Shakespeare*, p.143.

<sup>68</sup> Jacob Katz, "German Culture and the Jews", in Reinharz and Schatzberg, *op. cit.*, pp.96f; cf. Williams, *German Actors*, p.107.

<sup>69</sup> Figures collated from *SJb.*, 7, 1872, pp.345, 347; 8, 1873, pp.284, 296, 315, 317, 322, 325, 326, 340.

<sup>70</sup> *SJb.*, 7, 1872, pp.330ff, 342f, 345; 8, pp.310-312, 317, 322-324, 329, 334, 339-340.

<sup>71</sup> *SJb.*, 7, 1872, pp.341f; 8, 1873, pp.284, 296, 310 (Berlin Royal Theatre), 312, 315, 322, 324, 329, 337f, 340.

<sup>72</sup> *SJb.*, 9, 1874, p.312.

<sup>73</sup> *SJb.*, 10, 1875, p.363.

<sup>74</sup> *SJb.*, 11, 1876, p.305.

<sup>75</sup> *SJb.*, 12, 1877, p.294; *SJb.*, 13, 1878, p.292. During 1876/77, *The Merchant of Venice* was, however, performed on 21 stages to *Hamlet's* 20.

<sup>76</sup> *SJb.*, 14, 1879, p.324. Although, with performances by 23 theatre companies, *The Merchant of Venice* was the most widely performed play that season, if not the most frequently overall.

<sup>77</sup> *SJb.*, 15, 1880, p.444; *SJb.*, 16, 1881, p.430.

<sup>78</sup> Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron. Bismarck, Bleichröder and the Building of the German Empire*, London, 1980, p. 187. Bismarck resented this article as it was not only an attack on his economic policy but a personal attack on his association with the banker Gerson Bleichröder. Stern gives an excellent account of the impact of the 1873 crash, especially as far as the subsequent resurgence of antisemitism is concerned.

<sup>79</sup> Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus*, pp.128-130; Felix Gilbert, "Bismarckian Society's Image of the Jew", *Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture* 22, New York, 1978, especially pp.7-9.

<sup>80</sup> *SJb.*, 16, 1881, p.430. The eighteen-month report period here results from the German Shakespeare Yearbook reverting from counting in theatre seasons to calendar years.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. the comparison between Duke Georg II von Sachsen-Meiningen and Ludwig II of Bavaria in John Osborne, ed., *Die Meininger. Texte zur Rezeption*, Tübingen, 1980, pp.6f.

<sup>82</sup> Alfred Klaar, "Herzog Georg von Meiningen. Ein Nekrolog", *SJb.*, 51, 1915, p.193; also quoted in *ibid.*, p.8. Klaar's diction here is, admittedly, under the influence of the war. However, the frequency with which the Meininger performed Heinrich von Kleist's patriotic *Die Hermannschlacht* suggests a strong nationalist sentiment behind the company's programme.

<sup>83</sup> See John Osborne, *The Meininger Court Theatre, 1866-1890*, Cambridge, 1988; Steven DeHart, *The Meininger Theater 1776-1926*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1981; Ann Marie Koller, *The Theater Duke. Georg II of Saxe-Meiningen and the German Stage*, Stanford CA, 1984; and Williams, *Shakespeare*, pp. 161-171 on the Meininger Shakespeare productions. In their striving for verisimilitude, the Meininger resorted not only to the arts of the painter and costume designer, but also to those of the taxidermist: in battle scenes in plays such as Kleist's *Die Hermannschlacht* and Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, the bodies of real horses, stuffed, added realism to the battlefield. Max Grube, *The Story of the Meininger* (tr. Ann Marie Koller), Coral Gables, Florida, 1963, pp.37f.

<sup>84</sup> Osborne, *Meininger Court Theatre*, p.191n9; on Irving and his version of Shylock, see John Gross, *Shylock. Four Hundred Years in the Life of a Legend*, London, 1994, Ch.10; Toby Lelyveld, *Shylock on the Stage*, London, 1961, Ch.V.

<sup>85</sup> On Chronegk, see Koller, *op. cit.*, pp.75-81; and the affectionate portrait by the veteran Meininger actor Max Grube, *op. cit.*, pp.29-32.

<sup>86</sup> Osborne, *Meininger Court Theatre*, pp.56, 62, 65, DeHart, *op. cit.*, p.20; *SJb.*, 8, 1873, p.326; *SJb.*, 9, 1874, p.311; *SJb.*, 10, 1875, p.362; the production of *The Merchant of Venice* by Charles Kean, son of the famous actor Edmund Kean,

was noted for its lavish production values and huge cast of extras. See Gross, *op. cit.*, pp.119-120.

<sup>87</sup> Osborne, *Meiningen Court Theatre*, pp.65, 72 (quotations), 193-194n62; on Weilenbeck, Osborne, ed., *Die Meininger*, pp.62, 64, 178.

<sup>88</sup> Thomas Hahm, *Die Gastspiele des Meininger Hoftheaters im Urteil der Zeitgenossen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Gastspiele in Berlin und Wien*, diss., Cologne, 1970, pp.73, p.218n47.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.73, 218n48.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.73f.

<sup>91</sup> Osborne, *Meiningen Court Theatre*, p.56.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p.74.

<sup>93</sup> Theodor Fontane, *Sämtliche Werke, Bd.2. Theaterkritiken*, Munich, 1969, pp.73-76 (performance of April 13, 1872). Fontane also found the Gratiano too much the superficial *roué*, even by the usual standards of the role. Kahle's Shylock may have suffered by comparison with that of his predecessors in Berlin, the distinguished Jewish actor Ludwig Dessoir and Theodor Döring.

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.12, i, 1916, p.535.

<sup>95</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.452.

<sup>96</sup> Jozef De Vos, "The Shakespeare Performances by the Company of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen in Antwerp and Brussels (1888)", *SJbW*, 1980, p.191.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.190-191; cf. Grube, *op. cit.*, pp.102f.

<sup>99</sup> Franz Ludwig, *Ludwig Wüllner. Sein Leben und seine Kunst*, Leipzig, 1931, p.130.

<sup>100</sup> See Iser, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig auf der Illusionsbühne der Meininger", *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 99, 1963, pp.72-94; cf. Osborne, *Meiningen Court Theatre*, pp.146f.

<sup>101</sup> Grube, *op. cit.*, pp.102 (quotation), 103; Iser, *op. cit.*, pp.76-78; Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.452f.

<sup>102</sup> Adolf Winds, cited in Iser, *op. cit.*, p.76.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.78f. The frequency of scene changes in Shakespeare, not least in *The Merchant of Venice*, often vexed nineteenth-century productions. For one attempt to rearrange the scenes for the contemporary German stage, see Gisbert Freiherr Vincke, "Eine Bühnen-Anordnung des Kaufmann von Venedig", *SJb.*, 23, 1888, pp.193-200. Eugen Kilian sought to argue that such rearrangements, running the scenes at Belmont and in Venice together, were justified on dramatic as well as practical grounds: "Die scenischen Formen Shakespeares in ihrer Beziehung zu der Aufführung seiner Dramen auf der modernen Bühne", *SJb.*, 28, 1893, pp.96-98.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p.86 (citing Rudolf Stamm).

<sup>105</sup> See drawing in *Graphische Sammlung*, Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung, Cologne University, Schloss Wahn; reproduced in Osborne, *Meiningen Court Theatre*, p.70.

<sup>106</sup> DeHart, *op. cit.*, pp.53f.

<sup>107</sup> Best known for his Marc Antony, he was also the Prince of Morocco in *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>108</sup> *SJb.*, 25, 1890, p.311.

<sup>109</sup> Shakespeare, *Der Kaufmann von Venedig. Lustspiel in fünf Aufzügen. Nach der Schlegel-Tieckschen Übersetzung bearbeitet von Ludwig Barnay*, Leipzig, n.d. (published by Philipp Reclam jun., whose cheap paper-covered editions of the classics gained a very wide circulation).

<sup>110</sup> *SJb.*, 8, 1873, p.311; *SJb.*, 9, 1874, pp.309-310.

<sup>111</sup> Fritz Engel, "Theater", in Siegmund Kaznelson, ed., *Juden im Deutschen Kulturbereich*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Berlin, 1959, p.208.

<sup>112</sup> Eduard von Bamberg, in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p.362.

<sup>113</sup> R. Prölss, "Feuilleton. Residenztheater", undated clipping in *Kritikensammlung (Kaufmann von Venedig)*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>114</sup> Georg Brandes, *Berlin als Deutsche Reichshauptstadt. Erinnerungen aus den Jahren 1877-1883* (tr. Peter Urban-Halle, ed. E.M Christensen and H.-D. Look), Berlin, 1989, p.520.

<sup>115</sup> On Schreyvogel's adaptations, see Williams, *Shakespeare*, pp.111-119; on the Austrian theatre censorship see Susanne Fröhlich, *Strichfassungen und Regiebücher. Kulturpolitik 1888-1938 und Klassikerinszenierungen am Wiener Burg- und Volkstheater*, Frankfurt/M., etc., 1996, pp.19-24; W.E. Yates, *Theatre in Vienna. A Critical History, 1776-1995*, Cambridge, 1996, pp.25-48.

<sup>116</sup> Barnay, *op.cit.*, p.97. *Faust* was played by the Burgtheater, however.

<sup>117</sup> Yates, *op. cit.*, p.33; Heinz Kindermann, "Josef Schreyvogel und sein Publikum", in Margret Dietrich, ed., *Das Burgtheater und sein Publikum*. Bd.I, Vienna, 1976, p.265.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28.

<sup>119</sup> Eugen Kilian, "Schreyvogels Shakespeare-Bearbeitungen. 4. 'Der Kaufmann von Venedig'", *SJb.*, 43, 1907, pp.53-70; Williams, *Shakespeare*, p.115; Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.256. Stahl's comment overlooks both the dominance of conservative Catholicism in the Viennese censorship and the attempts of the multi-national Habsburg Empire's bureaucrats to avoid unnecessarily offending *any* ethnic minority in the Empire. Steven Beller's study of Jews in Vienna suggests that Jews were less predominant in theatre than in the literary world of Vienna, but were still prominent "at the leading edge of drama and operetta". S. Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938. A Cultural History*, Cambridge, 1990, p.23. Beller is in error, however, in counting Josef Kainz among persons of Jewish descent active in the theatre. *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> Kilian, "Schreyvogels Shakespeare-Bearbeitungen", pp.65-66.

<sup>121</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.256; Johann Hüttner, "Das Burgtheaterpublikum in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts", in Dietrich, *op. cit.*, pp.180-181; Kindermann in *ibid.*, pp.272, 287f (citing positive reviews).

<sup>122</sup> *Burgtheater 1776-1976. Aufführungen und Besetzungen von zweihundert Jahren* (ed. Österreichischer Bundestheaterverband), Vienna, n.d. [1976], Vol. 1, p.157; Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.238.



<sup>123</sup> Costenoble's assessment of La Roche in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p.354; see also Kilian, "Schreyvogels Shakespeare-Bearbeitungen", p.67.

<sup>124</sup> Yates, *op. cit.*, p.26.

<sup>125</sup> Laube, *Das Burgtheater*, pp.214-216; see also Laube's comments on the Viennese audience's taste, contrasting, as an example, the success of *Othello* in Berlin with the aversion of the Burgtheater audience to the play. *Ibid.*, pp.178-180, 274, 296, 300; see also Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.331.

<sup>126</sup> Comment by Jakob Minor in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p.354; Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.239.

<sup>127</sup> Julius Bab, *Kränze dem Mimen*, Emsdetten, 1954, pp.261f.

<sup>128</sup> Eugen Guglia, *Friedrich Mitterwurzer*, Vienna, 1896, p.70. Guglia's comments here are his description of Mitterwurzer's Burgtheater performance of 2 September 1875; see also Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.240.

<sup>129</sup> Guglia, *op. cit.*, p.72.

<sup>130</sup> Quoted in Williams, *German Actors*, p.132.

<sup>131</sup> Guglia, *op. cit.*, pp.71-72, quotation p.72.

<sup>132</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.239.

<sup>133</sup> Helene Richter, "Der 'Kaufmann von Venedig' im Wiener Burgtheater", *SJb.*, 46, 1910, pp.162-165, quotations p.165; Heinz Kindermann, *Theatergeschichte Europas*, Bd.8, Salzburg, 1968, pp.188-189.

<sup>134</sup> Silvia Ehalt, "Wiener Theater um 1900", in Hubert Ch. Ehalt, Gernot Heiss and Hannes Stekl, eds., *Glücklich ist, wer vergißt...? Das andere Wien um 1900*, Vienna, Cologne, Graz, 1986, pp.328-329; Ilse Barea, *Vienna. Legend and Reality*, London, 1967, p.241; and the considerable body of data gathered in Dietrich, *Burgtheater und sein Publikum*.

<sup>135</sup> Elke Calaitzis, "Das Publikum von Wilbrandt bis zum Dreierkollegium", in Dietrich, *Burgtheater und sein Publikum*, p.410.

<sup>136</sup> Ehalt, *op. cit.*, pp.325-342.

<sup>137</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.340; the Wiener Stadttheater put on a notable total of 6 performances in the 1874/75 season, more than any of the theatre's other Shakespeare productions that season. *SJb.*, 11, 187, p.305.

<sup>138</sup> Yates, *op. cit.*, pp.169-172; Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.562.

<sup>139</sup> *SJb.*, 40, 1904, p.380, and annual register of performances in subsequent years.

<sup>140</sup> John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna. Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-1897*, Chicago and London, 1995, p.79.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*; Peter G. J. Pulzer, *Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria*; Andrew G. Whiteside, *The Socialism of Fools: Georg Ritter von Schönerer and Austrian Pan-Germanism*, Berkeley, 1975; Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: politics and culture*, New York, 1979, esp. Ch.3.

<sup>142</sup> Ehalt, *op. cit.*, pp.333-335; on Christian-Social cultural politics, see also John W. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna. Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918*, Chicago and London, 1995, pp.16-19, 166.

<sup>143</sup> Geehr, Richard S., *Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn and the Aryan Theater of Vienna: 1898 1903. The Approach of Cultural Fascism*, Göppingen, 1973.

<sup>144</sup> Yates, *op. cit.*, pp.173-177; Geehr, *Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn*, pp.151-157, quotations p.152; *idem*, *Karl Lueger. Mayor of Fin de Siècle Vienna*, Detroit, 1990, pp.192-195 ("mutilated version", p.194).

<sup>145</sup> Geehr, *Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn*, p.152; performance figures in *SJb.*

<sup>146</sup> Geehr, *Karl Lueger*, pp.185, (quotation) p.361n122 (emphasis from original).

<sup>147</sup> Geehr, *Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn*, pp.154-155.

<sup>148</sup> *SJb.*, 36, 1900, p.346; *SJb.*, 37, 1901, p.313; *SJb.*, 38, 1902, p.348; *SJb.*, 39, 1903, p.359; *SJb.*, 40, 1904, p.381.

<sup>149</sup> Geehr, *Karl Lueger*, p.195.

<sup>150</sup> See Uwe Puschner, "Deutsche Reformbühne und völkische Kultstätte. Ernst Wachler und das Harzer Bergtheater", in *idem*, Walter Schmitz, and Justus H. Ulbricht, eds., *Handbuch zur "Völkischen Bewegung" 1871-1918*, Munich, New Providence, London, Paris, 1996, pp.762-796.

<sup>151</sup> Friedrich Bodenstedt, "Ueber einige Shakespeare-Aufführungen in München", *SJb.*, 2, 1867, pp.244-246.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p.265-266.

<sup>153</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.234.

<sup>154</sup> Malyoth, *op. cit.*, pp.94-95.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p.96.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.96-98.

<sup>157</sup> Ernst von Possart, *Erstrebtes und Erlebtes. Erinnerungen aus meiner Bühnentätigkeit*, Berlin, 1916, p.180. Richard Crodel, *Der Schauspieler Ernst Possart*, München-Gladbach, 1927 (= diss., Munich), p.45, also discusses Possart's evolution in the role.

<sup>158</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.235.

<sup>159</sup> Walter Bormann, "Münchener Shakespeare-Vorstellungen von 1905", *SJb.*, 42, 1906, p.330.

<sup>160</sup> Possart, *op. cit.*, pp.180-182.

<sup>161</sup> Malyoth, *op. cit.*, p.100.

<sup>162</sup> Walter Bormann, "Theaterschau. Münchener Shakespeare-Aufführungen von 1902", *SJb.*, 38, 1903, pp.348-349.

<sup>163</sup> In 1889, for example, Possart played Shylock as a guest artist in Amsterdam (at the German Theatre), Danzig, Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Leipzig, Nuremberg and Reichenbach. *SJb.*, 25, 1890, pp.311-316. Other tours took him from Milwaukee (*SJb.*, 26, 1891, p.351) to Moscow (*SJb.*, 27, 1892, p.318).

<sup>164</sup> *Der Kaufmann von Venedig. Schauspiel in 5 Akten von Shakespeare*. Für die Darstellung eingerichtet von Ernst Possart, Munich, 1880; see also the commentary in Otto Burmeister, *Nachdichtungen und Bühneneinrichtungen von Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice* (diss.), Rostock, 1902, pp.134-139; Hans Frahm, *Ernst Possart als Schauspiel-Regisseur* (diss.), Munich, 1932, pp.85-88.

<sup>165</sup> Burmeister, *op. cit.*, p.135.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p.137.

<sup>167</sup> *Kaufmann von Venedig* (Possart), pp.89-94.

<sup>168</sup> Hans Frank, "Münchener Kunst. Hoftheater-Chronik", *Die Gesellschaft* I, 38, 19 September 1885, p.718.

<sup>169</sup> See Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.488-500; Williams, *Shakespeare*, pp.185-190; on Possart's conservatism, Rainer Hartl, *Aufbruch zur Moderne. Naturalistisches Theater in München*, Munich, 1978, pp.14, 287-288, 436; Peter Jelavich, *Munich and Theatrical Modernism. Politics, Playwrighting, and Performance, 1890-1914*, Cambridge MA and London, 1985, pp.119-121, 158, 164f.

<sup>170</sup> Bormann, *op. cit.*, p.347.

<sup>171</sup> Addison McLeod, *Plays and Players in Modern Italy*, London, 1912, p.225. See also Henry Lyonnet, *Le Théâtre en Italie*, Paris, 1900, pp.294-297 (with illustration); Jean Dornis, *Le Théâtre Italien Contemporaine*, Paris, n.d. [ca.1904], pp.332-337.

<sup>172</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.467. Cf. the review of Novelli's Shylock in the Lessing-Theater, Berlin. P. M-n., "Lessing-Theater", undated clipping in *Kritikensammlung (Kaufmann von Venedig)*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>173</sup> H. Stümcke, "Von den Berliner Theatern 1899/1900", *Bühne und Welt*, Jg.II, I, 1899/1900, p.567.

<sup>174</sup> Walter Bormann, "Die Shakespeare-Aufführungen in München 1906", *SJb.*, 43, 1907, pp.353-354.

<sup>175</sup> Walter Bormann, "Die Shakespeare-Aufführungen in München 1907", *SJb.*, 44, 1908, p.253.

<sup>176</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.475. *Hamlet* was in fourth place with 139 performances from 1779 to 1929. *The Taming of the Shrew* in twentieth place followed *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p.273.

<sup>178</sup> *SJb.*, 9, 1874, p.299.

<sup>179</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.415-435; Otto Devrient, "Ueber die Shakespeare-Aufführungen in Karlsruhe", *SJb.*, 2, 1867, pp.276-291.

<sup>180</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.419.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p.429.

<sup>182</sup> *SJb.*, 8, 1873, pp.281-285, 288; Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.410.

<sup>183</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.481.

<sup>184</sup> Robert Prölss, "Shakespeare-Aufführungen in Dresden vom 20. Okt. 1816 bis Ende 1860", *SJb.*, 15, 1880, pp.176, 179, 181, 199-201.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.200-201; Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.281, 291.

<sup>186</sup> *SJb.*, 7, 1872, pp.328-331, 335f; Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.276.

<sup>187</sup> *SJb.*, 8, 1873, p.324.

<sup>188</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.437-440; Martersteig, *op. cit.*, p.497; on Charles Kean, cf. Lelyveld, *op. cit.*, pp.58-60.

<sup>189</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.300-301.

<sup>190</sup> Kindermann, *op. cit.*, p.192; Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.559, 560.

<sup>191</sup> *SJb.*, 8, 1873, pp.319-320, and the annual statistics for these years.

<sup>192</sup> *SJb.*, 10, 1875, p.361.

<sup>193</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.305, 309-310; Martersteig, *op. cit.*, pp.360-361.

<sup>194</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.559.

<sup>195</sup> Otfried Büthe, "Berühmte Hebbel-Inszenierungen II – Judith", *Hebbel Jahrbuch* 1969, p.62.

<sup>196</sup> Hans Schwab-Felisch, *Das Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus*, Düsseldorf and Vienna, 1970, pp.26, 31. For Gustav Landauer's thoughts on *The Merchant of Venice*, see his *Shakespeare*, Frankfurt/M., 1922, Vol.1, pp.42-90. Landauer saw the character of Shylock as both fully Jewish and fully human: the negative features of Shylock's character are the product of his people's oppression, and of his exclusion from the Christian Venetians' world of light, laughter and music.

<sup>197</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.639.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.295, 297.

<sup>199</sup> *SJb.*, 8, 1873, pp.312-313.

<sup>200</sup> *SJb.*, 8, 1873, pp.329, 332.

<sup>201</sup> *Brockhaus' Konversations-Lexikon*, Vol.13, Leipzig, 1898, p.970.

<sup>202</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.556.

<sup>203</sup> *SJb.*, 8, 1873, pp.334, 337. Stahl's history of Shakespeare in Germany was openly contemptuous of Aldridge, dismissing him as "completely talentless", and a product of the vogue for exoticism on the German stage that had been inaugurated, in Stahl's view, by the Polish Jew Dawison: "as a naturally coloured Othello, [Aldridge] had nothing more original to contribute than the absence of dark make-up". Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.236. Stahl goes on in the same paragraph to deplore the "cretinous manifestation of the French Jewess Rachel". As Aldridge toured Europe in the 1850s, Stahl, writing in the 1940s, would not have seen him at first hand.

<sup>204</sup> On Naturalism, see Sigfrid Hoefert, *Das Drama des Naturalismus*, Stuttgart, 1968; John Osborne, *The Naturalist Drama in Germany*, Manchester, 1971.

<sup>205</sup> Horst Claus, *The Theatre Director Otto Brahm*, Ann Arbor, MI, 1981, p.11. Claus notes Otto Brahm's clashes with Ludwig Barnay and Friedrich Haase on this point.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p.16.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.72, 98.

<sup>208</sup> Julius Bab, "Emanuel Reicher", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.4, ii, 1908, p.353. On Reicher, see also Engel, "Theater", p.209; Hartl, *Aufbruch zur Moderne*, pp.368-370.

