



THE ECONOMIC HISTORY OF EUROPEAN JEWS

Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages

By
MICHAEL TOCH

BRILL

The Economic History of European Jews

Études sur le Judaïsme Médiéval

Fondées par
Georges Vajda

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TOME LVI

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LEIDEN • BOSTON
2013

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Toch, Michael.

The economic history of European Jews / by Michael Toch.

p. cm. — (Études sur le judaïsme médiéval ; t. 56)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-23534-2 (hardback : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-90-04-23539-7 (e-book)

1. Jews—Europe—History—To 1500. 2. Jews—Europe—Economic conditions. 3. Europe—Commerce—History—To 1500. 4. Europe—Economic conditions—To 1492. 5. Europe—Ethnic relations. I. Title.

DS135.E83T63 2012

330.94'01089924—dc23

2012022621

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual “Brill” typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see www.brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 0169 815X

ISBN 978 90 04 23534 2 (hardback)

ISBN 978 90 04 23539 7 (e-book)

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

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PREFACE

This book has been long in the making and during its course I collected many debts. I first began to explore the topic in a talk prepared for the session of the *Konstanzer Arbeitskreis für Mittelalterliche Geschichte* commemorating the 1096 crusade persecutions. Moving from German to European Jews, I extended the subject in the fall of 2000 during a sabbatical spent as guest of the Department for Jewish History and Culture of the Ludwig-Maximilian-University of Munich. Further thoughts were aired in a talk at the Arye-Maimon-Institute of Trier University in November 2000. A Jacob Perlov Distinguished Visiting Fellowship in Judaic Studies at Yale University in the winter and spring of 2001 gave me opportunity to develop what by then was turning into a book, with graduate and faculty seminars at Yale and talks at Harvard and Princeton to test my evolving concepts. The book experienced critical shaping and final form in 2004–05. During this year, funds provided by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung enabled me to enjoy a fellowship in the unmatched work atmosphere of the *Historisches Kolleg* in Munich, next door to the medievalist's Mecca of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. Back home in Jerusalem, a grant by the Thyssen Stiftung allowed me to employ two research assistants in the years 2007 to 2009. The last to host my early medieval endeavors was the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. I thank all these institutions, their fellows, directors, office managers, research assistants and librarians for making me feel abroad so much at home.

Throughout the years, I learned much from my students in senior undergraduate and graduate seminars at the Hebrew University, in Munich, Vienna, Konstanz, Berlin and at Yale University. Over the years I had fruitful exchanges with my friends Alexander Patschovsky of Munich and Alfred Haverkamp and his students and colleagues from Trier. Tim Reuter, who sadly is not with us anymore, Ivan Marcus, Paul Friedman, Frederick Cheyette, Jordi Casanovas I Miró, Steve Bowman, and Haym Soloveitchik provided much-valued information and opinions. Shepherded by Frau Dr. Elisabeth Müller-Luckner, in June 2005 an international flock of specialists congregated at the *Historisches Kolleg* in Munich to discuss the economic history of medieval Jews. In Philadelphia, the deliberations of the research group on "Jews, Commerce, and Culture" demonstrated

once more the value of the comparative approach, with special thanks to Jonathan Karp who listened with a professional ear and gave much appreciated advice. Particular thanks go to my friends and colleagues at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Abraham Grossman and Israel Yuval, who enlightened me on many moot points of medieval Hebrew sources; to Diego Olstein whose critical reading of the Spanish chapter is gratefully acknowledged; to David Jacoby for his scrutiny of the Byzantine chapter, as unfaltering as all his corrections to my work since I was his student a long time ago; to my other academic teacher Amnon Linder, whose editions on the Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation and in the Legal Sources of the Early Middle Ages have made work so much easier; to my research assistants A.L.M. Thoma in Munich and Anna Gutgarts and Asya Bereznyak in Jerusalem; and to Mrs. Tamar Sofer of the Hebrew University Center for Computational Geography; and finally to two anonymous lectors at Brill who alerted me to some ambiguities.

This book is once more dedicated to my wife Avital, and to our sons Eran and Yuval and their spouses Osnat and Adi who gave us the joy of our life, our grand-children Ori, Shira, Ayala and Avigail.

Jerusalem, 2012–04–10

Michael Toch

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INTRODUCTION

The field of the economic history of early medieval Jews is by no means an uncultivated one. With the possible significant exception of Byzantium, the Cairo Genizah and maybe also some parts of Iberia, the greatest part of extant manuscript sources has been published. Since the late 19th century, a tremendous amount of local case studies have seen light. However, the synthesizing effort has stopped short of the regional level, not to speak of Europe as a whole. Despite a wealth of opinions on the issue, we still lack authoritative histories of the Jewish factor in the economies of the diverse regions and countries. For the whole of Europe, one has to do with the very much outdated and uncompleted German book by Georg Caro (1908–1920) and the slightly later and highly learned, yet for most inaccessible Yiddish/Hebrew work, sadly lacking in references, by Ignaz Schipper (1930/1935). I hope to remedy the deficiency with this book and two further volumes on the High and Late Middle Ages, one in the Mediterranean world and the other to the north of the Alps.

This work asks to make sense of the economic foundations of Jewish life in the different parts of late antique and early medieval Europe, from the 5th to the 11th, in some places up to the 12th century. Over this long period, Jewish existence in Europe almost came to an end and was eventually reconstituted, in many places constituted for the first time. When medieval Jewries fully came into their own, sometimes between the 9th and 11th centuries, economic activities and livelihoods bore little similarity to previous ones in the Middle East or in the Mediterranean Diaspora of Late Antiquity. Despite significant differences between regions which will be charted, they followed a new pattern that by and large was to remain valid into our own days.

The subject of this book is thus a double one. The first is to ascertain the demographic arc, the decline, subsequent rise and distribution of population, by establishing where and when one could find real-life Jews, as opposed to virtual ones (a contradiction to be explained shortly). The conclusions from the investigation of settlement history have been translated into a series of maps. The task of stock-taking is then broadened to economic activities, again by the main European regions: Byzantium, Italy, Gaul (that is France and Germany), Iberia, and Eastern Europe. The second part of the book asks for historical conclusions to be drawn from

the previous stock-taking: the actual share of Jews in commerce and other branches; the often entertained idea of a pioneer role in the economy; the contacts between European Jews and the ones in the Muslim world and the notion of an intercontinental network of Jewish trade; the phenomenon, partly noticed but never explained in economic terms, of Jews in agriculture; Jewish history in light of the environmental and epidemiological record of early medieval Europe; gender, the sexual division of labor, and the household mode of production; convergences and divergences between the Jewries of South and North in regard to women's place in the economy and occupational structure; finally the most difficult question of all, the significance of minority status.

On the way, both parts of the book have to navigate a number of grave problems inherent in both the state of the evidence and the state of scholarship. Throughout my work on the medieval European economy, of urban society, of the countryside, and of the Jews, my concern has always been the validity of historical investigation, which for me meant what one can legitimately deduce from the sources. This will be the focus in this book too. Sources, as we have been made aware in the methodological debates of the last decades, do not speak on their own, they must be made to talk. This means understanding what was their context, how and by whom they were produced, who stood to gain or to lose from their making. This is not so far removed from the old concept of source criticism—*Quellenkritik*—established by the founders of the historical enterprise. It is not an easy task for the “Dark Ages”, as succinctly put by Roberto Lopez, one of the more sober scholars of the medieval economy:

One has to shuffle and reshuffle disconnected scraps of information, laws that may have been unenforced, incidents that may have affected only a small corner of the European world, descriptions that may be mere rhetorical exercises, statements that may be sheer misunderstandings.¹

How much more, to use an expression medieval Hebrew writers were fond of, does this difficulty hold for the economic history of the Jews! The evidence at our disposal poses all the problems cited by Lopez, and some more unique to Jewish history, to a point that, as David Romano put it wryly, “quantity of documentation X imagination = constant”.²

The extant sources belong to two types unevenly distributed over the European space: those produced by Jews themselves and those produced by

¹ Lopez, 1987: 307.

² Romano, 1993: 255.

non-Jews. Archaeological remains—most commonly epitaphs, synagogue inscriptions, amulets and finger rings—belong to the former category and are extant mainly from Late Antiquity within the geographical borders of the Roman Empire. In the later part of our period, the early medieval centuries, Jews also produced literary works and most importantly religious-legal deliberations and decisions, *Halakhic* literature. The latter are extant mainly from Northern Europe (*Ashkenaz*) and from Muslim Spain (*Sepharad*), in very small numbers also from Southern France, while the important communities of Italy and Byzantium have left almost nothing in this regard. By their very nature, Halakhic sources bear witness to conflict and issues yet unsettled in the public life of the community, thus raising the well-known problem of the bearing of normative texts on human reality.³ Originally arising from concrete cases, they were treated as raw material for the teaching of the sages and thus distilled to legal essentials, extinguishing in the process most hints to tangible details. Jewish sources, the archaeological remains and Halakhic literature extant from relatively few places, thus suffer from a problem of representativeness, but have the great advantage of reliability. Wherever and whenever they are extant, we can confidently deduce the existence of actual Jews. Therefore, a concerted effort has been made in this book to put this evidence to systematic use.

Not a few regions and periods wholly lack such sources, leaving the field to texts that do not necessarily speak of real-life Jews. These are mainly of ecclesiastical origin, such as hagiography and the kindred genre of chronicles, the epistles of popes and bishops, canon law and the resolutions of church councils; and Imperial and royal laws very much influenced by the thinking of churchmen. This is a largely literary evidence of a predominantly ideological nature, that reveals more about the expectations of a society and its view of itself than about what actually happened on a day-to-day basis. In many cases it does not reflect actual encounters with Jews but should be read as “rhetorical exercises”, to use Lopez’s formulation. Often the Jews making an appearance were virtual ones put there for the sake of a moralistic, theological or ecclesiological argument. This type of evidence makes up the textual basis on which some of the most important opinions on early medieval Jews have been formed by generations of scholars blissfully ignorant of anything but a handful of Latin texts. Conversely, many of those proficient in the Hebrew

³ See Soloveitchik, 1990.

evidence had little inclination to draw on insights of “general history” for concerns they felt to be uniquely Jewish and therefore by definition little comparable to others.

The second quandary thus concerns the state of scholarship. Two millennia of Jewish-Gentile relations and two centuries of public debate on the status of Jews in European society have produced a train of opinions, prejudices and easy generalizations on the nature of Jews. Signaling the Diaspora situation more than anything else, medieval economics were at the heart of 19th and 20th century polemics and apologetics through which the discourse on Jews in the economy became thoroughly politicized. Some of the issues have recently been pointed out by Derek Penslar:⁴

Throughout the modern Western world, Jewish economic activity has been an object of awe and wonder. The Jews’ economic influence has been often exaggerated, not only by anti-Semites searching for a culprit for overwhelming social ills, but also by philo-Semites identifying material manifestations of Jewish chosenness. From the mid nineteenth century until the Second World War, Jewish writers directly engaged this language of Jewish economic exceptionalism with attitudes ranging from testy defensiveness to confident triumphalism to harsh self-criticism; meanwhile, Jewish economic difference remained prominent in Jewish self-consciousness. Then, in the wake of the Holocaust, talk about Jewish economic distinctiveness lost its respectability as even its benign forms were associated with Nazi anti-Semitism. Jewish scholars, in turn, ignored the subject, returning to it only in the past twenty years.

A number of concepts will inform this book throughout: one is the notion of economic prowess of medieval Jews, by itself a problematical assumption taken from the modern situation and projected back into the past. This ties in with the premise of an exceptional role played in the commercial economy of the Early and High Middle Ages, up to a monopoly or hegemony in international and intercontinental trade, especially the slave trade. This in turn connects to the notion of the “network” and the idea of Jewish ubiquity, in a period when actual population numbers everywhere declined significantly. Another theme is economic distinctiveness, an old idea deriving from the indubitable “otherness” of Jews in the European imagination. In the pet theories of the 19th and 20th centuries, this was re-cast as “inborn character” or “essence”: Marx’s “chimerical nationality of the Jew which is the nationality of the merchant, of the man of money in general” (*On the Jewish Question*, 1844); Sombart’s “The Jew’s inherent

⁴ Penslar, 2010: vii.

'Nomadism' or 'Saharaism'" (The Jews and Modern Capitalism, 1911); and up to Slezkine's "service nomads" (The Jewish Century, 2004). We shall find the influence of these and other notions with quite a number of sober scholars otherwise not given to flights of fancy.⁵ Let it be stated here and now that the marked propensity to take leave of the normal procedures of historical argumentation is not particular to those of Jewish origin or identification or, conversely, to non-Jews. Rather, they belong to an all-embracing intellectual climate, now slowly waning, which gave pride of place to theoretical constructs, ideal types, and archetypes borne from ahistorical reification.⁶ Given the degree to which such notions have shaped and partly still shape research and the public climate, we shall need to question time and again the scholarship as much as the evidence. To facilitate the flow of argument, the discussion of the demographic evidence has been consigned to appendices, while other problems in scholarship are dealt with in the footnotes.

The post-World War II period has opened up the discourse on Jews in a number of ways. In many regions, their history is increasingly seen as part of a local, regional and national one.⁷ Economic history, shunned for a long time, is making somewhat of a comeback, if only for the modern period where influences from sociology, economics and anthropology are easily recognizable.⁸ Methodologically, there is innovation:

Jewish economic history is characterized by an intriguing methodological tension. On the one hand, there is a push towards contextualization, that is, nuancing Jewish economic difference through comparison between Jews and mercantile minorities, niche and network theory, and models of sub- and supra-ethnic trading networks. The results are a minimizing of Jewish economic exceptionalism and a depiction of Jews as trading people that stops short of presenting *the* Jews as *a* trading people. The 'cultural turn' ... further strengthens contextualist, as opposed to essentialist, presentations of Jewish economic behavior. On the other hand, signs of Jewish economic uniqueness remain and demand explanation.⁹

The present author finds himself largely in accord with these historiographical trends. Similar to other aspects of Jewish existence that have

⁵ On some of the historiographical pitfalls and fallacies see Toch, 2000, Penslar, 2010, and Reuveni, 2010.

⁶ Reification: the fallacy of treating an abstraction as if it were a real thing.

⁷ Peters, 2007; Toch, 1998a: 68–142.

⁸ See the essays by Penslar and Reuveni, quoted above, in Reuveni, 2010, and in addition the one by Jonathan Karp there.

⁹ Penslar, 2010: vii.

been “normalized”,¹⁰ I would perhaps strive for one more critical element, Jewish agency, which at least conceptually might free the economic activities of Jews from over-determination by minority status. For a Jew from the Diaspora and Israeli by choice, this seems a natural stance to take. With all its criticism of past approaches, in its methodological thrust this book too is thus very much a child of its time and place. The challenge is to fruitfully apply the insights and incentives gained from our own condition to the subject matter and evidence of a far away past that for us looks very much like a “foreign country”. Our question: did they really “do things differently there”?¹¹

¹⁰ I have in mind issues such as the perception of anthropological categories, time, birth, death, etc. See for instance Elisheva Baumgarten, ‘A separate people?’ Some directions for comparative research on medieval women, in: *Journal of Medieval History* 34 (2008), 212–228.

¹¹ The full quote is “The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there”: Leslie Poles Hartley, *The Go-Between*, London 1953, p. 1.

PART ONE

STOCKTAKING: REGIONAL POPULATIONS AND LIVELIHOODS

CHAPTER ONE

BYZANTIUM

Byzantine Jews are often lamented as having been left out of the mainstream of the writing of history. Reasons given for this alleged neglect include the fact that they lived in a corner of the world not quite European; that they were part of a culture given to religious fanaticism and bizarre court intrigue; that they were obscured behind languages inaccessible to most scholars; that they lacked an indigenous lobby of professional historians; and that they were Jews and thus by definition a marginal group.¹ I am not sure that such alleged neglect is indeed true to fact. Apart from the sectarian Karaites who very early aroused the interest of scholars, on the whole medieval Byzantine Jewry was studied not much later than other European ones, beginning with Samuel Krauss in 1914. By the 1930's important text editions of Jacob Mann and Joshua Starr had appeared and document-based research, amongst others by Simha Assaf, commenced. Starr followed in 1949 with "Romania: the Jewries of the Levant after the Fourth Crusade". Salo Wittmayer Baron included sizable chapters and copious notes on Byzantium in the monumental second edition of his "Social and Religious History of the Jews". In 1959 Zvi Ankori's much detailed history of the "Karaites in Byzantium" appeared, including many a consideration of Rabbanite Jews. The mid-1950 also saw the beginning of Andrew Sharf's scholarship, culminating in 1971 in his full-scale history of "Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade". His overview "Jews in Byzantium" was included in the important collection "The Dark Ages. Jews in Christian Europe 711–1096", edited in 1966 by Cecil Roth and still not superseded today. Since 1967 David Jacoby has enlarged on many and different aspects of economic and settlement history, and his book on "Silk in Byzantium" is to be eagerly awaited. He was joined some-

¹ So marginal indeed that the organizers of a symposium had no qualms to title it "Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider." Papers from the Thirty-Second Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, March 1998." Emblematic, even though tongue-in-the-cheek, is an essay by Nicholas de Lange, where he treats their "historiographical murder" and hoped-for "resurrection": *Qui a tué les Juifs de Byzance?* For this and further work quoted in the following see the bibliography under the authors' names. A more detailed review of research is given by De Lange, 1995.

what later by Steven Bowman, who also published a full-scale history that continued from where Starr and Sharf stopped, as well as work on Italian-Byzantine-Jewish writings such as *Sefer Yosippon*. The cultural legacy of Byzantine Jews has also been the subject of Nicholas de Lange's numerous articles, leading up to his bi-lingual edition of "Greek Jewish Texts from the Cairo Genizah". Rabbinical and other religious writings have been analyzed by Hirsch Jakob Zimmels, Israel Ta-Shema and Robert Bonfil. Christian-Jewish relations and the associated ecclesiastical literature have engaged the meticulous attention (and sometimes heated debate) of Gilbert Dagron, Vincent Déroche, Averil Cameron, Paul Speck, Hagith Sivan, David Olster and others. In 2001, Joshua Holo wrote a doctoral dissertation on the "Economic History of the Jews of Byzantium" which was published in 2009. Finally, in the same year David Jacoby distilled his wide knowledge of Byzantine Jewish and general history into an overview of "The Jewish Communities of the Byzantine World from the Tenth to the Mid-Fifteenth Century". Scholarship on medieval Byzantine Jews, while not as extensive and systematic as for instance that on German ones, is thus not unsubstantial at all.²

The main problem, as we shall see, is not lack of research but rather the opaque and equivocal character of many of the extant sources. These consist of several types. The most substantial one is Christian polemics, sometimes straightforward and sometimes masquerading as religious disputations between Christians and Jews.³ Often it is clad in the garb of hagiography, the *Lives* of saintly bishops and monks.⁴ All these are extant for the entire length of our investigation, and beyond. For reasons going back to the theology worked out by the Church Fathers, Byzantine ecclesiastics (as their colleagues in other parts of Europe) saw fit to use Jews and Judaism as a polemical counterfoil to Christianity. For these literary devices

² For Germany the main stimulus was to be *Germania Judaica*, the six-volume dictionary of Jewish communities begun in 1903 and, fittingly, completed in 2003. Nothing similar exists elsewhere.

³ For the works of this genre see Schreckenberg, 1995. Most of the relevant texts on Byzantine Jews, of this and further types of evidence mentioned in the following, are summarized in Starr, 1939.

⁴ The most inclusive collections, even though much dated, are Jacques-Paul Migne (ed.) *Patrologiae Graecae Cursus Completus*, 81 vols., Paris 1856–1861, and *Acta Sanctorum*, 71 vols., Paris 1863–1940. The Greek *Lives* of one hundred and nineteen saints of the 8th to 10th centuries are now accessible through the Dumbarton Oaks Hagiography Database: <http://www.doaks.org/Hagio.html>. Many texts have been translated into western languages. They are listed in: <http://www.doaks.org/translivesalpha.html>.

Jeremy Cohen has coined the apt phrase of “the hermeneutical Jew”.⁵ By themselves, such fictions may serve as important clues for the views held by Christians on Jews. The historian’s problem is to decide whether a Jew (almost never a Jewess) appearing in such text was a real or metaphorical one, actually observed or put into the story in order to drive home some message. Still, even a “hermeneutical Jew”, though clearly invented, might be circumstantially accurate and could thus convey historical information. A second and quite extensive type of evidence concerns legislation and law codes, from the *Theodosian* and *Justinian* Codes to the *Ecloga* and their commentators.⁶ This also includes the decisions of church councils. It is often very difficult to determine to what degree such texts reflect abstract norms and/or actual circumstances. Somewhat in contrast, administrative government documents, even though kindred to the previous type, were often issued in response to concrete local concerns.

Written evidence produced by Jews themselves is rarer. In this respect Byzantine Jews shared the fate of all European Jewries. In the Early Middle Ages they tend to be silent, with some notable exceptions. There is Biblical exegesis, liturgical writings as well as poetical, Halakhic and scientific ones, transmitted mostly via the Cairo Genizah, southern Italy, and Ashkenazic scholars. These are notoriously difficult to fathom for historical data.⁷ Certain types of evidence can more properly be termed documentary sources that tend to reflect down-to-earth concerns and actual individuals. Epitaphs and other dedicatory inscriptions are of this kind, even though very few medieval ones have been found outside Byzantine southern Italy (treated in the chapter on Italy), where they are plentiful. Apparently, this is not a Jewish peculiarity: in the whole of Greece between the later 7th and the later 8th centuries, there are no inscriptions at all except for some Athenese graffiti.⁸ The main documentary evidence comes from the Genizah, that huge repository of sacred and profane writing in Hebrew letters accumulated since the late 10th century in the attic of the Ben Ezra synagogue in old Cairo. However, outside its main orbit that extended from North Africa and Egypt to Palestine, Muslim Sicily and to a lesser degree to Muslim Spain, only a very small part refers to

⁵ Cohen, Jeremy, 1999: 39. See also Markus, 1995.

⁶ Now collected in exemplary fashion and furnished with an English translation by Linder, 1987 and 1997.

⁷ Zimmels, 1966; De Lange, 1992, 1995, 1996; Ta-Shema, 2005. For bibliographical guidance see De Lange, 2001. For an exposition of the problems see Soloveitchik, 1990.

⁸ Claude, 1985a: 228, note 427.

European matters. We shall have frequent opportunity to speculate on the meaning of what was and what was not preserved in the Genizah. Suffice it at this point to quote the doyen of Genizah studies, the late Shelomo Dov Goitein: "An answer to that puzzling question might possibly be found not in the facts touching on those countries [Byzantium, southern France, Christian Spain] and towns [Thessalonica, Constantinople and other Byzantine places], but rather in the character of the Genizah itself, which in the 11th century served as a repository mainly for a club of Tunisian merchants who sojourned or settled in Egypt."⁹ Even so, what little there is conveys important information on the lives of actual people.

People and Communities

Actual people then are the first concern, in this chapter as well as in following ones on the Jewries of late antique and early medieval Europe. Where did Jews live, and if possible at all to ask, how many (or few) of them were there? There is little need to explain to what degree such questions bear on the main issue of this book, the economic pursuits and roles of Jews. Our first task is to establish, by a renewed appraisal of the sources, the settlement structure of Byzantine Jews from Late Antiquity and until the end of the Early Middle Ages. In order to include some precious information, we stretch the "end of the Early Middle Ages" a little into the 12th century.

In the course of Roman antiquity Jews came to make up a significant ingredient of some town populations of the Empire. In Asia Minor and to a lesser degree in Greece (Thessalonica) and on the isles (Cyprus, Crete and Rhodes), the foundation of Jewish communities goes back to pre-Christian times, that of Constantinople to the period before Theodosius II (408–450).¹⁰ Archaeology has confirmed the existence of Jewish communities in many more towns of the Eastern Roman Empire. Synagogues, clustering between the 1st to 4th centuries C.E., were located in modern Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Bulgaria; on the Black Sea; in larger numbers in mainland Greece and on some Aegean islands; on Cyprus; and in even larger numbers in Asia Minor. Inscriptional evidence adds to the

⁹ Goitein, 1971b: 15 (my translation as throughout this book, unless otherwise indicated). For a systematic exposition see Goitein, 1967: 1–28.

¹⁰ Jacoby, 1967: 168–9. The evidence for the following is assembled in Appendix 1: Places of Jewish Settlement in the Byzantine Empire, and in map 1.

list a considerable number of further places. Of the one hundred sites of archaeological evidence for Jewish life in the Balkans, Greece and Asia Minor, more than half are on/near Mediterranean or Black Sea shores and on islands in the Mediterranean. Of the ones inland, the large majority is in Asia Minor (34 out of 43), mostly on the ancient trans-Anatolian highway leading from Smyrna (Izmir) and Ephesus on the Aegean coast via Iconium (Konya) to Mesopotamia.¹¹ The archaeological evidence, even though considerable, in no way supports the still-held opinion of a vast Jewish population in the late-antique Roman Empire, a notion that has lately come under well-deserved criticism.

In the following period of the 6th to the 9th century evidence diminishes sharply, in numbers and in intelligibility. The hitherto abundant inscriptional evidence dwindles to almost nothing. In the whole Byzantine realm we know of five synagogues only, including the ones at Constantinople and at Aleppo in northern Syria. Tellingly, all the references cluster in the earlier part of the period, up to the Arab conquests in the Middle East.¹² One single synagogue, at Sardis, has left a tangible archaeological presence, of the rest we know only from the writings of Christian ecclesiastics. Such texts are usually polemical in nature and scholars hotly debate their factual value. Thus for instance we are told of the exploits of Symeon the Holy Fool, who played one of his pious pranks on a Jew. The man, a glass-blower by profession, was promptly converted and would eventually carry out his appointed task to bear testimony to Symeon's sainthood.¹³ The story is set in the Syrian town of Emesa (Homs) in the late 6th century. One might thus deduce the existence of Jews in then Byzantine Emesa, where inscriptional evidence indeed points to a 5th century synagogue. However, according to the latest editor of the *Life of Symeon*, this story and others on the Holy Fool rather reflect the small-town life familiar to the author of *Symeon's Life*, Leontius of Neapolis, and his mid-7th century Cypriot audience.¹⁴ So is this evidence for Jews in a late 6th century Syrian

¹¹ Cf. French, David H., *The Roman Road-system of Asia Minor*, in: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.7.2 (1980) 698–729.