<sup>209</sup> Schlenther cited in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p.366. Stahl (*op. cit.*, p.233) puts Reicher in the tradition of Dawison as portraying Shylock as victim. Brahm's production ran for a creditable seven performances in 1894, and six in both 1895 and 1896, while Berliners also had the opportunity to see *The Merchant of Venice* at the Königliches Schauspielhaus (three performances in 1894) or Barnay's Berliner Theater (three times in 1894). *SJb.*, 31, 1895, p.433; *SJb.*, 32, 1896, p.348; *SJb.*, 33, 1897, p.300.

<sup>210</sup> O.N.-H. (=Otto Neumann-Hofer), "Feuilleton", *Berliner Tageblatt*, 4 October 1894 (clipping in *Kritikensammlung, Kaufmann von Venedig*, Schloss Wahn).

<sup>211</sup> D. Honigmann, "Ueber den Charakter des Shylock", *SJb.*, 17, 1882, pp.201-229, quotation p.229.

<sup>212</sup> Bab, *Kränze*, p.269.

<sup>213</sup> Fellner in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p.364.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p.375. See the illustration in Williams, *Shakespeare*, p.144, showing Mitterwurzer resplendent in his rich silken robes and dark skull-cap, and with a dramatically forked beard.

<sup>215</sup> Williams, *Shakespeare*, p.145.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, p.146.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.143-146; Gross, *op. cit.*, pp.215f; Joseph Schildkraut, *My Father and I*, New York, 1959, pp.40-41, 52-53.

<sup>218</sup> Heinz Selo, *Die "Freie Volksbühne" in Berlin. Geschichte ihrer Entstehung und ihre Entwicklung bis zur Auflösung im Jahre 1896*, Berlin, 1896; Siegfried Nestriepke, *Geschichte der Volksbühne in Berlin. I. Teil: 1890-1914*, Berlin, 1930; Hyun-Back Chung, *Die Kunst dem Volke oder dem Proletariat?* Frankfurt/M., Bern, New York, 1989; Cecil Davies, *The Volksbühne Movement. A History*, Amsterdam, 2000; Andrew Bonnell, *The People's Stage in Imperial Germany. Social Democracy and Culture 1890-1914*, London/ New York, 2005.

<sup>219</sup> Bonnell, *op. cit.*, pp.161, 184.

<sup>220</sup> The Berlin Social Democrat Paul Singer used the term in the Reichstag in 1892, attributing it to a member of the Austrian Reichsrat, probably, as Peter Pulzer has suggested, Ferdinand Kronawetter. *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, 145. Sitzung, 12 January 1892, p.3587; Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Antisemitism*, p.269n.

<sup>221</sup> [Conrad Schmidt?], "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Freie Volksbühne. Eine Monatsschrift*, 1, 1897/98, pp.11, 12. This production was played three times, in response to demand from members wishing to join or re-join the Freie Volksbühne, which had just been refounded after difficulties with censorship had precipitated its closure the previous year.

<sup>222</sup> *Vorwärts*, Unterhaltungsblatt no.68, 6 April 1897.

<sup>223</sup> Reinhardt found Reicher an "admirable" actor, but believed that his Shylock lacked "the great powerful classical streak". Max Reinhardt, *Schriften* (ed. Hugo Fetting), Berlin, 1974, pp.42, 447n11.

<sup>224</sup> For introductions to Reinhardt's life and work, see Leonhard M. Fiedler, *Max Reinhardt*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1994; J.L. Styan, *Max Reinhardt*, Cambridge, 1982.

<sup>225</sup> Wolfgang Drews, quoted in Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.570f.

<sup>226</sup> As noted by Norbert Jaron, Renate Möhrmann and Hedwig Müller, eds., *Berlin – Theater der Jahrhundertwende. Bühnengeschichte der Reichshauptstadt im Spiegel der Kritik (1889-1914)*, Tübingen, 1986, pp.64f, 587; much more detail on the financial aspects of Reinhardt's activities is in Max Epstein, *Max Reinhardt*, Berlin, 1918, here pp.94-103.

<sup>227</sup> Huntly Carter, *The Theatre of Max Reinhardt*, New York, 1914 (reprint 1964), p.321; Knut Boeser and Renata Vatková, eds., *Max Reinhardt in Berlin*, Berlin, 1984, p.327.

- <sup>228</sup> Arthur Kahane, "Reinhardt as Stage Director", in Oliver M. Sayler, ed., *Max Reinhardt and his Theatre*, New York/ London, 1968 (reprint of 1924 edn.), p.83.
- <sup>229</sup> Siegfried Jacobsohn, "Berliner Theaterwoche", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.1, 16 November 1905, p.298; Styan, *op. cit.*, p.62.
- <sup>230</sup> Sayler, ed., *Max Reinhardt and his Theatre*, p.330; see also Felix Poppenberg, "Reinhardts Bühnen", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.2, 19 April 1906, pp.467-468.
- <sup>231</sup> Jaron et al., *op. cit.*, pp.588f, 591; Schildkraut, *op. cit.*, pp.76-80.
- <sup>232</sup> J.L. (=Isidor Landau), "Vor den Kulissen", *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 10 November 1905 (clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn).
- <sup>233</sup> Alfred Klaar, *Vossische Zeitung*, 10 November 1905, in Hugo Fetting, ed., *Von der Freien Bühne zum Politischen Theater*, Bd.1, Leipzig, 1987, p.306.
- <sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p.305.
- <sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, p.306.
- <sup>236</sup> Heinrich Hart, *Der Tag*, 11 November 1905, in Fetting, *op. cit.*, Bd.1, p.310, also in Jaron, et al., *op. cit.*, p.595.
- <sup>237</sup> dt (=Conrad Schmidt), "Theater", *Vorwärts. Berliner Volksblatt*, 11 November 1905 (clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn).
- <sup>238</sup> *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 10 November 1905, in Jaron, et al., *op. cit.*, p.590; Helene Richter, "Berliner Theaterschau", *Slb.*, 43, 1907, p.338.
- <sup>239</sup> J.L., "Vor den Kulissen".
- <sup>240</sup> Fritz Engel, *Berliner Tageblatt*, 13 November 1905, in Fetting, *op. cit.*, Bd.1, pp.313-314; cf. *Slb.*, 43, 1907, p.340. See also Heinrich Stümcke, "Von den Berliner Theatern 1905/06", *Bühne und Welt*, Jahrgang 8, i, 1905/06, pp.210-211.
- <sup>241</sup> Landauer, *op. cit.*, Vol.1, pp.76-77. Cf. also Paul Lerch, "Deutsches Theater: Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Germania*, 11 November 1905 (clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn): "the lamentation of the broken heart and of crushed race pride sounded so heart-rending that a feeling of pity involuntarily had to awake in every breast".
- <sup>242</sup> Hermann Sinsheimer, *Shylock. The History of a Character or the Myth of the Jew*, London, 1947, p.142.
- <sup>243</sup> Helene Richter, *Slb.*, 43, 1907, p.342.
- <sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, p.338. *Deutsche Zeitung* cited in Jaron, et al., *op. cit.*, p.589.
- <sup>245</sup> Theodor Müller-Fürer, *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, 10 November 1905, in *ibid.*, p.592.
- <sup>246</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.533.
- <sup>247</sup> M.H. [Harden], "Deutsches Theater", *Die Zukunft*, 18 November 1905, p.242.
- <sup>248</sup> M.H. [Harden], "Theater", *Die Zukunft*, 2 December 1905, p.341.
- <sup>249</sup> Harden to Rathenau, 8 November 1905, in Walther Rathenau/ Maximilian Harden, *Briefwechsel 1897-1920* (=Walther Rathenau-Gesamtausgabe VI, ed. Hans Dieter Hellge), Munich, 1983, p.439.
- <sup>250</sup> Rathenau to Harden [9 November 1905], in *ibid.*, p.442.
- <sup>251</sup> Harden to Rathenau, 10 November, 1905, in *ibid.*, p.443.

<sup>252</sup> For a discussion of the suggestion that Harden may have constituted a case of "Jewish self-hatred", see Shulamit Volkov, *Antisemitismus als kultureller Code*, Munich, 2000, p.34.

<sup>253</sup> Schildkraut, *op. cit.*, p.86. Rudolf Schildkraut was supported by a fine cast including Agnes Sorma (one of the foremost actresses of that era) as Portia, and Alexander Moissi as Gratiano.

<sup>254</sup> Schalom Asch, "Rückblick", in *idem, Von den Vätern*, Berlin, Vienna, Leipzig, 1931, p.325.

<sup>255</sup> J.L. Styan, *op. cit.*, pp.61, 159n1; Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.573. After its quarter-century, Reinhardt's *Midsummer Night's Dream* was claimed to have enjoyed a total audience of half a million. *Ibid*, p.574.

<sup>256</sup> Herbert Ihering, "Reinhardt und Bonn", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.7, i, 1911, pp.108-110.

<sup>257</sup> Epstein, *Max Reinhardt*, p.119. The 1913 *Merchant* ran for 38 performances from its premiere in December 1913 to its close in 1916. Knut Boeser and Renata Vatková, eds., *Max Reinhardt in Berlin*, Berlin, 1984, p.334. B-d., "Deutsches Theater", *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 16 December 1913, and F.E. (=Fritz Engel), "Shakespearezyklus IV.", *Berliner Tageblatt*, 16 December 1913 (clippings in *Kritikensammlung*, Schlos Wahn).

<sup>258</sup> Julius Bab, *Albert Bassermann*, Leipzig, 1929, p.165. This passage is echoed in Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.533-534. Cf. also J.A.B. (=Josef Adolf Bondy), "Bassermann als Shylock", *Nationalzeitung*, 17 December 1913; -r, "Theater", *Vorwärts. Berliner Volksblatt*, 17 December 1913 (clippings in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn).

<sup>259</sup> F.E., "Shakespearezyklus IV."

<sup>260</sup> Emil Faktor, "Theater und Musik. Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 16 December 1913, (clipping in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn).

<sup>261</sup> Sinsheimer, *op. cit.*, p.142. Sinsheimer's book on the history of Shylock sought to rescue Shakespeare and his "glorious play" from the "barbarians" who attempted to misappropriate and mutilate it.

<sup>262</sup> Jacobsohn, *Max Reinhardt*, p.6; extended comparison of Bassermann and Schildkraut in the role on pp.6-7. For a photograph of Bassermann as Shylock, see Bab, *Albert Bassermann*, facing p.166. Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.577, endorsed Jacobsohn's contrast of Bassermann and Schildkraut, and added his own comparison of the "Urariet [archetypal Aryan] Albert Bassermann" and the "Urjude" Schildkraut as Lear. Stahl saw Schildkraut as a lachrymose bourgeois paterfamilias, Bassermann as the "bearer of sovereign dignity". *Ibid.*, p.582.

<sup>263</sup> "Die beiden Shylocks", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.9, ii, 1913, p.1278.

<sup>264</sup> Hugo Zehder, *Ernst Deutsch*, Berlin, 1960, pp.14-15; Georg Zivier, *Ernst Deutsch und das deutsche Theater*, Berlin, 1964, p.48.

<sup>265</sup> See the photographs of Bassermann as Shylock and Nathan side by side in Bab, *Albert Bassermann*, facing p.166.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, p.168; clippings in Kritikensammlung Schloss Wahn (folder Lessing: *Nathan der Weise*), in which critics generally concurred that the humour was forced and failed to convey the wisdom and dignity traditionally associated with Nathan.

<sup>267</sup> Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp.74-75.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.75-77 (cf. reviews by Karl Immermann, August Lewald and Georg Knispel).

<sup>269</sup> Wexel, *op. cit.*, pp.78-80; cf. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp.77-78.

<sup>270</sup> Siegfried Jacobsohn, *Das Jahr der Bühne, Bd.7: 1917/18*, Berlin, 1918, p.25.

<sup>271</sup> "Nathan der Weise", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.7, ii, 1911, pp.456-457.

<sup>272</sup> Crodel, *op. cit.*, p.35; see, for example, the account of the warm reception given to Possart's Nathan in Cologne. Undated, unprovenanced clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn (folder: Lessing: *Nathan der Weise*).

<sup>273</sup> Possart, *op. cit.*, p.209.

<sup>274</sup> *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* [1865], cited in *ibid.*, p.55.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch.9, quotation p.300. On Levi, see Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and other Germans. Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture*, Oxford/ New York, 1979, pp.189-230: a chapter entitled "Hermann Levi. A Study in Service and Self-Hatred". Jacob Katz has queried Gay's characterization of the Jewish Wagnerian Levi as a case of self-hatred. Jacob Katz, "German Culture and the Jews", p.99n42.

<sup>277</sup> Crodel, *op. cit.*, p.37.

<sup>278</sup> Ludwig, *op. cit.*

<sup>279</sup> Heinrich Stümcke, "Von den Berliner Theatern 1903/04", *Bühne und Welt*, Jahrgang 6, ii, 1903/04, pp.647-648; Ludwig Eisenberg, *Adolf Sonnenthal. Eine Künstlerlaufbahn als Beitrag zur Geschichte des modernen Burgtheaters*, Dresden and Leipzig, 1900 (on Sonnenthal as Nathan, see pp.400-404); Rudolph Lothar, *Sonnenthal*, Berlin and Leipzig, n.d. [ca. 1904/05]; see also the profile of Sonnenthal by Willi Handl, "Sonnenthal", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.4, ii, 1908, pp.397-403.

<sup>280</sup> "Feuilleton. Burgtheater", unprovenanced newspaper clipping, 1894, Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>281</sup> Helene Richter, *Schauspieler-Charakteristiken*, Leipzig and Hamburg, 1914, p.132. Richter offers an extended comparison of the two Nathans, *ibid.*, pp.130-138.

<sup>282</sup> Heinrich Stümcke, "Die Berliner Meisterspiele 1902", *Bühne und Welt*, Jg.4, ii, 1901/02, p.754.

<sup>283</sup> J. von Wildenradt, "Die Festaufführungen des Rheinischen Goethe-Vereins im Stadttheater in Düsseldorf", *Bühne und Welt*, Jg.3, ii, 1900-1901, pp.885-891.

<sup>284</sup> Richter, *op. cit.*, p.46.

<sup>285</sup> Mosse, "Jewish Emancipation: Between *Bildung* and Respectability", p.13; cf. *idem*, *German Jews beyond Judaism*, pp.15-17. On philosemitism in Imperial Germany, see Michael Brenner, "'Gott schütze uns vor unseren Freunden' –



Zur Ambivalenz des Philosemitismus im Kaiserreich", *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 2, 1993, pp.174-199.

<sup>286</sup> Mosse, *German Jews beyond Judaism*, p.15.

<sup>287</sup> Cosima Wagner, *Die Tagebücher. Bd.II 1878-1883* (ed. Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack), Munich/ Zurich, p.852. The fire of 10 December actually occurred just before a performance of Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann*. *Ibid.*, p.1255n.

<sup>288</sup> Epstein, *Max Reinhardt*, p.87.

<sup>289</sup> Yates, *op. cit.*, p.79.

<sup>290</sup> Norbert Fuerst, *Grillparzer auf der Bühne. Eine fragmentarische Geschichte*, Vienna and Munich, 1958, pp.207-209.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.209-214, quotation from a reviewer p.210.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.214, 219.

<sup>293</sup> Helene Richter, *Schauspieler-Charakteristiken*, Leipzig and Hamburg, 1914, pp.197-198.

<sup>294</sup> Barea, *op. cit.*, p.241.

<sup>295</sup> Laube, *Das Burgtheater*, pp.492-495.

<sup>296</sup> Yates, *op. cit.*, p.37.

<sup>297</sup> Laube, *Das Burgtheater*, pp.400-401; idem, *Erinnerungen, 1841-1881*, Leipzig, 1909, p.190.

<sup>298</sup> Grube, *op. cit.*, p.73. Hedwig Dohm was the daughter of the pioneering feminist of the same name, and soon left the stage to marry the mathematics professor Alfred Pringsheim: their daughter Katia became the wife of Thomas Mann.

<sup>299</sup> Felix Salten, quoted in Max-Reinhardt-Forschungsstätte Salzburg, ed., *Max Reinhardt. Sein Theater in Bildern*, Hannover and Vienna, 1968, p.50. On the history of stage Judiths, see Erika Sterz, "Zur Problematik der Dramen Hebbels auf der Bühne", *Hebbel Jahrbuch*, 1966, pp.132-133; Büthe, *op. cit.*

<sup>300</sup> Lion Feuchtwanger, "Reinhardt in München. 4. Judith", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.5, i, pp.233-234.

<sup>301</sup> See the copiously illustrated survey of contemporary Salomes in Marie Luise Becker, "Salome-Darstellerinnen auf der modernen Bühne", *Bühne und Welt*, Jahrgang 9, i, 1906/07, pp.439-447.

<sup>302</sup> Julius Bab, "Gertrud Eysoldt", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.2, i, 3 May 1906, p.527. For responses to Gertrud Eysoldt's Salome in Reinhardt's 1903 production, see Jaron, *op. cit.*, pp.522-530; Marie Luise Becker, "Berliner Bühnenkünstler. XXVIII. Gertrud Eysoldt", *Bühne und Welt*, Jg.5, ii, 1902-1903, p.640.

<sup>303</sup> Dr. Volker, "Theater", *Hochland*, I, 2, November 1903, p.249.

<sup>304</sup> Dr. Volker, "Theater", *Hochland*, I, 7, April 1904, p.116.

<sup>305</sup> "Judith", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.6, i, 1910, pp.226-227.

<sup>306</sup> For detailed development of this theme, see Sander Gilman, "Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt, and the Modern Jewess" in Linda Nochlin and Tamar Garb, eds., *The Jew in the Text. Modernity and the Construction of Identity*, London, 1995, pp.97-120; also, idem, *The Jew's Body*, New York and London, 1991. On representations of the "beautiful Jewess", see Florian Krobb, *Die*

*schöne Jüdin. Jüdische Frauengestalten in der deutschsprachigen Erzählliteratur vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, Tübingen, 1993; Michaela Haibl, *Zerrbild als Stereotyp. Visuelle Darstellungen von Juden zwischen 1850 und 1900*, Berlin, 2000, pp.63-74; also Grözingen, *Die schöne Jüdin*, pp.7-28.

<sup>307</sup> See Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp.105-112, for a brief summary.

<sup>308</sup> On the banning of *Professor Bernhadi* in Vienna, see Yates, *op. cit.*, pp.45-46. Schnitzler noted that it had taken a world war and the collapse of the Habsburg Empire to get *Bernhadi* performed in his home city. *Ibid.*, p.46. For responses to the Berlin première, see Fetting, *op. cit.*, Vol.1, pp.479-486.

<sup>309</sup> See Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp.210-211 on the proliferation of this stereotype.

<sup>310</sup> Richard S. Levy, *The Downfall of the Anti-Semitic Political Parties in Imperial Germany*, New Haven and London, 1975.

<sup>311</sup> Wolfgang Treue, ed., *Deutsche Parteiprogramme seit 1861*, Göttingen, 1968, pp.87-90. See Jochmann, *op. cit.*, pp.452-454, 473-477.

<sup>312</sup> See Berding, *op. cit.*, pp.110-120; Norbert Kampe, *Studenten und 'Judenfrage' im Deutschen Kaiserreich*, Göttingen, 1988.

<sup>313</sup> Data compiled from annual statistics in *SJb*. See Appendix. As always, the *SJb*'s figures included a small number of German-language theatres outside Germany and Austria.

<sup>314</sup> *SJb.*, 57, 1921, p.163.

<sup>315</sup> See Eduard von Bauernfeld, "Provinztheater", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.2, ii, 26 July 1906, pp.85-86; Walter Turszinsky, "Hannoversches Theater", *ibid.*, 16 August 1906, pp.144-148; Walter Behrend, "Premiere in Rostock", *ibid.*, Jg.6, ii, 1910, pp.1020-1023.

<sup>316</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.472-473 (with reference to 1904 production). See also Walter Bormann, "Theaterschau", *SJb.*, 69, 1903, p.347, making the same points about the 1902 production.

<sup>317</sup> Hans-Günther Reichel, *Das königliche Schauspielhaus unter Georg Graf von Hülsen-Haeseler (1903-1918). Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der zeitgenössischen Tagespresse* (diss., Freie Universität Berlin), 1962, pp.75-77, 78-79.

<sup>318</sup> Wilhelm Münch, "Shakespeare-Lektüre auf deutschen Schulen", *SJb.*, 38, 1902, pp.121, 131.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 132f.

<sup>320</sup> Werner Sombart, *Händler und Helden. Patriotische Besinnungen*, Munich and Leipzig, 1915. Sombart was dismissive of English culture *since* Shakespeare, exempting Shakespeare himself from his critique. He also cited Cromwell's decision to allow Jews back into England as an example of the primacy given in England to commercial considerations over spiritual ones. *Ibid.*, pp.48-50. See also Friedrich Lenger, *Werner Sombart 1863-1941. Eine Biographie*, Munich, 1995, pp.246-251. On the wider context of Anglophobia in Germany during the First World War, see Matthew Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War, 1914-1918*, Cambridge, 2001.

<sup>321</sup> "Jahresbericht des Präsidenten", *SJb.*, 51, 1915, p.vi.

<sup>322</sup> Gerhart Hauptmann, "Deutschland und Shakespeare", *SJb.*, 51, 1915, p.xii.

<sup>323</sup> Herbert Ihering, "Die gegenwärtige Bedeutung des Theaters", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.10, ii, 1914, p.177.

<sup>324</sup> Wilhelm Creizenach, "Betrachtungen über den 'Kaufmann von Venedig'", *SJb.*, 51, 1915, pp.171-182, quotation p.176.

<sup>325</sup> Werner T. Angress, "The German Army's 'Juden-zählung' of 1916 – Genesis – Consequences – Significance", *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute* XXIII, 1978, pp.117-137; Peter Pulzer, *Jews and the German State. The Political History of a Minority, 1848-1933*, Oxford and Cambridge, MA, 1994, pp.194-207; Saul Friedländer, "Die politischen Veränderungen der Kriegszeit und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Judenfrage", in Werner E. Mosse with Arnold Paucker, ed., *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916-1923*, Tübingen, 1971.

<sup>326</sup> *SJb.*, 50, 1914, p.141; 51, 1915, p.217; 52, 1916, p.192; 53, 1917, p.186; 54, 1918, p.108; 55, 1919, p.236.

<sup>327</sup> Cited in *Deutsche Tages-Zeitung* (Abend-Ausgabe), 9 October 1914. Clipping in Julius-Bab-Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

<sup>328</sup> Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914. Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany*, Cambridge, 2000, p.121. For critical commentary, see Herbert Ihering, "Theaterbarbarei", *Die Schaubühne* Jg.10, ii, pp.229-230; Max Epstein, "Das Theatergeschäft im Kriege", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.10, ii, pp.447-449.

<sup>329</sup> Hubert Thoma, *Das Trierer Theater 1802-1944*, Trier, 1964, p.199.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, p.125.

<sup>331</sup> Stahl, *op. cit.*, p.572. Not to mention the frustration of some actors with the reduced fees ostensibly justified by the outbreak of war. Inge Richter-Haaser, *Die Schauspielkunst Albert Bassermanns*, Berlin, 1964, p.17.