¹² At Constantinople, dated to the 5th/6th century; at Laodicea (Goncalı-Eskihisar, half-way between Izmir and Antalya), dated to 528; the most impressive and largest synagogue of all at Sardis (modern Sart east of Izmir, Turkey), in existence from the 2nd/3rd century and destroyed 616; at Tella (Constantina=Viransehir, east of Urfa, south eastern Turkey) 6th century; and at Beroia (Aleppo) 5th/6th century: Rutgers, 1992: 110; Kraabel, 1987: 50; Rutgers, 1998: 129–130.

¹³ The text: Krueger, 1996: 165–166, 169–170.

¹⁴ Krueger, 1996: 10, 12.

town, in Cyprus of the mid-7th century, or neither? A further source, the *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati* ("Teachings of Jacob Newly Baptized"), is no less intricate.¹⁵ Set in 632–634, immediately after the decree of forced baptism of Emperor Heraclius, it refers to the movements of the protagonist and other Jews between their places of origin on the eastern Mediterranean littoral and Constantinople, Carthago, even Spain and Gaul. Other places visited earlier by youthful Jacob were Rhodes and a number of port cities in the northwest of Asia Minor. This might possibly point to some more Jewish communities.¹⁶ Such evidence, even if not wholly to be taken at face value, indicates at least a wide geographical range where a Christian author might convincingly locate Jews for the sake of his story. It definitely tells of Jewish migration to Constantinople in the early 7th century.¹⁷ Other sources of the period, such as imperial and ecclesiastical legislation, are usually couched in general terms and do not provide local references. For more concrete hints to Jewish life one must look to the fringes of the Empire, for instance a 6th century papyrus from Byzantine Egypt that tells of the lease of a shop situated in the southern agora of Antinoopolis to a Jew named Peret.¹⁸ Another example would be an epitaph from southern Italian Taranto, tentatively dated to the 7th–8th centuries. It commemorates the wife of Leon son of David from Melo.¹⁹ The last word might quite possibly be Melos, in which case this would be yet more evidence for migration, from the Greek isles to then Byzantine southern Italy.

It is tempting to read the dearth of evidence from this period as a demographic low. The basic trend, faint as it is, fits the general development of population in the Byzantine Empire. According to recent archeological research, the proto-Byzantine world knew demographic growth until the plague epidemic of 541/542 and economic growth up to around the year 550. After that, a decline set in, differing and uneven in various regions, gradually till 615/620 (the Persian invasion of Asia Minor), accelerating

¹⁵ Edited, translated into French and commented by Dagron & Déroche, 1991: 17–273. Further on this key text see below, notes 74–77.

¹⁶ *Doctrina*, 1.41, Dagron and Déroche, 1991: 130; Dan, 1970/1: 8–13.

¹⁷ Jacoby, 1995: 222. For ways to sift this text for circumstantial information see Cameron, 1994: 83.

¹⁸ Tcherikover et alia, 1964: 99–101, no. 511. Antinoopolis, the town founded by Emperor Hadrian in memory of his beloved Antinoos, who drowned in the Nile, is modern el-Sheik Ibada in Middle Egypt, about 300 kilometers south of Cairo. For further day-to-day evidence of Jews (and Samaritans) in 6th century Byzantine Egypt see Tcherikover, 1964: 93–99, 101–105.

¹⁹ Noy, 1993: 164–5, no. 125.

from that date to 636 (the disastrous battle of Yarmouk against the Arabs), and even more abrupt until around 670.²⁰ The loss to Islam of the Near Eastern territories with their large urban agglomerations must surely have shrunk population totals.²¹ During the 7th century the Byzantine countryside became of primary importance, the cities few in number and small in size. In economic terms, this was a time of “headlong depression and deflation, which lasted to the mid-eight century”.²² The main impact would of course be on urban populations, amongst them the Jews. One might also think of the long-term effect of Christian missionary pressure, culminating in the decree of forced baptism of Emperor Heraclius in 630/632. It is difficult to see here “Jewish communities in expansion”, as has been postulated on strength of a surge in Christian polemics and forced baptism.²³ However, even under the depressed conditions of the period, or rather because of them, there was migration towards the larger centers of population and economy.

We are on much safer ground to assume increasing numbers beginning in or after the mid-10th century, parallel to and probably caused by Byzantium’s military and political restoration in the Mediterranean and in the East. Significant dates were the conquest of Melitene in 934, Crete in 961, Cyprus and Tarsus in 965, Antioch and Aleppo in 969, the Balkans south of the Danube in 971. By 1045, all of Asia Minor and parts of Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Caucasus area were in Byzantine hands. An increase in the numbers of Jews and of their communities matches the general development of Byzantine population as well as the demographic curve of other European Jewries in that period.²⁴ A Byzantium newly established as the stronghold of peace and political stability would surely have encouraged internal growth. In a reverse to the process of the 7th century, the occupation of conquered places and regions also incorporated Jewish populations into the Empire. Byzantium now attracted Jewish immigration,

²⁰ Sodini, 1993: 182; Foss, 1977: 469; and now Sarris, 2007. See also Laiou, 2002b. For a concise survey of Byzantine political and military history see Laiou, 2002a. For a more detailed treatment see the chapters by Andrew Louth, John Moorhead, T. S. Brown, Michael McCormick, Jonathan Shepard, Michael Angold, and Paul Magdalino, in: *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vols. 1–4, Cambridge 2005, 1995, 2000, 2004.

²¹ Holo, 2009: 25, 31.

²² Lopez, 1959: 69.

²³ Dagron and Déroche, 1991: 37. The rising tide of anti-Jewish writing in 7th century Byzantium is indeed unmistakable. See the list of texts in Déroche, 1991: 276–281.

²⁴ Laiou, 2002b: 48, 50. For the demographics of Italian, French, German and Spanish Jewries see the chapters below.

especially, as has been claimed, from Arabic-speaking countries.²⁵ Indeed, large numbers of Syrians and particularly of Armenians immigrated into Byzantine Asia Minor in the 960s and 970s.²⁶ Amongst the immigrants into Constantinople were also numerous Jews.²⁷ This was but part of a larger westward migratory movement from the Muslim East towards the Mediterranean, which had begun already in the late 9th century and was made up mostly of the urban classes, intellectuals, merchants and artisans, including also Jews.²⁸ The establishment of Karaite communities in the Byzantine Empire has been seen as part of that movement.²⁹ A further large-scale migration, or rather flight, occurred in the wake of the Seljuks' victory at Mantzikert in 1071 and their expansion into Asia Minor.³⁰

However, most of the concrete evidence adduced for a sizeable Jewish immigration concerns Jews from Fatimid Egypt, which was untouched by the Byzantine *reconquista*. We know of them from the Cairo Genizah, sometimes quite intimately, because they remained in contact with their families or business partners in the old country. Actually, not that many individuals are attested in Byzantium as Arabic speaking Jews or their descendants.³¹ The evidence on their circumstances is far from uniform. For some, Byzantium was indeed a land of opportunity, while for others it was the opposite. One of the former was an Egyptian Jew, wholly content with his lot, the author of an Arabic letter sent in 1089/90 from Thessalonica.³² He had settled in the Empire after having *despaired of the lands of the Muslims*. His itinerary included his native Fustat (Old Cairo), which he left around 1064, Jerusalem, various places in Syria, and Byzantine Asia Minor, from where he fled westward in or shortly after 1071, eventually reaching Thessalonica. Somewhat later, in 1137, a physician from Egypt, now resident in Seleucia, wrote to relatives in his country of origin in an even more cheerful mood.³³ By his own testimony, he was

²⁵ Ankori, 1959: 101, 103–104. This argument is strongly stressed by Holo, 2009: 50–62, however with questionable inferences, on which see below.

²⁶ Dagron, 1976.

²⁷ Jacoby, 1995: 223; Jacoby, 1998b.

²⁸ Ashtor, 1972: 201–208. For a highly interesting case illustrating the trend see Jacoby, 1998b: 86–7.

²⁹ Ankori, 1959: 87–203.

³⁰ Jacoby, 1998b: 88.

³¹ De Lange, 1992: nos. 13, 15, 17–24, 36, 41; Goitein, 1971b. The Mastaura marriage deed of 1022 (de Lange, 1996: 1–10, no. 1) probably hints to ancestors from Palestine or Syria: Jacoby, 1998b: 86.

³² Goitein, 1971b: 11–22 = de Lange, 1992: 41, no. 22. For details see Jacoby, 1998b: 88.

³³ Goitein, 1964.

well liked and successful in his profession, had a Byzantine wife, a house worth 200 dinar, and 400 barrels of wine in his cellar. He had invested in his daughter's dowry 324 gold-pieces, a pound of silver, and objects valued at 200 dinar. The writer was frankly optimistic about his prospects in the Empire. He urged his in-laws to join him and mentions by their Judeo-Arabic names eleven other Jews, some of them family, who had settled either in Seleucia or in Constantinople. But, from the same letter one also learns of a Jewish scholar hailing from Baghdad, who had studied in Jerusalem and now made pancakes for a living in Constantinople. The letter also mentions "that beggar from Acre" who apparently too lived in Seleucia. A different case would be Israel ben Nathan, who first left his native city, Kairuan in Tunisia, for a promising mercantile career in Fustat, Old Cairo.³⁴ Later on, about 1045, he settled in Constantinople, married a local woman, and was to know only trouble. After being imprisoned for some time and suffering other mishaps he decided in 1049 to leave for Jerusalem, with no intention to return. His wife refused to follow him to an Arabic-speaking country, and he divorced her before his departure. In September 1051 he bitterly wrote to his uncle and former business associate in Egypt about his circumstances *after having left Byzantium—may the God of Israel desolate it!* One century earlier, in the mid to late 10th century, an equally unsettled prospective emigrant from Byzantium presents himself in a Genizah letter written to relatives from Rhodes, an island *evil in every respect*.³⁵ Crete too *is no longer as it was of old, rather it has been overthrown*, a remark convincingly tied by the editor of the letter to the Byzantine conquest of the island from the Arabs in 961. Little wonder then that the letter-writer made urgent enquiries to follow his family, apparently to Egypt, where they had already moved to from Byzantium. Unless purely personal circumstances prompted these remarks, evidently the Mediterranean theatre of war at the onset of the Byzantine *reconquista* was not a happy place. If this was the case, one might question the assumption, in whose light the documentary evidence has mostly been evaluated, of a new pull exercised by Byzantium on Jews.

Such doubt is nourished by the fact that against this mixed bag of emigrants to Byzantium there is a somewhat larger number of Byzantine

³⁴ Mann, 1920–1922: II, 248, no. 5 = Starr, 1939, 199–200, no. 146. Cf. Jacoby, 1998b: 95, and Jacoby, 1995: 224.

³⁵ Holo, 2000: 10–12 for the text and 1–10 for commentary.

Jews mentioned during the 11th and first half of the 12th century in Egypt.³⁶ Fifty of them, many with dependents, were registered as aid recipients by the communities of Alexandria and Fustat in 1107, and additional others sometime between 1100 and 1140. This is how they were characterized by a modern historian:

Whether drawn to Egypt because of flight from persecution in a Christian land or in the Muslim west (in the 12th century); as converts seeking refuge in the Islamic world from harassment by their Christian families back home; as captives of pirates or enemy sailors, redeemed by fellow Jews on Egyptian soil; as pilgrims headed ultimately for the Holy Land; as wayfarers seeking a better life; as abandoned wives (with or without children) attracted to the economically flourishing communities of Egypt in search of support”.³⁷

The evidence for a sizeable emigration, drawn by economic opportunity to Byzantium from Muslim parts and especially from Egypt, is thus not clear-cut. It is more than matched by Jews who for diverse reasons moved in the opposite direction. In addition to the Muslim link, migration to other parts should also be considered. Given the strong connections between Byzantium and its southern Italian sphere of influence, the latter would be a natural destination and one warranted by the enduring cultural ties between Byzantine and southern Italian Jews. An example would be the author of a 10th century religious poem, who called himself *Menahem ha-katan* (“the Small”), *son of R. Mordecai Corizzi from the community of Otranto*. His family had possibly moved to Otranto in southern Italy from Koritsa, nowadays Korça in Albania, the only indication for Jews there. Menahem’s cultural background was surely a Byzantine one, as evident from his frequent use of Greek terms. Similarly, in 1160 a Sabbatai of the city of Spalato (modern Split, Croatia, due south across the Adriatic) is documented in another southern Italian town, Terlizzi.³⁸

³⁶ De Lange, 1992: nos. 26–31; Mann, 1920–1922: I, 102. These do not include Byzantine Jews taken to Egypt by Muslim pirates and redeemed there by local Jews and communities. On such unwilling migrants see below. See also the references in the next note.

³⁷ Cohen, Mark, 2003: 252; Cohen, Mark, 2000. For an overview of emigrants from Christian lands in Fustat see Cuffel, 1999–2000: 65–68.

³⁸ Starr, 1939:150, no. 89; Codice diplomatico Barese, III, no. LXXXVII. Earlier evidence from Jewish immigration from the region of modern Albania is found in Latin-Hebrew epitaph of 521 from Venosa, of *Augusta, wife of Bonus, daughter of Isa the father from Anchiasmon*: Colafemmina, 1974: 88; Noy, 1993: no. 107. Colafemmina identifies *Anchiasmon* as the modern coastal town of Saranda in southern Albania, where indeed a late antique synagogue was recently discovered. On Byzantine migration to southern Italy see McCormick, 1998.

In this later period from the 9th to the 12th century various places of Jewish settlement are mentioned in the sources. Still, the fragmentary state of the documentation makes it impossible to retrace local developments, except for Constantinople and Thessalonica.³⁹ For the earlier period one had to be content with pious tales of zealous monks and bishops converting or expelling Jews in this or other place as evidence that Jews actually lived there. Such evidence still needs to be used (with caution), but it is supplemented by more unambiguous sources such as the Cairo Genizah. The list of places grows significantly once the 12th century travel report of Benjamin of Tudela is taken into account.⁴⁰ In comparison to the preceding period, the evidence as a whole attests to a much denser pattern of Jewish settlement, 45 places altogether in both parts, European and Asian, of the Byzantine Empire.⁴¹ If Benjamin's remark on ten more communities on Lesbos were added, the total would be 54. The list would be even longer had Benjamin not hurried up his travel in Byzantium, as compared to his much more leisurely pace in earlier and later parts of the journey. In his impatience to get to the Holy Land, he did a quick naval hop from southern Italy down the western Greek coast and through the gulf of Corinth, then dashed up to Constantinople, back again through the straits of Dardanelle and, very much like a modern Mediterranean cruise ship, down along the coastal islands off Asia Minor to Cyprus.⁴² He barely touched the interior of mainland Greece and did not set foot in the Peloponnese or in the inland of Asia Minor. With Benjamin's testimony making up 27 (37 including Lesbos) of the 44 (54) places of Jewish settlement in evidence, the list is thus possibly incomplete and evidently imbalanced. Other evidence than Benjamin's however corroborates the Mediterranean slant: of the additional 17 places, eight are coastal towns. As in antiquity, the settlement structure of Byzantine Jews in the 9th to 12th centuries was thus clearly oriented towards the Mediterranean littoral. Nine out of 44 places, a smaller share than in antiquity, were located inland. Most of these were not more than 40 to 50 km distant from the sea. Such configuration fits the reduced road-system of medieval Byzantium, which still connected the coastal cities to inland towns that served as hubs or objectives of military and commercial traffic. From this pattern a

³⁹ Jacoby, 1967, 1998a, 2003.

⁴⁰ Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 10–15. Cf. Ochoa, 1992.

⁴¹ For the full list see Appendix 1.

⁴² See the map in Sharf, 1971: 131 and Jacoby, 2002. Our reading disagrees with the "revisionist interpretation" proposed by Ankori, 1988: 21, 26, on which see below, note 96.

far-reaching demographic conclusion has been drawn by Zvi Ankori: "It is therefore legitimate to presuppose, even though no additional documents are as yet available, the existence of Jewish groupings in many more ports and commercial cities of Asia Minor at different periods of Byzantine history and, especially, following the Empire's territorial expansion in the late 10th century."⁴³ Something similar had already been expressed in the Hebrew *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* ("The Book of Tradition") written by Abraham ibn Daud of Toledo in 1161. The Spanish scholar pointed out the presence of Jews *on all the islands of the Greek sea from the land of Venice and Genoa as far as Constantinople and Byzantium*.⁴⁴

By extent and numbers of communities, medieval Byzantine-Jewish settlement was still much below the late antique zenith. For the earlier period (6th to 9th centuries) it is difficult to decide whether only a dearth of sources or an actual demographic low is reflected. We tend to accept the second view. For the later part (10th to 12th centuries), the distance in numbers, roughly half, to Late Antiquity is substantial. Still, given the first premise of an earlier dramatic drop in the Jewish population, even such a number implies a remarkable recovery. As we shall see, there is contemporary confirmation for extremely rapid demographic growth of Jewish populations elsewhere in Europe. The evidence also provides a further distinctive and apparently persistent feature, the migratory geography of Jewish Byzantium. It is thus safe to state that two basic demographic phenomena mark Byzantine Jewry throughout our entire period. There was a continuity of the Jewish presence in the Eastern Empire from Late Antiquity until the High Middle Ages, even though ebbing and surging at a pace apparently attuned to that of the population at large. Secondly, there was geographical dissemination and a migratory flow throughout the Byzantine space. Such movement and communication included the whole Empire, but also southern Italy (which is treated in the following chapter) as well as the Middle East with Palestine, Egypt and North Africa. With the latter regions Jewish Byzantium retained some contact even after the Arab conquest, and apparently with renewed vigor from the late 10th century onwards.

⁴³ Ankori, 1959: 116–117. For the Byzantine system of communication in Asia Minor and its changes from classical times see Avramea, 2002: 74–77.

⁴⁴ *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, 1967: 93.

Economic Pursuits

Structurally, the mid-Byzantine Jewish settlement pattern was thus not very different from that of Late Antiquity. Adjusting to the ravages of constant warfare and insecurity, it still clung to Mediterranean ports, though not to those of the Black Sea. Less than in antiquity, but to a degree, Jews still (or again) lived in commercial places along the great trans-Anatolian highway and its tributaries. Does this mean that the economy of Byzantine Jews was wholly or predominantly a mercantile one? This is indeed a widespread sentiment for early-medieval European Jews as a whole, and one we shall take issue with in this book. It has also been applied to Byzantine Jews, as witnessed by one eminent scholar who saw fit to open the discussion of merchants active in the “grand commerce” of Byzantium with evidence on Jews.⁴⁵

Our point of departure is again the situation in Late Antiquity. Here the archaeological evidence can provide much information, even though it is plainly random. Of the Jewish epitaphs found in Corykos (Fethiye, west of Antalya), one commemorates a pair of cobbler brothers, another the head of the guild of the goldsmiths, yet another a craftsman producing rudders or paddles. Fittingly for the saffron capital of the ancient world, two more were of perfumers.⁴⁶ Three more goldsmiths are known from Sardis, and a blacksmith from Larnaka, Cyprus.⁴⁷ In Hierapolis, the officials of the guild of purple-dyers and of carpet-weavers were bequeathed sums of money to decorate a Jewish grave on the *Feast of Unleavened Bread* and the *Feast of Pentecost*.⁴⁸ Significantly, from this small sample of inscriptions there is evidence in two different places for Jews as members of craft-gilds of goldsmiths, purple-dyers, and carpet-weavers. It cannot be decided whether these were exclusively Jewish associations or general ones that also included Jews.⁴⁹ A 5th-6th century epigraph, of Beirut, tells of Samuel the silk-worker or silk-merchant.⁵⁰ Concerning precious textiles, there is a tantalizingly oblique reference from the year 339 in the Theodosian law code.⁵¹ Apparently some Jews had made female workers of an imperial weaving establishment the object of their amorous attentions. By

⁴⁵ Patlagean, 1993: 610–612.

⁴⁶ Williams, 1994: 280–1; IJO II, 504, 513, 515, 517.

⁴⁷ IJO II, 258–9, 267–8; IJO III, 223–5.

⁴⁸ Kant, 1987: 690, note 117; IJO II, 416.

⁴⁹ Trebilco, 1991: 178–9, and notes 45–48.

⁵⁰ IJO III, 38–39.

⁵¹ CTh.16.8.6 = Linder, 1987: 144–151, no. 11.

this, according to one recent scholar, they “presumably coopted women of the imperial weaving establishment”.⁵² If correct, this would be one more piece of evidence for a very early Jewish involvement in the textile business, even though it remains unclear where and in what capacity.⁵³ Further on craftsmen, there is the possibility that the location of the 5th century Jewish quarter in Constantinople, near the Copper Market (Chalkoprateia), was tied in some way to a group of Jewish artisans selling their own products there.⁵⁴ As for other occupations, an *arch-physician* was buried in Ephesus, a *chief of the scribes* in Larnaka, a banker from southern Syrian Palmyra in Beith Shearim, Israel.⁵⁵ In Side there was a *master of the public scales*, son of a man titled similarly.⁵⁶ As for trade, there is epigraphic evidence for a dealer in pearls, a linen-merchant, and shopkeepers.⁵⁷ A wine-merchant from Alexandria was buried in Tomis on the Black Sea, that bleak place of the poet Ovid’s exile where in winter *wine stands stiff, holding the shape of the jar*. That merchant has long been thought to be Jewish, but apparently was not.⁵⁸ An imperial law forbade the appointment of non-Jewish functionaries to control and supervise the prices of the Jews’ merchandise, reserving this duty to the Jews themselves. It was issued at Constantinople in 396 and later incorporated into the Theodosian and Justinian Codes as well as into further compilations, and is clouded as to the place of implementation.⁵⁹ Nothing of this can be taken to be representative, but the overall impression is one of a rather broad range of occupations practiced by Jews, in various crafts, the textile business, and different lines of trade. This variety is nicely borne out by a long inscription, dated to the mid-4th/mid-5th century, of donors in Aphrodisias (Geyre, south-east of Izmir).⁶⁰ Among the Jews and proselytes in the list were a goldsmith; a shepherd; dealers in vegetables, poultry,

⁵² Holo, 2009: 155, note 110. Similar Muthesius, 1992: 23, and Kislinger, 1991: 106.

⁵³ Jacoby, 2001a: 2. The location of the establishment, either in the western or the eastern part of the Empire, most probably either Rome or Constantinople, stands and falls with the identification of the addressee and the time of issue of this law, cf. Linder, 1987: note 52.

⁵⁴ IJO I, 37–8. Cf. Jacoby, 1967: 169.

⁵⁵ IJO II, 155; IJO III, 225–6, 80–82.

⁵⁶ IJO II, 466.

⁵⁷ IJO II, 40–42; IJO II, 531; IJO II, 220, 223.

⁵⁸ Jewish: Kant, 1987: 677 note 29. Not Jewish: IJO I, 330–333. The verse is from Ovid, *Tristia*, Book III.X:23.

⁵⁹ Codex Justinianus 1:9:9 = Linder, 1987: 194–195, no. 23, who thinks that this law was originally destined to Palestine only and that its application in the Diaspora was obviously highly problematical.

⁶⁰ IJO II, 73–76.

fodder, and second-hand goods; a bronze-smith; and two confectioners. Among a second group of non-Jewish sympathizers ("God-fearers") a comparable mix of occupations is apparent, some of them with a bent towards the artistic: purple-dyer, producers of projectiles and tablets, a sculptor, two bronze-smiths, a dancer, athlete, painter, maker of sausages, three tanners, a money-changer, and a carpenter.

Even though in the following early Byzantine period (6th to 9th centuries) evidence on professions of Jews is rare, some patterns can be detected. One reference concerns a late sixth-century shipwreck off Iskandil Burnu (on the western end of the Knidian peninsula, southwest Asia Minor), thus possibly lost on course to Constantinople. Cargo and pottery from the wreck indicate that the ship was probably Palestinian and transported wine in the amphoras common to southern Palestine and Gaza, a wine-exporting region of first rank. A kosher casserole with sealed lid possibly belonged to a Jew on board.⁶¹ It is tempting to see a Jew from then still Byzantine Palestine on his way to sell wine in the capital or somewhere else in Byzantium. Alternatively, he might of course have been a humble sailor, like the men who carved an invocation embellished with a Jewish Menorah, which was found at an inscription site on the island of Syros and dated to 4th century or later: "*Lord help your servant Eunomius and all his ship crew, Naxians*".⁶² In another corner of the Empire, documents from sixth century Egypt plainly record the involvement of Jews in local wine commerce, and the lease of a shop intended to serve as a dye-works.⁶³ A further craft, glassblowing, comes into view in three miracle stories of the 6th century. Far away in Gaul, bishop Gregory of Tours (538/9–593/4) noted a report from the East on the miraculous rescue of a Jewish boy from the furnace, into which he had been cast by his furious father, a glass-worker, for studying (evidently towards apostasy) with Christian children. Evagrius of Antioch, an almost exact contemporary, placed a similar story at Constantinople in the years 536 to 552.⁶⁴ A further glass-blower located

⁶¹ Doorninck, 2002: 892.

⁶² IJO I, 242–4.

⁶³ Tcherikover, 1964: 95–98, 101–102, 99–101, nos. 508, 512, 511.