<sup>332</sup> Epstein, *op. cit.*, pp.126-129; Heinrich Braulich, *Max Reinhardt. Theater zwischen Traum und Wirklichkeit*, Berlin, 1969, pp.143-144. *Die Schaubühne* commented that there was no need for the national anthem to be played before a Kleist play, as Kleist himself was a national anthem. "Vom Deutschen Theater", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.10, ii, 1914, p.221.

<sup>333</sup> *SJb.*, 52, 1916, p.190 and cf. references in n.266 above.

<sup>334</sup> Unprovenanced clipping: "Theater- und Kunstinrichten", dateline "Wien, 7. Oktober [1916]" in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn; Alfred Polgar, "Shakespeare in Wien", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.12, ii, 1916, pp.390-391. Wüllner, son of a music professor, came to the theatre after completing a doctorate in philology and after a distinguished musical career, starting with the Meiningen Court Theatre in 1889. Theatermuseum Köln, *Gedächtnis-Ausstellung Ludwig Wüllner*, Cologne, 1938.

<sup>335</sup> Fritz Kortner, *Aller Tage Abend*, Munich, 1969, p.174; unprovenanced clipping: "Theater- und Kunstinrichten", dateline "Wien, 30. Oktober [1916]" in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>336</sup> Alfred Polgar, "Reinhardt in Wien. 4. Hamlet", *Die Schaubühne*, Jg.6, i, 1910, p.644. For a hostile assessment, see Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.530-531.

<sup>337</sup> Siegfried Jacobsohn, *Das Jahr der Bühne, Bd.3: 1913/14*, Berlin, 1914, p.99.

<sup>338</sup> Styan, *op. cit.*, pp.61, 144.

<sup>339</sup> m., “Volksbühne”, *Neues Wiener Journal*, 9 November 1918, and \* [star symbol], “Volksbühne”, *Fremdenblatt*, 10 November 1918, clippings in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>340</sup> Review in [*Berliner Börsen-Courier* ?], in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn; Ihering quoted in Braulich, *op. cit.*, p.199.

<sup>341</sup> Siegfried Jacobsohn, *Das Jahr der Bühne, Bd.8: 1918/19*, Berlin, 1919, p.165.

## Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup> John Willett, *The Theatre of the Weimar Republic*, New York/ London, 1988, p.65.

<sup>2</sup> W.E. Yates, *Theatre in Vienna. A Critical History, 1776-1995*, Cambridge, 1996, p.203.

<sup>3</sup> Georg Droyscher, *Die vormaligen Königlichen, jetzt Preussischen Staatstheater zu Berlin. Statistischer Rückblick auf die künstlerische Tätigkeit und die Personalverhältnisse während der Zeit vom 1. Januar bis 31. Dezember 1935*, Berlin, 1936, pp.39-40

<sup>4</sup> Hans Schwab-Felisch, *Das Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus*, Düsseldorf and Vienna, 1970, pp.16f.

<sup>5</sup> Franz Feldens, *75 Jahre Städtische Bühnen Essen*, Essen, 1967, p.199.

<sup>6</sup> Leonhard Schrickel, *Geschichte des Weimarer Theaters von seinen Anfängen bis heute*, Weimar, 1928, p.256; Burkhard Stenzel, “Das Deutsche Nationaltheater in Weimar. Symbol und Schauspiel kultureller Praktik um 1930”, in Lothar Ehrlich and Jürgen John, eds., *Weimar 1930. Politik und Kultur im Vorfeld der NS-Diktatur*, Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1998, pp.225-226.

<sup>7</sup> Stenzel, “Das Deutsche Nationaltheater in Weimar”, pp.225-226.

<sup>8</sup> Willett, *op. cit.*, p.65.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p.53. On the new expressionist theatre in post-1918 Germany, see, in addition to Willett, *op. cit.*, Michael Patterson, *The Revolution in German Theatre, 1900-1933*, Boston, London and Henley, 1981; David F. Kuhns, *German Expressionist Theatre*, Cambridge, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> Max Epstein, *Max Reinhardt*, Berlin, 1918, p.122. Epstein lists (p.123) “Reinhardt, Meinhard, Bernauer, Barnowsky and Altman” as Jewish directors in Berlin, as well as the former directors “Brahm, Barnay, L’Arronge and Lautenberg”.

<sup>11</sup> *SJb.*, 56, 1920, p.151.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.149.

<sup>13</sup> Wolfgang Goetz, *Werner Krauss*, Hamburg, 1954.

<sup>14</sup> Walther Volbach, “Berliner Shakespeare-Vorstellungen”, *SJb.*, 57, 1921, p.146.

<sup>15</sup> Alfred Mensi-Klarbach, “Münchener Shakespeare-Aufführungen”, *SJb.*, 58, 1922, p.184.

<sup>16</sup> Ernst Leopold Stahl, *Shakespeare und das Deutsche Theater*, Stuttgart, 1947, p.592.

<sup>17</sup> Ernst Heilborn, [*Frankfurter Zeitung*?] undated clipping, in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>18</sup> Siegfried Jacobsohn, *Das Jahr der Bühne, Bd.10: 1920/21*, Charlottenburg, 1921, pp.120-124.

<sup>19</sup> Monty Jacobs, "Shylock in der Arena", *Vossische Zeitung*, no.122, 14 March 1921 (clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn). Cf. Joachim Werner Preuss, *Der Theaterkritiker Monty Jacobs (1875-1945). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der neueren Theaterkritik*, Berlin, 1965, pp.108-109.

<sup>20</sup> Alfred Kerr, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Berliner Tageblatt* [1921], clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>21</sup> Herbert Ihering, *Der Kampf ums Theater*, Dresden, 1922, pp.91, 94-95.

<sup>22</sup> Herbert Ihering, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, No.133, 20 March 1921 (clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn), also reprinted in Ihering, *Theater in Aktion. Kritiken aus drei Jahrzehnten 1919-1933* (ed. Edith Krull and Hugo Fetting), Berlin, 1986, pp.64-66.

<sup>23</sup> Alfred Kerr, "Der andre Shylock", [*Berliner Tageblatt*], n.d. [1920/21], in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>24</sup> Emil Faktor, "Theater, Musik und Kunst. Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Berliner Börsen-Courier* [?], 13 March 1921, in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>25</sup> Heilborn, [*Frankfurter Zeitung*?] undated clipping, in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>26</sup> Vollbach, "Berliner Shakespeare-Vorstellungen", p.147.

<sup>27</sup> Fritz Kortner, *Aller Tage Abend*, Munich, 1969, p.41. "Ponim" is simply Yiddish for face, but its use by a non-Jew in the context of Viennese antisemitism, would have been pointedly pejorative. On Kortner, see Heinz Ludwigg, ed., *Fritz Kortner* (= Die Kunst der Bühne, Bd.3), Berlin, 1928; Matthias Brand, *Fritz Kortner in der Weimarer Republik*, Rheinfelden, 1981; Klaus Völker, *Fritz Kortner. Schauspieler und Regisseur*, Berlin, 1987; Peter Schütze, *Fritz Kortner*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1994.

<sup>28</sup> Kortner, *op. cit.*, p.56.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.174.

<sup>30</sup> "Die Theaterkrise", *Die Weltbühne*, Jg.19, i, 1923, pp.308-309; Willett, *op. cit.*, 1988, pp.78, 82; Alfred Döblin, *Ein Kerl muß eine Meinung haben. Berichte und Kritiken 1921-1924*, Munich, 1981, p.207.

<sup>31</sup> See Willett, *op. cit.*, p.79; Brand, *op. cit.*, pp.76-80.

<sup>32</sup> Monty Jacobs, "Shakespeare in Berlin 1922-1924", *SJb.*, 59/60, 1924, p.242; cf. also Jacobs' review "Die Truppe" [*Vossische Zeitung*, 13 September 1923] and Franz Köppen, "Das Debut der 'Truppe'", [*Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, September 1923], both in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>33</sup> Köppen, "Das Debut der 'Truppe'".

<sup>34</sup> Julius Bab, *Kränze dem Mimen*, Emsdetten, 1954, p.359.

<sup>35</sup> Norbert Falk (*Berliner Zeitung*), quoted in Brand, *op. cit.*, p.78. Falk considered Kortner's performance too dominated by external effect-seeking, however, a criticism sometimes encountered among conservative, not to mention antisemitic, reviewers of Kortner. *Ibid.*, pp.78-79.

<sup>36</sup> Köppen, "Das Phänomen Fritz Kortner", in Ludwigg, ed., *Fritz Kortner*, p.48.

<sup>37</sup> Döblin, *op. cit.*, p.207.

<sup>38</sup> Kortner, *op. cit.*, p.241.

<sup>39</sup> Volker, *op. cit.*, p.89; Brand, *op. cit.*, pp.90-93. On Reinhardt's venture in the Theater in der Josefstadt, see W.E. Yates, *Theatre in Vienna. A Critical History, 1776-1995*, Cambridge, 1996, pp.214-215.

<sup>40</sup> Kortner, *op. cit.*, p.240.

<sup>41</sup> Alfred Polgar, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Die Weltbühne*, Jg.20, ii, 1924, pp.150-151.

<sup>42</sup> Leo Feld, unprovenanced clipping, June 1924, in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn; cf. also Oskar Maurus Fontana, "Reinhardt's Shakespearepremiere in Wien", unprovenanced, [June 1924], *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Kortner, *Aller Tage Abend*, p.242.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.242, 243. Whether Kortner's reference to *Der Stürmer* was accurate or not, it would accurately characterise the piece in Goebbels' paper *Der Angriff* (28 November 1927) on Kortner's Shylock. The text is quoted in Brand, *op. cit.*, p.166.

<sup>45</sup> John Willett notes: "this was one of the rare productions of the time, said critics, that did not orbit around her [Bergner's] stardom". Willett, *op. cit.*, p.114; cf. Monty Jacobs, "Berliner Shakespeare-Aufführungen 1927/29", *SJb.*, 65, 1929, p.324.

<sup>46</sup> Alfred Kerr, *Mit Schleuder und Harfe. Theaterkritiken aus drei Jahrzehnten* (ed. Hugo Fetting), Munich, 1985, pp.397f (originally in *Berliner Tageblatt*, 18 November 1927); cf. Ernst Th. Sehr, "Der Shylock Fritz Kortners", *Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft West, Jahrbuch* 1973, pp.78-96.

<sup>47</sup> Ihering, *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*, II, p.297; also "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 18 November 1927, clipping in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>48</sup> Jacobs, "Berliner Shakespeare-Aufführungen 1927/29", p.324; cf. also [partly identical] Jacobs, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Vossische Zeitung*, 18 November 1927, clipping in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn. For Jacobs, philosemitic readings ("fashionable today") of Shakespeare were anachronistic – Shakespeare, he suggested, would have been on the side of Gratiano and the other Venetian cavaliers. However, Shakespeare's genius was so encompassing that he could also understand Shylock's situation.

<sup>49</sup> Franz Köppen, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", [*Berliner Börsen-Zeitung?*], 18 November 1927, clipping in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>50</sup> Norbert Falk, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag*, 18 November 1927, clipping in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>51</sup> Ludwig Sternaux, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig im Staatlichen Schauspielhaus" [*Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger?*, 18? November 1927], clipping in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>52</sup> Sehr, *op. cit.*, pp.93-94.

<sup>53</sup> Berthold Viertel, "Ueber Fritz Kortner", in Ludwigg, *op. cit.*, p.40 (with illustrations).

<sup>54</sup> F.E. [Fritz Engel?], "Schiller-Theater: 'Der Kaufmann von Venedig'", clipping [from *Berliner Tageblatt?*], 2 October 1929, in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn. Cf. also the other reviews of this production in this collection.

<sup>55</sup> See Brand, *op. cit.*, pp.200-205; Schütze, *op. cit.*, pp.74-75; Kortner's account is in his *Aller Tage Abend*, pp.261-264, in which Harlan is referred to under the name Kunz, and the incident is attributed to Harlan's professional jealousy; reference to applause on p.263.

<sup>56</sup> Brand, *op. cit.*, pp.225-231.

<sup>57</sup> Stahl, *Shakespeare und das Deutsche Theater*, p.221. On Stahl's position at the Bayrisches Staatsschauspiel, see *ibid.*, p.623.

<sup>58</sup> W.R., "Werner Krauss als Shylock", unprovenanced clipping, dated August 1931, and Walter Tschuppik, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", unprovenanced clipping, 20 August 1931, both in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>59</sup> "Pg. Werner Krauß – Hände an die Hosennaht!", *Neue Montagszeitung*, 29 February 1932, clipping in Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter BA B), Document Center denazification file: Werner Krauss, RKK2705 Box 0003, File: 24, Bl.9. The leftist newspaper's further claim that Krauss was actually a Nazi party member was not supported by the postwar denazification authorities, although they definitely considered him to have been a Nazi sympathizer and an antisemite. See also "Der heimliche Intendant", *Montag-Morgen*, 17 October 1932, in *ibid.*, Bl.7-8. One postwar witness claimed that in 1932 Krauss recruited her as a member of the Nazi cultural front organisation, the Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur. Note on conversation between Charlotte Bretsch and Wolfgang Schmidt, 1 September 1947, in *ibid.* (no pagination). Krauss's membership form for the Fachschaft Film of the Reichsfilmkammer in May 1939 states that he was not a member of the Nazi Party, the SA or SS, statements that were verifiable at the time and it would not have been in Krauss's interest to deny membership at that time had he been a member. Fragebogen der Reichsfilmkammer, Fachschaft Film, 21 May 1939, BA B, Document Center denazification file: Werner Krauss, RKK2600 Box 0246, File: 02, unpaginated.

<sup>60</sup> Stahl, *Shakespeare und das Deutsche Theater*, p.683.

<sup>61</sup> Joseph Schildkraut, *My Father and I*, New York, 1959, p.139; filmographic details in Gerhard Lamprecht, *Deutsche Stummfilme 1913-1914*, Berlin, 1969, p.100.

<sup>62</sup> For basic filmographic details, see Gerhard Lamprecht, *Deutsche Stummfilme, 1923-1926*, Berlin, n.d., p.106. The film was produced by Peter Paul Felner-Film Co. GmbH, Berlin, and was distributed by Phoebus-Film. It was passed uncut by the censor on 31 August 1923, and classified as suitable for general exhibition (*jugendfrei*).

<sup>63</sup> This is the version of *Der Kaufmann von Venedig*, of which few copies seem to have survived, that is in the Filmarchiv, Berlin, of the German Bundesarchiv. This restored copy is in generally good condition, although there are occasional repeated movements, and other continuity problems. Quotations in the text are from the intertitles of the English-language version.

<sup>64</sup> The stage name of Klara Romberger.

<sup>65</sup> According to Herbert Ihering's review, it is Shylock's mother, not wife – possibly a difference between the German and English-language intertitles? Ihering, "Shylock im Film" (originally published 15 October 1923), in *idem*, *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*, Bd.1, Berlin, 1961, p.461.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p.461.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.460-462.

<sup>68</sup> H.H. Wollenberg, *Fifty Years of German Film*, London, 1948, p.30; filmographic data in Gerhard Lamprecht, *Deutsche Stummfilme 1921-1922*, Berlin, 1968, p.594. Judging from the advertisements in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* (9-10 February 1923), the film's run did not last longer than two days. The Nazi *Völkischer Beobachter* claimed with some satisfaction that the film only lasted one day and, "in the interests of maintaining public peace and safety", warned of possible outbreaks of disorder if the film returned to Munich. H.E., "Nathan der Weise", *Völkischer Beobachter*, no.18, 16 February 1923. On the prevalence of Nazi violence against Jews in Munich in this period, see Dirk Walter, *Antisemitische Kriminalität und Gewalt. Judenfeindschaft in der Weimarer Republik*, Bonn, 1999, pp.97-110; and for other examples of Nazi disruption of cultural events in Munich in this period, see David Clay Large, *Where Ghosts Walked. Munich's Road to the Third Reich*, New York and London, 1997, pp.206-214.

<sup>69</sup> "Film-Zeitung", *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, Nr.39, 10 February 1923.

<sup>70</sup> H.E., "Nathan der Weise". H.E. refrained from criticizing, or even mentioning, Krauss's performance in the film.

<sup>71</sup> Roland Schacht, "Filme", *Die Weltbühne*, 19.Jg. i, 1923, p.114.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in John Willett, *Theatre of the Weimar Republic*, p.75.

<sup>73</sup> *SJb.*, 56, 1920, p.151; *SJb.*, 57, 1921, p.163; *SJb.*, 58, 1922, p.211; *SJb.*, 59-60, 1924, p.266. See also Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.665-666.

<sup>74</sup> *SJb.*, 59-60, 1924, p.266.

<sup>75</sup> See *SJb.*, references as in n.39.

<sup>76</sup> Herbert Ihering, "Wegeners Shylock", unprovenanced [*Berliner Börsen-Courier*], undated [1918/19] clipping in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>77</sup> *SJb.*, 57, 1921, pp.159-163; on Munich, see Alfred Mensi-Klarbach, "Münchener Shakespeare-Aufführungen", *ibid.*, pp.150-151. Granach was jubilant at getting the role of Shylock in Munich, describing it as a part he had longed for for years. Albert Klein and Raya Kruk, *Alexander Granach. Fast verwehte Spuren*, Berlin, 1994, p.13.

<sup>78</sup> *SJb.*, 58, 1922, pp.207-211.

<sup>79</sup> Ernst Leopold Stahl, "Theaterschau", *ibid.*, p.199 (citing review in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p.197 (citing the *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*).

<sup>81</sup> *SJb.*, 58, 1922, p.189.

<sup>82</sup> Hermann Pörzgen, *Das deutsche Fronttheater 1914-20*, Frankfurt, 1935 (=diss., Cologne), pp.52-53, 72.



<sup>83</sup> See Stahl, *Shakespeare und das Deutsche Theater*, pp.655-664. Stahl characterized Schmitt's treatment of the classics as an antipode to the more overtly experimental Jessner, especially with reference to their respective productions of *Richard III*. *Ibid.*, p.639. See also Wilhelm Hortmann with Maik Hamburger, *Shakespeare on the German Stage. The twentieth century*, Cambridge, 1998, pp.93-101.

<sup>84</sup> Karl Arns, "Bochumer Shakespeare-Aufführungen", *SJb.*, 58, 1922, p.185.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p.186. See also the excerpt from the *Berliner Börsen-Courier's* review in *SJb.*, 58, 1922, p.190.

<sup>86</sup> Helene Richter, "Shakespeare im Burgtheater", *SJb.*, 58, 1922, p.181; for number of performances, *ibid.*, p.211; *Burgtheater 1776-1976. Aufführungen und Besetzungen von zweihundert Jahren* (ed. Österreichischer Bundestheaterverband), Vienna, n.d. [1976], Vol.1, p.473.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p.182.

<sup>88</sup> Oskar Maurus Fontana, unprovenanced clipping [1921] in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>89</sup> Leo Feld, "Wiener Theater", unprovenanced newspaper, March 1921, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>90</sup> Alfred Polgar, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Die Weltbühne*, Jg.17, 23 June 1921, pp.685-687.

<sup>91</sup> *SJb.*, 59/60, pp.255-266.

<sup>92</sup> Stahl, *Shakespeare und das Deutsche Theater*, pp.631-633, quotations pp.631, 632.

<sup>93</sup> *SJb.*, 58, 1922, p.208; *SJb.*, 59/60, 1924, pp.257-258..

<sup>94</sup> *SJb.*, 59/60, 1924, p.255.

<sup>95</sup> *SJb.*, 59/60, pp.255-266.

<sup>96</sup> Arthur Kahane, "Reinhardt as Stage-Director", in Oliver M. Sayler, *Max Reinhardt and his Theatre*, New York/ London, 1968 (reprint of 1924 edn.), p.77.

<sup>97</sup> *SJb.*, 61, 1925, p.176.

<sup>98</sup> See table, *SJb.*, 64, 1928, p.249; *SJb.*, 65, 1929, p.256.

<sup>99</sup> Statistics compiled from *SJb.*

<sup>100</sup> *SJb.*, 61 1925, pp.170-176.

<sup>101</sup> *SJb.*, 62, 1926, pp.189-196. The Hamburg Deutsches Schauspielhaus put on another 8 performances of *The Merchant* the following year, and the Württemberg Volksbühne's tour continued into 1926, with performances in Tübingen and Heidenheim. *SJb.*, 63, 1927, pp.262, 266.

<sup>102</sup> *SJb.*, 61, 1925, p.175.

<sup>103</sup> *SJb.*, 62, 1926, p.194.

<sup>104</sup> *SJb.*, 63, 1927, pp.260-267.

<sup>105</sup> Heinrich Braulich, *Die Volksbühne. Theater und Politik in der deutschen Volksbühnenbewegung*, Berlin, 1976, p.278.

<sup>106</sup> Herbert Ihering, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig. Volksbühne", [*Berliner Börsen-Courier*], 25 October 1925 [?], in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>107</sup> Alfred Klaar, “Der Kaufmann von Venedig”, unprovenanced [*Vossische Zeitung*?], undated [ca. 15 October 1925], clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn; Julius Knopf of the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* (“Alexander Granach als Shylock”, ca. 15 October 1925) and Franz Servaes (“Volksbühne” [Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger, October 1925], clippings in *ibid.*) confirm the strong impression the production made on the highly receptive and appreciative Volksbühne audience, even by such trappings as its borrowed tricks with the revolving stage.

<sup>108</sup> Julius Knopf, “Alexander Granach als Shylock”.

<sup>109</sup> Bur., “Der Kaufmann von Venedig”, unprovenanced clipping [October 1925]; and Kurt Pinthus, “Volksbühne”, *8 Uhr Abendblatt und National-Zeitung* [October 1925], both in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>110</sup> Julius Bab, “Der ‘Kaufmann’ in der Volksbühne”, unprovenanced clipping [*Berliner Volks-Zeitung*?, October 1925] in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn. See also Klein and Kruk, *op. cit.*, pp.38-39.

<sup>111</sup> Alexander Granach, *Da geht ein Mensch*, Weimar, 1949, pp.367-374, quotation pp.369-370.

<sup>112</sup> *SJb.*, 64, 1928, pp.243-248.

<sup>113</sup> Rolf P. Parchwitz, *Die Bayerische Landesbühne. Studien zur Geschichte eines Regionaltheaters*, Munich, 1974, pp.100—112.

<sup>114</sup> Herbert Ihering, *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*, Vol. II, Berlin, 1961, p.296; also “Der Kaufmann von Venedig”, *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 18 November 1927.

<sup>115</sup> *SJb.*, 65, 1929, pp.250-256.

<sup>116</sup> Lothar Ehrlich and Jürgen John, “Weimar 1930’. Politik und Kultur im Vorfeld der NS-Diktatur”, in Ehrlich and John, *Weimar 1930*, pp.xxiii, xxiv.

<sup>117</sup> Stenzel, “Das Deutsche Nationaltheater in Weimar”, pp.226-232.

<sup>118</sup> O. Francke, “Shakespeare im Weimarer Nationaltheater”, *SJb.*, 63, 1927, pp.258-259; Wolfgang Stroedel, *Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne. Vom Ende des Weltkriegs bis zur Gegenwart*, Weimar, 1938, p.83 (including reference to Morocco).

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p.259; *SJb.*, 64, 1928, pp.245, 248.

<sup>120</sup> Stenzel, *op. cit.*, p.234. On the Kampfbund in the Weimar Republic period, see Alan E. Steinweis, “Weimar Culture and the Rise of National Socialism: The *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*”, *Central European History*, 24, 1991, pp.402-423.

<sup>121</sup> Stenzel, *op. cit.*, pp.235-241.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p.241; Willett, *Theatre of the Weimar Republic*, p.143. The cast included Emmy Sonnemann, later to become Hermann Göring’s second wife.

<sup>123</sup> *SJb.*, 69, 1933, pp.219, 228.

<sup>124</sup> On Mehring’s play, see Ruth Frfr. von Ledebur, “Na, hinreissend waren Sie als Shylock!” Walter Mehrings *Der Kaufmann von Berlin*”, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 127, 1991.

<sup>125</sup> Erwin Piscator, *The Political Theatre* (ed. Hugh Rorrison), London, 1980, p.331.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.332-333.

<sup>127</sup> Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers. The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923*, Madison, Wisconsin, and London, 1982, pp.240-241. Aschheim's study traces the development of attitudes towards Eastern European Jews in Germany. Their influx from the 1880s on was a source of some discomfort to many assimilated German Jews, whose newly attained bourgeois respectability seemed to be put at risk by (antisemitic reactions to) the presence of identifiably "alien" *Ostjuden*, sometimes called *Kaftanjuden*, in reference to their different style of dress. See also Shulamit Volkov, "The Dynamics of Dissimilation. *Ostjuden* and German Jews", in Jehuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg, eds., *The Jewish Response to German Culture. From the Enlightenment to the Second World War*, Hanover, NH and London, 1985, pp.195-211, also (in German) in Volkov, *Antisemitismus als kultureller Code*, Munich, 2000, pp.166-180.

<sup>128</sup> Norbert Falk, "Piscators Maschinen spielen", *B.Z. am Mittag*, no.244, 7 September 1929, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>129</sup> John Willett, *The Theatre of Erwin Piscator*, London, 1986, p.98.

<sup>130</sup> The text of *Der Kaufmann von Berlin* can be found in Hans-J. Weitz, with Michael Assmann, ed., *Drei jüdische Dramen*, Göttingen, 1995, pp.65-188 (pp.177-188 comprise a glossary of Yiddish and Hebrew words to help comprehension of the text).

<sup>131</sup> Mehring, *Der Kaufmann von Berlin*, in *ibid.*, p.163.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p.150.

<sup>133</sup> There were in fact outbreaks of pogrom-like violence in the "*Scheunenviertel*", the Jewish quarter in Berlin's East End, in November 1923. For details, see Walter, *op. cit.*, pp.151-154.

<sup>134</sup> On further intertextual connections, parallels and contrasts, between Mehring's *Merchant* and Shakespeare's original, see von Ledebur, *op. cit.*.

<sup>135</sup> Willett, *Theatre of the Weimar Republic*, p.112.

<sup>136</sup> Hugh Rorrison, in Piscator, *The Political Theatre*, p.316.

<sup>137</sup> Monty Jacobs, "Piscators Anfang und Ende?", *Vossische Zeitung*, no.215, 8 September 1929, 4. Beilage, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn. See also Herbert Ihering, "Eröffnung der Piscator-Bühne", clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn, excerpted in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.326-327.

<sup>138</sup> Rorrison, in *ibid.*, p.316.

<sup>139</sup> *Deutsche Zeitung*, 10 September 1929, quoted in Piscator, *op. cit.*, pp.338-339.

<sup>140</sup> Heinrich Goertz, *Erwin Piscator in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1981, pp.15-16.

<sup>141</sup> Andor Gabor, "Zwei Theaterabende" (originally in *Die Linkscurve*, Vol.1, 3, October 1929), in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.305-306.

<sup>142</sup> H. Eisgruber, "Piscators Maschinentheater wieder in Betrieb", *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, no. 211, 10 September 1929, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn. While mainly positive in its response to Mehring's work, Eisgruber regretted the incident with the dead soldier, described below, as a lapse in judgement.

<sup>143</sup> Hans Oppenheimer, “Der Kaufmann von Berlin”, *C[entral]-V[erein] Zeitung*, 13 September 1929 (with note by the *Schriftleitung* (editorial board)), clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn; also excerpted in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.306-307.

<sup>144</sup> Max Reinheimer, “Wie Juden unbewußt Judenhaß schaffen”, unprovenanced clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn; also reprinted, with possible attribution to *Israelitisches Familienblatt*(?), in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.307-309.

<sup>145</sup> k.k., “Der Kaufmann von Berlin”, *Jüdische Rundschau*, 34, 4 October 1929, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn, also excerpted in Weitz, *op. cit.*, p.309; see also the unprovenanced clipping by Walter Loewenstein, “Der Kaufmann von Berlin”, n.d. (ca. 9 September 1929) in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn, excerpted in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.310-311 (suggested identification here: *Gemeindeblatt der Jüdischen Gemeinde zu Berlin*?).

<sup>146</sup> The *Berliner Tageblatt* also feared that the actual political consequences of the production could be the opposite to what was intended, giving ammunition to the antisemitic right: “Politisches Theater”, *Berliner Tageblatt*, 9 September 1929, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn, also in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.325-326. See also Mehring’s reply: “Die politische Theater-Kritik”, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>147</sup> Kerr, *Mit Schleuder und Harfe*, pp.465-469 (originally in *Berliner Tageblatt*, 7 September 1929).

<sup>148</sup> Bernhard Diebold, “Piscator-Premiere”, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, no.668, 7 September 1929, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn, excerpted in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.330-332.

<sup>149</sup> Mehring, *op. cit.*, pp.162-163.

<sup>150</sup> *Nachtausgabe*, 7 September 1929, quoted in Piscator, *The Political Theatre*, p.337.

<sup>151</sup> Reproduced in facsimile in *ibid.*, p.339. Clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn with the full text of Ludwig Sternaux’s review from *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, no.423, 7 September 1929.

<sup>152</sup> Johannes W. Harnisch, “Verhöhntes Volk – gehöhnter Staat”, *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, no.425, 9 September 1929, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>153</sup> Paul Fechter, “Das neue Piscator-Theater”, *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, no.414, 7 September 1929, in Hugo Fetting, ed., *Von der Freien Bühne zum Politischen Theater*, Leipzig, 1987, Vol.2, pp.447-449, also excerpted in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.340-341. See also the antisemitic rightist commentary in *Der Tag*, 8 September 1929, excerpted in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.343-344.

<sup>154</sup> Walter Mehring, “Was ist Leichenschändung?” (originally in *Das Tage-Buch*, Jg.10, 37, 14 September 1929), in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.311-315, quotation p.312.

<sup>155</sup> Text of *Der rote General* in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.21-64; documents on the reception of the performance, pp.273-296.

<sup>156</sup> Walter Mehring, “Der rote Genral” (originally *Das Tage-Buch*, Jg.9, 38, 22 September 1928), in *ibid.*, pp.276-280, quotation p.279.

<sup>157</sup> "Ein Hetzdrama" (originally *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 17 September 1928) in *ibid.*, pp.291-292.

<sup>158</sup> "Bar Kochba" [pseud.], "Der rote General" (originally in *Der Angriff*, 24 September 1928), in *ibid.*, pp.292-296, quotation p.296. The Nazi press never failed to remind its readers that Kortner was born Nathan Kohn. On the pejorative charge of the name "Cohn/ Kohn" among antisemites, see Dietz Bering, *The Stigma of Names. Antisemitism in German Daily Life, 1812-1933* (tr. Neville Plaice), Ann Arbor, 1992, pp.149-151.

<sup>159</sup> Claude Singer, *Le Juif Süss et la Propagande Nazie. L'Histoire Confisquée*, Paris, 2003, pp.46-47.

<sup>160</sup> Text of *Jud Süß* in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.189-270; documents on the reception of the performance, pp.358-378.

<sup>161</sup> See articles from the *C.-V. Zeitung* by Alfred Hirschberg and Hugo Lachmanski respectively, in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.358-363.

<sup>162</sup> Ka., "Jud Süß" (originally in *Rote Fabne*, 10 October 1930), and S.-M., "Paul Kornfeld: 'Jud Süß'" (originally in *Vorwärts*, 8 October 1930) both in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.363-364

<sup>163</sup> Walter Steintal, "Jud Süß" (originally in *12-Uhr Blatt*, 8 October 1930), in Weitz, *op. cit.*, pp.370-371.

<sup>164</sup> Franz Servaes, "Unfruchtbares Theater", *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, in Weitz, *op. cit.*, p.375.

<sup>165</sup> Singer, *Le Juif Süß*, p.66.

<sup>166</sup> See Fetting, ed., *Von der Freien Bühne*, Vol.2, pp.476-488.

<sup>167</sup> Alfred Knoke, "Georg Kaiser's 'Die jüdische Witwe'", unprovenanced, undated [1921] clipping in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>168</sup> Bernhard Diebold, *Der Denkspieler Georg Kaiser*, Frankfurt /M., 1924, p.139; Wilhelm Steffens, *Georg Kaiser*, Velber, 1969 (with illustration of the 1925-26 production); Norbert Falk, "Die jüdische Witwe", *B.Z. am Mittag*, no.308, 9 November 1925, clipping in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>169</sup> Elvira Grözingen, *Die schöne Jüdin. Klischees, Mythen und Vorurteile über Juden in der Literatur*, Berlin/ Vienna, 2003, p.15.

<sup>170</sup> See clippings file in Schloss Wahn for Lessing, *Nathan der Weise*. For reviews of the Marburg performance, see Hessisches Staatsarchiv Marburg Bestand 330 C, no.2721, Bl.43-45 (clippings from *Oberhessische Zeitung*, no.16, 19 January 1929; *Hessisches Tageblatt*, no.19, 22 January 1929). Reviews mainly emphasized Wüllner's status as a revered veteran of the stage (rather than the contemporary relevance of Lessing's work), and he was presented with a laurel wreath at the end of the performance.

<sup>171</sup> Thomas Eicher, "Spielplanstrukturen 1929-1944", in Eicher, Barbara Panse and Henning Rischbieter, *Theater im "Dritten Reich". Theaterpolitik, Spielplanstruktur, NS-Dramatik*, Seelze-Velber, 2000, p.340.

<sup>172</sup> James W. Angell, *The Recovery of Germany*, New Haven, 1930 (first printing 1929), p.361.

<sup>173</sup> Konrad Dussel, "Theater in der Krise. Der Topos und die ökonomische Realität in der Weimarer Republik", in Ehrlich and John, eds., *Weimar 1930*, p.213.

<sup>174</sup> Hennning Rischbieter, "NS-Theaterpolitik", in Eicher, Panse and Rischbieter, *Theater im "Dritten Reich"*, p.43. The statistics here refer only to towns and cities with over 50,000 inhabitants.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p.65.

<sup>176</sup> Stahl, *Shakespeare und das Deutsche Theater*, p.666.

<sup>177</sup> Compiled from *SJb.*, 66, 1930 to 69, 1933.

<sup>178</sup> Ernst Leopold Stahl, "Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne 1931/32", *SJb.*, 68, 1932, p.190.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> *SJb.*, 66, 1930, pp.243-249; Feldens, *op. cit.*, pp.252, 254, 266-274.

<sup>181</sup> *SJb.*, 66, 1930, p.251.

<sup>182</sup> *SJb.*, 67, 1931, pp.135-137.

<sup>183</sup> Ernst Leopold Stahl, "Theaterschau. Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne 1930-31", *SJb.*, 67, 1931, p.122; Heinz-Rüdiger Spenlen, *Theater in Aachen, Köln, Bonn und Koblenz 1931 bis 1944* (diss., Universität Bonn), 1984, pp.12-13.

<sup>184</sup> *SJb.*, 67, 1931, p.139.

<sup>185</sup> *SJb.*, 68, 1932, pp.213-215.

<sup>186</sup> Stahl, "Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne 1931/32", p.206, quoting Bringezu, *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, 2 October 1931; f.t.g. [=F.T. Gugler], *Frankfurter Zeitung*, no.732-733, 2 October 1931, Abendblatt.

<sup>187</sup> See Bettina Schültke, "The Municipal Theatre in Frankfurt-on-the-Main. A Provincial Theatre under National Socialism", in Günter Berghaus, ed., *Fascism and Theatre. Comparative Studies on the Aesthetics and Politics of Performance in Europe, 1925-1945*, Providence, RI and Oxford, 1996, pp.161, 165.

<sup>188</sup> Albert Richard Mohr, *Das Frankfurter Schauspiel 1929-1944*, Frankfurt am Main, 1974, p.40. For Rothe's thoughts on *The Merchant of Venice* (admittedly published after 1945) see Hans Rothe, *Shakespeare als Provokation*, Munich, 1961, pp.234-241. Rothe contrasted Shylock's human dimension with Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, and emphasized the negative characteristics of the Venetian Christians.

<sup>189</sup> Stahl, "Theaterschau. Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne 1930-31", p.127.

<sup>190</sup> Erich Sieburg, "Shakespeares 'Kaufmann von Venedig'", *Bochumer Anzeiger*, 5 January 1931, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>191</sup> *SJb.*, 68, 1932, p.214; *SJb.*, 69, 1933, p.227.

<sup>192</sup> Stahl, "Theaterschau. Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne 1930-31", pp.124-125.

<sup>193</sup> Franz Köppen, undated clipping [late November/ December 1931], from *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn. See also Stahl, "Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne 1931/32", p.198.

<sup>194</sup> W. Steinthal, "Othello im Staatstheater", [*Neue Berliner Zeitung/ 12-Uhr Blatt?*], 20 January 1932, clipping in *Othello* folder, Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>195</sup> Jürgen Weisker, "Theaterschau", *SJb.*, 69, 1933, p.210.

<sup>196</sup> Walter Schmits, *Kölnische Zeitung*, 13 September 1932, quoted *ibid.*; cf. however, the more moderately worded review, FJ, "Eröffnung des Deutschen Theaters am Rhein", ca. 12 September 1932, unprovenanced clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>197</sup> *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 15 October 1932, quoted *ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> *SJb.*, 69, 1933, pp.226-228.

<sup>199</sup> Quoted in Stahl, *Shakespeare und das Deutsche Theater*, p.668f.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p.665. Stahl (p.667) lamented the "peak of confusion" in the 1931/32 season in Berlin "within the theatre world that was being pushed more and more down the slippery slope of wilful exhibitionism". Writing in 1947, he went on to state (p.669) that Berlin's theatres required a process of "clarification", which happened after 1933, but the new regime then took theatre "from one extreme to another: from disorder to prescribed order".

<sup>201</sup> Stahl, "Theaterschau. Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne 1930-31", p.128.

<sup>202</sup> Ignaz Wrobel [pseud. for Tucholsky], "Berlin und die Provinz", *Die Weltbühne*, Jg.24, 11, 13 March 1928, p.406. To take just one example, the chronicler of the Trier Stadttheater stressed the openness of that theatre to innovation during the Weimar years, but conceded that it had managed to neglect the work of Bertolt Brecht. Hubert Thoma, *Das Trierer Theater 1802-1944*, Trier, 1964, p.285.

<sup>203</sup> Eugen Kilian (posthumously published), "Shakespeare und die Mode des Tages", *SJb.*, 61, 1925, pp.31-32.

<sup>204</sup> Hortmann, *op. cit.*, pp.78-81.

<sup>205</sup> Shulamit Volkov, "Antisemitism as a Cultural Code – Reflections on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany", *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* XXIII, 1978, pp.25-46; more recent version (in German) in Volkov, *Antisemitismus*, pp.13-36.

### Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup> *Reichsgesetzblatt* (=RGBl), 1933, I, p.175. §3.2 allowed exemptions from this for Great War veterans, and their parents or children, or for exceptions granted by the Reich Interior Minister in consultation with other relevant authorities. The exemption for veterans was a concession to President Hindenburg. The question of who was to be considered of non-Aryan descent was addressed by the decree on the implementation of the civil service law of 11 April 1933 (*ibid.*, p.195), as persons with at least one "non-Aryan" parent or grandparent. More precise definition had to await the November 1935 decrees on the implementation of the Nuremberg Laws (*ibid.*, 1935, I, pp.1333-1336).

<sup>2</sup> Alan E. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology and Economics in Nazi Germany*, Chapel Hill and London, 1993, p.107; *RGbl.* I, p.659.

<sup>3</sup> Steinweis, *Art, Ideology and Economics*, pp.110-117, figure of 535 (no breakdown indicating “racial” categories available) p.113.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.105.

<sup>5</sup> Hans Schwab-Felisch, *Das Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus*, Düsseldorf and Vienna, 1970, pp.27-28; Walter Rischer, *Die nationalsozialistische Kulturpolitik in Düsseldorf 1933-1945*, Düsseldorf, 1972 (also diss., Cologne), p.30.

<sup>6</sup> Henning Rischbieter, “NS-Theaterpolitik”, in Thomas Eicher, Barbara Panse and H. Rischbieter, *Theater im “Dritten Reich”. Theaterpolitik, Spielplanstruktur, NS-Dramatik*, Seelze-Velber, 2000, p.17.

<sup>7</sup> Eberhard Wolfgang Möller, Referent in Reich Propaganda Ministry, to Will Vesper, 11 August 1934, Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter BA B), R55/20169, Bl.136.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Eicher, “Spielplanstrukturen 1929-1944”, in Eicher, Panse and Rischbieter, *Theater im “Dritten Reich”*, p.340.

<sup>9</sup> See Herbert Freeden, *Jüdisches Theater in Nazideutschland*, Frankfurt/M., Berlin, Vienna, 1985 [originally 1964], pp.27-33; on the Jewish Kulturbund, see also Akademie der Künste, ed., *Geschlossene Vorstellung. Der Jüdische Kulturbund in Deutschland 1933-1941*, Berlin, 1992, especially pp.67ff; Eike Geisel and Henryk Broder, eds., *Premiere und Pogrom: der Jüdische Kulturbund 1933-1941*, Berlin, 1992; Eike Geisel, “The Cultural League is formed to concentrate all ‘Jewish’ cultural life in one central organization under Nazi supervision”, in Sander L. Gilman and Jack Zipes, eds., *Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture 1096-1996*, New Haven and London, 1997, pp.506-511; Rebecca Rovit, “Jewish theatre: repertory and censorship in the Jüdischer Kulturbund, Berlin”, in John London, ed., *Theatre under the Nazis*, Manchester and New York, 2000, pp.187-221; Steinweis, *Art, Ideology and Economics*, pp.120-126. On Kulturbund activities outside Berlin, see Kurt Düwell, “Jewish Cultural Centres in Nazi Germany”, in Jehuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg, eds., *The Jewish Response to German Culture. From the Enlightenment to the Second World War*, Hanover, NH and London, 1985, pp.294-316.

<sup>10</sup> On Hinkel, see Alan Steinweis, “Hans Hinkel and German Jewry, 1933-1941”, *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, XXXVIII, 1993, pp.209-219.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Hans Hinkel, “Die Judenfrage in unserer Kulturpolitik”, *Die Bühne*, Jg.2, no.17, 1 September 1936, p.515: “The Jews can pursue their Jewish cultural life, which they claim to possess, in their own circles, and the so-called programme development within the local associations of the Jewish Kulturbund is tolerated by us as long as it does not concern itself with the direct or indirect influence of German cultural life and its paths of development”. Hinkel’s article swings between using the Kulturbund to disprove claims of Nazi “barbarism” in its policy towards Jews and emphasizing that it was only a temporary expedient while there were still Jewish artists who could not be brought to emigrate, and that there was “no



room for the bearers of Jewish-Bolshevik poison”, *ibid.*, pp.514-515. See also Hinkel, “Wohin mit den Juden?”, *Die Bühne*, no.1, 5 January 1939, pp.3-4.

<sup>12</sup> Reichsdramaturg Rainer Schlösser to Staatskommissar Hinkel, 26 October 1933, on ban of performance of the play *Die Jagd Gottes* by Emil Bernhard by the Jewish Kulturbund: “One can imagine with whom the said cossacks will be identified”. BA Berlin, R56 I/11, Bl.6.

<sup>13</sup> Steinweis, *Art, Ideology and Economics*, p.115; Freeden, *op. cit.*, p.164 (with text of Gestapo order of 11 September 1941 banning the Kulturbund).

<sup>14</sup> Freeden, *op. cit.*, pp.27-28.

<sup>15</sup> *Jüdische Rundschau*, 4 October 1933, quoted in *ibid.*, pp.28-29 (ellipses in Freeden).

<sup>16</sup> Cited *ibid.*, p.29. On the internal debate within the Jewish community over the play, see also Jörg W. Gronius, “Klarheit, Leichtigkeit und Melodie. Theater im Jüdischen Kulturbund Berlin”, in Akademie der Künste, *Geschlossene Vorstellung*, pp.67-69.

<sup>17</sup> Hebrew: “Welcome”, or short form of “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD”.

<sup>18</sup> Gronius, *op. cit.*, pp.68-69.

<sup>19</sup> Alfred Dreifuss in Geisel and Broder, *op. cit.*, p.133.

<sup>20</sup> Ruth Anselm-Herzog in *ibid.*, p.81.

<sup>21</sup> Ernest Lenart in *ibid.*, p.243.

<sup>22</sup> See Frithjof Trapp *et al.*, eds, *Handbuch des deutschsprachigen Exiltheaters*, Munich, 1999, 2 vols..

<sup>23</sup> Fritz Kortner, *Aller Tage Abend*, Munich, 1969, pp.271ff; Peter Schütze, *Fritz Kortner*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1994, pp.80-90, 147.

<sup>24</sup> Schütze, *op. cit.*, p.86.

<sup>25</sup> Georg Zivier, *Ernst Deutsch und das deutsche Theater*, Berlin, 1964, p.117.

<sup>26</sup> Werner Mittenzwei, “Verfolgung und Vertreibung deutscher Bühnenkünstler durch den Nationalsozialismus”, in Trapp *et al.*, *op. cit.*, Vol.1, p.51; Rischbieter, “NS-Theaterpolitik”, p.67.

<sup>27</sup> Clippings in file on Lessing, *Nathan der Weise*, Kritikensammlung, Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung der Universität Köln, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>28</sup> Trapp *et al.*, *op. cit.*, Vol.2, p.51.

<sup>29</sup> Erwin Geschonnek, quoted in Albert Klein and Raya Kruk, *Alexander Granach. Fast verwehte Spuren*, Berlin, 1994, p.112.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.112-113.