⁶⁴ Gregory of Tours, 1988: 29, cap. 9, cf. Averil Cameron, *The Byzantine sources of Gregory of Tours*, in: *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 26 (1975), 421–6; Evagrius Scholasticus, 2000: 241, ch. IV.36. The tale was to enjoy a tremendous literary success in the Middle Ages: Eugen Wolter (ed.), *Der Judenknabe*. 5 Griechische, 14 Lateinische und 8 Französische Texte, Halle/Saale 1879; Heike A. Burmeister, "Der Judenknabe". Studien und Texte zu einem mittelalterlichen Marienmirakel in deutscher Überlieferung, Göttingen 1998.

either in the 6th century Syrian town of Emesa (Homs) or in 7th century Cyprus, has already come to our attention: *Another time he* (Symeon the Holy Fool) *was sitting with his brothers in poverty and warming himself near a glassblower's furnace. The glassblower was Jewish.*⁶⁵ Both tales (for the first two are essentially one) depend on the métier of the Jewish protagonist for their dramatic plot, including in the second one the use of the unmistakable Jewish expression *mamzere*. They could thus be discounted as pious fiction. There is however a proven connection between Jews and glass making. Recent archaeological and chemical investigations have revealed that manufacturers in the eastern Mediterranean supplied surprisingly large quantities of raw glass (and the Natron processed in its manufacture) to late antique and early medieval Europe.⁶⁶ The export of raw glass from Egypt and Palestine to distant parts implies production on a large scale, and this has been confirmed by the discovery of four industrial-scale sites with furnaces on the short coastal stretch between Acre in Israel and Tyrus in Lebanon. All these furnaces functioned in Late Antiquity or the early Middle Ages—the dates are not yet certain. Apparently, they kept up or renewed their activity, for a Genizah document of 1011 mentions 37 bales of glass sent by three Jewish firms from Tyrus. During the 11th and 12th centuries Egypt was reportedly flooded with Syro-Palestinian glassmakers, so that the local Jewish artisans complained of competition.⁶⁷ In the later 12th century, Benjamin of Tudela found ten Jews engaged in glass making in Antioch, and more in Tyrus *who make that fine Tyrian glass-ware which is prized in all countries.*⁶⁸ In late medieval and early modern central Europe, glass making and glazing appear in documentary sources as a typically Jewish profession.

For the 7th century three texts of ecclesiastical origin and purpose are extant. One stems from the general church council assembled in 691/2 in the Imperial palace in Constantinople and thus known as “in Trullo” (under the dome). Canon 11 forbids those in sacerdotal orders as well as laymen to *call on Jews in sickness and receive from them medicines.*⁶⁹ This first hint to Jewish physicians and pharmacists in the Empire is somewhat diminished by the fact that the same sentence bans also other forms of

⁶⁵ Krueger, 1996: 165–166.

⁶⁶ Whitehouse, 2003: 3003–305. Baron, 1957: IV, 168, states, sadly without reference, that “As early as the seventh century Greek glassblowers in France boasted of their ability to produce glass of a quality known as Jewish glass.”

⁶⁷ Goitein, 1967: 421, note 65; 51.

⁶⁸ Benjamin of Tudela, 16, 18.

⁶⁹ Linder, 1997: 460, no. 64.

association with Jews. By itself, the idea of prohibiting such contacts was not new. John Chrysostom (later 4th century) had already warned Christians: *What use is it to have your body cured if you lose your soul?*⁷⁰ This prohibition was copied into numerous later collections of canon law, both Byzantine and western, to no avail whatsoever, as we shall see.⁷¹ Again, one might be tempted to dismiss the text as more rhetorical exercise in the juxtaposition of internal and external faith, were it not for the fact that earlier and later sources clearly speak of such occupations. Its most prominent practitioner was to be R. Solomon Hamitsri ("The Egyptian"), the emperor's physician at the time of Benjamin of Tudela, the one Jew in Constantinople *allowed to ride on horseback, through whom the Jews enjoy considerable alleviation of their oppression.*⁷²

Two other texts have as their heroes Jews engaged respectively in trade and finance. Of considerable length and intricate literary composition, both are essentially tales of conversion. As such, they pose substantial problems of interpretation. The earlier one is the *Doctrina Jacobi*, already mentioned, whose composition has lately been dated to around 642/3.⁷³ Alternatively, a component structure has been suggested, with the section relevant to our purpose composed during the first half of the 7th century and another towards the end of the century.⁷⁴ The story enjoyed a considerable popularity, as witnessed by the extant manuscripts: four full versions and two abridged ones in Greek as well as quotations in three further manuscripts; two Syriac fragments; one Arabic version also translated into Ethiopian, in fourteen manuscripts; one Slavonic version in three manuscripts.⁷⁵ Unlike previous hagiographic sources, the incidental economic information is not essential to the religious plot of the text, and thus, presumably, less malleable and truer to contemporary circumstances. Even if Jacob were totally invented, his circumstances would have been designed to strike the reader or listener attuned to mid-7th century "music" as essentially correct. Thus verisimilitude enables us to use this non-documentary text as semi-documentary evidence.

Jacob's story unfolds under the shadow of the baptism enforced on the Jews, at least in Byzantine Africa, by Emperor Heraclius between 630

⁷⁰ Adv. Jud. VIII.5.6, Patrologia Graeca vol. 48, 855.

⁷¹ Cf. Linder, 1997, subject index, Prohibitions.

⁷² Benjamin of Tudela: 14.

⁷³ Edited, translated and commented in Dagron & Déroche, 1991: 17–273.

⁷⁴ Speck, 1997.

⁷⁵ Dagron & Déroche, 1991: 47–55.

and 632. Its relevant passages can be summarized as follows⁷⁶: Jacob is a young Jew from Ptolemais (Acre in the Holy Land), who has come up to Constantinople. Having led the life of a wastrel for several years, he settles down, entering into the service of a wealthy man, plausibly a merchant. This rich patron entrusts Jacob with a small sum of money on which he is expected to generate a return, undoubtedly by opening a shop. Having demonstrated his honesty, Jacob is then entrusted with garments valued at two pounds of gold (silk garments, one would suppose) to sell illicitly in Carthage by going from door to door, with a remuneration that roughly corresponds to 10% of the sum invested. From this shady operation a high turnover is expected. In Carthage, Jacob is discovered to be an un-baptized Jew and imprisoned. To extricate him from his plight, Jacob's Constantinopolitan patron calls on his own "protector," a functionary of the Imperial palace, who sends a ship to repatriate Jacob and the money, on 13 July 634. The three players in the plot occupy different social levels: Jacob is an employee entrusted with increasing responsibility. His non-Jewish patron is most probably a merchant. However, wealth is not enough, and the patron himself needs a powerful "protector," who in this context is undoubtedly not a financial backer, but rather a man of power, who capitalizes on his influence. The focus of the text, the theological to and fro towards acceptance of Christianity, is placed in Carthage within a group of Jewish expatriates from Palestine. Of these, another character in the cast, the learned Ioustos, appears to be similarly engaged as commercial agent acting out of Constantinople.⁷⁷ The *Doctrina Jacobi* thus presents us with a segment of shipping and commercial activity in the Byzantine Empire, between the capital and the eastern as well as western periphery, one moment before Islam was to change this geography forever. With its three-layered structure of financing and patronage, it also allows an otherwise rare glimpse of the actual workings of trade. If accurate, this hierarchy between non-Jewish employer and Jewish agents does not fit the current idea that Jews traded mostly with Jews.

The next source, the last one for the 7th century and some time beyond, views the same social order from a different angle. It is set during the time of patriarch Sergius I of Constantinople (610–638) and thus slightly earlier than *Doctrina Jacobi*. Extant in a large number of Greek and Latin manuscripts, it headed a highly popular collection of miracle tales translated

⁷⁶ I follow Dagron, 2002: 411, who summarizes *Doctrina* V.20. For the full text and French translation of this chapter see Dagron & Déroche, 1991: 214–218.

⁷⁷ *Doctrina* V.19, lines 10–12 and note 127. Cf. Dan, 1970/1: 22–24.

into Latin from the Greek in the 11th century by Johannes Monachus, an Amalfitan monk who stayed as a guest in a monastery just outside the walls of Constantinople.⁷⁸ The story is possibly derived from an episode in the Life of St John the Almsgiver by Leontius of Neapolis. Its strong stress on the miraculous agency of the icon of Christ points to a date of composition at least after the first and probably after the second Iconoclasm, that is the first half of the 8th and, respectively, of the 9th century.⁷⁹ Essentially, the story reports the series of miracles that started the cult of the icon of *Christ Antiphonetes* ("Christ the Guarantor Savior"). There is much confusion as to the exact location of the icon.⁸⁰ The earliest one might have been exhibited in a Tetrastyle structure in the middle of the city. This might or might not have been identical with the "Brazen House" (Chalke) that was part of the entrance to the imperial palace, where an icon is also mentioned. Its destruction during the Iconoclasm troubles in 729 provoked a serious riot among the people of Constantinople. By the 10th century, when the earliest extant version of our legend was composed, the icon is housed in the Chalkoprateia church. By the Later Middle Ages, a painted copy of the image was affixed to the outside of the sea wall near the Perama Gate, gazing at the Jewish quarter of the 11th and 12th centuries. A conversion story had thus been turned into visual propaganda to the Jews.

The plot: on a voyage Theodore, a Christian shipmaster, struck a reef.⁸¹ He reached home a ruined man. Unable to raise money from his good friends, he called on the Jew Abraham, who had in the past repeatedly offered to enter into partnership with him, and asked for a loan. After some hesitation, Abraham agreed, provided some trustworthy person would stand surety. Once again, Theodore was disappointed by his former friends who would have no dealings with a vile, unbelieving Jew. In the morning he set out to renew his request of Abraham, stopping on his way to pray before the icon of Christ, which he decided to offer to the Jew as surety. Abraham accepted and stood by Theodore in his further maritime calamities. Finally, the Jew was persuaded of the true faith by the commercial miracles worked by the icon: a chest with fifty pounds of gold floating by its own from England to Constantinople in one day, a

⁷⁸ Hoferer, 1884; Huber, 1913. A lengthy synopsis and analysis, including the later Oriental and Western versions, in Nelson & Starr, 1939–1944. On Johannes Monachus see Maaz.

⁷⁹ Magdalino, 1998, 220–7.

⁸⁰ Mango, 1959: 108–148; Majeska, 1984: 356–360; Magdalino, 1998.

⁸¹ I follow Nelson & Starr, 1939–1944.

ship-cargo of tin and lead that turned into silver. Theodore and his wife entered the monastic life. Abraham converted to Christianity together with his household of seventy-five, built a chapel in the building in which stood the miraculous icon, and was inducted as priest in the new chapel, his two brothers (or sons, depending on the version) serving as deacons.

Similar to *Doctrina Jacobi*, the story makes its point by anchoring the religious message in the verisimilitude of a given milieu, personalized and moralized, in this case maritime commerce, shipwreck and losses at sea, and the problem of raising capital. One might add as an aside that maritime insurance, invented some centuries later, would have saved much of the trouble encountered. Abraham is brought into the story for his riches, counterpoint to Theodore's indigence after repeated maritime mishaps, his noble attitude that shames Theodore's Christian friends' shabbiness, and his conversion in response to the icon's miracles. Although called a moneylender, he is really a mercantile investor not unlike the one met in *Doctrina Jacobi*. Throughout the winding story, sailor lore and mercantile experiences are injected. For our purposes, the "Guarantor Savior" affords a view at a scenario thought possible by contemporaries, in which a Jew invested money in the maritime ventures of a Christian. Again, there is little of a self-contained commercial Jewish world, and nothing of the proverbial moneylender with which later medieval versions and modern historians have invested this story and similar ones. It remains an unresolved question whether the circumstances and mind-sets reflect the story's purported period, the 7th century, or rather the time of its composition, the 10th/11th century.

Of the 8th century not a single source pertinent to our questions has been preserved. Things are a little better for the 9th century. Indeed, when coupled with the sources of the following 10th century, a more coherent picture emerges of Jews engaged both in craft production and in trade. This is clearly corroborated by the evidence of the 11th/12th centuries. One might begin with Gregorius Asbestos ("The Inextinguishable", ca. 800–879/80), one of the most colorful personalities of his time, deposed archbishop of Syracuse in Sicily, later metropolitan of Nicaea, and a tenacious player at high stakes in the ecclesiastical politics of his time. Once more in opposition, to the decree of forced baptism promulgated by Emperor Basil I in 873/4, Gregorius wrote around 878/9 a treatise maintaining *that the Hebrews ought not be baptized with undue haste and without previous careful examination*.⁸² There he describes the Jews' obstinacy as follows:

⁸² Biography, edition, French translation and commentary: Dagron, 1991a. English translation of the relevant passages: Starr, 1939: 136–138, no. 74.

As long as he remains within the Jewish deception, he is immersed in tannery, hemmed in by dog-dung and a variety of filth, he is laden with heavy taxes, never dares to face a Christian, is exposed to all the abuses, and is even lacking in necessities. This is the first of a series of highly derogatory references to tannery as a craft practiced by Jews.⁸³ The stench and sewage surrounding it serves as a metaphor for Jews and Judaism. Again, the polemic might easily disqualify such statements, were it not for Benjamin of Tudela whose statement on the Jewish quarter of Constantinople is usually (though not necessarily) understood to point to Jewish tanners active there: *For their (the Jews) condition is very low, and there is much hatred against them, which is fostered by the tanners, who throw out their dirty water in the streets before the doors of the Jewish houses and defile the Jews' quarter.*⁸⁴ There is evidence for Jewish tanners and traders in hides in Crete, in Mytilene on the island of Lesbos, and in other places. A Hebrew business letter dated on paleographical grounds to the late 10th or 11th century, written from an unknown location, possibly Crete, and full of Judeo-Greek expressions, was apparently addressed to Egypt where it eventually ended up in the Cairo Genizah.⁸⁵ The writer and some other Jews operated a delivery system of hides from abroad, in which one link was a (Christian) *priest, the son of the apostate* (woman). Local artisans, one of them a Jew named Moses the dyer, who also acted as entrepreneur, then processed the hides. One of the places he asks merchandise to be sent to is Crete, possibly his place of residence. One can associate, with Zvi Ankori, the archaeological evidence for a tanning compound in Crete with such Jewish artisans, even though no direct link can be proven. However, it would be stretching the evidence to see tanning as an occupation imposed on Jews by the Byzantine government as social stigma and theological punishment rolled into one. Equally far-fetched seems the kindred notion that tanning was an exclusively Jewish profession organized in guilds.⁸⁶ What evidence there is speaks of individuals acting on their own. However, tanning was definitely a low-status occupation, even though it also touched, as in the Cretan case, on entrepreneurship.

Evidence on Jews working in the textile branches, including silk and dyeing, goes back to late antiquity. As has been mentioned, the high value of the garments to be sold by the previously mentioned Jacob (mid-7th

⁸³ Quoted in Dagron, 1991a: 351. Cf. Jacoby, 1995: 227.

⁸⁴ Benjamin of Tudela: 14.

⁸⁵ De Lange, 1996: 21–27, no. 4.

⁸⁶ Crete site and governmental imposition: Ankori, 1968: 327, 352. Monopoly of Jewish guild: Ankori, 1959: p. 176, note 28, p. 142 and note 213, p. 145.

century) and the secretive nature of his venture possibly point to silk, the export of which was tightly controlled by the Byzantine state. Then there is a gap in documentation till the early 10th century. An epitaph for a Jewish dyer found at Corinth has been tentatively dated to 900 to 950: ... *Here lies Eliaqim, surnamed Caleb the dyer, who was cut off in the twenty-fourth year.*⁸⁷ What sort of fabric this man treated remains unknown. Another Jewish textile worker, this time in woolens, is made to appear in the town of Sparta in the *Life of Nikon the Metanoite*, which is set in the late 10th century and was composed around 1042.⁸⁸ Going by the technical term employed in the text, the craftsman in question seems to have been highly qualified in the finishing process of “smoothening” or “polishing” woolen cloth by shearing the surface of the fabric. The plot hinges on the Jew’s skill: Saint Nikon had agreed to stop an epidemic rampant in Sparta in exchange for the expulsion of the local Jews. His pious achievement was almost foiled when a greedy local entrepreneur brought back his Jewish textile worker. This episode has prompted an illustrious economic historian to describe the Jews in this “sleepy community of farmers and landowners” as “apparently the only significant non-agrarian element of the population”.⁸⁹

The next document finally brings us to silk. This is a petition written between 1082 and 1094 to David ben Daniel, head of the Egyptian Jews.⁹⁰ Somewhere in Byzantium, a costly silk fabric had been brought to the writer, a dyer, clearly by a private customer. The dyer was accused of spoiling the fabric. Being unable to indemnify the customer, he was “severely punished”, unclear how or by whom. Someone, most likely also a Jew, agreed to provide the necessary sum for bail while keeping the dyer’s children as pawns. Having failed to gather financial help within his unnamed local Jewish community for the reimbursement of his debt, the dyer decided to leave for Egypt. One more Jewish fugitive from Byzantium, in Cairo the man asked for assistance to free his children.

⁸⁷ Starr, 1939: 148, no. 85. Jacoby, 1991: 455, criticizes the dating but proposes no alternative. He also rightly points out that the identification as silk dyer is tenuous, as there is no evidence for Jewish silk workers in 11th to 12th century Corinth.

⁸⁸ Starr, 1939: 167–169, no. 115; Sullivan, 1987: 112–113, 118–121. See Jacoby, 1991: 455 and note 15 for details on the work process. On Jews in Sparta see Bowman, 1985b: 132–3.

⁸⁹ Lopez, 1978: 345.

⁹⁰ De Lange, 1992: no. 26; Goitein, 1967a: 50. I follow the reconstruction by Jacoby, 1991: 482, note 169. Again, for this and other kindred matters the definite word will be David Jacoby’s forthcoming book on Silk in Byzantium. In the meantime see Jacoby, 1991 and 2001a.

These were individuals. There is convincing evidence that silk working was indeed a widespread occupation of Jews in Byzantium, as in other regions of the Christian and Muslim Mediterranean.⁹¹ Two Karaite Bible commentaries from Byzantium, one of the 11th/12th and the other of the second half of the 12th century, must have been written in a milieu well versed in the technicalities of the production and processing of silk and other textiles.⁹² When the Sicilian Normans raided in 1147 Corfu, Cephallonia, Thebes, Corinth and further down the Greek coast, they kidnapped the silk weavers in these places, including the Jews of Thebes, and settled them in Palermo.⁹³ This cannot have been total ruin, for roughly twenty years later Benjamin of Tudela met silk workers in the three largest Jewish centers of the Empire: in Thebes, where *they are the best craftsmen in the land of the Greeks at making silk and purple garments*; in Thessalonica, where *the Jews are engaged in the silk craft*; and of course in Constantinople, where amongst the Jews *there are silk artisans and many rich merchants*.⁹⁴ Benjamin was especially impressed by the industry of Thebes, where he distinguishes between purple and other silk garments. The first were dyed with purple extracted from the *murex* mollusk, a coloring agent reserved for imperial garments, and thus clearly handled by highly qualified artisans as Benjamin indeed points out. Incidentally, Jewish shell fishers are mentioned around 1115 or in the 1180's, based in Alexandria and operating on the Israeli coast, near Haifa, which in antiquity was called Porphyryon, the town of the purple shell. They must have been rough and ready fellows, for after work they apparently used to take their beer across the bay in the Crusaders' taverns of Acre.⁹⁵ Benjamin does not mention other places, which may have been simply a result of his itinerary, as proposed above. Alternatively, were one to accept Zvi Ankori's reading of Benjamin's account as a commercial "guide book" to

⁹¹ See below the chapters on Italy and Spain. For the Genizah world see Goitein, 1967, index entries Clothing, Dyeing, Silk, Textiles.

⁹² Ankori, 1959: 174–5, 196–8; Jacoby, 2001a: 10–12.

⁹³ For the event and sources see Jacoby, 1991: 462 and note 54. The fact that only the 13th century *Annales Cavenses* (MGH Scriptores III, 1893: 132) mentions Jews among the captives, while the contemporary Otto of Freising does not (*Gesta Friderici*, MGH Scriptores XX: 370), should not cast doubt on the fact that there were indeed Jewish silk workers at least in Thebes. For the reasons see immediately in the following.

⁹⁴ Benjamin of Tudela, 10, 11–12, 14, but using the commentary provided by Jacoby, 2001a: 8–9.

⁹⁵ Goitein, 1967: 126–7; Jacoby, 2001a: 8; Jacoby, 1991: 493 and note 232. For the Genizah source and a dating to around 1115 see Gil, 1983: III, 511–514, no. 599 (I thank David Jacoby for this reference).

the Jewish textile industry, the author would surely have made a point to visit its sites.⁹⁶ His silence on other places would then mean that they had no such industry. Nevertheless, the textual evidence for Thebes is corroborated by archaeological finds of medieval dye-works in two different places adjacent to the old Jewish quarter of the town.⁹⁷

The evidence for Jews in the silk industry sets in long before Benjamin's visit, at the latest in the 10th century, but possibly much earlier.⁹⁸ Jews were involved in several stages of the production process, definitely as dyers of silk fibers or fabrics, weavers, and tailors of garments, tentatively also as degummers and spinners, and clearly as highly skilled artisans. There is no evidence for Jews working in imperial workshops, for their integration into general craft associations, or for the existence of particular Jewish guilds. Rather, these were artisans operating independent workshops or employed by them. Non-Jewish entrepreneurs and customers also hired Jews, piecemeal or on a more permanent basis. The fugitive dyer mentioned above would be an example for the former, the Sparta case, though in the woolen craft, for the latter. Whether all this amounts to a "major impact the Jews may have exerted on the Byzantine silk industry" as has been claimed, can only be decided by quantitative analysis, for which no data exist.⁹⁹

It is highly probable that in such a fluid and informal structure there was also a place for Jewish entrepreneurs with a hand in the silk trade. This is suggested by the 7th century evidence covered above, and at the end of our period by Benjamin's association, in one sentence, of *silk artisans and many rich merchants* amongst the Jews of Constantinople. In between, there is the *Book of the Eparch* of 911–912, with traces of a later revision perhaps from about 965. This collection of twenty-two chapters was aimed to officially regulate the guilds of Constantinople, whose activities comprised the greatest proportion of economic life in the capital. Chapter 6:16 has this to say on Jews: *The silk fiber merchants shall not sell silk fibers to the Hebrews or to traveling merchants in order to sell it off outside the city. The perpetrators of this shall be flogged and shorn of their hair.*¹⁰⁰ The purpose of the ban was to prevent local Jews and non-Jewish

⁹⁶ Ankori, 1988.

⁹⁷ Louvi-Kizi, 2002: 629–630.

⁹⁸ I follow Jacoby, 2001a: 12. See also there, 12–17, on organization, and 13, note 51, on the much debated question of a Jewish guild.

⁹⁹ Muthesius, 1992: 25.

¹⁰⁰ Linder, 1997: 151–152, no. 312: 6:16. For analysis of the clause Jacoby, 2001a: 4–5. On the *Book of the Eparch* see Papagianni, 2001.

merchants to act as middlemen in business ventures that might lead to the illicit export of silk. Evidently, in this business Jews had acquired a share sufficient to warrant the attention of the Imperial authorities. The existence of Jewish merchants can be substantiated by further evidence, for instance yet another conversion story. The anonymous *Life of the holy monk Constantine the Jew* was composed between 886 and 912 and is preserved in a single manuscript of the late 10th or early 11th century.¹⁰¹ Born a Jew in Synnada (Phrygia), Constantine abandons his Jewish bride at the wedding, adopts Christianity, and wanders about Nicaea, Attaleia and Cyprus, places where Jews lived in antiquity and will be found living slightly later. Nicaea, where Constantine intended to make converts, is pointed out as a location *where Jews dwelt for the sake of its trade*. It is one of the places linking the northern trans-Anatolian highway to the capital and the seashores. Another focal point on the southern shore of Asia Minor was the port of Attaleia (modern Antalya). For the year 1028 there is a report on a group of seven Jewish merchants taken by Arab pirates on ship and brought to Alexandria for ransom. The group was made up of four Rabbanites and three Karaites, all from the city of Attaleia, *including some of its elders and household-heads*. It stands to reason that they were taken on the same merchant ship, the destination of which is not stated.¹⁰² Some years earlier another group of ten Jews from Attaleia had been kidnapped by Arab pirates and *much wealth taken from them*.¹⁰³ This last detail, though no direct proof, indicates that most probably these were merchants too. A third group of hostages from Attaleia is documented in Alexandria between 1028 and 1035, when one of them was freed to go home to raise the ransom for his fellow-captives.¹⁰⁴ The port city of Attaleia thus appears as a commercial center of the period and its coast a preferred hunting ground for Arab pirates, the likes of which had in 1055 a *band prepared to go to plunder in the land of Greece*.¹⁰⁵ Jewish hostages and the substantial ransoms paid for them with nice promptness

¹⁰¹ Acta Sanctorum, November IV, 628–656; Starr, 1939: 119–122, no. 54; Dumbarton Oaks Hagiography Database (above, note 4): 33.

¹⁰² For the text Ankori, 1959: 47, note 56; Starr, 1939: 190–1, no. 132. The word “merchant”, preserved in the manuscript only by the first letter of the word, is corroborated by the context. The inference by Ankori, 1959: 47, that this constitutes evidence for direct sea-traffic between Attaleia and Egypt is unsupported by the text.

¹⁰³ Starr, 1939: 186, no. 128; Holo, 2009: 224–226; Jacoby, 1998b: 91–92.

¹⁰⁴ Starr, 1939: 191, no. 133.

¹⁰⁵ Mann, 1920–1922: II, 364.

by Egyptian co-religionists were a significant part in these brigands' thriving business.

Who did these Byzantine-Jewish merchants trade with? As their earliest trade-partners outside Byzantium, in silk and other commodities, the famous Radhanite merchants of the 9th century have been suggested.¹⁰⁶ Of these Jewish merchant princes the Arabic account of Ibn-Khordadbeh, to be treated below in Part II chapter 6c, mentions in its very first sentence that they speak *Arabic and Persian and Rumi*, that is Greek, as well as further tongues. On their far-flung travels *they sometimes turn to Constantinople with their merchandise and sell it to the Byzantines... Some of them turn to beyond Byzantium to the land of the Slavs*. Another possible outlet for the illicit export of silk could be the Jewish merchants from Italy who used the shipping services of the Venetians from Byzantium. In 991/2 the Imperial administration undertook yet another attempt to control such trade. To regulate the Venetians' comings and goings in the Empire, Emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII issued a solemn document. One clause tried to make sure that the commercial privileges accorded would not be misused by other Italians: *And these Venetians shall bring on their ships under their privilege no one of those who have commerce with Constantinople, such as Amalfitans, Jews, Lombards, [those] from the city of Bari, and others, but they shall bring only their merchandise*.¹⁰⁷ We shall have further opportunity to ask how such and similar regulation effected Jewish commerce in the Mediterranean. One apparent answer, namely that Byzantine Jews worked in tandem with their fellow Jewish merchants of the Genizah (from Egypt, Tunisia, Muslim Sicily, and Spain), is not borne out by the evidence. This is not to say that Byzantine merchants did not sail to Egypt, where the arrival of foreign traders and ships was keenly noted and deemed important enough to be included by local Jewish merchants in no less than eighteen published Genizah letters of the 11th century.¹⁰⁸ One letter of 1060, from Alexandria to Fustat, observes Byzantine merchants in the Egyptian port as follows:

The Byzantine ships have arrived. At the beginning they (the Byzantines) were active, then they stopped and showed no desire (to buy)... They have no dis-

¹⁰⁶ Jacoby, 1993: 136, and Holo, 2009: 193. The translation used here and throughout this book is by Gil, 2004: 618.

¹⁰⁷ Linder, 1997: 159, no. 340. On this *chrysobull* see Jacoby, 2001a: 5–7, with further references.

¹⁰⁸ Gil, 1997: II, nos. 139, 185, 240; III, nos. 305, 333, 348, 380, 408, 431, 432, 593, 601, 604; IV, nos. 622, 679, 738, 749, 794.

*cernment, the good and the less (good) all at exactly the same price... They have lots of money with them, and they say that more of them will come.*¹⁰⁹

Not a single sign identifies these Byzantine merchants active in Egyptian markets and ports as fellow Jews, so they must have been Christians. With as tight a documentary coverage as the 11th century Genizah, one can for once argue from the silence of the sources: Byzantine-Jewish merchants were not active in the international trade towards Muslim lands, at least not in its best documented period and area.

Rather, they must have been involved in regional and local commerce within the Byzantine Empire. One tantalizingly oblique hint appears in a solemn document issued in 1135 by Emperor Manuel I in favor of the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. It ordered the return to the church of all real estate and assets previously seized for any reason by the government, and exempted it from taxation in the future. The original document, which does not survive, listed the properties. Among the few items preserved is a curious item: *The Strobiliote Jews who are found everywhere; exemption for ships with a capacity of 30,000.*¹¹⁰ Strobilos has been identified as a now totally ruined fortress and port to the southwest of Bodrum/Halicarnassus in southwestern Turkey, incidentally called in modern times Cifut Kalesi, the Jews' Castle. The item in the document refers to rights to which the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople had some title: the right to a tax on the Jews, and exemption on shipping levies. Seafaring Jews from Strobilos, a group of five youth carried by Arab pirates to Alexandria, are indeed reported about one century earlier.¹¹¹ The matter remains clouded, to say the least, for what is one to make of *the Strobiliote Jews who are found everywhere*? If Strobilos Jews and shipping were indeed connected, as has been claimed, this would place Jewish traders in one of the major ports and military bases of the Empire.¹¹² It supplements the 7th century evidence on agents operating out of Constantinople, the image of the Jewish trader in Christian hagiographic sources, the business letter on the hide trade, and the observation of Benjamin of Tudela on many rich merchants among the Jews of the capital.

¹⁰⁹ Gil, 1997: III, 5–6, lines 10–13, no. 305.

¹¹⁰ Starr, 1939: 228, no. 181. I follow the emended reading and geographical identification by Foss, 1990: 164–168.

¹¹¹ Mann, 1920–1922: II, 345; Starr, 1939: 186, no. 128. The deficient reading of the place name has been emended by Starr, 1939: 245, and Holo, 2009: 221, lines 12–14, but see Jacoby, 1998b: 90.

¹¹² Holo, 2009: 159.

There remains one last aspect of Jewish economic pursuits in the Byzantine Empire. One reference, admittedly a single one, leaves no doubt that in one place some Jews made their living by working the land. Benjamin of Tudela reports of *Crissa, where about 200 Jews live apart. They sow and reap on their own land.*¹¹³ In Benjamin's itinerary, Crissa lies a journey of a day and a half from Lepanto and three days' journey from Corinth, that is most likely on the northern shore of the gulf of Corinth.¹¹⁴ As we shall see, the case of a community of peasant Jews, outlandish as it might seem, is not that far removed from the experience of other European Jews of the early Middle Ages. It also complements one central economic characteristic of Byzantine Jewry. Of all the European Jewries, Byzantium provides the most articulate evidence, in place already in Late Antiquity, for a broad occupational range and especially for a continuous and apparently widespread engagement in crafts. The Byzantine state, though no great friend of the Jews, did not marginalize them in their occupations. In the turmoil of the First Crusade of 1097, a Genizah letter reports of the Jews of Thessalonica that they (or the author of the letter) thought the days of the Messiah near, reason enough to behave very differently than they would normally. Thus they considered themselves at last *in great security; free from the poll-tax and levies, they sit garbed in prayer-shawls and do not work.*¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Benjamin of Tudela: 10.

¹¹⁴ Steven Bowman in a personal communication identified Crissa as a town below Delphi (Fokis), with a port further below on the north shore of the Gulf diagonally west of Corinth.

¹¹⁵ Starr, 1939: 205; Sharf, *An Unknown Messiah of 1096 and the Emperor Alexius*, in: Sharf, 1995: 136–147; Holo, 2009: 139.

CHAPTER TWO

ITALY

Italy in the Early Middle Ages was not one political, ethnic, or cultural unit. Between the 6th and the 11th centuries, its different parts were under the rule of at least five entities that usually fought, coexisted uneasily over periods, and at times vanquished each other: Ostrogoths, Byzantines, Langobards, Carolingian Franks, and Arabs.¹ In the later part of the period city-states came into being, and at its very end powerful new players, the Normans, arrived on the scene. The latter succeeded where everyone else had failed, uniting the south and even adding to their dominion Sicily, which had been under Arab rule since the 9th century. In a process that began as early as the 5th century, the northern/central interior and the coastal regions of the peninsula separated into two different entities, the “two Italies”.² This also decisively shaped the history of Jews, warranting a separate treatment of northern and central Italy on one hand, and of the south on the other. The city of Rome occupied an in-between position and stands out for its unbroken continuity of Jewish existence. In this changing political landscape Byzantium remained a constant actor, even though the territorial extent of her Italian dominion underwent considerable changes. Expelled from the north and center of the country, the Empire hung on to large parts of the south where most of Italy’s Jews lived, even extending and buttressing its rule in the 10th to 11th centuries.³ Many scholars have thus viewed the influence of Byzantium as paramount for southern Italian Jewry, and discuss the latter as part of the former.⁴ In this book, southern Italy is treated as part of an Italian story rather than of the Byzantine one, a decision suggested by the moving borders of

¹ For political history see Wickham, 1981, and the concise overview of Pohl, 2002. For a more detailed treatment see the chapters by John Moorhead, Paolo Delogu, T.S. Brown, Giuseppe Sergi, Graham Loud, and Giovanni Tabacco in: *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vols. 1–4.

² See Marazzi, 1998, esp. 152–159.

³ For details see Falkenhausen, 1967, Kreutz, 1991.

⁴ For instance Zimmels, 1966, Sharf, 1971, and especially Starr, 1939, who presents the southern Italian sources as integral part of the Byzantine documentation. I too have expressed something close to this view in Toch, 2005: 549.

Byzantine dominion, the existence of Jewish communities in numerous non-Byzantine places of the South, and the decidedly local character of Jewish economic activity.

The evidence extant from Italy is of a somewhat different nature than in Byzantium or, as we shall see, in Frankish Europe or Spain. After the Patristic period of Late Antiquity, hagiography and religious polemics become less prominent, except for Byzantine Sicily where they abound. Instead, to a degree undreamt of in any other country, there are charters and notarial records, types of sources that give matter-of-fact information on real people.⁵ The present chapter, as the preceding and following ones, opens with demographics, and then moves to economics. It too stops with the later 12th century evidence provided by the traveler Benjamin of Tudela.

People and Communities

As elsewhere, the demographic profile and development of Italian Jews must be seen in the context of their environment. As has been stated on strength of the archaeological record,

At the end of the Roman period (in particular in the 6th and 7th centuries) the towns of northern Italy suffered considerable decline. Many towns disappeared altogether, and those that survived shrank in population and density of settlement.... However, despite considerable decline, towns in this period perhaps fared better in Italy than they did in most other parts of the former Empire. A large number did survive, and the evidence... shows some continuity of occupation and of urban sophistication. Towns survived because they continued to serve as centres for the administration, as a home for the aristocracy and, to some extent, as centres of production and exchange. In the 8th and 9th centuries, as elsewhere, urban life revived. In Italy the revival was particularly widespread and dramatic, probably because the towns had not suffered quite the same decline as they had elsewhere."⁶

Our review of the late antique sources has found a clear preponderance of the south, with a total of 32 places of Jewish habitation in evidence, as compared to the north and center (including Rome) with a mere nine-

⁵ For ecclesiastical sources see Blumenkranz, 1963, and Schreckenberg, 1995. For Sicily see Falkenhausen, 1996: 32–36; and Gebbia, 1996. On Italian charters, *breve*, notarial records, and their early-medieval distribution, preservation and peculiarities see Langeli, 2002.

⁶ Ward-Perkins, 1988: 16.

teen. In both north and south, some more places are documented by uncertain evidence and have not been included in the count.⁷ In only a small minority of locations is there clear continuity of habitation from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages: one or possibly two in the center (Rome and Ravenna), and seven in the south (Bari, Capua, Naples, Oria, Otranto, Taranto, Venosa). The example of Ravenna appears somewhat typical: a sizeable community was present in the late antique town, while its existence in early medieval times is more doubtful, even though this important political and economic hub was surely visited by Jews. Such chronology dovetails with the archaeological record that shows Ravenna in sharp decline by the later 7th century.⁸ Noteworthy is the almost complete absence of Jews from Tuscany, except for Lucca. This economic powerhouse of Italy in the central and later Middle Ages was not attractive or conducive to Jews in Antiquity or in the Early Middle Ages.

Rome, the one significant community in central Italy, is a further example for the close fit of the Jewish and general population curve. All types of sources single out Rome as the oldest community. Literary texts, even though difficult to localize, point back to the first century B.C.E. The Jewish catacombs of Rome, of which at least five have been identified, were in use between the third and the fifth century C.E. They have yielded altogether 587 burials and 13 objects in glass or other non-stone material. Nothing of similar scale is known from any other European region, a sure indication for the importance and dimensions of the Jewish community of Rome in Antiquity. There are no early medieval numbers, but by all signs Rome was continuously inhabited by Jews throughout the Middle Ages, albeit much more sparsely than in Antiquity. This fits the general demographic curve, which has been described as “an irregular but inexorable decline in the 5th and 6th centuries (during which the city may have lost 90% of its inhabitants), a long period of stagnation in the 7th century and the first half of the 8th, and a revival, which gained momentum in the last quarter of the 8th century.”⁹ By the 11th century, a Jewish quarter situated on the island Tiberina and across the river in Trastevere becomes visible but might of course have been in place much longer. This would imply a sizeable community equipped with an ample infrastructure. According to

⁷ See Appendix 2 for a list of places of Jewish residence, the source references, and a place-by-place discussion of the evidence.

⁸ Hodges, 2006: 76–77.

⁹ Whitehouse, 1988: 31. For the city’s “rebirth” in the 8th and 9th centuries see Delogu, 1988.

Benjamin of Tudela, Rome's 200 Jews *occupy an honorable position and pay no tribute*. Outside the city, in Civitavecchia, Porto, Ostia, Jewish life was flourishing in Late Antiquity. Especially noteworthy is the fine synagogue of Ostia, one of altogether two in archaeological evidence from antique Italy. Fitting the general early-medieval retreat of human settlement from outlying areas to the larger centers, there is no later indication for communities surrounding Rome, for instance at Ostia, which had to be totally abandoned in face of repeated Saracen attacks.¹⁰

In addition to Rome, the South was the true focal point of Jewish habitation in late antique as in early medieval Italy.¹¹ In the year 398 Emperor Honorius repealed the exemption from the civic duties (*curial liturgies*) previously granted to Jewish men of religion. His argument was: *We learn that many city-curias totter throughout Apulia and Calabria, because they belong to the Jewish superstition and consider that they should be exempt from the necessity of undergoing liturgies on the strength of some law passed in the regions of the East*.¹² The evidence does not allow us to verify or disprove the claim for such a decisive impact. However, late antique Jewish settlement in these regions, southern Latium, Basilicata, Campania, Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily, was indeed substantial.

The numeral disparity between south and north also holds for the places where Jews first settled during the Middle Ages: 18 in the south as against ten in the north and center. Most of the latter date from the 12th century onwards, while new foundations in the south usually date to the 10th to 11th centuries. Thus for instance, some of the Jewish population in the Lombard principality of Benevento had antique roots, but the majority was of medieval origin, from the 10th century onward. An example for an old settled one would be Venosa, the birthplace of the poet Horace. It possesses an abundance of late antique bilingual funerary epigraphy, in Greek or Latin with some Hebrew and usually datable only by the style of writing. For the 4th to the 6th century, at least seventy-four such epitaphs have been identified in the Jewish catacombs of Venosa. Then there is a hiatus, most probably caused by a change in burial customs rather than by a break in residence. From the first half of the 9th century there is again a large collection of gravestones, located by now in an open-air cemetery, all in Hebrew, mostly dated by reference

¹⁰ See Gelichi, 2002: 170–4.

¹¹ For the complex political history of the south see Kreutz, 1991, and Wickham, 1981: ch. 6.

¹² Linder, 1987: 213, no. 29.

to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, and not yet systematically published. In a story set in the 9th century, Jews of Venosa and of neighboring villages appear in the *Scroll of Ahimaaz*, and the town was the residence of the religious poet R. Silano.¹³ After that and until the 15th century there is no more evidence, a rupture that can possibly be connected to a Jewish population shift within Southern Italy. Initially, the principal south Italian Jewish communities had apparently all been located in Apulia: at Otranto, Taranto, Oria, Bari, and nearby in upper Basilicata at Venosa. But Bari was occupied by Saracens between 847 and 871, Taranto attacked in the 840's, Brindisi in 838; there was a devastating Arab sack of Oria in 925; and in that same decade the Byzantine emperor Romanus Lepacenus began a fierce persecution of Jews in Byzantine territories. A move into Campania thus seems to have begun, to Benevento, Salerno, Capua, and Naples, with even more evidence in the 11th century.¹⁴ This seems to owe to the dislocations by politics and warfare as much as to economically motivated migrations of individual families. The small town of Gravina (between Venosa and Matera), with a dedication inscription of 1184/5 in the synagogue, appears to be the tail end of the movement into smaller towns of the inland south.

Of special interest for our purposes is the coming of Jews to the commercial towns of the South. Gaeta, though an antique town, was settled by Jews only in medieval times. They are mentioned first in a tale of *Ahimaaz* set in the 9th century, which incidentally is the time of the town's first rise as a commercial power, and not again until a charter of the early 12th century.¹⁵ Such sparse presence in a prominent and well-documented trade center is reminiscent of Venice, Genoa and Amalfi. Indeed, Amalfi across the mountainous Sorrentino peninsula was not a Jewish center, despite its meteoric rise as a seafaring power since the 9th century.¹⁶ With all its excellent historical record, between the mid-10th and the later 12th century there are four references altogether, all external, including Benjamin of Tudela on a mere twenty Jews living there. Two documents are Genizah letters that speak of Jews passing through Amalfi or availing themselves of its maritime services. This is similar to the Venetian

¹³ The *Scroll of Genealogies* of Ahimaaz ben Paltiel, completed in 1054 at Oria in Apulia, came to light in the library of Toledo and was first edited in the nineteenth century. We quote according to Bonfil, 2009.

¹⁴ Kreutz, 1991: 86.

¹⁵ On Gaeta's commerce see Citarella, 1993: 267–8.

¹⁶ On Amalfi's politics see Kreutz, 1991: 75–93, on its commerce Citarella, 1967, 1968, and 1993: 273–81.

case, a purely commercial city that did not harbor Jews. In contrast, in the antique metropolis Naples there are recurring references to Jews in both archaeological and literary sources, until the late 6th century. This again fits a general trend: "Naples remained an urban community throughout the Dark Ages, . . . and continued to receive imports, from north Africa, Gaza and other parts of the Mediterranean, . . . however in steadily declining quantities between c400 and c 650".¹⁷ Jews and their quarter are mentioned again, by reliable and variegated evidence, from the 10th century onward. By the time of Benjamin of Tudela, the large number of 500 Jews lived there. This ranks Naples together with Salerno and Otranto as one of the largest communities in mainland Italy.

Salerno, just 22 km down the coastal road from Amalfi, provides the most detailed picture of the medieval establishment of Jewish life. This Roman town fell into disuse and had to be re-founded by the Lombard duke of Benevento in the second half of the 8th century. Not long afterwards, from the 840s onwards, persons that were possibly Jewish appear in charters concerning land sales. Witnesses and other persons are mentioned by proper names that sound Jewish, even though the entire onomastic environment is one of Germanic names. First a *Jacob* appears, in 843 and twice in 848. In 848 there is also *Joseph, son of Jacob*. Between 848 and 856 a *Iosep medicus* invested considerable sums of money to acquire exceptionally large tracts of land. Before 865 a *Josueb medicus*, surely the same man and perhaps the before-mentioned *son of Jacob*, conveyed land to a church. If he was Jewish before, he had by now converted. In 872 a piece of land is described as *bordering on Rebecca*. In the 10th century the ambivalence is gone, and people are clearly designated, still in property deeds, as *Josep ebreus* or *Leonti hebrey*. By the end of the century the Jewish quarter, *iudaica*, is a concept stable enough to serve as orientation for the property rights of neighbors. Surely, all this signifies more than a few Jews. Indeed, Benjamin of Tudela counted 600 in Salerno, the greatest number in all of mainland Italy and three times that of Rome.

The island of Sicily had a sizeable Jewish population in late antiquity, as indicated by epitaphs, tomb decorations and other finds that are the widest-ranging from all of Italy besides Rome. This is supported for the end of the 6th century by the extensive correspondence of pope Gregory I the Great, which also points to Jews living in the countryside. In stark contrast to this richness, there is no further evidence until the Arab

¹⁷ Whitehouse, 1988: 31. See also Arthur, 1991.

conquest of the island (827 to 878) except for two hagiographic stories, one set in mid-7th century Syracuse and the other in later 8th-century Catania. In Muslim Sicily, a Jewish presence is attested for Agrigento, Castrogiovanni (Enna), Valdemone, Mazara del Vallo, Messina, Palermo, Ragusa, Sciacca, Syracuse, and Trapani. There is abundant evidence in the Cairo Genizah for migration to and from Arab Sicily and for manifold contacts with Spain, North Africa, and the Middle East, mostly Egypt but also further to the east.¹⁸ By the first half of the 11th century the vast majority of Sicilian Jewry, if not all of it, was Arabic speaking. Towards the end of the Muslim period, at least a part fled to Muslim lands and especially to Egypt, where they established a veritable *émigré* community. However, sizeable numbers appear to have stayed on after the Norman conquest, in all larger towns as well as in smaller rural places. According to Benjamin of Tudela, in the later 12th century Messina had 200 Jews and Palermo an astounding 1500, more than double the numbers of Naples, Otranto and Salerno, the largest communities on the mainland. For the other larger isles, Sardinia and Malta, a late antique Jewish presence is well attested, but nothing later except for a gold ring with Hebrew inscription of uncertain medieval date, found in Macomer in western central Sardinia.

Our examination has found a significant difference, in favor of the South, in the extent and quality of documentation. Notaries' records with reference to Jews are extant only from the South and from Lucca in Tuscany, even though such documents were written and preserved in many northern places, such as Pisa, Milan, Piacenza, Verona, Bergamo, Pavia, Asti, Pistoia, and Ravenna.¹⁹ In contrast, in some towns of the North one typically has no more than a single hagiographic reference, burdened with a huge question mark of reliability inherent in such type of sources. This disparity leads to a tentative methodological conclusion, namely that the absence or presence of records is not merely a matter of chance survival of information that must have been there but somehow got lost, as some scholars would have it.²⁰ This would assume a self-evident existence of Jewish communities, unless otherwise proven. With all necessary caution, the total lack of references or the sole existence of a polemical ecclesiastical source should rather be understood to reflect the lack of a Jewish presence, at least of a significant and stable

¹⁸ Goitein, 1971a; Ben-Sasson, 1991; Gil, 1995; Simonsohn, 1997.

¹⁹ Langeli, 2002: 206.

²⁰ See my debate with Friedrich Lotter: Toch, 2001, 2001a; Lotter, 2001, 2004, 2004a, 2006. On this matter, I also take issue with Blumenkranz, 1977.

one. Compared to Byzantium, the low rate of continuity from Antiquity to the Middle Ages indicates a considerable difference in the permanence of Jewish habitation.²¹ Altogether, the number of communities everywhere in Italy is small, much smaller than in Byzantium. The church reformer Peter Damian (1007–1072), who spent all his life in Italy, remarked in the prologue to his polemic “Against the Jews” (1040–1041) that writing such a treatise is barely worth the effort, as *the Jews are now almost deleted from the face of the earth*.²²

For population numbers, the only one to convey some figures is Benjamin of Tudela in the later 12th century, which we understand to mean numbers of households rather than of individuals.²³ They are, in geographical order of his journey: Genoa 2, Pisa 20, Lucca 40, Rome 200, Capua 300, Naples 500, Salerno 600, Amalfi 20, Benevento 200, Melfi 200, Ascoli 40, Trani 200, Taranto 300, Brindisi 10, Otranto 500, Messina 200, Palermo 1500. The list can be supplemented for Catania, where a document of the year 1145 lists 24 Jewish families all bearing Arabic names and belonging to the local church, together with 525 villains, 94 widows, 23 Negro slaves, and 8 blind men. Since the bishop appears again some years later as lord of the Jews of Catania, it stands to reason that the ones enumerated in 1145 were indeed all the Jews of the town.²⁴ Thus, for population numbers too the North and Rome are clearly eclipsed by the South, but southern communities were not uniformly large. Some numbered a few dozen, some a few hundreds, and the largest many hundreds. Palermo is clearly outstanding, a result of its particular bloom under Arab rule. Benjamin numbers add up to altogether 4832. Taking into account a few places not visited by him in the North and on the eastern seaboard, opting for his numbers to mean families or households rather than (male adult) individuals, and assuming a high ratio of eight persons per household (alternatively a low one of four), his total can reasonably be rounded up to about twenty to forty thousand individuals.²⁵ Such dimensions attained for the very end

²¹ For visual confirmation of this finding see map B VI 18 of Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Teil B. Geschichte, eds. Horst Kopp & Wolfgang Röllig.

²² Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani, Teil 1, 1983: 66, no. 1. I owe this reference to my friend Alexander Patschovsky of Munich. Cf. David Berger, St. Peter Damian: His Attitude toward the Jews and the Old Testament, in: Yavneh Review 4 (1965), 80–112.

²³ Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 6–15. For a discussion of Benjamin's figures see below, note 25.

²⁴ Simonsohn, 1997: 395–6, 421–2, nos. 173, 187.

²⁵ On strength of Benjamin of Tudela, a total of 40 000 is given by Milano, 1977: 627, and by Baron, 1957: IV, 24. For a thorough discussion of the different opinions on Benjamin's numbers see Holo, 2009: 29, note 17. Most scholars, this author included, opt for house-

of our period, when the Jewish population, as indeed the general one, was clearly on the rise again. Families in the South were large, as witnessed by a tax document of 1041 from Capua that lists two groups of adult male Jews united by parenthood and the possession of common property. One is made up of eight descendants of the same ancestor, *Judas*, divided over three generations and regrouped as a father and his cousins, the sons of brothers. The other group consists of four descendents of an ancestor called *Dunissus*, grouped in two generations of parallel patrilineal cousins. Amongst the first was also, as in so many places all over Europe, the son of a certain Jonas *who has become a Christian*, which begs the question of the demographic impact of apostasy.²⁶

There are no reliable population totals for the late antique period to which these admittedly spotty and late figures could be compared. Some eminent scholars have put forward immense numbers, running into millions. The maximalist view on ancient Jewish population has a long history and is tied to more complex issues, such as the conviction that Jews were aggressively proselytizing.²⁷ It has lately aroused strong disagreement, both for its historical assumptions and its methodology.²⁸ The sources available simply do not allow a trustworthy appreciation of antique population numbers, certainly not the high ones current in scholarship. Given even a catastrophic decrease of the Jewish population under the tribulations of the early Middle Ages, it is difficult to see how the dimensions apparent in our sources, communities mostly running from a few dozen to some hundred families, can be squared with the order of magnitude postulated for the late Roman period. The conclusion would be that to begin with, the Jewish population of late antique Italy, including Rome, must have been smaller than generally assumed. This fits with a recent

holds rather than individuals, but note that Jacoby, 2008: 160, prefers adult individuals to families. In a case study from 15th century Germany I have arrived at the high household multiplier of 10 persons (male and female). But there governmental limitations on the purchase of houses accounted for a higher population density of Jews than of the general population. Also, most Jewish households included service personnel, again to a much higher degree than non-Jewish ones, see Toch, 1980.

²⁶ Codice diplomatico Verginiano, 1977: I, 180–2, no. 47. For an attempt to disentangle the confusing document see Taviani-Carozzi, 1994: 276.

²⁷ Juster, 1914: I, 209–212; Baron, 1972; Feldman, 1993, 1995, 2003; and most recently Bowman, 2006. For a more reasonable but still large estimate for the city of Rome—15 to 40 000 rather than the 30 to 60 000 current in the literature—see Solin, 1983: 698–701 and note 240.