<sup>31</sup> Akademie der Künste, *Alexander Granach und das jüdische Theater des Ostens* [exhibition catalogue], Berlin, 1971, p.118, with illustrations pp.118, 119; see also Trapp *et al.*, *op. cit.*, Vol.2, pp.337-338.

<sup>32</sup> Geisel and Broder, *op. cit.*, p.127 (reminiscence of Martin Brandt); Trapp *et al.*, *op. cit.*, Vol.2, p.491.

<sup>33</sup> Ernest Lenart in *ibid.*, p.242.

<sup>34</sup> Leonhard M. Fiedler, *Max Reinhardt*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1994, pp.115, 117, 143.

<sup>35</sup> Max Reinhardt, *Schriften* (ed. Hugo Fetting), Berlin, 1974, pp.222-225. On the *Gleichschaltung* of the Deutsches Theater, see Wayne Kvam, "The Nazification of Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater Berlin", *Theatre Journal*, Vol.40, 3, 1988, pp.357-374.

<sup>36</sup> Cited in Heinrich Braulich, *Max Reinhardt. Theater zwischen Traum und Wirklichkeit*, Berlin, 1969, p.228.

<sup>37</sup> Reinhardt's *Regiebuch* cited in *ibid.*, pp.85-86.

<sup>38</sup> Elisabetta Cerruti, "Der 'Kaufmann' in Venedig", *Berliner Tageblatt*, no.351, 27 July 1934. The article is otherwise largely devoted to evoking the Venetian atmosphere. The annual report of the President of the German Shakespeare Society, Prof. Werner Deetjen, managed to describe this production, quoting Cerruti's account and mentioning the music of the composer of "new Italy", Victor de Sabato, without mentioning the exiled director Max Reinhardt. *SJb.*, 71, 1935, pp.7-8.

<sup>39</sup> See Marla Stone, *The Patron State. Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy*, Princeton NJ, 1998, pp.100-113.

<sup>40</sup> Horst Müllenmeister, *Leopold Jessner. Geschichte eines Regiestils* (diss., Cologne), 1956, p.96.

<sup>41</sup> Avraham Oz, "Transformations of Authenticity. The Merchant of Venice in Israel 1936-1980", *Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft West Jahrbuch*, 1983, p.168.

<sup>42</sup> Manfred Geis, cited in Müllenmeister, *op. cit.*, p.96.

<sup>43</sup> Oz, *op. cit.*, p.168.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.171.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.168-170.

<sup>46</sup> A work remembered only for the line, often modified and incorrectly attributed to Göring: "When I hear the word culture, I release the safety catch on my Browning [revolver]".

<sup>47</sup> The writer Eckart von Naso, who worked as a dramaturg with the Prussian State Theatre in Berlin, claimed perhaps with some exaggeration that the script department received "2400 manuscripts" in 1933, "among which were 500 dramas about Arminius and Thusnelda". Von Naso's memoirs, excerpted in George L. Mosse, ed., *Nazi Culture*, New York, 1981, p.186.

<sup>48</sup> Wolfgang Benz, *Herrschaft und Gesellschaft im nationalsozialistischen Staat*, Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 1990, p.18; see also William Niven, "The birth of Nazi drama?: Thing plays", in London, *op. cit.*, pp.54-95; Rischbieter, "NS-Theaterpolitik", pp.34-41.

<sup>49</sup> See Barbara Panse, "Censorship in Nazi Germany. The Influence of the Reich's Ministry of Propaganda on German Theatre and Drama, 1933-1945", in Günter Berghaus, ed., *Fascism and Theatre. Comparative Studies on the Aesthetics and Politics of Performance in Europe, 1925-1945*, Providence RI/ Oxford, 1996, pp.140-156.

<sup>50</sup> See the entry for Möller in Franz Lennartz, *Die Dichter unserer Zeit*, Stuttgart, 1938, pp.194-196; Hermann Wanderscheck, *Deutsche Dramatik der Gegenwart*, Berlin, n.d. [1939?], pp.104-112, 315.

<sup>51</sup> Aachen's new *Intendant*, Edgar Gross, had included both Möller's *Rothschild* and a play by Möller's fellow *Referent* Sigmund Graff in a proposed programme which met with the Reich Dramaturg's warm approval. BA B R55/20307, Bl.73-76.

<sup>52</sup> On the "Waterloo myth", see Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: Money's Prophets, 1798-1848*, New York, 1998, pp.15-16, 23-24, 96-101, which traces the myth back to Balzac's *The House of Nucingen* (1837-8). Myths can be put to more than one use, however: Ferguson cites (p.15) the American banker Bernard Baruch as claiming that the myth of Rothschild's Waterloo coup inspired him to make his first million. Ferguson mentions Möller's play, but gives the author's name incorrectly (as Müller) and also gets the date wrong (p.23).

<sup>53</sup> Eberhard Wolfgang Möller, *Rothschild siegte bei Waterloo*, Berlin, 1937 [3rd and 4th ed.], p.14.

<sup>54</sup> Erik Krünes, "Shylock auf dem Schlachtfeld", review in *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 6 October 1934. Clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>55</sup> P.W. [Paul Wiegler?], "Rotschild-Drama", unprovenanced clipping [*BZ am Mittag*?], 8 October 1934.

<sup>56</sup> Elisabeth Frenzel, *Judengestalten auf der deutschen Bühne. Ein notwendiger Querschnitt durch 750 Jahre Rollengeschichte*, Munich, 1942 [first published 1940], pp.248-249. (A publisher's note indicates: "Included in the N[ational] S[ocialist] bibliography".) See also her "Die Darstellung von Judenrollen", *Die Bühne*, no.17, 10 September 1940, pp.244-246; no.18, 25 September 1940, pp.276-277. Together with her husband, Herbert A. Frenzel, who like Möller was a *Referent* in the Propaganda Ministry, Frenzel went on to compile a number of standard reference works on literary and theatrical history in post-war West Germany.

<sup>57</sup> Reinhard Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner*, Stuttgart, 1970, p.34. Frick appointed Hans Severus Ziegler, regional head of the Nazi-inspired Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur, his *Referent* for culture, art and theatre, and Ziegler proceeded to carry out a cultural purge which included the dismissal of Bauhaus lecturers from the Weimar Bauhochschule and the destruction of some of their works.

<sup>58</sup> M-r, "Aachen: 'Rothschild siegt bei Waterloo'", unprovenanced clipping, 13 October 1934, in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn. In November 1936, Goebbels was to ban all forms of artistic criticism. See *Die Bühne*, 2.Jg, no.23, 1 December 1936, pp.705-707.

<sup>59</sup> Heinz-Rüdiger Spenlen, *Theater in Aachen, Köln, Bonn und Koblenz 1931 bis 1944* (diss., Universität Bonn), Bonn, 1984, p.62. Undeterred, the Nazi *Westdeutscher Beobachter* asked: "What would Germany like to be more than one big FAD-camp Kroschenen?"

<sup>60</sup> BA B, R55/ 20308, Bl.21 (request of city of Aachen for increased Reich subsidies for the municipal theatre).

<sup>61</sup> B., "Rothschild siegt bei Waterloo", unprovenanced clipping, [October 1934], in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn. A review of the November 1934

production in Breslau suggests that the Weimar performance was not wholly successful: "Rothschild siegt – auch im Lobetheater!", *Nationalsozialistische Schlesische Tageszeitung*, 19 November 1934, clipping in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>62</sup> P.W., "Rotschild-Drama"; Krünes, "Shylock auf dem Schlachtfeld"; -nt-, "Eberhard Wolfgang Möller: 'Rothschild siegt bei Waterloo'", unprovenanced clipping, 9 October 1934, *Kritikensammlung* Schloss Wahn refers to a large proportion of the audience as consisting of Party members.

<sup>63</sup> See Friederike Euler, "Theater zwischen Anpassung und Widerstand. Die Münchner Kammerspiele im Dritten Reich", in Martin Broszat and Elke Fröhlich, eds., *Bayern in der NS-Zeit*, Vol.II, Munich and Vienna, 1979, pp.91-173, especially pp.131, 143-147; "Die Aufführungen der Reichs-Theaterfestwoche: *Rothschild siegte bei Waterloo*", *Die Bühne*, 2. Jg., no.11, 1 June 1936, pp.358-359; Wolfgang Petzet, *Theater: Die Münchner Kammerspiele 1911-1972*, Munich, Vienna, Basel, 1973, pp.279-282 emphasizes the duress under which the Kammerspiele acted in producing *Rothschild*.

<sup>64</sup> Euler, "Theater zwischen Anpassung und Widerstand", p.145n332, cf. also the photo on p.146. A review by H.Jh. [Herbert Ihering?] simply refers to Friedrich Domin's expressivity and energy in the role of Rothschild, without elaborating on his "Jewish" attributes. "Rothschild siegt bei Waterloo", *Berliner Tageblatt*, no.238, Abend-Ausgabe, 14 May 1936. The *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* made a point of commenting on Domin's cultivated restraint. J.M. Wehner, "Rothschild siegt bei Waterloo", *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 15 Mai 1936, clipping in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>65</sup> Barbara Panse, "Antisemitismus und Judenfiguren in der Dramatik des Dritten Reiches", in Hans-Peter Bayerdörfer, ed., *Theatralia Judaica. Emanzipation und Antisemitismus als Momente der Theatergeschichte. Von Lessing bis zur Shoah*, Tübingen, 1992, p.300. See also *eadem*, "Zeitgenössische Dramatik, 1933-44" in Eicher *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp.657-659.

<sup>66</sup> L.E., "Möller bei Roses", *Berliner Morgenpost*, 27 November 1936, clipping in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn. In the Rose-Theater, *Rothschild siegt bei Waterloo* formed a double bill with Möller's historical sketch *Die graue Eminenz*.

<sup>67</sup> Herbert Günther, "Das regsame Berliner Rose-Theater", unprovenanced clipping, 4 December 1936, in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>68</sup> E. Naujoks, "Monomanen der Macht", unprovenanced clipping, 26 November 1936, in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>69</sup> Panse, "Zeitgenössische Dramatik, 1933-44", p.555.

<sup>70</sup> Bruno Fischli, *Die Deutschen-Dämmerung. Zur Genealogie des völkisch-faschistischen Dramas und Theaters (1897-1933)*, Bonn, 1976, pp.254-256.

<sup>71</sup> Panse, "Antisemitismus und Judenfiguren", p.306.

<sup>72</sup> Frenzel, *Judengestalten*, p.250.

<sup>73</sup> Drewniak, *Theater im NS-Staat*, p.221.

<sup>74</sup> Panse, "Antisemitismus und Judenfiguren", pp.299-301.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p.301. On the antisemitic repertoire in Nazi drama, see also Panse, "Zeitgenössische Dramatik 1933-44", pp.550-555.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p.302.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.304-305.

<sup>78</sup> E. Frenzel, "Die Darstellung von Judenrollen", p.244; on Büller, see Rischbieter, "NS-Theaterpolitik", pp.133-134.

<sup>79</sup> Drewniak, *Theater im NS-Staat*, pp.171-173; Georg Ruppelt, *Schiller im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland. Der Versuch einer Gleichschaltung*, Stuttgart, 1979, on the *Don Carlos* incidents: pp.113-115; on the *Tell* ban, pp.40-45.

<sup>80</sup> References listed in A.C. Strahl, "Spiegelberg", *Bühne und Welt*, Jg.13, 1910-11, ii, pp.475-477.

<sup>81</sup> Letter of Reichstag deputy Dr. Hans Fabricius to Gründgens, 30 July 1944, cited in Heinrich Goertz, *Gustaf Gründgens*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1995, p.102. Fabricius was the author of *Schiller als Kampfgenosse Hitlers* (1932).

<sup>82</sup> Wolf-Eberhard August, *Die Stellung der Schauspieler im Dritten Reich*, Munich, 1973 (=diss., University of Cologne).

<sup>83</sup> Erik Krünes, "Schiller – volkstümlich und revolutionär", *Berliner Illustrierte Nachtausgabe*, 19 January 1934, folder on Schiller, *Die Räuber*, in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>84</sup> Siegfried Melchinger, in the *Stuttgarter Neues Tageblatt*, 4 August 1939, Abendausgabe, referred to "Alfons Mühlhofer's Ahasuerus-like Spiegelberg", a reference to the legendary "Wandering Jew". Clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>85</sup> Paul Wiegler, "Zweimal 'Räuber' im Deutschen Theater", unprovenanced clipping, 17 September 1941, in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>86</sup> Ruppelt, *Schiller im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland*, p.169

<sup>87</sup> Rischbieter, "NS-Theaterpolitik" in Eicher *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p.60, 86. For more detail, see Michael Baumgarten and Ruth Freydank, *Das Rose-Theater. Ein Volkstheater im Berliner Osten 1906-1944*, Berlin, 1999, pp.49-53.

<sup>88</sup> W. Dr. [Wolfgang Drews], "Die Journalisten. Rose-Theater", unprovenanced clipping, 4 February 1935; Dietzenschmidt, "Die Journalisten", unprovenanced clipping, 2 February 1935; O.S., "Gustav Freytag's 'Journalisten' im Rose-Theater", unprovenanced clipping, 4 February 1935, all in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn. "O.S." even found that Ganzer managed to "make the most unsympathetic figure in the play, the penny-a-liner Schmock, more than sympathetic".

<sup>89</sup> Clippings in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>90</sup> Dr. Gertrud Haupt, "Die gutgeschnittene Ecke", unprovenanced clipping, 26 February 1941, in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>91</sup> See other reviews in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn, by Paul Fechter, Paul Kersten, Otto Ernst Hesse, and Alois Bezold. See also the illustrations in Baumgarten and Freydank, *op. cit.*, p.59.

<sup>92</sup> Quoted in Eicher, "Spielplanstrukturen 1929-1944", in *idem, et al., op. cit.*, p.355.

<sup>93</sup> Eicher, "Spielplanstrukturen 1929-1944", in *idem, et al., op. cit.*, p.347.

<sup>94</sup> Kurt Dörnemann, *Schauspiel in Bochum. Bilder und Texte zur Geschichte eines Theaters*, Bochum, 1963, p.17.

<sup>95</sup> Bogusław Drewniak, *Das Theater im NS-Staat. Szenarium deutscher Zeitgeschichte 1933-1945*, Düsseldorf, 1983, p.176.

<sup>96</sup> Sten G. Flygt, *Friedrich Hebbel*, New York, 1968, p.58.

<sup>97</sup> William John Niven, *The Reception of Friedrich Hebbel in the Era of National Socialism*, Stuttgart, 1984, pp.115, 216-217 (with an apparent error of addition in the column listing performances from 1918 to 1933: total given as 3 but numbers in column add up to 19). Thomas Eicher counts 5 productions from February 1933 to August 1944, compared with just one from September 1929 to January 1933. Eicher, "Spielplanstrukturen 1929-1944", in *idem et al., op. cit.*, pp.345,347.

<sup>98</sup> Niven, *The Reception of Friedrich Hebbel*, pp.115, 219.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.115-124.

<sup>100</sup> See Rischbieter, "NS-Theaterpolitik", in Eicher *et al., op. cit.*, pp.111, 253.

<sup>101</sup> Volkmar Frobenius, "Der Diamant", unprovenanced clipping, 21 March 1939, in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>102</sup> Otto Büttner, "Die Hebbel-Komödie 'Der Diamant'", unprovenanced clipping, 22 November 1940, in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>103</sup> F.A. Dargel, "Märchen – leicht grotesk", unprovenanced clipping, 14 February 1942; Heinz Joachim, "Neubesetzung in 'Diamant'", unprovenanced clipping, [March 1942]; F-u, "Zwei Neubesetzungen in der Saarlandstrasse", unprovenanced clipping, 10 March 1942, all in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn. Paul Fechter, "Hebbel – Rehse – Martin. 'Der Diamant'", [*Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*], 13 February 1942, *ibid.*, also found the audience amused and the performance "a merry success". See also Richard Biedrzyński, "Hebbels 'Diamant'", *Völkischer Beobachter*, [ca. 14 February 1942], *ibid.*, and Carl Weichardt, "Der 'Diamant' im Theater in der Saarlandstrasse", unprovenanced clipping, 15 February 1942, *ibid.*, who records some "initial hesitation" before the audience laughter set in.

<sup>104</sup> A point emphasized in Oliver Rathkolb, *Führertreu und Gottbegnadet. Künstlereliten im Dritten Reich*, Vienna, 1991.

<sup>105</sup> Hans Dieter Schäfer, *Das gesplittene Bewußtsein. Deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit 1933-1945* Munich, 1981.

<sup>106</sup> As noted by Fischli, *op. cit.*, in relation to Nazi drama.

<sup>107</sup> Pornographic representations of Jews as sexual predators preying on blonde women can be found in Nazi products from *Mein Kampf* and Artur Dinter's bestselling *Die Sünde wider das Blut zu Der Stürmer*.

<sup>108</sup> Panse, "Antisemitismus und Judenfiguren", p.301; Régine Mihal Friedman, *L'Image et son Juif. Le Juif dans le Cinéma Nazi*, Paris, 1983, pp.35-37.

<sup>109</sup> Dorothea Hollstein, *"Jud Süß" und die Deutschen. Antisemitische Vorurteile im nationalsozialistischen Spielfilm*, Frankfurt/M., Berlin, Vienna, 1983.

<sup>110</sup> Frenzel, *Judengestalten*, p.250.

<sup>111</sup> See Werner Habicht, "Shakespeare in the Third Reich", in Manfred Pfister, ed., *Anglistentag 1984: Passau. Vorträge*, Giessen, 1985; Ruth Frfr. von Ledebur, "Der deutsche Geist und Shakespeare: Anmerkungen zur Shakespeare-

Rezeption 1933-1945", in Rainer Geißler and Wolfgang Popp, eds, *Wissenschaft und Nationalsozialismus*, Essen, 1988.

<sup>112</sup> Habicht, *op. cit.*, p.196.

<sup>113</sup> *SJb.*, 69, 1933, p.5; *SJb.*, 70, 1934, pp.1, 8; *SJb.*, 72, 1936, pp.7-8. For a full list of members as of 1941, see *SJb.*, 77, 1941, pp.239-248. The list still includes such representatives of the *ancien régime* as Prince Heinrich XXXIX of Reuss-Köstritz, and Hermine, German Empress, resident of Haus Doorn, Holland, as well as New Order personalities such as Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, Alfred Rosenberg, and Education Minister Bernhard Rust. For a detailed study of the German Shakespeare Society in the Weimar Republic and the Nazi period, see Ruth Frfr. von Ledebur, *Der Mythos vom deutschen Shakespeare. Die deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft zwischen Politik und Wissenschaft 1918-1945*, Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2002.

<sup>114</sup> *SJb.*, 71, 1945, p.10.

<sup>115</sup> *SJb.*, 72, 1936, p.8; Hans F.K. Günther, "Shakespeares Mädchen und Frauen aus lebenskundlicher Sicht", *SJb.*, 73, 1937, pp.85-108, especially 93, 102-104. For a commentary and further context, see Gerwin Strobl, "The Bard of Eugenics: Shakespeare and Racial Activism in the Third Reich", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34, 1999, pp.323-336.

<sup>116</sup> See Max Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors*, New Haven and London, 1999 (first published 1946), pp.15, 48, 56, 287; Max Wundt, *Die Wurzeln der deutschen Philosophie in Stamm und Rasse*, Berlin, 1944.

<sup>117</sup> Strobl, "The Bard of Eugenics", p.323.

<sup>118</sup> *SJb.*, 70, 1934, pp.1-2.

<sup>119</sup> *SJb.*, 71, 1935, p.5.

<sup>120</sup> Heinz Kindermann, "Shakespeare und das deutsche Volkstheater", *SJb.*, 72, 1936, p.9.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14.

<sup>122</sup> Joseph Wagner, "Was ist uns Shakespeare?", *SJb.*, 74, 1938, pp.13-19, quotations pp.14, 16.

<sup>123</sup> Rainer Schlösser, "Der deutsche Shakespeare", *ibid.*, pp.20-30, quotations pp.23, 24.

<sup>124</sup> See, for example, Kurt Schrey, "Zeitschriftenschau", *SJb.*, 76, 1940, p.221.

<sup>125</sup> Ernst Leopold Stahl, "Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne 1935 und 1936", *SJb.*, 72, 1936, pp.238-239.

<sup>126</sup> Quoted in Jürgen Weisker, "Theaterschau", *SJb.*, 69, 1933, p.209.

<sup>127</sup> Stahl, "Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne 1935 und 1936", p.239, see also pp.247, 249.

<sup>128</sup> Cited in Wolfgang Stroedel, *Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne. Vom Ende des Weltkriegs bis zur Gegenwart*, Weimar, 1938 (= Schriften der deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, Neue Folge, Bd.II), p.20.

<sup>129</sup> F. Euler, "Theater zwischen Anpassung und Widerstand", p.114; *SJb.*, 72, 1936, p.2; Thomas Eicher, "Spielplanstrukturen 1929-1944", in Eicher *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp.315-316. Rothe attempted to vindicate himself in his *Der Kampf um Shakespeare. Ein Bericht*, Leipzig, 1936.

- <sup>130</sup> Werner Papsdorf, "Theaterschau", *SJb.*, 76, 1940, p.344.
- <sup>131</sup> Wolfgang Keller, "Die 76. Hauptversammlung der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft", *SJb.*, 76, 1940, pp.1-4, quotation p.4.
- <sup>132</sup> Hermann Burte, from a 1940 speech to a gathering of poets from Greater Germany, excerpted in Mosse, ed., *Nazi Culture*, pp.141-142.
- <sup>133</sup> Von Ledebur, "Der deutsche Geist", pp.215-216, citing antisemitic passages from a 1940 outline of instruction on literature in German schools.
- <sup>134</sup> Jakob Graf, *Familienkunde und Rassenbiologie für Schüler* (1935), excerpted in Mosse, ed., *Nazi Culture*, p.81.
- <sup>135</sup> Wolfgang Keller, "Bücherschau", *SJb.*, 77, 1941, p.194.
- <sup>136</sup> Kurt Schrey, "Zeitschriftenschau", *SJb.*, 77, 1941, pp.206-207.
- <sup>137</sup> Dietmar Schmidt, "Über die Insel-Kultur", *Die Bühne*, no.4, 28 February 1941, pp.74-75; Helmut Schulz, "Warum spielen wir Shakespeare?", in *ibid.*, no.5, 14 March 1941, pp.102-104; quotation p.102, illustration p.103.
- <sup>138</sup> Eicher, "Spielplanstrukturen 1929-44", pp.298, 299-301. George Bernard Shaw's plays were made subject to the same restrictions.
- <sup>139</sup> Jürgen Weisker, "Theaterschau", *SJb.*, 69, 1933, p.220; Rischbieter, "NS-Theaterpolitik", pp.230, 247.
- <sup>140</sup> *SJb.*, 70, 1934, p.239.
- <sup>141</sup> Stroedel, *Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne*, p.83.
- <sup>142</sup> Spenlen, *Theater in Aachen, Köln, Bonn und Koblenz*, pp.25-27.
- <sup>143</sup> *Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen Hannover*, 1933/34, Heft 7, 9.
- <sup>144</sup> Stroedel, *Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne*, p.83. There is an illustration showing an idyllic Belmont scene in Stroedel, illustrations p.48.
- <sup>145</sup> *SJb.*, 70, 1934, p.239.
- <sup>146</sup> *SJb.*, 71, 1935, pp.170, 230.
- <sup>147</sup> "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Leipziger Tageszeitung*, 7 March 1934, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.
- <sup>148</sup> John Gross, *Shylock. Four Hundred Years in the Life of a Legend*, London, 1994, p.294. Gross also states here that *Othello* was "eventually suppressed on racial grounds", however, from 1936 to 1940 it was among the ten most frequently played Shakespeare plays on German-language stages, produced more often than *The Merchant of Venice*. Drewniak, *Theater im NS-Staat*, p.253.
- <sup>149</sup> Ernst Leopold Stahl, in *Jahrbuch der deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, 1936, p.239. The statistics gathered by the Shakespeare Yearbook continued to include performances on German-language stages outside the Reich, so the figures for 1933 included 10 performances in Zurich and one each in Karlsbad and the Vienna Volksoper (out of 86 altogether). *SJb.*, 70, 1934, pp.238-240.
- <sup>150</sup> Drewniak, *Theater im NS-Staat*, p.253; rubric "Theaterschau" in *SJb.*, 1937-41.
- <sup>151</sup> Panse, "Spielplanstrukturen 1929-1944", p.302.
- <sup>152</sup> See Walter Thomas (*Kulturreferent* for Gauleiter Baldur von Schirach) to Rainer Schlösser, 22 September 1942, relaying a query to this effect from



Bruno Iltz, Intendant of the Deutsches Volks-Theater, Vienna. BA B, R55, 20288, Bl.244.