²⁸ Rutgers, 1995; Wasserstein, 1996; Monfrin, 2000; McGing, 2002. For the historiographical context see Kraabel, 1982, aptly titled “The Roman Diaspora: six questionable assumptions”.

intriguing hypothesis on a linguistic-cultural separation that developed in Late Antiquity between Eastern Rabbinical and Western Biblical Judaism. In this process, the Western Diaspora was left without ties to the new centers of Judaism, and might as a consequence have largely assimilated into the Christian community.²⁹ At the end of this book we shall propose a complementary explanation derived from environmental history (below, Part II, Ch. 8a).

Economic Pursuits

Despite the wealth of epigraphic material, especially from Rome, the evidence on Jewish economics in late antique Italy is abysmally poor, much poorer than in the Eastern Empire. Why so very few people saw reason to commemorate their own or their relatives' occupations in grave inscriptions remains obscure. What there is cannot in any sense be taken to be representative. From 3rd–4th century Rome, there are the epitaphs of a chief doctor, a sausage-maker from the market, a trader, and a painter; from late 4th–early 5th century Concordia a soldier from the troop of the *royal Emesene Jews*; and from 5th century Venosa yet another chief doctor.³⁰ Literary evidence is even more testing. Jewish soothsayers in Rome are mentioned in a Satire of Juvenal, scarcely an objective observer. An innkeeper at the Tuscan port of Faleria affords the archconservative author Claudius Rutilius Namatianus the opportunity to lament a pagan Rome quietly vanquished by the Jews (which by some other opinion actually mean the Church). Again in a polemical vein, Claudian refers to Jews that produce painted tapestries. Amongst the Catholic writers, Ambrosius likens the heretic Arian Christians to Jewish innkeepers, who mix wine with water.³¹ Of legal sources mention has already been made of an oblique reference of 339 in the Theodosian law code, on female workers in an imperial weaving establishment as the object of the attentions of some Jews.³² If this is indeed evidence for a Jewish involvement in the textile business,

²⁹ Edrei & Mendels, 2007.

³⁰ Noy, 1995: nos. 341, 343, 360, 227; Noy, 1993: 6, 76.

³¹ Juvenal, Satire 6:547, in: Juvenal, 1992: 56; Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, 1972: I:381–398; Claudian invectiva in Eutropium, I:354–8, in: Claudianus, 1985: 157; Ambrosius, De fide 3:10:65, in: Ambrosius, 2005: II, 405. There the translator suggests that Ambrosius might have taken his anti-Jewish metaphor from Athanasius of Alexandria.

³² CTh.16.8.6 = Linder, 1987: 144–151, no. 11. There also a consideration of the addressee and time of issue of this law.

the location of that enterprise, most probably either in Constantinople or in Rome, remains open.

The pitiful state of the evidence has led to some ingenious attempts to solve the contradiction between a purportedly robust presence of Jews and the dearth of information. One approach is to argue from the artistic quality of archaeological remains to the social and thus occupational profile of Roman Jews. As expected, the result is uneven. By some opinion, the larger number of scrawled and poorly written burial inscriptions and graffiti would imply that most Jews were relatively poor, indeed proletarian. There are, however, some very elegant and well-written inscriptions, indicating an affluent layer of the Jewish population of Rome.³³ Such contradictions are also apparent in the more extensive evidence of pope Gregory's I epistles, at the very end of the 6th century. In a sense, Gregory matches the epigraphy from the city of Rome in indicating a pattern of varied social standing and occupations. Jews appear in substantial numbers as *coloni* on papal lands in Sicily, but also as possessors of estates worked by Christian dependants in Etruria; as a buyer of precious metal and plate; as a ship owner heavily in debt and deprived of his vessel in Palermo; as some individuals moving between Marseille and Rome on their business, probably as merchants; and some settled in Naples, acting on one occasion as purveyors of slaves from Gaul for officials in their town.³⁴ Also in Naples, some Jews evidently had access to foodstuffs on a large-scale. When Byzantine forces under Belisarius besieged (and eventually conquered) the city in 536, Jews not only participated whole-heartedly in its defense, but are also reported to have promised to take care of provisions so *that it shall lack nothing*.³⁵

These sources have been utilized to suggest some elaborate economic functions in late-antique Italy. Lellia Cracco-Ruggini linked the evidence on Naples with the one Palermitan ship-owner to present "great outfitters of ships" and "ship-owners with almost a complete monopoly for interregional transport of agricultural produce", all in the plural. Jews not only played the part of "the living spirit and financiers of the resistance of Naples against Belisarius". Organized in "colonies", they also "infiltrated" the commerce in the agricultural produce of the South in order to supply

³³ Kant, 1987: 690; Solin, 1983: 715.

³⁴ Gregory I, Epistles 2:38, 5:7, 8:23, 4:21, 1:45, 6:29, 9:105 = Linder, 1997: 423, 428–9, 432–3, 426–7, 418–9, 429–31, 436–8, nos. 707, 712, 715, 710, 703, 713, 718; Gregory I, Epistle 9:40, MGH Epistola II: 68.

³⁵ Procopius of Caesarea, 1966: 85, ch. i.8.

the intricate system of yearly food deliveries (*annona*) to the capital Rome: "To a certain part the enterprise of furnishing the State [with foodstuffs] was assumed by Jews". Not content with this, "the traffic in slaves became the monopoly of the Jewish traders of peninsular Italy." The evidence for this last statement is found in "countless" epistles of pope Gregory I.³⁶ Of the actual eight letters adduced, six are irrelevant, as they merely touch on Jews possessing house slaves. Two refer to the purchase of domestic slaves as well as to a single case of slave trade by Jews of Naples. Whether this one documented instance warrants the sweeping conclusions of a trade monopoly is to be doubted. This is not the only scholar to argue from inconclusive evidence for a dominant share of Jews in the Italian economy. In the second (1987) edition of the magisterial *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, Roberto Sabatino Lopez would claim that "Jews, Greeks and Syrians still dominated commerce in Italy under the Ostrogoths".³⁷

For the South, commercial engagement has also been postulated on strength of the geographical pattern of Jewish settlement "prevalently in the maritime cities and along the great roads of communication, in particular the Via Appia".³⁸ However, a sizeable number of the places adduced had no Jews at all in Antiquity, thus weakening the argument for a significant share in trade. A related problem besets the question of large-scale landholding, which has been claimed as the major proof for a high social standing of Jews. There is indeed some evidence for landed property of Jews, mainly from the pen of Pope Gregory I. Further references, like the law of Emperor Honorius quoted above, and epigraphic sources reinforce the impression that Jewish notables in fact existed in late antique Italian towns, if not in the North as stated then surely in the South. That their related social rank was grounded in extensive landed possessions cannot be argued from the mere fact that Jews possessed slaves,³⁹ an everyday feature for people of even modest means in Late Antiquity. Slave-holding simply does not equate the possession of *latifundia*. Considering all these *caveats*, the most one can say is that evidently Jews were engaged in a broad spectrum of occupations—trade, crafts, landholding, even working the lands of others. Details and main tendencies are impossible to

³⁶ Cracco-Ruggini, 1959: 234–6, 238, and note 131; Cracco-Ruggini, 1961: 312; Cracco-Ruggini, 1964: 952.

³⁷ Lopez, 1987: 324.

³⁸ Falkenhausen, 1996: 28.

³⁹ This point has been systematically argued by Friedrich Lotter, especially 2004a.

establish, and there is no support for elaborate theories that credit Jews with outstanding economic functions.

In the Middle Ages, evidence for the three main economic pursuits—landholding, crafts, and trade—sets in by the 9th century. The possession of agricultural holdings figures in the earliest sources, both in the north (Asti, Lucca) and in the south (Venosa, Oria, and Salerno).⁴⁰ In the second half of the 10th century there are further references in the territories of Ancona and Treviso, then more around Lucca at the turn of the century.⁴¹ During the 11th century such possessions are mentioned again near Lucca, and in the south in Taranto, Caiazzo (north of Naples) and Palermo, in the 12th century in Terlizzi (Apulia) and again in Palermo.⁴² In other words, wherever Jews lived, there was a good chance that some would possess or lease some land, besides the urban plots that are much more in evidence. Given the loose topography of early-medieval towns, there is no contradiction between a predominantly urban life style and landholding, for Jews as for many more non-Jews. A property acquired in Palermo in 1161 by Yaqub, son of the “old” Fadlun b. Salah, held a vineyard with two fields, a water source, a house, and a tower.⁴³ The location on the outskirts of town indicates that this was essentially a suburban villa. Something similar, gardens and orchards purchased by a Jew, is mentioned in the same town Palermo already more than a hundred years earlier. This must not have meant that the owner was necessarily a farmer, as has been surmised on strength of this document.⁴⁴ In Terlizzi, the possessions mentioned above consisted of a garden, a vineyard, and a smallholding. On such properties, smaller animals could and would usually be raised. The *two pairs of good tubes of the best goat-skin, of the best that can be found in the same Jewish quarter*, demanded in 1031 as part of the yearly lease of a well within the Jewish quarter of Salerno, might have come from such a source.⁴⁵ On the other hand, they might as well have been purchased on the market. Most common were vineyards near town, as in the *Scroll of*

⁴⁰ Asti: Colorni, 1980: 247 and note 20; Lucca: Luzzati, 1999: 23; Venosa and Oria: Bonfil, 2009: 256, 308; Salerno: Codex diplomaticus Cavensis, I, nos. 29, 39, 47, 61. For the literary working of the rustic atmosphere in Venosa see Bonfil, 1987: 14–16.

⁴¹ Ancona, Lucca: Colorni, 1980: 256–8; Treviso: Die Urkunden Otto des II. und Otto des III., vol. 2/2, 1883: 520, no. 109.

⁴² Starr, 1939: nos. 137, 138; Colorni, 1980: 257–8; Colafemmina, 2001: 40; Codice diplomatico Barese: III, nos. 49, 53, 87; Simonsohn, 1997: 418–20, no. 185.

⁴³ Simonsohn, 1997: 418–20, no. 185; Bresc, 2001: 33.

⁴⁴ By Gil, 2004: 583. The document in Gil, 1997: II, no. 238.

⁴⁵ Codex diplomaticus Cavensis V, no. 841, p. 211–2.

Ahimaaz, where Amittai b. Shefatiyah of Oria, ancestor of the writer, *one day went out to his vineyard and to his estate (or hereditary possession, in Hebrew nahala)*.⁴⁶

There is no direct indication for trade in agricultural products. Still, in one case in early 11th century Taranto, one can sense a purpose that might go beyond the household supply of some self-grown wine. A man called Theophylaktos (in Hebrew Chimaria = Shemaryah) purchased a plot of two vineyards, from no less than the sons of the count of Taranto. Some years later he completed the transaction with the acquisition, from the same sellers, of yet another adjacent plot of the same size.⁴⁷ A more substantial property, located further away from town at a distance of about 12 km, appears in a lease contracted in 1003 by a Jew in Lucca. Clearly an economic enterprise, it consisted of two homesteads with their courtyards, vegetable gardens, vineyards, olives, and chestnut trees. All this had been previously held by the lessee's father and worked for him in a sharecropping arrangement by others, apparently non-Jews.⁴⁸ The lease was of the same advantageous type, called *livellaria*, that was used by landlords in the south to attract cultivators to their holdings abandoned in the turmoil of the Arab attacks.⁴⁹ There is thus a range of possibilities in the economic use of landed property. Most prevalent was surely the home supply of produce, most commonly wine. This is of course connected to the production of kosher wine, which required that Jews carry out some of the work.

By far the most important employment was in the textile branch. A first indication can be found in a document, already mentioned, of Salerno in 1031, where the yearly lease of a well was to be paid for by *two pairs of good tubes of the best goat-skin* as well as by *one good belt of pure silk as is appropriate*.⁵⁰ Another lease in Salerno, of a building plot in 1056, stipulates in addition to a money payment the yearly delivery *as it is custom, of a good belt*.⁵¹ Though not explicitly of silk, it is described as a *good Jewish belt*, probably by then a fixed term that can be connected to the silk belt of 1031. Jews in Salerno thus most likely had a hand in the working of silk. A second craft, expressively mentioned in a number of places, is the dyeing of textiles, either silk or some other material. Again, Salerno provides

⁴⁶ Bonfil, 2009: 308.

⁴⁷ Starr, 1939: 194, nos. 137, 138.

⁴⁸ Colorni, 1980: 257.

⁴⁹ Citarella & Willard, 1996: 74–75.

⁵⁰ Codex diplomaticus Cavensis V, no. 841, p. 211–2.

⁵¹ Codex diplomaticus Cavensis VII, no. 1231, p. 298.

clear indications. In 1121 duke William of Apulia confirmed an earlier conveyance of the Jews of Salerno to the archbishop. On that occasion, he instituted, or endorsed, their monopoly of work as dyers and butchers. *That no person shall dare to work or sell dye-work in the city of Salerno and its dependencies or keep a butchery for the slaughtering of four-legged animals, except for the Jews of the above-mentioned archbishop.* This is the only unambiguous indication for Jewish butchers, even though many more should have served their communities, at least the larger ones, as we know from other places and later times. We shall propose a solution to this puzzle at the end of this book (below, Part II, ch. 7c). The concession, including the monopoly clause, was again endorsed in 1221 by Emperor Frederick II. At that point an additional clause was inserted: *Also their [the Jews'] dye-works in our city of Salerno, which is called Caballa, with our walking machine and all that belongs to it, the building and other things belonging to that dyeing and walking establishment.*⁵² Jewish dye-works are also mentioned in 11th century Benevento and in Amalfi, but these references are doubtful.⁵³ In Gaeta the evidence is straightforward: in 1129 the town people wanted to secure their part in the profits of a dyeing establishment operated by Jews as well as from *other of their craft*.⁵⁴ Some forty years later Benjamin of Tudela found ten dyers in Brindisi, actually all the Jews in that place. The only Jews he met in Genoa, two north-African brothers, were also dyers.⁵⁵ The number of Jewish silk-workers in Sicily was considerably augmented when in 1147 the Normans raided Corfu, Cephallonia, Thebes, Corinth, and further down the Greek coast, kidnapping the silk weavers in these places, including the Jews of Thebes, and settling them in Palermo.⁵⁶ In the following centuries, many more Jews active in the textile crafts and silk production are met in southern Italy. This pattern of slow beginnings and then quick extension is one we have already encountered in western Byzantium. It can probably be explained by an upturn in the industry that began in the 11th century in response to

⁵² Pergamene Salernitane, 1941: 57–59, no. 12; Marongiu, 1937: 257 and notes 1, 2.

⁵³ Benevento: Milano, 1954: 89, quoting I. Borgia, *Memorie storiche della pontificia città di Benevento*, Roma 1763–9, II, 265; Amalfi: Camera: I, 348; II, 699. The phrase in question in Amalfi is read by Colafemmina, 1995: 171, note 20, as *tintoria pannorum* (dye-works of cloths), not as *tintoria Hebreorum* (dye-works of the Jews).

⁵⁴ Codex diplomaticus Cajetanus: 240–242, no. 377.

⁵⁵ Brindisi: Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 9. In Adler's English translation, the Genoa entry lacks the word *dyers*. However, two manuscripts variants noted in his Hebrew text clearly have *two Jewish brothers dyers*: Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 5 and Hebrew pagination p. 5, note 37.

⁵⁶ See above, chapter I, note 93.

expanding internal Byzantine demand and was followed about a century later by a similar demand in the West.⁵⁷ Still, all this does not yet amount to the bold statements that “In Salerno, the Jews monopolized . . . the dyeing and weaving industries . . .” “In Amalfi, the manufacture of silk and woolen brocades and dyed cloths—eagerly sought after, for they were considered to be equal to the finest Venetian wares—was begun by Jews in the 10th century”. “At Catanzaro, long an important seat of industry, they are said to have begun silk-manufacture about 1072”.⁵⁸ In the sources scrutinized above, there is qualified support for the case of Salerno, none for the rest of these sweeping assertions.

Jewish physicians were plentiful in Italy, as in other parts of Europe. The best known was probably Sabbatai Donnolo, born 913 at Oria, who according to his own testimony was abducted in 925 by Saracens, his *parents and relatives exiled in Palermo and in Ifriqia*, while he *remained in a land under the Roman king*. Sabbatai was later redeemed in Taranto, traveled widely, became a leading physician, astrologer and philosopher, and died after 982. He was probably the one actually existing Jew to enter Christian hagiography, in a tale on St. Nikos whom he met in Rossano. Donnolo offered the saint a medicine to support the extreme rigors of his asceticism, but the latter refused, preferring faith in God to the science of the Jewish physician.⁵⁹ We shall have further occasion to query the function ascribed in Christian hagiography to Jewish doctors, especially when they are counterpoised to practitioners of austere rigor. Another native of Oria was Moses ben Elazar, who was also kidnapped in 925 to Tunisia. He rose to a prominent position in the Fatimid court as physician to caliph Al-Mu’izz and his two subsequent successors.⁶⁰ Yet another contemporary was Abraham b. Sasson, a physician and prominent communal figure in Bari, who is reported to have organized a Jewish posse on horseback to apprehend a band of thieves.⁶¹ A *Iosep medicus* is amongst the earliest of a number of people who might have been Jewish in mid-9th century Salerno. Yet another Salernitan doctor some hundred and

⁵⁷ Jacoby, 1991: 499.

⁵⁸ Roth, 1946: 86. Ashtor, 1980: 423, makes a similar assertion for the towns of Calabria. The statement by Roth on Amalfi derives from Camera (above, note 53), the one on Catanzaro from V. d’Amato, *Memorie storiche della Citta di Catanzaro*, Napoli 1670, 19, the one of Ashtor on Calabria from Dito, 1916: 63. Roth later revised his opinion on Amalfi: Roth, 1966a: 110.

⁵⁹ Shabbetai Donnolo, 1993: 3. Cf. Sharf, 1976.

⁶⁰ Goitein, 1967: vol. II, 243.

⁶¹ Mann 1931: I, 25–26; Golb & Pritsak, 1982: 88 note 44.

fifty years later was clearly so, as was one in Capua.⁶² Even though by the late 10th century Jewish doctors were unquestionably practicing at Salerno, they were not the ones who founded the town's famous medical school. In the later 12th century, Benjamin of Tudela mentions in Salerno, *where the Christians have a school of medicine*, about 600 Jews but no physicians. The nearest one lived not far away in Amalfi.⁶³

Italy was the keystone of medieval European commerce, thanks to her central position both in the Mediterranean basin and on the continent. Its principal role is well established for the period of the "Commercial Revolution", roughly from 1050 onwards. A lead in trade also holds for earlier times, for the same geographical reasons and for the fact that Italy had retained a much higher level of urban life than any other European country.⁶⁴ Did Italian Jews share in that leading role in commerce? Were they as heavily involved in international trade as claimed by most scholars? If this were the case, the broader argument for a decisive Jewish involvement in early medieval trade in the Mediterranean and beyond would be considerably strengthened.

The evidence for Jewish merchants is far from clear-cut. The earliest piece of evidence, the Capitulary of Pavia legislated in 832 by the Frankish King Lothair for the Italian Kingdom, has been thought to contain a clause *similarly on the Jews who for the sake of commerce move their belongings from one of their houses to another and to the places where the courts or the army assemble*. This would indeed constitute clear cut evidence on Jews traveling for the sake of commerce to the gatherings of the elite. However, the whole clause is but a faulty copy from an earlier piece of legislation (Thionville 805), where the critical word *Jews* is lacking.⁶⁵ We shall see further instances of manuscript texts thought to refer to Jews that eventually turn out to have been misread. Still, in the North in the 9th century there might have been Jewish merchants visiting Ravenna and Pavia, as seen above. Similarly in the South, where the *Scroll of Ahimaaz* portrays for

⁶² Codex diplomaticus Cavensis: IV, 46 no. 567; Codice diplomatico Verginiano, 1977: I, 180–3, no. 47.

⁶³ Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 8–9.

⁶⁴ For the "commercial revolution" see Lopez, 1976. For earlier periods see Lopez, 1987: 324–30; the articles by Zug Tucci, Ortalli, Bocchi, Settia, Citarella and Bresc, in: *Mercati e mercanti*, 1993; and Claude, 1985a. But see the cautionary note on 8th and 9th century towns in the Po valley by Balzaretto, 1996.

⁶⁵ MGH, Leges I, 1835: 363, cap. 19. The revised edition of the Capitulary in MGH, *Capitularia regum Francorum* II, 1897: 59–63, lacks the entire clause, a further sign that the text of the 1835 edition was not an integral one. Blumenkranz, 1960: 350, note 269, was the first to point to this confusion.

roughly the same time two brothers *away in Benevento on their business*, when their third brother suddenly died.⁶⁶ Around 840 a Jew was asked in Ravenna to evaluate a precious piece of jewelry and gold working. His qualification for the delicate task was his thorough acquaintance with the church treasure of Ravenna, as well as having earlier supplied Emperor Charles with such objects. This was obviously no craftsman, but a dealer, however one with intimate knowledge of the profession. It stands to reason that the Emperor was Charlemagne, his court the one north of the Alps, and the time between the Emperor's coronation of 800 and his death in 814.⁶⁷ This would make our merchant the only Italian one on record, Jewish or non-Jewish, with a truly transalpine range of business connections, not a very plausible prospect. We shall have further opportunity to see the association of Jews with the memory of Charlemagne, in Italy and elsewhere.⁶⁸ Other texts adduced for this period as evidence have been plainly misread, for instance the "many Jewish merchants" allegedly found in 878 in Sicilian Syracuse by the Muslim conquerors.⁶⁹ A further question mark is raised by the famous 9th century text of Ibn-Khordadbeh on the *Radhanites* (see below, Part II, Chapter 6c). These Jewish merchants, inter-continental traders *par excellence*, have now conclusively been proven to be of Oriental rather than of European origin.⁷⁰ In all probability, none of their many routes passed through or touched Italy.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Bonfil, 2009: 282. Actually, the words *la-assot malahtam* can be understood either way, more generally as *in way of their business or occupation* or specifically as *working their craft*. The present context suggests the former.

⁶⁷ Agnelli... *liber pontificalis*: 372, cap. 143. It is unlikely that the Emperor in question was Charles the Bald, whose kingship began in 840 at the age of 17, his emperorship not before the year 875. This leaves Charlemagne, with no less chronological problems. The man's connection to the court might refer to Charlemagne's Italian sojourns, even though they are much too early, as for instance in Pavia, where he crowned himself king in 774 and met the scholar Alcuin in 781, or in Monte Cassino which he visited in 787. Charlemagne also stayed in Rome in the same years, and again for his imperial coronation in 800.

⁶⁸ See Aryeh Graboïs, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans les textes hébraïques médiévaux*, in: *Le moyen âge* 72 (1966), 5–41.

⁶⁹ Ashtor, 1980: 405–6. Actually, all the text mentions is the author's and others' imprisonment by the Muslims, amongst them *Ethiopians, Tarsians, Hebrews, Lombards, and some Christians, including the bishop of Malta*. The word *merchant* does not appear in the text and has been supplied by Ashtor. The source quoted is *Theodosii monachi atque grammatici, Epistola de espugnatione siracusarum*, in: L. Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, I/ 2 (Milan, 1735), 264°.

⁷⁰ The text: Gil, 2004: 618. For the full literature on this source and its problems see Ch. Pellat, al-Radhaniya, in: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., VIII: 363–367; and Gil, 2004: 615–637.

⁷¹ Thus Ben-Sasson, 1984: 35–36. Differently Gil, 1974: 310, who understands the term *Firanja* to mean "that part of Italy which was under Frankish rule", rather than *Francia*. See

In the 10th century, there are a few individuals clearly mentioned as active in trade, such as *Mar Eliyahu of Otranto*, a student and owner of merchandise, or, on the outskirts of Bisignano, a *Hebrew* returning from business, who had *his ass with its load seized by a ruffian and was killed*.⁷² A piece of legislation from Treviso (905) is ambivalent. It envisages *Jews who would wish to exercise there their commerce*, but further reiterations in 991 and 1014 suggest that for over a century this expectation might not yet have been realized.⁷³ The wording makes it clear that once again Jews are expected to act alongside Christian merchants.

Venice, by the 10th century an aspiring commercial and maritime power, supplies evidence that Jews were indeed seen as commercial competition on the sea route to Constantinople and therefore repeatedly banned from using Venetian vessels. A first piece of legislation, now lost, was issued in 945, and repeated in 960. In 992, a Golden Bull of the Byzantine emperors to the city strictly prohibited such ventures under Venetian flag: *And these Venetians shall bring on their ships under the privilege no one of those that have commerce with Constantinople, such as Amalfitans, Jews, Lombards, [those] from the city of Bari, and others, but they shall bring only their merchandise*.⁷⁴ On the other hand, a key document from Pavia in northern Italy, the *Honorantie Civitatis Papae*, lists all imaginable sources of income to the authorities: dues owed by merchants coming into Italy over the Alps; the special gifts owed to officials and the palace of Pavia by the king of England and the duke of Venice; the percentage payable to minters of Pavia and Milan in return for striking coin and their tolls owed to the palace; even the taxes of the gold-panners of the rivers of northern Italy and of the fishermen, leatherworkers and soap makers of Pavia.⁷⁵ On Jews not a single word, as taxpayers or in any other capacity. This is clear negative evidence that they played no significant role on the land routes of Lombardy converging on Pavia, the commercial and political hub of the North.

In the 11th century, the evidence on trade is again anything but straightforward. At the beginning of the century, a Genizah letter was sent by

however Bernard Lewis, Ifrandj, in: *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., III: 1044a: "the name, which probably reached the Muslims via the Byzantines, was originally used of the inhabitants of the empire of Charlemagne, and later extended to Europeans in general."

⁷² Klar, 1974: 49; Life of St. Nilos in Starr, 1939: 161, no. 105. On Nilos and the Jews see Colafemmina, 1989.

⁷³ Linder, 1997: 375–77, 384–5, 387, nos. 602, 606, 607.

⁷⁴ 960: Tafel & Thomas, 1856: I, 20, no. 13; 992: Linder, 1997: 159, no. 340.