<sup>153</sup> Wilhelm Hortmann with Maik Hamburger, *Shakespeare on the German Stage. The Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, 1998, pp.134-135.

<sup>154</sup> Stroedel, *Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne*, p.82.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27; Jutta Wardetzky, *Theaterpolitik im faschistischen Deutschland. Studien und Dokumente*, Berlin, 1983, p.83.

<sup>156</sup> Eicher, "Spielplanstrukturen 1929-1944", in *idem, et al., op. cit.*, p.304.

<sup>157</sup> Complete text of all changes by the Reich Dramaturg reproduced in *ibid.*, pp.304-308.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p.308. See Rainer Schlösser's memo to Herbert Frenzel, 11 July 1940, reporting a discussion with Paul Rose about Rose's wish to stage *The Merchant*. BA B, R55/20288, Bl.192.

<sup>159</sup> Ron Engle, "Theatre in Detmold 1933-1939: A Case Study of Provincial Theatre During the Nazi Prewar Era", in Glen W. Gadberry, *Theatre in the Third Reich. The Prewar Years*, Westport, Conn., London, 1995, p.37, cf. also p.44n17.

<sup>160</sup> Otto Gilbert, "Lippisches Landestheater", *Lippische Landes-Zeitung*, 17 October 1933, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>161</sup> *SJb.*, 71, 1935, pp.228-231. 5 of the 69 were actually in Brünn (Brno), Czechoslovakia.

<sup>162</sup> Henning Rischbieter, "NS-Theaterpolitik", in Eicher, *et al.*, pp.181-182.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p.132; *SJb.*, 71, 1935, p.229.

<sup>164</sup> *SJb.*, 71, 1935, p.228; Paul Wagenknecht, "Schauspielhaus", *Chemnitzer Neueste Nachrichten*, 23 January 1934, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.228-230.

<sup>166</sup> *SJb.*, 72, 1935, pp.234-238.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, p.234; Stahl, "Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne 1935 und 1936", p.239.

<sup>168</sup> *SJb.*, 72, 1936, pp.235-236. Spenlen, *Theater in Aachen, Köln, Bonn und Koblenz*, p.66, claims 9 performances for Koblenz.

<sup>169</sup> An illustration in Bremen's theatre's programme guide shows actor Herbert Sebald as a heavily made-up caricature of the stage Jew, with what appears to be a fake hooked nose, and the typical unkempt forked beard. *Der Roland von Bremen. Dramaturgische Blätter*, 1936/37, no.5

<sup>170</sup> *Berliner Tageblatt*, no.307, Morgen-Ausgabe, 1 July 1936.

<sup>171</sup> *SJb.*, 73, 1937, pp.224-227; (on Königsberg) Stahl, "Shakespeare auf der deutschen Bühne 1935 und 1936", p.239. J. Wulf, *Theater und Film im Dritten Reich. Eine Dokumentation*, Frankfurt/M., Berlin, Vienna, 1983, pp.280f.

<sup>172</sup> *SJb.*, 74, 1938, pp.251-254.

<sup>173</sup> Gerd Schulte, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Hannoverscher Kurier*, no.403, 12 October 1937, Feuilleton-Beilage.

<sup>174</sup> *Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen Hannover*, 1937/38, nos. 2, 3.

- <sup>175</sup> *SJb.*, 75, 1939, pp.193-197; *Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen Hannover*, 1937/38, no.10.
- <sup>176</sup> Drewniak, *Das Theater im NS-Staat*, p.251.
- <sup>177</sup> Werner Papsdorf, "Theaterschau", *SJb.*, 76, 1940, p.247.
- <sup>178</sup> Rischbieter, "NS-Theaterpolitik", in Eicher *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p.151.
- <sup>179</sup> *SJb.*, 75, 1939, p.198; 76, 1940, p.259.
- <sup>180</sup> *SJb.*, 76, 1940, pp.254-259.
- <sup>181</sup> Rischbieter, "NS-Theaterpolitik", in Eicher *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp.121-122, 159, 248; *Blätter der Städtischen Bühnen Erfurt*, 1938/39 (and *Werbeheft* 1938/39).
- <sup>182</sup> Franz Förster, "'Der Kaufmann von Venedig'. Neuinszenierung der Städtischen Bühnen Erfurt", in *Thüringer Allgemeine Zeitung* (Erfurt), no.93, 20 April 1939. The production was directed by Heinz Sailer, who stepped in to play the role of Shylock himself in (at least) one of the later performances. *Ibid.*, no.110, 10 May 1939 (advertisements).
- <sup>183</sup> Theatre programmes in the entertainment advertisements of subsequent issues of *Thüringer Allgemeine Zeitung*.
- <sup>184</sup> *SJb.*, 77, 1941, p.237.
- <sup>185</sup> *SJb.*, 77, 1941, pp.234-237. Werner Papsdorf ("Theaterschau", *SJb.*, 76, 1940, p.247) also refers to a production in Reichenberg (Sudetenland) in January 1940, but this may have referred to one of the above-listed Sudeten productions.
- <sup>186</sup> Spenlen, *Theater in Aachen, Köln, Bonn und Koblenz*, p.157; see also Rischbieter, "NS-Theaterpolitik", pp.101-102.
- <sup>187</sup> Franz Achilles, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Aachener Anzeiger. Politisches Tageblatt*, no.118, 21 May 1940, Ausgabe A.
- <sup>188</sup> Cited in Spenlen, *op. cit.*, p.157.
- <sup>189</sup> Werner Papsdorf, with Ernst Leopold Stahl and Carl Niessen, "Theaterschau", *SJb.*, 78-79, 1943, p.133.
- <sup>190</sup> Drewniak, *Theater im NS-Staat*, p.251.
- <sup>191</sup> Rischbieter, "NS-Theaterpolitik", in Eicher *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp.130, 138; Eicher, "Spielplanstrukturen 1929-1944", *ibid.*, p.360.
- <sup>192</sup> Karl Eugen Tretz, "Der Jude von Malta", *Thüringer Allgemeine Zeitung* (Erfurt), no.72, 25 March 1939. Hans Daibler describes the Weimar Nationaltheater's conduct during the Nazi period as particularly co-operative towards the regime, conduct for which it was rewarded by generous additional funding. Hans Daibler, *Schaufenster der Diktatur. Theater im Machtbereich Hitlers*, Stuttgart, 1995, p.229.
- <sup>193</sup> Helmut Heiber, ed., *Goebbels-Reden 1932-1945*, Bindlach, 1991, vol.2, p.178.
- <sup>194</sup> Dr Hans Georg Bonte, "Der Jude von Malta", unprovenanced clipping, 26 March 1939, in *Kritikensammlung*, Schloss Wahn.
- <sup>195</sup> Wolf Margendorff, "'Der Jude von Malta' und das Judenproblem auf der englischen Bühne", *Programmheft des Deutschen Nationaltheaters Weimar*, Spielzeit 1938/39, Jahrgang 5, Heft 27.
- <sup>196</sup> Bonte, "Der Jude von Malta".

<sup>197</sup> Otto C.A. zur Nedden, *Drama und Dramaturgie im 20. Jahrhundert*, Würzburg, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, 1944, p.77. This passage does not occur in the 1<sup>st</sup> edn of 1940, but first appears in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edn of 1943. In 1945 zur Nedden was secretary of the German Shakespeare Society, and in the 1960s he was a Professor for Theatre History in Cologne.

<sup>198</sup> Werner Deetjen, "Die 75. Hauptversammlung der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft", *SJb.*, 75, 1939, p.xv.

<sup>199</sup> Wolfgang Keller, "Bücherschau", *SJb.*, 77, 1941, pp.204-205; Bonte (*op. cit.*) also praised zur Nedden's invention of the synagogue scene for "masterly expression of the the fanatical intensity of Oriental religious paroxysm". For excerpts from zur Nedden's text, including the synagogue scene, see *Programmheft des Nationaltheaters Weimar*, Jg.5, 1938/39, no.16/17 (Sonderdruck).

<sup>200</sup> Tretz, "Der Jude von Malta".

<sup>201</sup> Bonte, "Der Jude von Malta".

<sup>202</sup> Wilhelm K. Geyger, cited in August, *Die Stellung der Schauspieler*, pp.212-213.

<sup>203</sup> Petzet, *Theater: Die Münchner Kammerspiele*, p.272. For whatever reason, the Münchener Kammerspiele did not stage *The Merchant of Venice* during the directorship of Otto Falckenberg (from 1917 to 1944), despite producing several other works by Shakespeare in that period. (See Stahl, *op. cit.*, pp.648-649).

<sup>204</sup> Evelyn Schreiner, *Nationalsozialistische Kulturpolitik in Wien 1938-1945 unter spezieller Berücksichtigung der Wiener Theaterszene* (diss., Vienna), 1980, p.171.

<sup>205</sup> Wilhelm Grundschoßtel, "Shylock im Fasching – Paul Rose inszenierte den 'Kaufmann von Venedig'", *Völkischer Beobachter*, 2 September 1942, also excerpted in Wulf, *op. cit.*, p.282.

<sup>206</sup> Papsdorf, Stahl and Niessen, "Theaterschau", *SJb.*, 78-79, 1943, p.133

<sup>207</sup> Reproduced in Michael Baumgarten and Ruth Freydank, *Das Rose-Theater. Ein Volkstheater im Berliner Osten 1906-1944*, Berlin, 1999, p.60.

<sup>208</sup> Grundschoßtel, "Shylock im Fasching".

<sup>209</sup> *Rose-Fibel* 1942 (promotional pamphlet for the Rose-Theater).

<sup>210</sup> Graphic collection, Schloss Wahn, no.18151/ inv.15216.

<sup>211</sup> Baumgarten and Freydank, *op. cit.*, pp.58, 64.

<sup>212</sup> Record of interview with Paul and Traute Rose, 21 January 1946, BA Berlin, BDC Personal File Paul Rose, RKK 2703, Box 294, File 44; Baumgarten and Freydank, *op. cit.*, p.148.

<sup>213</sup> Paul Rose, *Berlins große Theaterzeit*, Berlin, 1969.

<sup>214</sup> Statement of Hedwig Siegert, Berlin-Nikolassee, 1 February 1946, in BA Berlin, BDC Personal File Paul Rose, RKK 2703, Box 294, File 44. Siegert's father and her siblings were deported to an extermination camp. Presumably her "mixed marriage" helped her to survive. See also letter from Georg Siegert to Paul Rose, Berlin-Nikolassee, 1 February 1946, in *ibid.*. On "mixed marriages" between Jews and non-Jews in the Third Reich, see Nathan Stolfus, "The Limits of Policy: Social Protection of Intermarried Jews in Nazi Germany" in Robert Gellately and Stolfus, eds, *Social Outsiders in Nazi*

Germany, Princeton and Oxford, 2001 and the same author's *Resistance of the Heart. Inter marriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany*, New Brunswick, 2001.

<sup>215</sup> Statements by Herr Steinborn, Berlin, 1 February 1946; Frieda Hütter, Berlin, 4 February 1946; and Helga Spieler [who played Lancelot Gobbo in the 1942 *Merchant* production], Berlin, 1 February 1946; Charlotte Arnold, Berlin, 4 February 1946 in *ibid.*. According to Baumgarten and Freydank, Michaelis reportedly committed suicide, *op. cit.*, pp.57, 66n37, although Spieler and Arnold refer to Michaelis having been taken away by the Gestapo, and Rose's own supplementary statement of March 1946 (also in *ibid.*) refers to Michaelis being deported to Poland in March 1943.

<sup>216</sup> Rischbieter in Eicher *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p.152 (notwithstanding his family background, Schoenfeld was a right-wing nationalist and former member of the Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur), *ibid.*, p.153.

<sup>217</sup> Photocopy of letter from Heinrich Kunz-Krause to Paul Rose, n.d. [December 1943], in BA Berlin, BDC Personal File Paul Rose, RKK 2703, Box 294, File 44. On the situation of Jews in the Rose-Theater, see also Baumgarten and Freydank, *op. cit.*, pp.55-58.

<sup>218</sup> See memo of Rechtsabteilung (discussion with Dr [Kurt?] Raeck); statement of Raeck, 13 February 1946; memo of publisher's reader, Eisentaler[?]; memo of W. Schmidt, Berlin, 4 November 1947, BA Berlin, BDC Personal File Paul Rose, RKK 2703, Box 294, File 44. BA B, R55/20288, containing correspondence between the Rose-Theater and the Reich Dramaturg, includes much evidence of a cordial relationship (see especially Bl.257).

<sup>219</sup> Statement of Dr Raeck, 13 February 1946, in BA Berlin, BDC Personal File Paul Rose, RKK 2703, Box 294, File 44.

<sup>220</sup> Koch had been with the Berlin royal court theatre for a season before the First World War and was subsequently a leading member of the German Theatre in occupied Belgium during the First World War. Hans-Günther Reichel, *Das königliche Schauspielhaus unter Georg Graf von Hülsen-Haeseler (1903-1918). Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der zeitgenössischen Tagespresse* (diss., Freie Universität Berlin), 1962, p.120; Hermann Pörzgen, *Das deutsche Fronttheater 1914-20*, Frankfurt, 1935 (=diss., Cologne), p.72. For a summary of Koch's career as an actor, see Heinz-Dieter Heinrichs, *Das Rose-Theater. Ein volkstümliches Familientheater in Berlin von 1906 bis 1944*, Berlin, 1965, pp.101-102.

<sup>221</sup> BA Berlin, BDC, Personal File Georg August Koch, RKK2703, Box 123, File 28.

<sup>222</sup> Record of interview with Paul and Traute Rose, 21 January 1946.

<sup>223</sup> Letter from Koch to Hinkel, 21 July 1933, BA Berlin, BDC, Personal File Georg August Koch, RKK2600, Box 108, File 24.

<sup>224</sup> BA B, R55/ 20150, especially Bl.59-60.

<sup>225</sup> Letter from Koch, Berlin, 14 November 1946, in BA Berlin, BDC, Personal File Georg August Koch, RKK2703, Box 123, File 28.

<sup>226</sup> Letter from Koch to Herr Alberti, Reichsfilmkammer, 20 November 1944, BA Berlin, BDC, Personal File Georg August Koch, RKK2600, Box 108, File 24.

<sup>227</sup> Annotation by K[eppler], dated 5 March [1940] on letter from Koch to Schlösser, Prague, 2 March 1940, BA B, R55/ 20150, Bl.79.

<sup>228</sup> G.A.Koch to Goebbels, Berlin, 9 April 1941, BA B, R55/ 20150, Bl.104-106. This was not the first time Koch wrote to Goebbels. In 1934, he had sent Goebbels the manuscript of his unpublished play on Bismarck. BA B, R55/20169, Bl.96-97.

<sup>229</sup> Georg August Koch, "Von der Sendung des deutschen Schauspielers", in *Deutsche Dramaturgie*, February 1942, excerpted in Wulf, *op. cit.*, pp.258-259.

<sup>230</sup> Record of interview with Paul and Traute Rose, 21 January 1946.

<sup>231</sup> Erwin Leiser, *'Deutschland erwache!' Propaganda im Film des Dritten Reiches*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1978, p.80.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, p.142.

<sup>233</sup> Gross, *op. cit.*, p.296; Wulf, *op. cit.*, p.7.

<sup>234</sup> Bogustaw Drewniak, *Das Theater im NS-Staat*, Düsseldorf, 1983, p.251.

<sup>235</sup> Cited in William R. Elwood, "Werner Krauß in the Third Reich", in Gadberry, *op. cit.*, p.96 (ellipsis in Elwood).

<sup>236</sup> Richard Biedrzyński, *Schauspieler, Regisseure, Intendanten*, Heidelberg, Berlin, Leipzig, 1944, p.35; also cited in Wulf, *op. cit.*, p.7, 282.

<sup>237</sup> Biedrzyński, *op. cit.*, p.35.

<sup>238</sup> Karl Lahm, "Shylok [sic] der Ostjude", *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 May 1943, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn; also excerpted in Wulf, *op. cit.*, pp.282-283. Lahm begins by echoing Lothar Mützel's own commentary (citing the break with tradition since Novelli) in Mützel, "Zur Dramaturgie des 'Kaufmanns von Venedig'", *Neues Wiener Tageblatt*, 13 May 1943, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>239</sup> Siegfried Melchinger, "Der Kaufmann von Venedig", *Neues Wiener Tageblatt*, 17 May 1943, clipping in Kritikensammlung, Schloss Wahn.

<sup>240</sup> According to *Burgtheater 1776-1976. Aufführungen und Besetzungen von zweihundert Jahren* (ed. Österreichischer Bundestheaterverband), Vienna, n.d. [1976], Vol.1, p.623. Drewniak, *op. cit.*, p.251, refers to 32 performances, some of them closed,

<sup>241</sup> Gross, *op. cit.*, p.296; Wulf, *op. cit.*, p.7.

<sup>242</sup> Henriette von Schirach, *The Price of Glory* (tr. Willi Frischauer), London, 1960, p.173. On von Schirach's cultural policy in Vienna, see Oliver Rathkolb, *Führertreu und Gottbegnadet. Künstlereliten im Dritten Reich*, Vienna, 1991, pp.68-78; Schreiner, *op. cit.*

<sup>243</sup> Hans-Christian Brandenburg, *Die Geschichte der HJ. Wege und Irrwege einer Generation*, Cologne, 1968, pp.59-60.

<sup>244</sup> Stahl, *Shakespeare und das Deutsche Theater*, p.712; August, *Die Stellung der Schauspieler*, pp.215-216; BA B, BDC files, RKK 2600, Box 144, File 5 [Lothar Mützel]. On Mützel's tenure at the Burgtheater, see Rathkolb, *op. cit.*, pp.157-162.

<sup>245</sup> August, *Die Stellung der Schauspieler*, pp.70, 139, 141, 146, 150.

<sup>246</sup> Berthold Viertel, *Schriften zum Theater* (ed. Gert Heidenreich), Munich, 1970, p.348.

<sup>247</sup> See denazification files on Werner Krauss in BDC files, BA B.

<sup>248</sup> Stahl, *Shakespeare und das deutsche Theater*, p.726. On the Minsk German theatre, inaugurated with a performance of a play, *Totila*, by the Gauleiter and governor of "White Ruthenia", Wilhelm Kube, see Drewniak, *op. cit.*, p.138.

<sup>249</sup> Inge Stolten, *Das alltägliche Exil. Leben zwischen Hakenkreuz und Währungsreform*, Berlin/ Bonn, 1982, pp.77-81 (Jewish workers in the theatre), 85-86 (text of notes); Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde. Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941 bis 1944*, Hamburg, 2000, p.738n1267, who also cites other sources, including a review in the *Minsker Zeitung*. The production appears to have premiered in September 1943, not in December as suggested by Stahl.

<sup>250</sup> Stolten, *op. cit.*, pp.85, 86-89, 93, 100-101. In September 1943, Gauleiter and Reichskommissar Kube was also assassinated in Minsk by a woman partisan who planted a bomb in his room.

<sup>251</sup> Drewniak, *op. cit.*, pp.351-354.

<sup>252</sup> I am indebted to Sam Koehne, PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne, for the information on this production. Sam Koehne, "The Idea of Germany: The (re)Creation of German Identity during Internment in Australia", paper presented to the Australasian Association for European History, XVth Biennial Conference, University of Melbourne, 11-15 July 2005.

<sup>253</sup> Claude Singer, *Le Juif Süß et la Propagande Nazie. L'Histoire Confisquée*, Paris, 2003, p.189; see also the details on the film's box office success in Dorothea Hollstein, "*Jud Süß*" und die Deutschen, Frankfurt/M., Berlin, Vienna, 1983, pp.226-229. In addition to these works, for further work on *Jud Süß* see Régine Mihal Friedman, *L'Image et son Juif*, Paris, 1983; Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion*, Cambridge MA/ London, 1996, Ch.6.

<sup>254</sup> Florian Krobb, *Die schöne Jüdin. Jüdische Frauengestalten in der deutschsprachigen Erzählliteratur vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, Tübingen, 1993, pp.125-127; Singer, *op. cit.*, pp.36-37.

<sup>255</sup> See statement of camera operator Bruno Mondì, 6 January 1948, in BA B, BDC, file on Werner Krauss, RKK2705, Box 3, File 24 (no pagination); see also Friedrich Knilli, *Ich war Jud Süß*, Berlin, 2000.

<sup>256</sup> BA B, R55/949, Bl.70, 140, 141.

<sup>257</sup> BA B, R55/949, Bl.225-233, 240-243.

<sup>258</sup> Frowein to Propaganda Minister Goebbels, Berlin, 12 October 1944, BDC, Personal file Veit Harlan, RKK 2600, Box 77, File 3. As Dorothea Hollstein points out, *op. cit.*, p.176, the wording of this memo contradicts Harlan's postwar claims that he was forced by Goebbels to take on (another) antisemitic production. Cf. Harlan's statement for the denazification authorities, "Wie ich zum Nazionalsozialismus [sic] stand", in BDC, Personal file Veit Harlan, RKK 2703, Box 82, File 35. Here Harlan claims (p.12, *recte*

13) that this was an example of the rule that he was only permitted to make films which “served the psychological warfare interests of the Third Reich”. See also his autobiography, *Im Schatten meiner Filme* (ed. H. C. Opfermann), Gütersloh, 1966 (on the film *Merchant of Venice*, pp.199-205).