⁷⁵ Brühl & Violante, 1983.

a young man, most probably from Egypt. He was a professional scribe stemming from Italy, whose native city cannot have been far away from Amalfi and was perhaps Benevento.⁷⁶ The lad had traveled via Amalfi and Palermo to Alexandria, ostensibly in search of reputed teachers, but also carrying some merchandise with him. He was clearly not a professional, but nevertheless moved in a commercial environment. His fellow travelers, with whom he was eventually shipwrecked, were all traders. A similar setting is present in a story of the 11th century *Scroll of Ahimaaz*, placed circa 850–60 in Bari, where the hero, the charismatic sage and wonder-worker Abu Aaron the Babylonian, decides to return home to the east: *Then he went to the city of Bari which is situated on the coast—the metropolis which is built facing the sea. . . . He went down to the sea, searched in all directions and found a cockboat ready to sail for overseas. He immediately boarded and sat within it and the boat swiftly began to sail.* Coincidentally or not, this 11th century tale bears an uncanny resemblance to a contemporary story on St. Nikon of Naples, who was instructed by a vision to board the first ship he met.⁷⁷ A real-life sea voyage is described in a second Genizah letter of ca. 1050, this time by a professional merchant from Alexandria who journeyed from Egypt to Tunisia, with a stop scheduled in Amalfi, where he planned to sell pepper and other Oriental goods. Once more, the trip turned into a nightmare: his ship was pursued by pirates or an enemy, forced to flee as far north as Constantinople, and again had to take refuge in Crete. Thus, instead of the fifteen to twenty-five days normally required for the journey from Alexandria to Amalfi, they were on the high seas for over seventy days. This man was no Italian Jew, but an Egyptian one attempting to avail himself of the Amalfi market. In the strange city, he mentions no local Jewish partners or trade contacts, but one *Yuhanna* (John, an exclusively Christian name), who might either have been a Tunisian-Christian acquaintance or a local person.⁷⁸ The document does not indicate whether the stopover in Amalfi was routine usage or a singular occurrence. The total lack of further contemporary indications in the rich Genizah evidence suggests the latter. Indeed, our “letter is the

⁷⁶ Transl. by Goitein, 1973: 40–2. For the Hebrew original see Ben-Sasson, 1991: no. 41, and Gil, 1997: vol. IV, no. 815. I follow the commentary by Goitein, 1973: 39–40.

⁷⁷ Bonfil, 2009: 278. The maritime setting is strongly stressed by Colafemmina, 1998. For St. Nikon see McCormick, 2002: 13. The general correspondence between the *Scroll of Ahimaaz* and Byzantine hagiography has been noted by Skinner, 2005: 285–6.

⁷⁸ Transl. by Goitein, 1973: 44–5. Here too I follow Goitein's commentary, *ibid.*, 42–4. See also Citarella, 1971a.

only example . . . for [Egyptian Jews] doing business in a Christian port of Europe; there is none from the 12th; and again only one, this time concerning Genoa and Marseilles, from the 13th century."⁷⁹

From the 12th century there are a few more direct testimonies to Italian-Jewish merchants. One comes from yet another Genizah letter, sent in 1137 from Seleucia to Egypt.⁸⁰ The writer, a physician from Egypt now resident in Seleucia, boasts of the rich dowry he had given his daughter, and mentions in passing his *son-in law*, *R(abbi) Samuel, son of R. Moses, son of R. Samuel, the Longobardian merchant*. As Shlomo Dov Goitein points out, in contemporary Arabic the term *Lombardia* also meant the south of Italy. Therefore, there is no telling which part of the country this merchant came from, or where he carried out his trade. One of the earliest Jews to appear in Genoa was a *Iosephus Iudeus* or *Iusephus Iudeus*. He is mentioned first in 1158 as witness to the establishment of a trade company, and again in 1162 as business partner of a non-Jew planning to travel with merchandise to Spain.⁸¹ As the town government steadfastly held to its anti-Jewish policy, the odds are that *Iosephus/Iusephus* was a foreign Jew, possibly from an Arabic-speaking background.

For a host of reasons, Italian as other European rulers found it fitting to align themselves with the prelates of the Church. One way was the wholesale bestowal of all or some of the income from the Jews in a given place to the local church and its leader, the bishop. The earliest such assignment took place in Treviso in the year 905. As often the case with charters of privileges, it was reiterated, in the original phrasing, in 991 and again in 1014.⁸² Its ambivalent tenor—*the toll of that city, from the Christians as well as from the Jews who would wish to exercise there their commerce*—has already been noted. The Norman rulers of southern Italy, who had ample resources, gave away the income from the Jews in a systematic manner, and there are some conveyances by other persons or institutions. The charters documenting this trade-off sometimes specify the nature of dues paid by Jews. These might have been taxes on a dyeing establishment, as noted above. In a number of places they clearly accrued from trade activities. In Treviso it was to be the *toll on commerce*, in Rimini 1015 *the toll from the seashore together with the toll of the Jews*. This privilege

⁷⁹ Goitein, 1973: 8.

⁸⁰ Goitein, 1964.

⁸¹ Urbani & Zazzu, 1999: 5, 9, nos. 7, 11.

⁸² See above, note 73.

was amplified in 1144 to include harbor dues (*portitium*). The latter term, re-phrased as *portaticum*, was also used in 1041 in Capua, where it was coupled to *plateaticum*, a tax on sales in the market place. In 1090 the same matter was expressed in Salerno as *plateaticum et portulaticum, et portaticum*. *Plateaticum* from the Jews also appears in the second half of the 12th century in Ascoli Satriano and in Candela.⁸³ A plain reading would indeed understand these expressions as dues to be paid for the transport and sale of goods.⁸⁴ However, both in Capua and in Salerno, they are part of a longer formula clearly designed to encompass all conceivable types of income from the Jews. In Capua: *all services and works, taxes and dues, horses and things given, portaticum and plateaticum and watch-duty in the town and everything additional that the said Hebrews and their heirs have to do and give and pay to the town*. In Salerno: *all the services and tax and plateaticum and portulaticum, and portaticum coming and going, and dues, and what they have to pay us*. It is quite possible that the commercial terminology was simply included alongside other types of potential income so as not to leave any loophole open, a feature quite common with the lawyers that drew up such documents in the Middle Ages. This legal talk is akin to the future sense employed in the Treviso charter. Still, in all these cases there is the expectation that Jews might bring in income generated by commercial activity, if not now, then in the future.

A further aspect concerns Jews active as advisors and finance officials in the service of princes and governments. The writer of the *Scroll of Ahimaaz* proudly describes how his grandfather R. Shemuel and later his father Paltiel won the favor of Capua's leaders. *The rulers of the city took R. Samuel up to their palace and appointed him minister of their treasury, to control in their city the area of the river, the tolls in their markets, and the coinage according to the city's laws and customs*.⁸⁵ The Hebrew terms used by R. Ahimaaz exactly match the Latin ones *portaticum* and *plateaticum* just encountered at the same place and time, Capua of the 1040's. A charter of 1140 explains how one managed to obtain such a position. A Jew, *Sciamar son of Abraham*, had been granted by the abbey of Cava the lease of a plot and house in Salerno, *as the said Sciamar has brought*

⁸³ Treviso: above, note 73. Rimini: Colorni, 1980: 260. Capua: Codice diplomatico Verginiano, 1977: I, 183, no. 47. Actually, *portaticum* might mean either mooring-dues (if derived from *portus*), or town gate toll (if derived from *porta*): Niermeyer, 1976: 815. Salerno: Marongiu, 1937: 241. *Portulaticum* derives from *portularius*, the gate-keeper of a city: Niermeyer, 1976: 816. Ascoli Satriano and Candela: Milano, 1977: 597.

⁸⁴ Thus Colafemmina, 1995: 171.

⁸⁵ Bonfil, 2009: 348.

*the said monastery great profit by his custody of the tithes of the same monastery and of its share in the markets of the said town.*⁸⁶ The discharge of such functions must surely have been grounded in commercial and monetary experience and skill. In Rome, ties to the papal court provided the lever. They appear first in an early 11th century Hebrew chronicle, where the pope speaks of *the Jews who see my face*. More than one hundred and fifty years later, the traveler Benjamin found in Rome an heir to biblical Joseph in Egypt: *R. Yehiel, a servant of the Pope, a handsome young man of intelligence and wisdom, who has the entry of the Pope's palace, for he is the steward of his house and of all that he has.*⁸⁷

There remains one further consideration: whether Italian Jews engaged in money lending. For our period, the sources are silent on this subject, except for one reference of 1022. It ties together the venerable abbey of Monte Cassino, cradle of Benedictine monasticism, with Emperor Charlemagne, a legendary Theodericus King of the Saxons, the German Emperor Henry II, and extremely valuable pieces of the monastery's treasure:

*Besides, he [Henry II] regained from the Jews [and gave to the abbey] a cover from the altar of St. Benedict which had belonged to King Charles and which these same Jews were holding in pawn for a sum of five hundred gold coins: also, a very large chalice in Saxon silver, with its paten, which Theodericus, King of the Saxons, had once sent to St. Benedict.*⁸⁸

It is highly improbable that the altar cloth donated by Henry II was actually one that had been given by Charlemagne. It quite certainly was, however, a very old and sumptuous textile, further exalted by association with Charlemagne's and St. Benedict's names. *Theodericus Saxonum rex* was a Carolingian grandee closely related to Charlemagne, his military commander in chief and therefore probably present with the king at his visit to Monte Cassino in 787. He was also an intimate of the monastic reformer Benedict of Aniane (died 821). For our purposes, the only thing stated by the text itself is the fact that, uncertain when, highly valuable church objects had been given to Jews as surety for the payment of a significant sum of money, and that they were redeemed in 1022 by the German Emperor. This could be plain pawn broking, but another

⁸⁶ Cerone, 1926: 60, no. I. Cf. Colafemmina, 1995: 170.

⁸⁷ Golb, 1998: 549; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 6.

⁸⁸ Die Chronik des Montecassino, 1980: 250. Translated by Citarella & Willard, 1983, 106–107, whose commentary I follow.

possibility is suggested by contemporary parallels from Germany (see below, Chapter 3). There we have found that the common interpretation of such pawns as security for loans, that is credit operations, owes more to the historian's obsession with eternal Shylock than to the actual economic circumstances of the period. They can more reasonably be understood as arising from commercial transactions, when yet unpaid debts for delivery of merchandise were secured by putting up pawns until completion. An unambiguous reference to money lending, by then not at odds anymore with the economic environment, is found a hundred and seventy years later, in 1195. When Emperor Henry VI, as King of Sicily and Southern Italy, took the Jews of Trani under his protection, he forbade molesting them under the pretense that their money comes from lending.⁸⁹ Altogether, unlike other European regions Italy in our period presents no evidence for a widespread engagement of Jews in credit operations. In this highly commercialized economy, credit was extended by merchants and other local agents, often priests. In Italy, the high tide of Jewish moneylending was to arrive only in the Later Middle Ages and then mainly in the North.

From the 9th century and to the end of our period, there are thus clear indications for quite a number of Italian Jews active in trade. Do they support the contention of a decisive or at least significant share in Italian commerce? The late Eliyahu Ashtor, a great economic historian and declared "Pirenist", has proffered such case. He divided the period under consideration into an earlier part, when Jewish merchants were "in competition" with the Italian ones, even in "a position of supremacy" (early 9th to the early 10th century); a later one, when they lost their "hegemony" (second half of the 10th century); and a third one when the commerce of the Jews was "re-dimensioned" (which is a euphemism for "almost disappeared").⁹⁰ The last sub-period really concerns the 11th and 12th century trade of the Egyptian Genizah merchants in the Mediterranean and need not detain us at this point. According to Ashtor, the holders of the earlier maritime "supremacy" or "hegemony" were primarily the 9th century Radhanites, a claim we shall want to question towards the end of this book. But Ashtor also included in his equation Italian Jews, with the following arguments:

Even though the number of merchants [in evidence] among the Jews of Campanian towns was not large, on the other hand in these towns they

⁸⁹ Milano, 1977: 601.

⁹⁰ Ashtor, 1980: 402, 421, 434, 475.

were not barred from maritime commerce, as in Venice. The fact that the coastal cities of this region had large Jewish communities is a sign for such [commercial] contacts. Similar in Apulia, where there was a concentration in port towns that could not have been fortuitous. It suggests a nexus with the participation of Jews in maritime trade, made possible by a more or less tolerant attitude of the local authorities of this region.⁹¹

Thus, it is the sheer size and location of the communities in southern Italy and the absence of discriminatory legislation, not evidence for trade activities as such, that constitute besides the Radhanites the mooring for Ashtor's judgment. In this view, Jews will trade by default.

While there can be no doubt that Jews were engaged in local and regional trade in different regions of Italy, they were definitely not part of the international networks that propelled the Italians to the forefront of Mediterranean and indeed intercontinental commerce. Historians take it for granted that compared to their Gentile competitors, religious identity and geographical distribution afforded an advantage to the Jewish merchants by providing an international network of economic contacts.⁹² Actually, sometimes the opposite applied. For example, Amalfi had mercantile establishments in a great number of places: in Rome, Gaeta, S. Germano, Capua, Benevento, Naples, Reggio, Bari, Brindisi, Melfi, also in minor centers like Molfetta, Bitetto, Terlizzi, Oria, Venosa; in Sicily in Messina and Palermo; in Muslim lands in Mahdia and Tunis, Cairo, Jerusalem, Tripoli, Antioch; in Byzantium in Constantinople, Almiro, Durazzo, as well as Amalfitan monks on Mount Athos.⁹³ Despite a Jewish presence in almost all these places, there is no evidence for a trade network in any way similar to that of Amalfi.

In all the rich Genizah material no Jewish merchants from Italy are mentioned in the Maghreb.⁹⁴ Conversely, Jewish merchants from the Maghreb did occasionally reach Italian shores, but these were not the declared goal of their journey, the place where they intended to do business. Italy was rather a transit area on trips from Egypt to the Maghreb. A few merchants would pass the winter in its ports, but in general that sojourn was not accompanied by transactions of international trade. In the course of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, some might furnish themselves

⁹¹ Ashtor, 1980: 423–424.

⁹² Ben-Sasson, 1984: 35–37. For the historiographical roots of such a belief, see Toch, 1998.

⁹³ Citarella, 1993: 276.

⁹⁴ Ben-Sasson, 1984: 35–36.

with merchandise in order to do some business on the way eastward. However, it was very uncommon to carry goods in order to do business in the cities of Italy on the way back to the Maghreb. The Genizah's silence concerning trade with Italy stands in contrast with its abundant evidence for wide-ranging trade with other countries, among them Muslim Sicily. Similarly, there is plentiful confirmation in the Genizah for the trade of Christians with local Muslims, Christians and Jews in the Maghreb and in Egypt. It seems unlikely that all evidence for Jewish trade between Italy and the Realm of Islam has been lost, whereas the evidence for Christian trade along that very same route has been preserved in Jewish sources. As Shlomo Dov Goitein put it succinctly:

To all intents and purposes, the Arabic-speaking Jewish merchants of the Mediterranean area (with the possible exception of Sicily and Spain) were confined to the realm of Islam. They were connected to their coreligionists in Europe by bonds of general culture, religion, and philanthropy (extended by the former to the latter), but not by business relations of any significance. The European traders with whom the Genizah merchants dealt were exclusively Christian, Italians and Byzantines.⁹⁵

To this we can add an insight of Armando Citarella, which is confirmed by our scrutiny of the sources. "There is no evidence at all that any of the numerous Jews living in the port cities that were most active in the overseas trade, like Amalfi, Salerno, Gaeta, Naples, Brindisi, Trani and Taranto, had any significant role in that commerce."⁹⁶ These towns were posts in the three great currents of trade developing in Italy, all of which managed perfectly well without Jews: a northern one focused on Pavia, which served local elites; a Venetian one which developed from a trade conduit with Byzantium into an all-Mediterranean super-power; and a southern one, exemplified by Amalfi, which in the 8th/9th to 11th century and especially from the Muslim conquest of Sicily onwards shipped huge quantities of raw materials and agricultural products from the Italian south to Muslim markets. As the southern cities mentioned indeed have no record of discriminatory legislation along the lines practiced by Venice, it follows that it was not intolerance and trade rivalry that kept their Jews from participating in the booming trade carried out with North Africa. Rather, they appear to have lacked the necessary resources or merely just the inclina-

⁹⁵ Goitein, 1967: 211, and 1971a: 12–13. A similar judgment already by Cahen, 1965: 423–424, and in a recent communication by Miriam Frenkel of Jerusalem.

⁹⁶ Citarella, 1971: 396.

tion. However, it might help considering also the smaller picture. It is true that of the more important places mentioned by Citarella only Salerno, which served as a supply center for the Amalfi trade, is on the record as expecting to make a profit from commercial transactions of Jews. In Gaeta taxation was to accrue from crafts production. None of the other towns appearing with *plateaticum* and *portaticum* of Jews, that is Rimini, Capua, Ascoli Satriano and Candela, belonged in the big league of commercial towns. Capua, even though an important center of administration, was a market for the sale of consumption goods, not for exports.⁹⁷

Going by the sparse direct indications for Jewish merchants active in the South, their main engagement should probably be sought in local and regional trade, as itinerant merchants rather than in huge ventures spanning continents and necessitating huge capital outlays and control of whole fleets. Even the more modest claim, that "in Italy there was noteworthy contact between Jewish merchants in the Byzantine regions and those from the Carolingian dominated areas" finds no support in the sources.⁹⁸ We are bound to conclude that an early medieval trade ascendancy of Italian Jews, eventually destroyed by competing maritime city-states, never existed. The Pirennean idea of the need for a neutral intermediary between two allegedly impenetrable religious blocs is not applicable in the Mediterranean, as evidenced by the extensive Amalfitan trade with the Muslims. Italian Jews were neither populous nor powerful enough to supply the organizational and technical infrastructure and political-military muscle necessary to operate such networks. As witnessed by the case of Venice, Amalfi, Pisa, and Genoa, the prominence of some towns as trade centers did not necessarily entail a strong Jewish presence, but might rather impede it. In Italy, Jews flourished in places that were not the big players in trade. Thus, Italian Jews had no substantial part in the great streams of commerce that rung in the Commercial Revolution. We do find them in trade niches on the local and regional level, in subsidiary functions that appear far removed from the decisive economic significance usually accorded by historians. We also find them well represented in textile and other crafts, not surprisingly exactly the ones also found in Byzantium. Here they might have played a somewhat more significant role than warranted by the record, especially in light of their more noticeable presence in 12th and 13th century sources. Thomas Aquinas, the great

⁹⁷ Citarella, 1993: 266–281.

⁹⁸ Bachrach, 1977a: 103.

thinker of the 13th century who spent his younger years, a good part of his later life and his last years in southern Italy, saw fit to advise the Countess of Flanders to “compel the Jews to work for their living as done in parts of Italy”.⁹⁹ We do not know of Italian rulers who actually did as advised, but we have definitely seen a significant part of Italian Jewry earning a living in exactly such ways.

⁹⁹ Robert Chazan, *Church, State and Jew in the Middle Ages*, New York 1980: 200.

CHAPTER THREE

GAUL, THE LANDS OF THE FRANKS, FRANCE AND GERMANY

As implied in the title of this chapter, the political entities under consideration changed strikingly over the course of the early Middle Ages.¹ Initially, they consisted of Gaul and adjacent territories under Roman rule west and south of the Rhine and the Danube, that is the provinces of *Gallia Belgica*, *Gallia Lugdunensis*, *Gallia Aquitania*, *Gallia Narbonensis*, *Gallia Alpina*, *Germania inferior* and *superior*, *Raetia* and *Noricum*. These were later reorganized into much larger administrative units, the *Dioceses Galliae* and *Viennensis*. The arrival of Germanic tribes and the establishment of their kingdoms, both within Roman territory and without, cut across the old border between Roman and Barbarian lands and made it obsolete. In the course of the 6th and 7th centuries a large part of western Europe came under direct Frankish rule of the Merovingian dynasty. One exception is *Septimania*, the swath of coastal land running from the eastern foothills of the Pyrenees to the Rhône River, which remained under dominion of the Spanish Visigoths until their overthrow by the Arabs in 711. The latter held *Septimania* until the Frankish conquest in the mid-8th century. From the early 8th century onwards, the Carolingian dynasty of the Franks spread its rule over all of western and central continental Europe, including northern and south-eastern Germany, northern and central Italy, and in Spain the whole of the Pyrenees and southwards into Catalonia. One century later, dynastic partitions turned into a permanent territorial division between a western, central and eastern kingdom, to culminate in the course of the 10th century in the establishment of the kingdoms of France and Germany. *Lotharingia*, the central part of the Carolingian partition, disappeared as an independent kingdom already in the later 9th century. However, in the collective memory of medieval Ashkenazic Jews it became fixed as *Lothir*, the earliest Hebrew appellation

¹ On political and institutional history see the chapters by Raymond van Dam, Paul Fouracre, Janet Nelson, Johannes Fried, Eckhard Müller-Mertens, Gerd Althoff, Herwig Wolfram, Michel Parisse, Constance Bouchard, Jean Dunbabin, David Bates, and Michel Zimmermann, in vols. I–III of the *New Cambridge Medieval History*, Cambridge 2005, 1995, 2000; as well as Geary, 1988, McKitterick, 1983, and Reuter, 1991.

for their abode north of the Alps. For our purposes three different parts of this huge portion of continental Europe should be distinguished: heavily urbanized southern and central Gaul, where similar to Italy municipal structures were maintained into the Middle Ages; northern Gaul and western Germany, where Roman urban roots were somewhat weaker but definitely existing; and the vast regions of northern, central and eventually also eastern Germany that were untouched by Roman urbanism.

People and Communities

The most common type of evidence produced by Jews (and others) in the antique period, the epitaphs so widespread in Byzantium and Italy, are entirely missing in late antique Gaul and adjacent provinces (including places now in Germany). It has been suggested that such disparity is simply due to geological chance: the wealth of tombstones in Rome, southern Italy and Sicily owes to their location in regions where volcanic rock layers made for underground caves that were easily turned into catacombs. In Gaul (and Spain) such natural conditions are lacking and thus no extant inscriptions that surely once must have been there but disappeared in the devastations accompanying recurring waves of expulsions.² The bulk of antique epitaphs in Rome and Venosa, treated in the previous chapter, indeed derive from underground catacombs. This does not hold for the significant number of medieval gravestones of the same town of Venosa that come from an open-air cemetery. The absence of suitable rock formations has not prevented the production of the late antique epitaphs of Asian and European Byzantium, treated above in chapter I, and in lesser numbers in Pannonia, to be addressed in a following chapter. Expulsions and concomitant devastations of graveyards should also hold for Byzantium. Finally, with or without catacombs in volcanic rock, over 2300 Christian inscriptions are extant from late-antique and early medieval Gaul, as compared to but a handful Jewish ones, all early medieval.³

The absence of burials and even more so of synagogue remains is a first hint to a sparse presence in late-antique Gaul. So is the extent, character and distribution of the few other archaeological finds.⁴ The larger number

² Thus Lotter, 2001: 231.

³ Handley, 2000: 247.

⁴ Treated by Blumenkranz, 1969, 1974; Lapp, 1993; Noy, 1993; Lotter 1999 and 2003. Most inclusive is Berger, 2005, 79–142, who with a team of co-authors assembled, carefully

comes from one single place, *Augusta Treverorum* (today's Trier in western Germany), which served as capital of the province *Belgica*, then of the Praetorian Prefecture of Gaul, then of the Western Empire at large, and again of the Gallic Prefecture till its relocation to Arles in 395/407. The finds are simple mundane items very different from the elaborate burials of Byzantium and Italy: a few small weights and lead seals, a clay lamp with menorah, a tripod base that might have been the pedestal of a menorah. Possibly, a synagogue community existed for a time in the town, but this is suggested by a text open to interpretation, not by physical evidence. Elsewhere in Roman Gaul, finds are even fewer and of smaller scale—two clay lamps from Avignon and a finger ring from Bordeaux, nothing that clearly speaks of habitation as would synagogue remains or burials. Similar objects have been found outside Gaul proper, in three places along the Danube border and one place further to the north in Germany: a lamp; a lead seal; a small finger ring, all three with menorah, the last one also with ethrog and lulav, symbols of the Feast of Tabernacles; and a shallow bronze bowl or dish with a fragmentary scratching that reads *IUDAEA*.⁵ Clearly, the nature and geographical distribution of the archaeological record hints at best to a fleeting presence of a very few Jews in a very few places. Most probably these were itinerant merchants or artisans plying their trade on the very borders of the Empire. The important political and military hub of 4th century Trier might for a time have been somewhat of an exception to this rule.

The traces left by Jews in Roman Gaul and Germany cluster along or near the border, very similar to the finds further to the east along the Danube border in Pannonia (below chapter 5). Interior Gaul does not appear in the archaeological record and southern Gaul does so only marginally. This is a finding in stark contrast to the written record. From the 4th to roughly the mid-7th century there is quite a profusion of textual (literary and legal) sources: letters of Sidonius Apollinaris and pope Gregory I, hagiography by bishop Gregory of Tours and others, the same Gregory's *Histories*, and the canons of the councils of the Septimanian and Frankish church, altogether thirteen between 465 (Vannes) and 647/653 (Chalon-sur-Saône). However, until one reaches four inscriptions of the

analyzed and even-handedly weighed all existing archaeological as well as some of the written evidence. For references and a discussion of the evidence, see Appendix 3 under the place names.

⁵ See Appendix 3 under Augsburg, Burghöfe, Kaiseraugst, Burgaltendorf. See there under Cologne and Rouen for unsubstantiated claims for a much more sizeable population.

7th to 10th centuries, all southern French, this corpus does not include a single piece produced by Jews themselves.⁶ A history that has Jews as subjects but none as objects is a peculiar phenomenon, especially as that Jewry is considered by most historians to have been significant in numbers, status and influence.⁷ A closer look at the texts both as literary genres and by themselves raises many questions of the kind already met in previous chapters, but now much more crucial. In a matter of fact-way few historians have been able to resist, ecclesiastical writers in Gaul have their heroes' path crossed by Jews, always with a spiritual teaching to be drawn from the encounter, always with a testimony to Christian truth coming willy-nilly from the Jew's mouth. They address the proof of sainthood, the spiritual danger of associating with those outside the fold, and the problem, heavy with implications for urban life, of the authority of the bishop over the town community. For such matters, individuals Jews and communities are employed as "agents of differentiation", as an archetypical counterfoil to Christian values.⁸ There is also the problem of literary motifs and rhetorical devices copied from one hagiographical work to the other, as well as to other genres such as historiography and legislation. As these are the only sources extant in Gaul, they must be closely scrutinized to ascertain whether "virtual" or actual Jews are intended.

Our examination has found no substantial Jewish population in Northern Gaul at the turn from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages, with the exception of Orléans.⁹ Some sources have been plainly misinterpreted, others point to "virtual" Jews, yet others to single persons not resident in the region. Thus Tournai, Paris, Nantes, Tours, and Bourges, all localities claimed to have housed communities, have no place in the list of Jewish habitation in this period. In central Gaul Poitiers should be struck from the list, Bordeaux is doubtful as to the presence of a community, and only Clermont is likely to have possessed one. Further important places, like Mâcon, Chalon sur Saône, Vienne, and Lyon, were to be inhabited by Jews only from the Carolingian period onwards. In the South we have found a Jewish population in Auch, in Uzès with a question mark, and in Arles,

⁶ Noy, 1993: 263–6, 267–70, 281–3, nos. 189, 191, 198–200.

⁷ Zuckerman, 1972, Bachrach, 1977a, and Lotter, 2004a, and somewhat less pointed in Juster, 1914, Katz, 1937, Blumenkranz, 1960, 1966, and Schwarzfuchs, 1966.

⁸ "Agents of differentiation": Keely, 1997: 109. For the bishops' authority see Brown, 1981. The classical exposition of Jews as witnesses for Christianity is Blumenkranz, 1949. For the theological underpinnings see Cohen, Jeremy, 1999.

⁹ For references and a discussion of the evidence see Appendix 3 under the places mentioned in the following.

Narbonne and Marseille. In the whole of France altogether eight places stand scrutiny (including two questionable ones), while towns to the same number have been found to lack the Jewish presence formerly claimed on insufficient evidence. Continuity of settlement from Late Antiquity throughout the Early Middle Ages is evident only in the south, in Arles and Narbonne, possibly also in Marseille. These places fit the littoral distribution-pattern met in the previous chapters on Byzantium and Italy, one that will also become apparent in the following chapter on Spain.

Between the mid-7th and the mid-8th century no sources mention Jews in Frankish lands, except for an epitaph from Narbonne (then still in Visigoth hands) and an inscription from Auch. Of the time of Charlemagne (768–814), there is some anecdotal and legislative evidence for a few Jews in the Emperor's entourage, suggesting the existence of roving merchants, in one case of a physician, but not of settled communities.¹⁰ The implication is an extended hiatus in the Jewish presence in large parts of Gaul, as well as in today's German and Belgian regions to the east and north. This fits the general economic and demographic curve—clearly downwards—that has been pointed out by recent research. First indications for change emerge during and after Emperor Louis' the Pious reign (814–840). Hinting at a likely source for growth, there is at least one documented and one more possible case of individuals and families immigrating from Spain.¹¹ Slowly at first, and definitely in the 10th and early 11th century, evidence accumulates for Jews settling again in southern Gaul, in places additional to Arles, Narbonne and Marseille where their presence had continued uninterrupted.¹² All the new southern accretions of the 10th to 12th centuries lie in Septimania, except for Monieux, whose Jewish population is doubtful, and Toulouse. By the end of this period of growth, the old and new communities boasted a flowering religious-cultural life.

In central France, between 822 and 827 a charter of Emperor Louis the Pious points to an important new place of settlement, Lyon, where a large Jewish family group had received extensive privileges. A few years later, Lyonese Jews are widely discussed in the writings of their inveterate enemy, archbishop Agobard. Even discounting some hyperbole, there

¹⁰ Einhardi annales, 1987: 76; Notkeri Gesta Karoli, 1969: 406, ch. II, 14; Einhardi translatio, 1887: 257, ch. IV, 3; Linder, 1997: 348, no. 587; 344, no. 579; 344, no. 580; *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi*, 1882: 448 (*Formulae Salzburgenses*, no. 38).

¹¹ Linder, 1997: 341–2, no. 576; 367, no. 596.

¹² For references see Appendix 3 under Toulouse, Marseille, Auch, Nîmes, Béziers, Carcassonne, Conques, Montpellier, Vaucluse, Lunel, Posquières, St. Gilles, Lodève, Monieux.

must have existed a significant Jewish collective in the beginning of the 9th century, and probably somewhat earlier. The archbishop also mentions Jews in adjacent towns, most probably Vienne, Mâcon and Chalon sur Saône.¹³ Indeed, a few years later extensive evidence on the landed property of Jews in and around Vienne and Mâcon sets in, to continue unbroken into the 11th century. This at last is straightforward information on real people, to which a Hebrew epitaph of the 10th century from Vienne adds a further dimension of reality. By the 10th century similar evidence on landholding becomes available in and around Chalon sur Saône and Lyon. It stands to reason that in all these places the initial arrival took place years before the first appearance in the written record. It is in the north of France that Jewish settlement, hitherto lacking except for the isolated case of Orléans, grew most extensively, but at a slow pace. New communities in significant numbers become finally visible, almost exclusively in Hebrew sources, in the post-Carolingian period, in the 10th and mainly in the 11th century. Even more communities were to be founded in the course of the 12th century.¹⁴

Jewish settlement in Gaul thus followed an uneven course. Going by the archaeological record as well as by the written one, there were very few places of Jewish habitation in Late Antiquity and the first medieval centuries. There was a transient presence in the 4th century on the Roman borders along the Rhine and Danube, a somewhat stronger one in Trier, perhaps also in Cologne (on which see below). Slightly later, during the 5th and mainly the 6th century, Jews were found in a few towns of Gaul, primarily in the South, and in one place each in central and northern Gaul. Only in Arles, Narbonne and possibly Marseille did Jewish habitation continue into the second period scrutinized here, the 9th to the 11th century. This post-Carolingian era saw considerable growth altogether, but with significant variations according to region. In the south, Jews lived in ten localities, three old-established and seven new ones. In the center, there were four settlements, all new. Growth was most pronounced in the north, in twelve localities, possibly only eleven, all of them new. It must be noted however, that all these places were situated inland, not a single

¹³ Linder, 1997: 336–8, no. 573; Agobardi Lugdunensis Opera Omnia, 1981: 115–7, 191–5, 199–221, 231–4, nos. 4, 7, 8, 9. Of the large literature on Agobard and the Jews, cf. Boshof, 1969: 102–138; Blumenkranz, 1977; Bonfil, 1994; Albert, 1996; Heil, 1998.

¹⁴ See Appendix 3 under Rouen, Reims, Châlons-sur-Marne, Le Mans, Blois, Durtal, La Fleche, Orléans, Tours, Auxerre, Avallon, Vitry, Joigny, Troyes. For the 12th century see Chazan, 1969 and 1973: 207–220.

one in the dynamic zone of trade *emporia* and “gateway” settlements developing in the valleys of the rivers Scheldt, Meuse and Rhine and on the continental shores of the North Sea.¹⁵ The absence of Jews from these locations is of great significance when asking for their contribution and weight in this period of new economic beginnings.

The communities mustered in northern Gaul became the western branch of Ashkenazic Jewry, with congregations in Maine-Anjou, Bourgogne, Champagne, Lorraine and Normandy. In this later period, demographic growth is paralleled by the onset of intellectual production of French scholars like Joseph Tov-Elem (ca. 980–ca. 1050, born in Narbonne, active in Limoges and the Anjou region) or Rashi (ca. 1040–1105, born and active in Troyes, studied in Mainz and Worms).¹⁶ Their religious-legal deliberations bear clear testimony to evolving community institutions and a settled way of life.

Medieval Germany grew out of the northern and north-eastern Roman provinces as well as from unoccupied *Germania magna* beyond the border. These then became Frankish Austrasia and Germanic tribal realms, since the mid-9th century making up together the East Frankish kingdom of the Carolingians, and by 911 the German one.¹⁷ We have already pointed out the archaeological record from Late Antiquity with its transient Jews in a number of places along the Roman border. There is not a single location of continuous habitation, except for a doubtful claim put forward for Cologne.¹⁸ Significantly, right to the Carolingian period the written record in German regions has not a single reference to Jews, not even of the hagiographic type we have come to mistrust. In other words, until the 9th century Jews, real or imagined, were not a topic to the ecclesiastical writers of the eastern parts of the Frankish kingdom, unlike to their counterparts further to the west and south. There is thus little room for a hypothesis recently raised, namely that the French part of Ashkenazic Jewry derived from immigrants from Germany.¹⁹ Settlement in Germany did not precede chronologically that in north-eastern France. Neither do its modest dimensions suggest free demographic reserves, certainly not in the 10th century, the time of initial settlement in both parts of Ashkenaz.

¹⁵ On these see Verhulst, 2000.

¹⁶ Grossman, 1995: 46–81, 121–253.

¹⁷ On Germany in general see Reuter, 1991. For the early settlement of Jews in Germany see Toch, 1997 and 1998a, and Haverkamp, 2003: maps A 1.1, A 2.1, A 3.1, A 4.1, A 5.1.

¹⁸ See Appendix 3 under Cologne.

¹⁹ Schwarzfuchs, 1980.

Rather, our investigation supports the established view of a slow spread from south to north, with the origins of German Jewry both in France and in Italy.²⁰

For a long time Jewish life in Germany was a small-scale affair, a matter of mere nine communities established between the end of the 9th and the mid-11th century.²¹ Of these, most were situated on the Rhine River, such as Cologne, Speyer, Worms and Mainz, the latter three collectively known as the ShUM (garlic in Hebrew) communities. Geographically close and related by family ties and teacher-student affiliations, they became in the 11th century the heart-piece of the eastern, German part of Ashkenazic Jewry. Trier, where archaeological indications for an antique Jewish presence have been found, does not appear in the record before the mid-11th century. Even then, it is with a voodoo tale of black magic, by which the Jews of Trier are said to have foiled a plot of the archbishop to baptize them by force. This is hard to accept literally, but forty years later the Jews of Trier were indeed attacked by the Crusaders. Regensburg, on the south-eastern end of Germany and 300 km as the crow flies from Mainz on the Rhine, signifies another dimension of Jewish settlement in Germany, a trade emporium situated on the Danube route to Eastern Europe. Further to the north-east, in Magdeburg on the river Elbe and in Merseburg, the Ottonian kings initiated rapid growth in the later 10th century, endeavoring to make these places into ecclesiastical, political and commercial centers on the border with the Slavs. Illustrating yet another, colonizing, aspect of Jewish settlement, this was also to include a Jewish presence, possibly only the promise of one. The great Slav revolt of 982 undid most of the German colonization of the region, and by the early 11th century its Jewish component too had fallen into abeyance, to be renewed only in the 13th century.

Further west, the early communities came to be substantial in intellectual creativity as well as in demographic numbers (to be treated below). They were the homes of the founding fathers of Ashkenazic scholarship, of sages such as Gershom ben Jehudah "Light of the Exile" (ca. 950/960 Metz–1028 Mainz) or Jehudah bar Meir ha-Cohen (ca. 975/985–ca. 1050/1055 Mainz).²² Here too, the sages' religious-legal deliberations bear clear testimony to evolving community institutions and a settled way of life. In the

²⁰ Grossman, 1982; Toch, 1994.

²¹ The groundwork for this and the following in Toch, 1997. See also Appendix 3.

²² Gershom "Light of the Exile": Grossman, 1988: 106–174; his Responsa: Gershom, 1955. Jehudah ha-Cohen: Grossman, 1988: 175–210; his Responsa in: Responsa Meir ben Barukh

crusading year 1096, these communities were to become the main target of the first major assault on European Jews. After the bloodletting and forced conversions of that year, life was re-established in all the places affected. This must have absorbed most of the energies, for during the whole first half of the 12th century there were only five new localities settled.

In 1987, a ground-breaking effort was made to establish the size and structure of the Ashkenazic family around the year 1100.²³ Using the memorial lists of the nearly 500 martyrs of the 1096 persecution in Mainz, Kenneth Stow computed a mean number of 1.7 children per family and the size of the average Rhineland family at 3.77 persons. The typical Jewish family was thus small, urban and two-generational, an impression reinforced by the paucity (in the Mainz source of 1096) of extended (multigenerational or joint) family units. Stow expanded his demographic finding by use of literary sources to arrive at the picture of a "partially non-role-differentiated, close-knit, affective nuclear family, oriented to the needs and feelings of its individual members, which thoroughly embodied the Jewish norm".²⁴ In a sense, this assessment reverts to the popular view of an archetypical Jewish family decisively at odds with the norms of surrounding society. For Stow, such contrast might have even been the trigger for the violence of the crusaders of 1096, who "may have been threatened by the Jew's social stability, at whose core the Jewish family stood".²⁵ This is of course sheer hypothesis, and there are significant question marks to Stow's use of numbers. Decades earlier, the same data had been used to arrive at the conclusion that families with less than three children constituted an exception, not the rule.²⁶ An exhaustive study of the lives of the scholars in the 11th century concluded that they had on the average four children, double and more than Stow's number.²⁷ Given that these sages were not yet professional "Rabbis" but rather an integral part of the (educated male) Jewish population, their demographic profile too seems to have been typical of their communities. However, with no further sources to shed light on the problem, this remains an open question.

How large or small were the communities established during the Early Middle Ages in France and Germany? Direct data are available only from

of Rothenburg, 1891: nos. 873–913, reprinted by Abraham Grossman as: *Jehudah ha-Cohen, Sefer ha-Dinim*, Jerusalem 1976/7.

²³ Stow, 1987; Stow, 1992: 196–209.

²⁴ Stow, 1987: 1086, 1107.

²⁵ Stow, 1992: 209.

²⁶ Blumenkranz, 1966: 165.

²⁷ Grossman, 1988: 8.

southern France of the later 12th century, where Benjamin of Tudela witnessed a new phase of population growth common to Christians and Jews. Larger places like Arles, Narbonne and Lunel had 200 to 300 Jews (most likely again families rather than individuals), smaller ones like Posquières 40, a middling one like St. Gilles 100. Earlier and elsewhere, in the north of France in the late 10th and first half of the 11th century, communities must have been much smaller, as implied in a Responsum of Joseph Tov-Elem: *our brethren in the surroundings of Sens and in Auxerre and two souls in Châlons-sur-Marne*.²⁸ Rashi is considered to have presided in Troyes over no more than 100 to 200 fellow Jews.²⁹ A somewhat different situation prevailed in Germany, where the 1096 massacres claimed many hundreds of victims in places like Mainz (500 dead known by name and probably a total of about a thousand) and Worms (400 to 800). Taking into account the small dimensions of even the most important places, in a few German towns Jews must indeed have been a very important part of early populations, up to 10% of a total that cannot have been much above 10000 at the end of the 11th century.³⁰

A last question concerns the recurrent references, met in France and to a degree in Germany, to Jews in possession of agricultural properties. Does this mean that there were Jewish rustics in the Early Middle Ages, akin to the “village Jews” (*Dorffjuden*) of early modern Germany?³¹ Or did these proprietors live in the towns we have established in this chapter as the main abode of early medieval Jews? A small number of source references directly indicate some Jews that did indeed live in villages in the countryside.³² However, the astonishingly wide range of agricultural property cannot really be explained by such small number of rural Jews. A fuller answer to this question hinges on understanding the economic function of such properties, to be addressed in the following sub-chapter as well as in Part II, chapter 7a.

²⁸ Joseph Tov-Elem: Responsa of the Tosaphists, 1954: no. 1, cf. Agus, 1952, Soloveitchik, 1990: 77–86; Grossman, 1995: 31. Similar in Le Mans (or rather Limoges, see below?) ca. 992: Haberman, 1945: 11.

²⁹ Baron, 1941: 58.

³⁰ Toch, 1998a: 10.

³¹ For medieval rural Jews see Barzen, 2005, for early modern German ones Toch, 1995.

³² Jehudah ha-Cohen, Mainz 11th century: Responsa Meir ben Barukh, 1891: no. 879; Jacob b. Moshe Gaon, Narbonne end of 10th century: Mutius, 1984: II, 139; Abraham b. Yitzhak, Narbonne, 12th century: Barzen, 2005: 28 note 41.

Economic Pursuits

Our demographic findings suggest a very modest presence in the Late Antique and Merovingian periods, with almost no communities in the north and center. Real growth becomes visible only from the late Carolingian era and onwards, especially in the 10th and even more so in the 11th century. How do these demographic facts speak to the economic history of the Jews? First, they clearly contest the widespread idea of an almost omnipresent Jewry in Frankish lands. In consequence, before the 11th century it is hard to see a highly developed communal infrastructure, a network deemed to be a precondition for international and intercontinental commerce. By themselves, these modifications to the accepted picture do not provide an alternative view of economics. For that, the sources need to be consulted. In this core-region of Europe, the economic pursuits of Jews have traditionally been accorded the highest significance, even more than in the countries examined in previous chapters. We shall therefore need to critically address not only the sources, but also their reading by scholarship. The evidence will be presented first for Late Antiquity to the Merovingian period and then from the Carolingian period and onwards.

Late Antiquity and the Merovingian Period

The earliest relevant sources are pieces of Imperial legislation addressed to the Roman governors of Gaul, on the exclusion of Jews from the state administration and much more extensively against the possession of Christian slaves.³³ These were general concerns not restricted to Roman Gaul, and the complicated subject of slave-holding shall be of major concern to us (below Part II, Chapter 6a). After the demise of the imperial government, both issues were taken up again, by four Church councils and also by the Merovingian king.³⁴ In light of this spate of legislation, most scholars have concluded that Jews were indeed engaged in fiscal and legal administration, first as imperial and later as royal and seigniorial

³³ Linder, 1987: 222–4, 307–8, nos. 33, 51.

³⁴ Clermont 535, Mâcon 581/583, Paris 614 10 October, and King Chlothar's Edict less than a week later, on 15 October 614: Linder, 1997: 470, no. 816; 474, no. 821; 478, no. 830; 479, no. 831.

agents, as local judges, and as collectors and farmers of taxes and tolls.³⁵ However, this legislation together with the one on slave-holding can better be understood as a rhetorical exercise addressing quite another matter, namely the imaginary of the proper order of society. Denouncing time and again the scandalous idea of Jews lording it over Christians, it aims at demonstrating the right order of subordination—Christians lording it over Jews—by employing the most powerful metaphor for its subversion. Such interpretation does not rule out the employment of some Jews in the fiscal and legal administration, but it would surely restrict it to a lesser dimension.

Corroboration for Jewish officials in Gaul has been found in two further sources. One is by Gregory of Tours, set in 584, on the *Jew Armentarius who came to Tours, to collect payment on some bonds which had been given to him on the security of public taxes by the Vice-Count and by the Count. Armentarius had an interview with the two men and they agreed to repay the money with the accrued interest*. This Armentarius has been envisaged as a tax-farmer, as the first professional Jewish moneylender in history, or more plainly as someone of means who had advanced money against the warranty of office holders in charge of taxes.³⁶ The text as it stands does not really yield a tax-farmer or collector, and thus independent corroboration for at least one Jew active in fiscal and legal administration. Another *Saint's Life* tells of a merchant and farmer of tolls and taxes active in Paris around 635, held to be a Jew on strength of his name *Salomon*. The man, if he ever existed, was definitely not a Jew, the same as a good number of contemporary churchmen bearing his name.³⁷

In the High Middle Ages, in different European countries quite a number of Jews are found in the capacity of mint-master or moneyer. For their proximity to rulers and authority, their command of technological know-how and the intricacies of prices and commerce, such entrepreneurs have been called “an aristocracy of money”.³⁸ This occupation was also thought to have been characteristic of Jews in the Merovingian period.³⁹

³⁵ Katz, 1937: 118–123; Bachrach, 1977a: 49 and note 30, 55; Lotter, 2004a: notes 57–59. But see Ganshof, 1962: 299, note 26.

³⁶ Gregory of Tours, 1974: 405–6; Caro, 1908: 87; Blumenkranz, 1960: 174, 182; Lotter, 1999: 55; Buchner in: Gregory of Tours, 2000: II, 120 note 1.

³⁷ See Appendix 3, Paris.

³⁸ Lopez, 1953. On Jewish minters see now Wenninger, 2008.

³⁹ Bachrach, 1977a: 63–4 and 164, note 101, quoting Katz, 1937: 121–3. Katz however noted only one possible Jew (Priscus, see below) and rejected the identification as Jewish of further persons. In turn, Katz, 1937: 122, note 5, relied heavily on Ponton d'Amécourt,

Of over 2000 minters in evidence in the Merovingian kingdom, there is a but a single one with a name that might, but need not, be Jewish: *IVSEF MONETARIVS*, who was active at the mint of Mâcon in the late 6th to the early 7th century.⁴⁰ The other Jew adduced as minter is Priscus, who was murdered at Paris in 582. He has been described as “a wealthy Jewish merchant and government official who dealt with kings and controlled the mint at Châlons-sur Saône”. Given the early marriage age of male Jews in the Middle Ages, it is far from evident that this father of a young son about to marry in the year 582 and thus roughly in the third or fourth decade of his life could have been identical with a minter Priscus active at Châlons-sur Saône around the year 555.⁴¹ The bridegroom’s father of 582 could in 555, twenty seven years earlier, at most have been in his early to late teens and thus somewhat unlikely to have reached the responsible position of a moneyer with his name struck on the coins produced by his mint.

Thus contrary to an often-repeated sentiment, Jewish officials, judges, collectors of taxes and tolls, and minters, if at all existent, appear to have been a minor occurrence in late Roman and Merovingian Gaul. What then did the few Jews in evidence do to make a living? Gregory of Tours mentions the Jewish owners of a ship making its way from Nice to Marseille. Pope Gregory the Great in the year 591 tells of Jewish merchants from Italy visiting Marseille, where they might have had commercial contacts with local Jews. Yet another pious story by Gregory of Tours concerns a Jewish doctor in Bourges, who indeed fits an occupational pattern found all over early-medieval Europe.⁴² A certain number appear to have been businessmen of some sort. A letter of recommendation by Sidonius Apollinaris, bishop of Clermont from ca. 470 to 489, remarks on the Jews *who are used to do honest business*.⁴³ Gregory of Tours, on the other hand, wrote of another bishop of Clermont (whom he heartily disliked) as *a great friend of the Jews and subservient to them, in order to purchase their wares*

of whom today’s foremost experts on early-medieval numismatics have the following to say: “Nineteenth-century scholars, notably Ponton d’Amécourt, ransacked the chronicles to find the name of prominent persons who could be identified with the *monetarii* of the coins, but these identifications, which played havoc with attempts to establish the chronology of the coinage, are now universally rejected.”: Grierson & Blackburn, 1986: 98.

⁴⁰ Berghaus, 1985: 196.

⁴¹ As claimed by Loeb, 1885, Katz, 1937: 122, and Bachrach, 1977a: 56 (there for the quotation). *Contra* this identification: Devroey & Brouwer, 2001: 365. For age at marriage see Grossman, 2004: 33–48.

⁴² Gregory of Tours, 2000: I, 292, ch. V,6; Gregory of Tours, 1988a, ch. 95; Gregory the Great: Linder 1997: 418–9, no. 703.

⁴³ Sidonius Apollinaris, 1887: 101.

(*species*) which they sold to him at a higher price than they were worth. This bishop's would-be successor was yet another priest *who bought many precious objects (species magnas) from the Jews*.⁴⁴ The two anecdotes have been pressed into evidence for "Jews organizing the long-distance trade on the basis of *Landmannschaft*", whereby the community of Clermont "not only supplied the episcopal court with sought-after spices but also served as a distribution hub for the entire region".⁴⁵ This seems a somewhat farfetched conclusion to draw from the evidence quoted. Priscus, again, is mentioned by Gregory of Tours as being on familiar terms with King Chilperic, *whom he used to supply with goods*. On strength of this sentence, Priscus has in turn been presented as royal agent, as *factotum*, as purveyor by appointment to the court, as "Court Jew", as intercontinental merchant-adventurer, by Henri Pirenne even as the king's banker. His goods (*species*) have been elevated to the rank of oriental treasures or alternatively moneys lent.⁴⁶ Clearly there were some Jews active in commerce, but the sketchy state of the sources allows nothing further than that conclusion, surely not a systematizing picture that patently stretches the evidence.

A further point concerns the claim for Jewish agriculturists in Merovingian Gaul. In order to achieve the conversion of the Jews of Clermont (576), the bishop is reported to have addressed them in the following manner: *Either grant my entreaty or, I pray, leave this place. Either follow me, or go and follow your own wishes. Yield the place, settler (colonus), and lead forth your co-religionists with you, or reside here permanently if you hold a single faith [with everyone else]*. The word *colonus* has been read to mean that these Jews were "tenants tied to the soil, apparently of the Church, for whom the expulsion from Clermont would also mean economic ruin".⁴⁷ Such literal understanding of the rustic term employed by Venantius Fortunatus would indeed make a significant part if not all of Clermont Jews into peasants of the lowest social order. However, the parallel account of the event penned by Gregory of Tours suggests a different reading. Here the bishop phrases the same dichotomy of staying/leaving

⁴⁴ Gregory of Tours, 2000: I, 210, ch. IV,12; I, 242, ch. IV,35.

⁴⁵ Ellmers, 2003: 59.

⁴⁶ Gregory of Tours, 2000: II, 8, ch. VI,5. Aronius, 1902: 16; Pirenne, 1992 (1937): 85; Laske, 1983: 260; Weidemann, 1982: II, 347; Claude, 1985b: 69; Ellmers, 2003: 58; Rosenthal, 2007. For *species* as all sorts of merchandise rather than just spices or money, see Devroey & Brouwer, 2001: 361.