<sup>259</sup> Frowein to Goebbels, 12 October 1944.

<sup>260</sup> *Der deutsche Film 1945. Kleines Film-Handbuch für die deutsche Presse*, Berlin, n.d., p.15, quoted in Hollstein, *op. cit.*, p.176.

<sup>261</sup> Harlan’s postwar attempt at self-justification stretches credulity when he claims that the purpose of this prelude was to “escape from the intended [anti-Semitic] tendentiousness” of the play, by allowing him to use the straight Shakespeare text in the body of the film. Harlan, “Wie ich zum Nazionalsozialismus stand”, p.13 (*recte* 14).

<sup>262</sup> Frowein to Goebbels, via the Reichsfilmintendant, 30 October 1944, in BA B, BDC, file on Werner Krauss, RKK2600, Box 246, File 2.

<sup>263</sup> Harlan’s account in “Wie ich zum Nazionalsozialismus stand”; cf. Hinkel to Goebbels, 6 December 1944, BA R55/664, Bl.8-9.

<sup>264</sup> Frowein to Goebbels, through the Reichsfilmintendant, n.d., BDC, Personal file Veit Harlan, RKK 2600, Box 77, File 3.

<sup>265</sup> List of films in preparation, BA R55/664, Bl.276.

<sup>266</sup> Felix Moeller, *Der Filmminister. Goebbels und der Film im Dritten Reich*, Berlin, 1998, pp.311-312.

### Conclusions

<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Benz, “The Legend of German-Jewish Symbiosis”, *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* XXXVII, 1992, pp.95-102 (originally published in German in *Merkur* 45, 2, 1991, pp.1991).

<sup>2</sup> On this question, see James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, New York, 1996; Martin D. Yaffe, *Shylock and the Jewish Question*, Baltimore and London, 1997.

# TABLE

## Performances of *The Merchant of Venice* on German stages, 1864-1943<sup>1</sup>

Year	Number of performances (in brackets, number of theatre companies)	Ranking among Shakespeare performances
1864	20 (10)	
1865	12 (6)	
1866	11 (7)	
1867	13 (9)	
1868	20 (10)	
1869	16 (9)	
1870	13 (9)	
1871	16 (10)	3 <sup>2</sup>
1872 (first half only) <sup>3</sup>	22 (12)	3
1872/73	32 (12)	4
1873/74	39 <sup>4</sup> (19)	2
1874/75	55 (24)	1

<sup>1</sup> Includes German-language theatres in Austria and Switzerland (and occasionally elsewhere) in so far as they are listed in the annual performance statistics in the *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*.

<sup>2</sup> Ranking for period from 1 July 1870 to 30 June 1872 taken as a whole, according to *SJb.*, 8, 1873, p.343.

<sup>3</sup> 1 January-June 30, 1872 only. Statistics from 1872/73 to 1878/79 refer to theatre seasons rather than calendar years.

<sup>4</sup> Including four performances at the Vienna Hofburg theatre, not included in this year's statistic for the *SJb.* See *SJb.*, 11, 1876, p.305.



Year	Number of performances (in brackets, number of theatre companies)	Ranking among Shakespeare performances
1875/76	47 (23)	1
1876/77	38 (21)	2
1877/78	37 (23)	4
1878/79	28 (11)	6
1879/end of 80 <sup>5</sup>	104 (59)	3
1881	85 (48)	3
1882	59 (46)	4
1883	68 (41)	4
1884	58 (40)	5
1885	70 (43)	4
1886	80 (43)	3
1887	87 <sup>6</sup> (44)	3
1888	99 <sup>7</sup> (51)	2
1889	89 <sup>8</sup> (40)	5
1890	54 <sup>9</sup> (30)	6
1891	77 (45)	1
1892	79 (46) <sup>10</sup>	4
1893	86 (54)	4
1894	67 (41)	5
1895	89 (50)	4
1896	84 (50)	5
1897	62 (43)	7
1898	71 (49)	5
1899	99 (56)	3

<sup>5</sup> 1 July 1879 to 31 December 1880. The number of theatre companies included in the *SJb*'s statistics increased from 28 in the 1878/79 season to 133 in the following eighteen-month period. 59 of these played *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>6</sup> Includes 20 performances by the Meiningen Court Theatre, touring in 6 places. *SJb*, 23, 1888, p.353.

<sup>7</sup> Includes 29 performances by the Meiningen Court Theatre, touring in 8 places. *SJb*, 24, 1889, p.211.

<sup>8</sup> Includes 18 performances by the Meiningen Court Theatre, touring in 6 places. *SJb*, 25, 1890, p.316.

<sup>9</sup> Includes 11 performances by the Meiningen Court Theatre, touring in 4 places. *SJb*, 26, 1891, p.353.

<sup>10</sup> Figures printed in *SJb*, 28, 1893, p.359 for numbers of performances and companies are incorrect and have been recalculated from the report in *ibid.*, pp.353-359.

Year	Number of performances (in brackets, number of theatre companies)	Ranking among Shakespeare performances
1900	75 (42)	5
1901	115 (66)	2
1902	91 (48)	3
1903	111 (59)	3
1904	108 (50)	3
1905	151 <sup>11</sup> (57)	2
1906	319 <sup>12</sup> (73)	1
1907	127 (55)	2
1908	161 (67)	2
1909	159 (65)	3
1910	116 (54)	4
1911	150 (56)	2
1912	141 (57)	2
1913	132 (61)	2
1914	127 (45)	2
1915	98 (23)	1
1916	92 (40)	6
1917	74 (31)	7
1918	117 (30)	3
1919	109 (30)	5
1920	202 (45)	1
1921	259 (45)	2
1922	223 (41)	2
1923	247 (37)	2
1924	212 (34)	3
1925	185 (26)	5
1926	86 (16)	9
1927	195 (26)	1
1928	153 (25)	3
1929	134 (19)	3
1930	130 (24)	5
1931	138 (21)	3
1932	125 (16)	4
1933	86 (20)	5

<sup>11</sup> Includes 38 performances by Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater, Berlin.

<sup>12</sup> Includes 138 performances by Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater, Berlin.

Year	Number of performances (in brackets, number of theatre companies)	Ranking among Shakespeare performances
1934	69 (12)	8
1935	39 (8)	12
1936	41 (5)	12
1937	45 (3)	11
1938	22 (4)	16
1939	23 (3)	16
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NS15: Der Beauftragte des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Schulung und Erziehung der NSDAP [=Amt Rosenberg]:

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R56: Reichskulturkammer und ihre Einzelkammern:

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# INDEX

There is no entry for *The Merchant of Venice*, as it occurs throughout the book. Only references to other plays are listed under Shakespeare, William. Otherwise, plays and other literary works are listed under their authors, and theatres are listed under their location: city or town.

- Aachen 80, 129
  - Grenzlandtheater 114
  - Stadttheater 127, 128-129, 152, 210n51
- Aachener Anzeiger* 152
- Aalen 97
- Achern 149
- Adorno, Theodor W. 137
- Adventures of the Good Soldier Švejk*, *The* (adaptation by Max Brod and Hans Reimann) 105
- Ahlwardt, Hermann 8
- Aldridge, Ira 41, 187n203
- Allenstein 96
- Allgemeine Theaterchronik* 15
- Allgemeines Theater-Lexikon* 10
- Alten, Ferdinand von 84
- Altman, Georg 117
- Amsterdam 16
- Angriff, Der* 110, 131, 197n44
- Annaberg (Erzgebirge) 96
- Anselm, Ruth 122
- Anzengruber, Ludwig 29
- Aretno, Pietro 84
- Asch, Schalom 52
  - Der Gott der Rache* 52
- Aschaffenburg 149
- Aschheim, Steven 103, 202n127
- Augsburg 94
- Auschwitz 169
- Bab, Julius 41, 42, 53, 54, 66, 77, 99
- Bach, Johann Sebastian 163-164
- Badische Bühne 149
- Baratoff, Paul 103, 107, 108
- Barmen 22
- Barnay, Ludwig 10, 24, 25, 183n107, 187n209
- Barnay, Paul 148
- Barnowsky, Viktor 62
- Bartels, Adolf 102, 139
- Bassermann, Albert 1, 52-56, 55, 80, 95, 98, 123, 190n262
- Bassermann, Else 123
- Bassermann, Ernst 54
- Bauhaus 76, 105, 117, 210n57
- Bayerische Landesbühne 99, 100, 117
- Beauftragte des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und

- weltanschaulichen Schulung  
und Erziehung der NSDAP,  
der (Amt Rosenberg) 128, 134,  
136
- Bebel, August 44, 103
- Becker, Willy 94
- Beer-Hoffmann, Richard  
*Der Graf von Charolais* 59
- Beller, Steven 183n119
- Benassi, Memo 125
- Benz, Wolfgang 126, 173
- Berger, Alfred von 39, 46
- Bergner, Elisabeth 78, 80, 81, 82,  
99, 197n45
- Berlin 1, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18,  
19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 29, 31, 37,  
41, 47, 50, 52, 58, 59, 62, 63,  
67, 70, 71-72, 75, 78, 80, 82,  
84, 97, 98, 100, 103, 104, 105,  
106, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112,  
113, 114, 116, 117, 118, 121,  
123, 124, 125, 130, 133, 135,  
144, 156, 157, 158, 173,  
178n38, 179n47, 182n93,  
184n125, 202n133
- Belle-Alliance Theater 46
- Berliner Theater 24, 115, 121,  
187n209
- Deutsches Theater 24, 41, 46,  
47, 52, 59, 63, 68, 71, 72, 75,  
77, 93, 124, 130
- Freie Volksbühne 44-46, 48,  
52, 188n221
- Friedrich-Wilhelmstädtisches  
Theater 20
- Grosses Schauspielhaus 52, 72-  
73, 75, 93, 133
- Kammerspiele 54
- Kleines Theater 62
- Königliches Schauspielhaus 11,  
12-13, 15, 16, 18, 21-22, 24, 64,  
69, 178n46, 180n63, 187n209
- Königstädtische Theater 7
- Lessing-Theater 62, 159
- Lustspielhaus 76
- Mozartsaal (cinema) 83
- Nationaltheater 7, 13, 24
- Rose-Theater 97, 129-130,  
133-134, 144, 147, 153, 156-  
161, 211n66
- Schiller-Theater 82, 112, 114
- Staatstheater 69, 75, 78, 82, 98,  
99, 100, 104, 112, 127, 132-  
133, 209n47
- Theater am Nollendorfpplatz  
102-103, 109
- Theater am Schiffbauerdamm  
110, 111
- Theater der Nation 133
- Theater des Westens 46
- Theater in der Königgrätzer  
Strasse 109
- Theater in der Saarlandstrasse  
135
- Tonhalle 7
- Volksbühne (am Bülowplatz)  
67, 98, 111, 112, 131, 147,  
201n107
- Berliner Börsen-Courier* 48, 49
- Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* 76, 98
- Berliner Illustrierte* 133
- Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* 81, 108-109,  
110, 111
- Berliner Tageblatt* 49, 53, 107, 149,  
203n146
- Berliner Volks-Zeitung* 20
- Berne 31
- Stadttheater 10
- Bernstein, Aron 20
- Bernstein, Eduard 44
- Biedrzyński, Richard 116, 162
- Bielolahwek, Hermann 30
- Bildt, Paul 76
- Bismarck, Otto von 6, 181n78
- Bleichröder, Gerson 181n78
- Bochum 94, 117
- Schauspielhaus 94, 114, 115,  
130, 134, 139
- Bochumer Anzeiger* 115
- Böckel, Otto 8
- Bodenstedt, Friedrich 31
- Bognar, Friederike von 60
- Bonn
- Stadttheater 142
- Bonn, Ferdinand 52

- Bouwmeester, Louis 95  
 Brahm, Otto 20, 41, 47  
 Brandes, Georg 25, 48  
 Brandt, Martin 124  
 Braunsberg 150  
 Braunschweig 40  
 Brecht, Bertolt 102, 206n202  
     *Im Dickicht der Städte* 78  
 Bremen  
     Stadttheater 121  
     Staatstheater 148-149, 216n169  
 Bremerhaven 149  
 Breslau 111, 148, 150, 152  
     Lobe-Theater 95, 96, 148,  
     211n61  
 Brooks, Louise 77  
 Brock, Max 101  
 Brühl, Karl Graf von 12  
 Brüning, Heinrich 112  
 Brück 152  
 Bucharest 52  
 Budapest 52  
*Bühne, Die* 129, 141  
 Büller, William 132  
 Bürkner, Robert 150  
 Burte, Hermann 141  
*B.Z. am Mittag* 103  
  
*Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, The* 72  
 Central-Verein deutscher  
     Staatsbürger jüdischen  
     Glaubens 106  
*Central-Verein (CV) Zeitung* 106,  
     111, 122  
 Chamberlain, Houston Stewart  
     139  
 Chemnitz 135  
     Schauspielhaus 148  
 Christian Social Party (Austria) 30  
 Christian Social Party (Germany)  
     8  
 Chronegk, Ludwig 20  
 Coburg 148  
 Cologne 44, 52, 96, 191n272  
     Schauspielhaus 116  
 Condell, Heinz 122  
 Copenhagen 52  
 Costenoble, Carl Ludwig 26  
 Craig, Gordon 47  
 Cserépy, Arzen von 137  
 Cumberland, Richard  
     *The Jew* 12, 15  
 Cuxhaven 149  
  
 Danzig 140, 169  
 Darmstadt 148  
     Hessian State Theatre 120  
 Dawison, Bogumil 16-17, 18, 27,  
     38, 41, 180n66, 187n203,  
     187n209  
 Dawson, William Harbutt 7  
 Decarli, Bruno 62  
 Deetjen, Werner 138-139, 155,  
     209n38  
 Delmenhorst 149  
 Dessau 117, 135, 148  
 Dessoir, Ludwig 17, 180n66,  
     182n93  
 Detmold 147-148  
 Detroit 123  
 Deutsch, Ernst 54, 110, 123, 160  
*Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 109  
*Deutsche Dramaturgie* 160  
 Deutsche Shakespeare-  
     Gesellschaft 5-6, 64-65, 70,  
     101, 102, 138-139, 140, 155,  
     209n38, 214n113, 218n197  
*Deutsches Volksblatt* 30  
*Deutsche Zeitung* 49, 105-106  
 Devrient, Eduard 10, 16-17, 37  
 Devrient, Emil 27  
 Devrient, Ludwig 10, 13-14, 14,  
     26, 38  
 Dicker, Frieda 76  
 Diebold, Bernhard 107-108  
 Dietrichstein, Moritz Graf 60  
 Döblin, Alfred 76, 77, 93  
     *Berlin Alexanderplatz* 77  
 Dohm, Hedwig 60, 192n298  
 Domin, Friedrich 129, 211n64  
 Döring, Theodor 15-16, 26, 37,  
     38, 41, 56, 180n61, n63,  
     182n93  
 Dresden 16, 18, 38, 63, 72  
     Hoftheater 27, 38  
     Schauspielhaus 97, 114

- Drewniak, Boguslaw 3, 150, 153  
 Dreyfus, Captain Alfred 30  
 Dumont, Louise 39-40, 69, 70, 120  
 Durieux, Tilla 60-61, 123  
 Düsseldorf 39-40, 69  
     Schauspielhaus 39-40, 69-70, 120  
     Stadttheater 39, 58, 94  
  
 Ebert, Carl 84  
 Ebert, Hans 142-143, 149-150  
 Eckersberg, Else 112  
 Eicher, Thomas 3, 112, 213n97  
 Eisenach 100  
 Eisner, Kurt 70  
 Eisler, Hanns 76, 105  
 Elbing 150  
 Engel, Fritz 49, 53  
 English Players 148  
 Erfurt  
     Deutsches Volkstheater 150-151, 153  
     Stadttheater 114, 145, 147  
 Essen  
     Stadttheater 70, 93, 114  
*ewige Jude, Der* (film) 166  
 Eysoldt, Gertrud 61  
  
 Fabricius, Hans 212n81  
*FAD Kroschenen* (by Marianne Lautsch and Barbara Herbig) 129  
 Faktor, Emil 54, 77  
 Falckenberg, Otto 218n203  
 Falk, Norbert 77, 81, 196n35  
 Fechter, Paul 109  
 Fehling, Jürgen 78, 80, 81, 82, 99, 100, 117  
 Fellner, Richard 42-43  
 Felner, Peter Paul 83, 84, 85, 91  
 Feuchtwanger, Lion 60, 110  
     *Jud Süß* 110  
 Finkel, Shim'on 126  
 Fiorentino, Giovanni 84  
*First of August, The* 67  
 Fischer, Albert 142  
 Fleck, Ferdinand 11  
  
 Fontana, Oskar Maurus 95  
 Fontane, Theodor 21, 182n93  
 Förster-Nietzsche, Elisabeth 102  
*Franc-Tireur, The* 67  
 Frankfurt am Main 39, 112, 114, 124, 134, 135  
     Neues Theater 93-94  
     Schauspielhaus 114-115, 116  
     Stadttheater 39  
*Frankfurter Zeitung* 107  
 Freedden, Herbert 121  
 Freiberg (Saxony) 149  
 Frenzel, Elisabeth 128, 130, 137, 144, 210n56  
 Frenzel, Herbert 141, 210n56  
 Frenzel, Karl 16, 21  
*Freund Fritz* (Émile Erckmann) 57  
 Freytag, Gustav  
     *Die Journalisten* 57, 62, 112, 113-114, 153, 158, 212n88  
     *Soll und Haben* 141  
 Frick, Wilhelm 102, 210n57  
 Frowein, Kurt 167, 169  
  
 Gans, Eduard 14, 56  
 Ganzer, Alfred 133, 212n88  
 Gareis, Edelbert 94  
 Geehr, Richard S. 30  
 Geer, Leonhard 150-151  
 Georg II, Duke of Sachsen-Meiningen 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24  
 George, Heinrich 117, 133, 159, 160, 166  
 George, Stefan 164  
 German Conservative Party 63  
*German Loyalty* 67  
 Geyer 96  
 Glogau 152  
 Goebbels, Josef 83, 110, 120, 126, 127, 131, 133, 136, 141, 147, 150, 160, 163, 165, 167, 168, 169, 173, 210n58, 220n228, 221n258  
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 11, 12, 39, 70, 113, 132, 141  
     *Clavigo* 32  
     *Faust* 16, 25, 183n116

- Goldhagen, Daniel 172  
 Golling, Alexander 133  
 Göring, Hermann 127, 164,  
     201n122, 209n46  
 Gotha 148  
     Landestheater 100  
 Göttingen 153  
 Graff, Sigmund 210n51  
     *Die Prüfung des Meister Tilman*  
         131  
 Granach, Alexander 93, 98-99,  
     123-124, 160, 199n77  
     *Da geht ein Mensch* 99  
 Greifswald  
     Stadttheater 131  
 Grillparzer, Franz 30, 59-60  
     *Esther* 60  
     *Die Jüdin von Toledo* 59-60, 134  
 Grillparzer-Gesellschaft 134  
 Gross, Edgar 128-129, 210n51  
 Gross, John 2, 44, 143, 161,  
     215n148  
 Grözingen, Elvira 112  
 Grube, Max 22, 60  
 Grünberg 152  
 Gründgens, Gustav 120, 132  
 Grüntzig, Walter 153  
 Guglia, Eugen 28  
 Guhrau 152  
 Günther, Hans 138, 139, 166  
 Gutzkow, Karl  
     *Uriel Acosta* 112  
     *Zopf und Schwert* 67  
  
 Haase, Friedrich 36, 38-39  
 Habimah/ National Theatre of  
     Israel 125  
 Hahn, Erwin 142  
 Halberstadt 152  
 Hamburg 11, 39, 134  
     Deutsches Schauspielhaus 39,  
         48, 97, 200n101  
     Thalia-Theater 39, 130  
 Hanau 149  
 Hannover  
     Schauburg 96  
     Städtisches Schauspielhaus  
         117, 142-143, 148, 149-150,  
         153  
 Harden, Maximilian 50, 190n252  
 Hardenberg, Karl August von 13  
 Hardt, Ernst 70  
 Harlan, Veit 82, 161, 166, 167-  
     169, 198n55, 221n258,  
     222n261  
 Hart, Heinrich 48-49  
 Hartung, Gustav 120  
 Hasenclever, Walter 71  
 Hauff, Wilhelm  
     *Jud Süß* 166  
 Hauptmann, Gerhart 65, 140  
     *Vor Sonnenaufgang* 41  
 Hebbel, Friedrich 60 134-135  
     *Der Diamant* 60, 134-136,  
     213n103  
     *Herodes und Mariamne* 60, 123,  
     134  
     *Judith* 40, 60-61, 111, 134  
     *Die Nibelungen* 134  
 Hecht, Hans 65  
 Heidelberg 133, 142  
 Heilborn, Ernst 73, 74-75  
 Heims, Else 53  
 Hein, Marte 82  
 Heine, Albert 36-37, 94-95, 123  
 Heine, Heinrich 32, 102  
 Heinle, Lutz 153  
 Helene, Duchess of Sachsen-  
     Meiningen (Ellen Franz) 24  
 Herrmann, Alois 147-148  
 Herzog, Wilhelm and Rehfish,  
     Hans J.  
     *Affäre Dreyfus* 111  
 Hess, Rudolf 133, 139  
 Heuser, Hermann 115  
 Hildesheim 132, 150  
 Himmler, Heinrich 156, 161  
 Hindenburg, Field Marshall Paul  
     von 119, 206n1  
 Hinkel, Hans 121, 148, 159, 169,  
     207n11  
 Hitler, Adolf 101, 102, 119, 123,  
     130, 135, 148, 149, 172, 173  
 Hippler, Fritz 166



- Hochland* 61  
 Hofer, Johanna 76  
 Hofmannsthal, Hugo von  
     *Elektra* 61  
     *Grosses Welttheater* 124  
 Holgers, Maria 46  
 Holbein, Franz von 40  
 Holl, Fritz 98, 116  
*Holy War, The* 67  
 Homolka, Oskar 111  
 Honigmann, D. 42  
 Horkheimer, Max 137  
 Hortmann, Wilhelm 3, 144  
 Humperdinck, Engelbert 48, 115,  
     156  
 Husum 97  
  
 Ibsen, Henrik 41  
     *Peer Gynt* 100  
 Iffland, August Wilhelm 9, 11-13,  
     15, 37, 56, 82-83  
 Ihering, Herbert 52, 65, 68, 71, 74,  
     80, 91, 98, 100  
 Illiger, Hans 101  
 Iltz, Bruno 133, 216n152  
 Immermann, Karl Leberecht 39,  
     56  
 Irving, Henry 20  
 Iser, Wolfgang 22, 24  
*Israelitisches Familienblatt* 122  
  
 Jacobs, Monty 74, 76, 77, 80-81,  
     105, 197n48  
 Jacobsohn, Siegfried 48, 54, 56,  
     68, 73-74  
 Jägerndorf 152  
*Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-*  
*Gesellschaft* 6, 7, 18, 36, 42, 49,  
     65-66, 93, 94, 101, 113, 114,  
     139, 140, 143, 148, 150, 151,  
     153, 157  
 Jena 102  
 Jessner, Leopold 75, 110, 111,  
     116-117, 125-126, 173, 200n83  
*Jew of Mestri, The*, see *Merchant of*  
*Venice* (film)  
 Johst, Hanns 126, 129  
     *Propheten* 131  
     *Schlageter* 123, 126  
 Josephus, Flavius 60  
*Jud Süß* (film, 1940) 137, 155, 161,  
     166-167, 168  
*Jüdische Rundschau* 107, 121  
 Jüdischer Kulturbund 121-122,  
     124  
 Kahane, Arthur 48, 96  
 Kahle, Richard 21-22, 182n93  
 Kainz, Josef 59, 183n119  
 Kaiser, Georg 71, 108  
     *Die jüdische Witwe* 111-112  
 Kaiserslautern 135, 149  
*Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur* 102,  
     198n59, 210n57, 219n216  
 Karajan, Herbert von 128  
 Karlsruhe 37  
     Hoftheater 10, 37, 38  
 Kassel  
     Staatstheater 114  
 Katsch, Kurt 114, 121-122, 124  
 Kattowitz 130  
 Kaulbach, Wilhelm von 20  
 Kean, Charles 20, 38, 181n86  
 Keller, Wolfgang 140, 141, 155  
 Kempert, Otto Hermann 152  
 Keppler, Ernst 160  
 Kerr, Alfred 74, 80, 107, 110  
 Kiev 124  
 Kilian, Eugen 117-118  
 Kindermann, Heinz 139  
 Kirchner, Otto 152  
 Klaar, Alfred 98, 181n82  
 Kleist, Erwin 151  
 Kleist, Heinrich von 160, 194n332  
     *Die Hermannsschlacht* 181n82,  
     n83  
     *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* 58,  
     67  
 Klingemann, August 40  
 Klöpfer, Eugen 73, 74  
 Kober, Gustav 46  
 Koblenz 149, 216n168  
 Koch, Georg August 130, 156,  
     157, 158, 159-161, 219n220,  
     220n228  
 Kohut, Herzlieb 157  
 Kolberg 99, 169

- Kolberg* (film, 1945) 165, 167, 169  
*Kölnische Zeitung* 116  
 Königsberg 149  
     Schauspielhaus 149  
 Konstanz 148  
 Köppen, Franz 76-77, 81, 115  
 Körber, Hilde 82  
 Kornfeld, Paul 110, 111  
     *Jud Süß* 110-111  
 Kortner, Fritz 1, 67-68, 72, 75-82,  
     79, 98, 99, 109, 110, 117, 123-  
     124, 160, 163, 173, 196n35,  
     197n44, 198n55, 204n158  
*Kraft durch Freude* 151  
 Kramer, Maria 162  
 Krause, Willi 131  
     *Nur nicht weich werden, Susanne*  
     131  
 Krauss, Werner 1, 53, 72-75, 80,  
     82-83, 84-92, 98, 115, 117, 124,  
     161-162, 163, 164, 166, 167,  
     172, 198n59, 199n70  
*Kreuzzeitung* (*Neue Preussische*  
*Zeitung*) 19, 49-50  
 Kroepelin, Hermann 144  
 Kronacher, Alwin 114  
 Kronawetter, Ferdinand 188n220  
 Kube, Wilhelm 221n248, n250  
 Kühne, Gustav 15  
 Künstlerische Volksbühne für  
     Pfalz and Saar 96  
 Kunz-Krause, Heinrich 158-159  
 Kustermann, Otto 100  
  
 La Roche, Karl 26-27, 28  
 Lademann, Felix 135  
 Laibach (Ljubljana) 25  
 Landauer, Gustav 40, 49, 70,  
     187n196  
 Landestheater für Pfalz und  
     Saargebiet 96, 135, 149  
 Landestheater Süd-Ost Preussen  
     96  
 Lange, Rudolf 37, 177n33  
 Langensalza 100  
 L'Arronge, Adolf 46  
 Lassalle, Ferdinand 44  
  
 Laube, Heinrich 27, 29, 60,  
     180n66, 184n125  
 Lautenschläger, Kurt 35  
 League of Proletarian-  
     Revolutionary Writers 106  
 Lehfeld, Otto 24-25  
 Leipzig 15, 38-39  
     Altes Theater 116, 143, 148  
     Schauspielhaus 98  
     Stadttheater 38  
*Leipziger Volkszeitung* 106  
 Leisner, Wulf 150  
 Lenart, Ernest 122, 124  
 Lenin, Vladimir Il'ich 109  
 Lesseps, Ferdinand de 130  
 Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim 5, 57,  
     92, 112, 122  
     *Nathan der Weise* 2, 22, 26, 35,  
     54-59, 67, 74, 92, 112, 114,  
     116, 120-122, 123, 124, 126,  
     131, 138, 142, 145, 171, 173,  
     191n266, n272, 204n170  
 Lessing, Theodor 122  
 Leube, Rudi 134  
 Levi, Hermann 57, 191n276  
 Levy, Richard S. 62  
 Lewinsky, Josef 27, 28, 38, 49, 57  
 Ley, Robert 133, 161  
 Liedtke, Harry 84  
 Liewehr, Fred 162  
 Lindau, Paul 24  
 Lindemann, Gustav 39-40, 69, 70,  
     120  
 Linkmann, Ludwig 135-136  
*Linkscurve, Die* 106  
 Linz 148  
*Lippische Staatszeitung* 147  
 Loder, Dietrich 130  
     *Konjunktur* 130-131  
 Łódź 124  
 Loewenberg, Carl 121, 122  
 London 7, 20, 123, 140, 152, 161  
 Lopez, Roderigo 155, 168  
 Lübeck 135, 150  
 Ludwig II, King of Bavaria 19, 31  
 Lueger, Karl 30  
 Lüneburg 149  
 Luxemburg, Rosa 44, 70, 110

- Maeterlinck, Maurice 46  
 Maierhofer, Ferdinand 162  
 Malyoth, Ludwig 31-32, 33  
 Mann, Klaus  
   *Mephisto* 132  
 Mannheim 9, 37, 40, 178n36  
   Hof- und National Theater 18, 37, 38, 75  
 Marburg 112, 204n170  
 Marian, Ferdinand 166, 167  
 Marienburg 150  
 Marlowe, Christopher  
   *The Jew of Malta* 153-156, 205n188  
 Marr, Heinrich 13, 39  
 Marr, Wilhelm 8, 19  
 Martersteig, Max 40  
 Martin, Karl Heinz 111  
 Marx, Karl 44  
 Masuccio Salernitano (pseud. Tommaso Guardati) 84  
 Maurus, Gerda 115  
 Mecklenburg Städtebund-Theater 97  
 Mehring, Walter 102-103, 106, 107, 108, 109-110  
   *Merchant of Berlin, The* 102-109, 111, 202n142  
 Meiningen 111, 149  
   Hoftheater 17, 18, 19-24, 31, 35, 36, 41, 48, 60, 143, 181n82, 181n83, 194n334  
   Staatstheater 152  
 Melchinger, Siegfried 162  
 Mels, A. 57  
 Mendel, Gregor 164  
*Merchant of Venice, The* (1923 film) 83-92  
 Meskin, Aharon 126  
 Michaelis, Heinz 158, 219n215  
 Minsk 220n250  
   Deutsches Theater 164-165  
 Mitterwurzer, Friedrich 27-28, 40, 42-44, 45, 188n214  
*Mobilization* 67  
 Moholy-Nagy, Laszlo 105  
 Moissi, Alexander 53, 68, 93, 123, 190n253  
 Möller, Eberhard Wolfgang 120, 127, 128, 129, 130, 136, 210n56  
   *Die graue Eminenz* 211n66  
   *Der Panamaskandal* 127, 130  
   *Rothschild siegt bei Waterloo* 127-130, 133, 148, 156, 160, 210n51, n52, 211n62, n63, n66  
   *Der Untergang Karthagos* 130  
 Moscow  
   Habima 112  
   Kamerny Theatre 76  
   Moscow Art Theatre 47  
 Mosenthal, Salomon Hermann von  
   *Deborah* 60  
 Mosse, George L. 58  
 Mosse, Werner 8  
 Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus  
   *Don Giovanni* 27  
   *Marriage of Figaro, The* 69  
 Mühlhofer, Alfons 212n84  
 Mühr, Alfred 116  
 Müller, Hermann 112  
 Müller-Guttenbrunn, Adam 30, 31  
*Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* 92, 211n63  
 Munich 31-37, 63, 73, 83, 92, 99, 110, 117, 129, 199n68, n77  
   Deutsches Theater 35  
   Hoftheater 31, 32, 34, 35, 36  
   Kammerspiele 129, 156, 211n62, 218n203  
   Künstlertheater 52  
   Residenz-Theater 83, 115, 131  
   Staatstheater 73, 82-83, 93  
   Volkstheater 142  
 Mussolini, Benito 125  
   *A Hundred Days* 102  
 Müthel, Lothar 76, 162, 163-164, 220n238  
*Nachtausgabe* 108  
 Napoleon I 8, 102  
 Napoleon III 17  
 Naso, Eckart von IIIIn47

- Nathan der Weise* (1923 film) 92  
 National Socialist German  
     Workers' Party (NSDAP) 83,  
     101, 102, 111, 112, 128, 150  
 Nedden, Otto zur 153, 154-156,  
     218n197, n199  
 Neher, Caspar 114  
 Neubauer, Hans-Joachim 8-9, 10  
 Neubrandenburg 97  
*Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna) 117  
*Neues Wiener Tageblatt* 162  
 Neusalz 150  
 Neustrelitz 135  
 New York  
     Yiddish Theatre 103  
 Niedecken-Gebhardt, Hanns 133  
*Night of St. Quentin, The* 67  
 Noa, Manfred 92  
 Nordhausen 111  
 Nordischer Rundfunk 114  
 Nordmark Verbandstheater/  
     Landestheater 97, 114, 158  
*Nosferatu* 84  
 Novelli, Ermete 28, 36, 162  
*Nur nicht weich werden, Susanne*(film,  
     1935) 137  
 Nürnberg 72  
     Schauspielhaus 116  
  
 Odessa 20, 22  
 Offenbach, Jacques  
     *Tales of Hoffmann* 192n287  
 Offenburg 149  
 Oldenburg  
     Grand Ducal Theatre 40  
 Olmütz 152  
 Oppenheimer, Hans 106-107  
 Oppenheimer, Joseph Süß 110,  
     111, 166  
 Orlik, Emil 48  
 Ortner, Eugen 111  
     *Jud Süß* 111  
 Osborne, John 20  
 Oz, Avraham 126  
  
 Pabst, G.W. 77  
 Pallenberg, Max 105  
*Pandora's Box* (film) 77  
  
 Panse, Barbara 3, 131  
 Pape, Alfons 148, 149  
 Pinthus, Kurt 98  
 Piscator, Erwin 102-103, 105, 106,  
     107, 108, 109, 124  
 Poelzig, Hans 73  
 Pohl, Max 64, 98  
 Polgar, Alfred 68, 78, 95, 123  
 Pommer, Claire 84, 199n64  
 Pommersche Landesbühne 99  
 Porten, Henny 84  
 Porth, Karl 38  
 Possart, Ernst von 1, 10, 31-36,  
     57, 152, 185n163, 191n272  
 Potsdam  
     Schauspielhaus 116, 129  
 Prague 52 58, 59, 123  
  
 Quanter, August Ludwig 38  
  
 Rachel (Rachel Félix) 187n203  
 Rathenau, Walter 50, 70  
 Rehfish, Hans J., see Herzog,  
     Wilhelm  
 Rehse, Bernd 135  
*Reich, Das* 141  
 Reichenberg 217n185  
 Reicher, Emanuel 41-42, 47,  
     187n209, 188n223  
 "Reichskristallnacht" 150  
 Reichskulturkammer 119-120, 144  
 Reichsschrifttumskammer 126  
 Reichstheaterkammer 119, 120,  
     129, 164  
 Reinhardt, Max 47-48, 50, 52, 53,  
     59, 60, 63, 67, 68, 71, 72, 73,  
     75, 77, 78, 83, 84, 93, 97, 121,  
     122, 123, 124-125, 133, 158,  
     173, 188n223, 190n255,  
     209n38  
 Reinhold, Babette 59  
 Rembrandt van Rijn 77, 95  
 Rendsburg 97  
 Rheinische Landesbühne 96  
 Rheinischer Goethe-Verein 58  
 Rheinisches Städtebund-Theater  
     115  
 Richter, Walter 116

- Riga 10, 18, 40-41  
 Rischbieter, Henning 3  
 Rose, Hans 134  
 Rose, Paul 134, 153, 156, 157-159,  
     161, 216n158, III n219  
 Rosenberg, Alfred 128, 139, 140,  
     166  
 Rossi, Ernesto 29, 36  
*Rote Fabne, Die* 111  
 Rothe, Hans 114, 140, 205n188,  
     214n129  
 Rothschild, Nathan 127  
*Rothschilds, Die* (film) 166  
 Rottonara, F.A. 64  
 Rürup, Reinhard 7, 8
- Saarbrücken  
     Stadttheater 131  
 Sagan 152  
 Sailer, Heinz 217n182  
 St. Gallen 148  
 St. Petersburg 16  
 Salten, Felix 83, 117  
 Salzburg 124  
 Savits, Jocza 35  
 Schaffhausen 149  
*Schaubühne, Die* 61  
 Schildkraut, Joseph 50, 61, 110  
 Schildkraut, Rudolf 1, 39, 44, 48-  
     54, 51, 75, 80, 83, 95, 98, 99,  
     158, 160, 173, 190n253, n262  
 Schiller, Friedrich 132-133  
     *Don Carlos* 132  
     *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* 181n83  
     *Kabale und Liebe* 77, 100  
     *Die Räuber* 16, 69, 132-133  
     *Wallenstein* 160  
     *Wilhelm Tell* 125, 132  
 Schirach, Baldur von 135, 141,  
     161, 162-163  
 Schirach, Carl von 70, 102, 164  
 Schlawe 99  
 Schlegel, August Wilhelm 5, 6, 24,  
     25, 34, 38, 141, 146, 166, 167,  
     168, 169  
 Schlenther, Paul 22, 41-42
- Schlesisches Landestheater/  
     Schlesische Landesbühne 100,  
     150, 152  
 Schlösser, Rainer 120, 127, 129,  
     131, 134, 138, 139, 142, 145-  
     147, 158, 159, 160, 210n51  
 Schmidt, Conrad 49  
 Schmitt, Saladin 94, 114, 115, 117,  
     134, 200n83  
 Schnitzler, Arthur 62, 193n308  
     *Professor Bernhadi* 62, 82,  
     193n308  
 Schoenfeld, Bruno 158, 219n216  
 Schönerer, Georg Ritter von 30  
 Schreck, Max 84  
 Schreyvogel, Joseph 25, 26, 27  
 Schröder, Friedrich Ludwig 11,  
     178n36`  
 Schultze-Naumburg, Paul 102  
 Schumacher, Erich 135  
*Schwarze Korps, Das* 140  
 Schwarzenberg 96  
 Sebald, Herbert 216n169  
 Sebrecht, Friedrich 101  
 Sehr, Ernst 81  
 Sellner, Gustav Rudolf 153  
 Servaes, Franz 110  
 Seydelmann, Karl 14-15, 26, 56  
 Shakespeare, William  
     *A Comedy of Errors* 140  
     *Hamlet* 11, 18, 19, 31, 38, 41,  
     52, 63, 93, 109, 118, 138, 151,  
     180n66, 181n75, 186n176  
     *Julius Caesar* 12, 20, 64, 140  
     *King John* 102  
     *King Lear* 25, 31, 49, 52, 80, 160  
     *Macbeth* 31, 64  
     *The Merry Wives of Windsor* 129  
     *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 47,  
     52, 63, 100, 140, 151, 190n255  
     *Much Ado About Nothing* 40, 52  
     *Othello* 7, 12, 16, 19, 27, 31, 35,  
     36, 40, 41, 75, 117, 184n125,  
     187n203, 215n148  
     *Richard III* 16, 27, 33, 75,  
     180n66, 200n83  
     *Romeo and Juliet* 52

- The Taming of the Shrew* 38, 40,  
 151, 152, 175n176  
*The Tempest* 75  
*Troilus and Cressida* 36  
*Twelfth Night* 18, 22, 38, 52, 117  
*Two Gentlemen of Verona* 140  
 Shaw, George Bernard 107,  
 215n138  
*Shylock of Cracow, The* (1913 film)  
 83  
 Sieber, Josef 135  
 Siegert, Hedwig 158, 218n214  
 Singer, Franz 76  
 Singer, Paul 44, 188n220  
 Sinsheimer, Hermann 54, 190n261  
 Social Democratic Party 44, 46  
 Söderbaum, Kristina 166, 167  
 Sombart, Werner 64, 193n320  
 Sondershausen Landestheater 114,  
 148  
 Sonnemann, Emmy 202n122  
 Sonnenthal, Adolf 57-58, 59, 60  
 Sophocles  
     *Oedipus Rex* 75  
 Sorge, Richard  
     *Der Bettler* 71  
 Sorma, Agnes 46, 59, 190n253  
 Spengler, Oswald 109  
 Spieler, Helga 219n215  
 Sprottau 152  
 Stahl, Ernst Leopold 2, 12, 13, 26,  
 28, 32, 36, 37, 38, 50, 73, 82-  
 83, 96, 100, 113, 114, 115, 117,  
 138, 139, 140, 149, 163-164,  
 178n36, 180n66, 183n119,  
 187n203, n209, 190n262,  
 200n83, 206n200  
 Stang, Walter 140  
 Stanislavsky, Konstantin 20  
 Steiner, George 5  
 Steinthal, Walter 115-116  
 Stinnes, Hugo 107, 109  
 Stockholm 52, 54  
 Stoecker, Adolf 8, 19  
 Stolp (Pomerania) 148  
 Stolten, Inge 165  
 Straub, Agnes 98  
 Strauss, Richard  
     *Salome* 61  
 Streicher, Julius 80, 161  
 Strnad, Oskar 77, 78  
 Strobl, Gerwin 138  
 Strom, H.K. 114  
 Stümcke, Heinrich 36, 57-58  
*Stürmer, Der* 80, 161, 213n107  
 Stuttgart 15, 97, 112  
 Süddeutscher Rundfunk 114  
 Sudermann, Hermann 62  
     *Die gutgeschnittene Ecke* 62, 112,  
     133-134, 158  
 Szabó, István 132  
  
 Tairov, Alexander 76, 77  
 Tatura internment camp, Victoria,  
     Australia 165-166  
 Teichen, Deli Maria 115  
 Tel Aviv 125-126  
 Teplitz-Schönau 152  
 Tieck, Ludwig 5, 6, 11, 38, 168,  
     169  
 Toller, Ernst 71  
 Treitschke, Heinrich von 19  
 Trenck, Ulrich von der 164  
 Tressler, Otto 28  
 Trier  
     Stadttheater 67, 206n202  
 Troppau 152  
 Trotsky, Leon 109  
     *"Truppe, Die"* 76  
 Tucholsky, Kurt 117  
 Tügel, Hans 149  
 Türk, Julius 46  
  
 Ulbrich, Franz 102  
 Ulmer, Friedrich 115  
 Ungar, Hermann 109-110  
     *Der rote General* 109-110  
     *Unser Verkehr* (by Karl  
         Borromaeus Alexander Sessa)  
         13, 14, 132, 178n46  
 Urach 97  
  
 Vegesack 1149  
 Venice 48, 52, 83, 124-125  
 Verch, Maria 3  
 Vesper, Will 120

- Vienna 18, 25-31, 52, 60, 67-68,  
     69, 75, 77, 94, 110, 123, 134,  
     135, 163  
   Burgtheater 16, 25-29, 30, 36,  
     37, 39, 42, 57, 58, 59, 60, 67,  
     69, 75, 83, 94-95, 156, 161-164,  
     183n116, 184n125, 193n308  
   Deutsches Volkstheater 29, 67,  
     75, 133, 216n152  
   Exlbühne (Theater in der  
     Praterstrasse) 135  
   Kaiserjubiläums-Stadttheater  
     30-31  
   Komödienhaus 110  
   Operntheater 60  
   Theater in der Josefstadt 77,  
     97, 123, 124  
   Volksbühne 68  
   Wiener Stadttheater 29, 30,  
     184n137  
 Viertel, Berthold 76, 77, 82, 164  
*Völkischer Beobachter* 92, 140, 156,  
     157, 161-162, 199n68  
 Volkov, Shulamit 118  
 Vollmer, Bernhard 101  
*Vorwärts* 46, 111  
*Vorwärts mit Gott* 67  
*Vossische Zeitung* 20, 48, 74  
  
 Wagner, Cosima 59  
 Wagner, Josef 139  
 Wagner, Richard 19, 58-59, 141  
 Waltershausen 100  
 Warsaw 16, 123  
 Waschneck, Erich 166  
 Washington DC 123  
 Wassermann, Henry 12  
 Wedekind, Frank  
     *Erdgeist* 61  
 Wegener, Paul 93  
 Weilenbeck, Josef 20-21, 22  
 Weimar 11, 16, 18, 25, 40, 101-  
     102, 128, 151  
     Hoftheater 11, 39, 70, 163  
     Nationaltheater 70, 101-102,  
     127, 128, 129, 142, 153-156,  
     211n61, 217n192  
 Weinig, Karl 148  
  
 Weininger, Otto  
     *Sex and Character* 61  
     *Weltbühne, Die* 92, 117  
 Werdy, Friedrich August 38  
*Westdeutscher Beobachter* 152,  
     210n59  
*Wiener Volksblatt* 30  
*Wiener Volksbote* 30  
 Wiesbaden  
     Königliches Theater 64  
 Wiesloch 149  
 Wilde, Oscar 61  
     *Salome* 60, 61  
 Wilhelm, Crown Prince 58  
 Wilhelm II, Kaiser 64, 69  
*Wille und Macht* (Hitler Youth  
     journal) 141  
 Williams, Simon 2, 11, 12, 13, 16,  
     43-44  
 Winds, Erich Alexander 142  
 Wolf, Friedrich  
     *Professor Mamlock* 123  
 Wolter, Charlotte 59  
 Wolzogen, Ernst von 36  
 Wulf, Joseph 143  
 Wüllner, Ludwig 22, 57, 67, 112,  
     115, 143, 194n334, 204n170  
 Wundt, Max 138  
 Württembergische Volksbühne  
     95, 97, 200n101  
 Würzburg 13  
  
*Zeitung, Die* 161  
 Zelter, Karl Friedrich 12  
 Ziegler, Hans Severus 101, 102,  
     128, 138, 210n57  
 Znamenacek, Wolfgang 157  
 Zola, Émile 41  
*Zukunft, Die* 50