⁴⁷ Lotter, 1999: 53. The source is Venanti Fortunati opera poetica, 1881: Carmen 5,5: 110. I follow the translation by Goffart, 1989: 486–7.

and unity/discord as following: *I am the shepherd set to watch over the sheep of the Lord. If you are prepared to believe what I believe, then become one flock, with me as your shepherd. If not, then leave this place.*⁴⁸ The metaphor is a pastoral one, as must necessarily follow from the Scripture verse alluded to: *And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd* (John 10:16). Gregory had supplied Venantius for his rhymed account with the outline of the event, apparently indicating also the stylistic setting. Venantius used a slightly different imagery, yet one still consistent with the pastoral drift of the argument. In light of this textual history, there is little ground for a literal understanding of Clermont Jews as “tenants of the Church tied to the soil”. Still, the existence of Jewish agriculturalists cannot be wholly ruled out, in light both of the later situation, from the 8th century onward (see below), and of a canon decided upon in 589 at a provincial church council of Narbonne: *That no one, whether freeborn or slave, Goth, Roman, Greek, or Jew, shall do any work on Sunday, nor shall oxen be harnessed, except when it will be necessary to move them.*⁴⁹ These tantalizingly vague indications exhaust the evidence of the late antique and Merovingian-time period for Gaul.

From the Carolingian Period to the 11th Century

Agriculture and Landholding

From the Carolingian period to the 11th century, the most extensive documentation by far concerns agricultural property of Jews (assembled in our map 4, Rural France). The earliest and yet most wide-ranging indication comes from a letter sent by pope Stephen III to the *archbishop of Narbonne and all the rulers of Septimania and Hispania* (the latter meaning then the eastern flanks of the Pyrenees, called Catalonia since the late 11th century). The letter has been dated to 768–772, the very first years of Charlemagne’s reign, and reads:

We were, therefore, grieved and mortified when you informed us that the Jewish populace (plebs Judaica) possesses hereditary holdings (allodia) in villas and in suburban estates—just like the Christian inhabitants—within the boundaries and territories of the Christians by reason of certain charters (praecepta) of

⁴⁸ Gregory of Tours, 1974: 266, ch. V.11.

⁴⁹ Linder, 1997: 476–7, no. 827.

*the kings of the Franks; and that Christian men cultivate their vineyards and fields and that Christians, both males and females, living together with them inside and outside cities are day and night defiled by words of blasphemy, and the miserable men and women perform uninterruptedly all imaginable services to the said dogs.*⁵⁰

Using once more rustic metaphors, of the shepherd in charge of the flock and of the provider of wheat to the hungry, the pope then delivers a somewhat twisted exegesis why such charters by rulers to the Jews need not be honored. Can one infer from this document, as has been suggested, the existence of a network of large scale domains reaching back to Late Antiquity, even of a “Jewish Principedom in Feudal France”? Both notions have been thoroughly discussed and soundly rejected by the vast majority of scholars.⁵¹ Alternatively, is this text to be discounted as yet another round of ecclesiastical polemics using the trope of Jews lording it over Christians?

It has been generally assumed that such *hereditary holdings in villas and in suburban estates* were substantial and located around Narbonne or more generally in Septimania.⁵² If so, they should have left some traces in the documentation of subsequent times, which is indeed the case. Seventy years later, in 839, Emperor Louis the Pious in audience at Frankfurt on the river Main lent a benevolent ear to the *complaints of certain Hebrews, namely Gaudiocus [=Sasson?] with Jacobus and Vivacius [=Haim], his sons, how they have lost through certain animosities—nay, depredations—carried out by certain malevolent people the charter of our authority, which we have formerly made for them concerning certain properties named Valerianae or Bagnila, which belong to them by right of succession from their ancestors, that charter enabling them to possess them without hindrance. Valerianae or Bagnila* has convincingly been identified as Banyuls-les-Aspres, dépt. Pyrénées Orientales, “a well-situated wine village” some 80 km south of

⁵⁰ Linder, 1997: 444, no. 724. For *praecepta*, I have preferred the more restricted *charters*, rather than the more general *orders* used by Linder. Baron, 1957: IV, 47, translates *plebs Judaica* as *the Jewish mob*, which seems excessive in the context.

⁵¹ “Late antique domains”: Graboïs, 1997: 166, 172. “Jewish Principedom”: Zuckerman, 1972. See the critique of Robert Chazan in: *Jewish Social Studies* 35 (1973), 163–5; of Bernard Bachrach in: *American Historical Review* 78 (1973), 1440–1; of Patrick Wormald in: *English Historical Review* 89 (1974), 415–6; of Graboïs, 1973; and most extensively of Jeremy Cohen, 1977. Oddly, Zuckerman’s thesis has lately been resurrected by a genealogist: Kelley, 2003.

⁵² Cohen, Jeremy, 1977: 47–48, has some doubts on the location. Baron, 1957: IV, 259–260, note 60, deals with the identity of the writer as Stephen III and thus with the letter’s dating.

Narbonne and right on the highway southwards to Gerona and Barcelona.⁵³ The location in Septimania, the description, and the existence of a royal charter fit the pope's complaint. The owners must have been substantial people, both for the success of their mission and for their having been introduced to the Emperor's presence by such an eminent personality as Hugh, half-brother of Louis, abbot of St Quentin and St Bertin and the Emperor's chancellor. The fact that they saw fit to travel in full company from the south of France to Frankfurt in Germany speaks for the importance of the estate.

However, the *certain animosities*—*namely, depredations* of 839 signal that not all was well with Jewish landholding in Septimania. Indeed, in 899 and again in 922, King Charles the Simple (ruler of the western Carolingian kingdom 898–922) granted to the cathedral church of Narbonne *all the lands, the houses, and the vineyards that the Jews are seen to possess in the county of Narbonne, and out of which tithes were customarily given to God's churches*. In 919 the same king showed similar munificence by assigning to another church *the land and the mills that are below the bridge of that city and that are seen to belong to Jews*, as well as further mills in an additional place, *similarly belonging to those Jews*.⁵⁴ Oddly, this wholesale expropriation did not put an end to Jewish landed possessions in and around Narbonne. The following centuries exhibit an entirely normal picture: lands of Christians that border on the ones of Jews, as well as Jews buying and selling landed properties, vineyards, mills, and salt-works.⁵⁵ The contradiction has lately been solved by demonstrating that the spoliations of Jewish property in Charles' the Simple charters are interpolations of the later 11th century, in other words forgeries.⁵⁶ They were most likely undertaken as part of a wider campaign by the archbishop of the period, both to reestablish his position vis-à-vis the viscount of Narbonne and to secure his hold over tithes in general. In spite of appearances, Jewish landholding around Narbonne was thus going strong. It left its imprint in the apparently oldest Halakhic document extant from medieval France: Jacob ben Moshe Gaon of Narbonne was asked towards the end of the

⁵³ For the text Linder, 1997: 365–367, no. 549. The identification by Blumenkranz, 1960: 348. A less likely localization by Taitz, 1994: 236, note 51. The “well-situated wine village” comes from a commercial website catering to British and Dutch tourists.

⁵⁴ Linder, 1997: 371–2, no. 599; 374–5, no. 601; 372–4, no. 600.

⁵⁵ Saige, 1881: 129–30 (year 955); *Histoire générale de Languedoc*: III, 151, V, 232–4, no. 106 = Régné, 1912: 61 (959); Régné, 1912: 179 (1064); Régné, 1912: 223–4 (1091); Régné, 1912: 224–5 (1092); Saige, 1881: 132–3 (1163); Saige, 1881: 137–9 (1195); Régné, 1912: 182, 227–8 (1199).

⁵⁶ Caille, 1986.

10th century on a Jew in a village far away (from town) who cannot purify his wine, may he let gentiles do that? The same Halakhic problem still occupied the Narbonne sage Abraham ben Yitzhak in the 12th century, when he wrote of winegrowing villages inhabited by Jews, which he contrasts to *villages of Gentiles* where Jews owned vineyards, houses, yards and wine-presses, without however living there.⁵⁷ Benjamin of Tudela wrote of Jewish Narbonne in the 1160's: *At their head is R. Kalonymos, of the seed of David. He possesses hereditary tenements (nahalot) and lands given him by the ruler of the city, of which no man can forcibly dispossess him.*⁵⁸

This does not exhaust the range of agricultural property in Septimania or indeed in southern France, but further references are more restricted in scope. They mostly concern properties that by the time of their documentation had already been sold to Christians. In order to arrive at a realistic time sequence, the dates appearing in the record should thus be adjusted backwards by at least some decades, which in most cases bring us to the 10th and 11th centuries.⁵⁹ Around Béziers, vineyards of Jews appear in 972, in 983, in 990 together with an estate held in guardianship, and again in 1019. In Carcassonne, three documents between 1142 and 1173 speak of a *Jewish estate (honor judaicus)*, whose owners authorize their Christian tenants to donate vineyards to the local chapter of the Templars. In 1142 the proprietor, *Bonysach Jew son of Gaviol*, signed the deed in Hebrew letters as *Isaac son of the late Elieser*. By 1173, the owners were a *confrérie* of four brothers, of which one was also employed as official of the viscount of Carcassonne. Clearly, this was a sizeable property made up of numerous vineyards, held by a substantial Jewish family and worked by hereditary tenants. The gift to the Templars was authorized under the condition that the owners shall go on receiving their share *of the produce, a quarter [of wine] to be faithfully delivered to their houses in Carcassonne*. Outside Septimania but still in the south, landed property is found around Toulouse, Auch, Arles and Marseille. As far as it is possible to establish, here as elsewhere in the South agricultural holdings of Jews were primarily vineyards. There are some faint indications for arable land, and clear references to mills and in Narbonne salt-works, which shall be touched

⁵⁷ Jacob ben Moshe Gaon: *Sefer ha-Eshkol*, 1984: 88. On the author cf. Benedikt, 1951: 87–88. Abraham ben Yitzhak: *Sefer ha-Eshkol*, 1984: 150a, quoted by Barzen, 2005: 28, note 41.

⁵⁸ Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 2 (English text), 3 (Hebrew text). On the eventual disposition of the landed properties of Narbonne Jews in the late 12th and earlier 13th century see Régéné, 1912: 164–84.

⁵⁹ For references see Appendix 3 under the following places.

upon in the following. Some of the holdings are explicitly stated to have been worked by Christian tenants, while for others this may be assumed. It was this basic fact that continued to be the problem for the Church, but also for the Talmudic scholars concerned with the ritual purity or impurity of the wine produced. Originally, some of these holdings appear to have been organized in larger estates. By the time they become visible in the written record, parts have been leased to different tenants, while other parts were in the process of being sold. In one case, ownership clearly derived from money lending: before the year 924, hereditary tenements in the county of Narbonne were put up by a countess of Carcassonne and her sons to Jews as security for a substantial loan of 1000 solidi. By 959, these holdings had been acquired by the cathedral church of Narbonne.⁶⁰

In east-central France, along over one hundred km running south-north from Vienne to Lyon to Mâcon to Chalon sur Saône and to the south of Dijon, Jewish landed property is found in an extraordinary concentration from the mid-9th and into the 11th century.⁶¹ A general indication is provided by a charter of King Louis the Blind of Provence of the year 894, granting safe possession to the bishop of Grenoble *for all his properties acquired in the surroundings of Vienne or Lyon or in Provence, from all Christians, Jews, Jewesses*.⁶² This does not necessarily mean that the bishop indeed bought land from Jews and Jewesses, but rather that one could expect such acquisitions and would thus include them in a legal document. Mentioned since the 840's, Jews of Vienne owned property in at least eight different places around the town. Here too one way to ownership was by money lending, as for instance in a village some twelve km east of town, where two Jewish brothers and their wives received in 958/9 occupancy of a vineyard as pledge for a loan, the interest to be paid in a yearly quantity of new wine. In another village ten km south of Vienne (Vernioz, dépt. Isère), at least five different Jewish properties can be identified. To these one can add more lands recorded in *Vitrosco*, most probably Vitrieu (dépt. Isère), today a miniscule hamlet in the commune of Vernioz but in the 10th century a sizeable village with at least 27 proprietors and a total population of roughly one hundred souls. In the second

⁶⁰ Histoire générale de Languedoc: III, 151; V, 232–4, no. 106; V, 1551, no. 42. Cf. Régéné, 1912: 61.

⁶¹ Most of the following localizations are by Blumenkranz, 1959 and 1960: 25–29, with some modifications now made possible by geographical data-bases. Apparently, Blumenkranz relied on André Déléage, *La vie économique et sociale en Bourgogne jusqu'au début du 11e siècle*, Mâcon 1941, which I was unable to consult.

⁶² Linder, 1997: 369, no. 597.

half of the 10th century a total of 17 transactions in landed property were recorded for this village.⁶³ Of these, four concerned assets held by one Jew Aster, possibly not one but two or three persons of the same name as these transactions took place over a lengthy period, between 957/8 and 975/993. One of these Asters, *living by the ancient law of my forefathers*, drew up a detailed agreement with the monastery of Saint Andrew of Vienne. By its terms, he gave to the monastery hereditary land as well as plots received from neighbors in the vill of *Vitrosco*, plots that bordered on all sides on Christian lands. In exchange, he was given a plot with two small houses inside the walls of Vienne in the Jewish quarter, bordering on one side on the *land of the sons of Levi* and on another side on the *public way leading to the Hebrews. For his rural holding, Aster and his sons and heirs shall run the affairs of the monks and be charged with their service and help them with their sustenance*, that is to act in the hereditary capacity of the monastery's steward. Five other Jews signed the document, thus giving their assent to the move of an extended family from the countryside into their Jewish quarter of Vienne.⁶⁴ We have no idea of the size of this community, but from the document we know of at least seven families that now resided there. Aster appears to have indeed achieved a position of trust. Sometime in the second half of the 10th century he was amongst seven witnesses to a property transaction in favor of the monastery. The rest were all non-Jews, and Aster (there is no Christian of this name in the monastery's records) appears without the usual appellation *Hebreus*.

For Lyon and surroundings the evidence is much sketchier, and the usual type of sources, cartularies of ecclesiastical institutions, yield but few references. Still, ca. 843 archbishop Amulo of Lyon in his polemic against the Jews mentioned Jewish and non-Jewish neighbors, proprietors of arable land and vineyards. Jewish properties are in much better evidence in the surroundings of Mâcon, thanks to the rich cartularies of Saint Vincent of Mâcon and the abbey of Cluny.⁶⁵ Similar to Vienne, they document dense holdings in a few villages as well as single possessions in more places; altogether at least 15 locations (see our map 3, Rural Bourgogne). The earliest reference, of 888/898, is to *the land of the Jews in the village*

⁶³ For the localization Blumenkranz, 1960: 25. For demographic data on the village Falque-Vert, 2004: 14, 31, 40.

⁶⁴ Cartulaire Saint-André-le-bas-de Vienne, 1869: 68–9, no. 91, on which there is an exhaustive though in our view somewhat mistaken commentary by Latouche, 1966.

⁶⁵ Blumenkranz, 1959, who on p. 112 also produced a map of the Mâconnais here under consideration, as well as Blumenkranz, 1960: 27–9. I have added some more sources, but rely in the main on Blumenkranz for geographical identification.

of *Boscido*, today either a suburb of Mâcon and the site of its local airport or another village some five km to the west (both dépt. Saône et Loire). Altogether, five of the six landed transactions in that village treat of Jewish possessions, clearly a significant concentration. The suburb of Charnay-lès Mâcon with its surrounding hamlets appears to have been another major focus. So was the *village of Hurigny in the district of Hurigny in the county of Mâcon*, some seven km to the north-west of town, with altogether nine references between the mid-10th and the early 11th century. Mostly no details are given, except for the fact that other plots bordered on *the land of the Jews*. One single deed, written between 987 and 996, provides however the names of two Jewish proprietors who exchanged with a cleric of Mâcon a field so as to round off their other lands in a hamlet adjacent to Hurigny. Further to the west, beyond the river Petite Grosne but still at accessible distances of about ten km from Mâcon, additional holdings are mentioned. Less than five km to the north-west, in the hamlet of Essertaux, a Jew by the name of Parenodius had before ca 970 bought an estate with vineyards and buildings. The present owner was a count Albericus who had come into possession *by royal order*, the exact nature of which remains unclear.⁶⁶

Further north, Jewish holdings are in evidence in the charters of the abbey of Cluny, although only for a relatively short time around the year 1000 and solely to the south of Chalon sur Saône where Cluny had massive landed interests.⁶⁷ These included *the land of William, formerly a Jew, located in the village of Droux* (4 km south of Chalon) *as well as in numerous other places, with his house located in the town of Chalon; also the entire land held of old by the Jews in the village called Curte Judaea, with the vineyards and all that belongs*.⁶⁸ Of the many agricultural properties encountered in the Bourgogne, this is the second case where the domicile of the proprietor is known—in town. A question directed to no less than Gershom “Light of the Exile” sometimes in the early 11th century tells of a Jew who had mortgaged two vineyards to another Jew, one

⁶⁶ Blumenkranz, 1959: 114, conjectures that the royal order might mean the expropriations of Charles the Simple in the region of Narbonne, 919–922, which however has been found to be a non-event. See above, note 56.

⁶⁷ See Appendix 3 under Chalon sur Saône.

⁶⁸ Chartularium... Paredo, 1891: 7, no. 6. Paray-le-Monial became few years later a priory of Cluny. This is the sole reference to Jews in this abbey's records. In a similar vein, there is not a single mention in the records of Saint-Marcel-lès-Chalon, another Cluniac dependency situated near Chalon just across the Saône: The cartulary of Saint-Marcel-lès-Chalon, 1998.

in a village *Bushiro* and the other in a nearby village *Kishon*. These have been tentatively identified as Bussiere and Chassange-Montrachet (both dépt. Cote-d'Or), south of Dijon, indeed the premier wine-growing region of France.⁶⁹

In the north of France landed property was much rarer. A *villa Judeis* is mentioned in the year 886 in the county of Chartres. By then the property had been in Christian hands for decades. It was probably identical with the *villa called Judeis in the county of Chartres*, which was twice endorsed by royal charter in the possession of the cathedral church of Orléans.⁷⁰ Another property claim similarly confirmed was to the *enclosed place near the walls of Orléans that Walter, previously a Jew and then a Christian, had bought from the monks of St Benedict for a large sum, for the brethren of the cathedral church to have*.⁷¹ Further to the north-east, a vineyard in the surroundings of Metz had before the year 945 been the possession of a Jew called David. A Hebrew letter of recommendation, apparently written in Arles and dated to ca 1030, tells of a Jew of faraway Rouen who had been *very great and heavy in silver and gold and the working of his land*, but was then dispossessed by the Norman duke. In addition to these direct references to Jewish landholding, there is a considerable body of deliberations by northern French sages, chiefly Rashi but also others. They do refer to landholding in the context of property transactions by dowry, divorce and inheritance, in matters concerning kosher wine, or in questions arising from internal community taxation. We shall have occasion to use these sources in our discussion of the economic functions of landholding (below Part II, Chapter 7a).

In Germany there is but one single directly documented instance, in Regensburg, where the abbey of St Emmeram had before 981 acquired from the Jew Samuel a holding *in Scierstat in the Nordgau in the suburb of Regensburg*. But then Germany lacks the collections of charters that provide the main bulk of evidence in France. Even more telling, as in northern France quite a number of Halakhic decisions by Talmudic scholars

⁶⁹ Gershom ben Jehudah, 1955: no. 28. The localization by Gross, 1969: 113.

⁷⁰ Die Urkunden Karls III., 1937: 228, no. 142 (a. 866); Cartulaire de Sainte-Croix d'Orléans, 1906: 521, no. 376 (a. 956).

⁷¹ Cartulaire de Sainte-Croix d'Orléans, 1906: 82, no. 39. This property became the subject of a highly revelatory editorial intervention by Georg Heinrich Pertz, venerable editor in chief of the Monumenta Germaniae Historica from 1823 until 1874. By slightly changing a passage in a chronicle by Richer of Saint Remy, where Hugh Capet is said to have died in the *villa once called of the Jews*, Pertz made the king die *by the hands of the Jews*, with the explicatory addition *probably Jewish doctors*: Blumenkranz, 1991: 17–9.

resident in 11th century Germany do refer to landholding, in the legal contexts touched upon in the previous paragraph. The texts from Germany only rarely let us localize the case discussed. A Responsum of the early 11th century, by Gershom "Light of the Exile", could be pinpointed by a stray reference to a major city at or near the river Danube, which would most probably again be Regensburg. *When the days of vintage came and he was at the gathering of the grapes, he went there with his wife and left no one in his house except for one small daughter and a Gentile maid and wet-nurse.*⁷² Some properties must have been substantial, as in a question addressed in the second half of the 11th century to sages in Worms that tells of a man on his deathbed who put his estate in order: *And to my brother Levi I leave a vineyard in a certain village, and to my brother's widow another vineyard in a certain village, and to Reuben, Levi, Joseph and Benjamin I leave another vineyard that I had from my fathers and forefathers.*⁷³ In light of such indications, some of them as late as the 12th century, landholding in northern France and in Germany was probably much more extensive than allowed by direct documentation, but surely not as extensive as in southern and central France.

Commerce

After the mid-7th century, more than a hundred years pass in Frankish lands without a single reference to Jews. Things begin to change in the mid-Carolingian period, roughly the times of Charlemagne (ruled 768–814). The *Capitula de Iudaeis*, six capitularies (pieces of administrative legislation), have long been thought to be the earliest and most substantial body of Carolingian legislation on Jews, with important information on economic and legal matters.⁷⁴ The first and second capitulary mention pledges and debts owed to Jews by ecclesiastical bodies and other Christians, which has been seen as confirmation for Jews acting as moneylenders. The third one prohibits Jews from working mints in their houses, which would provide verification for the minters discounted above. It also forbids them to sell wine, grain, or other merchandise, which has been understood to mean that Jews were cornering the market in times of famine. This clause was even used to establish a chronology of food shortages in the Carolingian Empire. The laws have been ascribed to no less than

⁷² Grossman, 1975a: 194–198, the text quotation on 196.

⁷³ Responsen der Weisen von Frankreich und Lotharingen, 1881: no. 49.

⁷⁴ Linder, 1997: 345–7, nos. 581–586.

Emperor Charlemagne, however fallaciously as scholarship has definitely established. They are considerably later and owe their existence and thrust not to royal policy but to a strong confrontational vein in ecclesiastical polemics, pioneered by archbishop Agobard of Lyon and then current in broader church circles in the period of Charles the Bald (ruled 840–877).⁷⁵ The economic information contained in “Charlemagne’s Capitularies on the Jews” is thus, sadly, of no use except as yet more water to the polemical mill.

Genuine legislation of 809 envisages the need to regulate law suits between Jews and Christians in a much more evenhanded manner than the one supposedly enacted in the false Capitularies.⁷⁶ This speaks of a growing presence of Jews in the Carolingian Empire. Some anecdotes centered on the domineering figure of Charlemagne point directly to merchants. In order to publicly humiliate a smug bishop, the emperor orders a *Jewish merchant, used to frequently visit the Promised Land and bring precious and unknown articles to the provinces this side of the Mediterranean*, to procure an ordinary mouse. Stuffed and perfumed, it is offered to the bishop as a *precious and hitherto unknown animal from Judea*, and promptly acquired for an outrageous sum. A visit to a port town in Septimania affords the opportunity to display another side of the emperor’s sagacity. When strange ships are sighted nearby, some in the emperor’s entourage think that they belong to Jewish or African or Britannic merchants. Only Charlemagne correctly discerns that they are Norman pirates.⁷⁷ The author Notker is well known as one of the less trustworthy of Carolingian chroniclers and probably neither story ever took place as related. But they can be understood to reflect the fact that Jewish (and other) merchants became part of the setting in Charlemagne’s times. A real life person was the Jew Isaac, the only survivor of a delegation sent by Charlemagne in 797 to Baghdad, who returned to the emperor’s residence at Aachen in July 802 with sumptuous gifts from Caliph Harun al-Rashid. Amongst them was yet another exotic

⁷⁵ For the traditional view see Baron, 1957: IV, 260–1, note 62. For the necessary revisions see Blumenkranz 1960: 344–5, and Linder 1997: 345, note 324. The grave problems in the manuscript tradition have been spelled out as early as 1883 by Alfred Boretius in the introduction to his Monumenta edition of *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 1883: I, 258. Over one hundred years later, some of the scholarship has yet to pick this up. An essential analysis of the polemical turn in later Carolingian ecclesiastical thought is Heil: 1998a.

⁷⁶ Linder, 1997: 344, no. 580.

⁷⁷ Notkeri Gesta Karoli, 1969: 343, ch. I, 16; 406, ch. II, 14.

creature, a white elephant called Abulabaz.⁷⁸ Commercial activities are in clear evidence in a Capitulary of 806 designed to regulate the churches of the kingdom: *That every bishop, abbot and abbess should inspect carefully the ecclesiastical treasures lest anything of the gems or the vessels . . . should be lost because of the perfidy or negligence of the custodians, for we have been told that Jewish merchants, as well as others, boast that they are able to buy from them whatever they would like.*⁷⁹ It is worth noting that *perfidy or negligence* is attributed here to ecclesiastic custodians, rather than to Jews as will become common not much later. On a more humdrum note, around 820 officials were dispatched to check the presence of illegal residents in the royal residence Aachen, amongst others *in the houses of all the merchants, whether they trade in the market or elsewhere, Christians as well as Jews.*⁸⁰

The center-piece of economic information belongs to the years 822 to 827, the mid-years of the reign of Charlemagne's son, Emperor Louis the Pious (814–840). Within these few years, three basically similar charters were granted by the Emperor: to *those Jews Donatus rabbi and Samuel his grandson* (no place of residence given); to *David grandfather of David, Joseph and . . .* (empty space) *with their spouses, living in the city of Lyon*; and to *this Jew named Abraham, inhabitant of the city of Saragossa* (in Muslim Spain).⁸¹ By phrases reminiscent of the language of vassalage, the recipients of the charters were taken under the emperor's protection. They were exempted from tolls, road dues and proof by ordeal. They were free *to exchange from their private properties and sell from their property to whomever they wish*, and have permission *to buy foreign slaves and sell them in our empire*, a clause that shall occupy us further on (below, Part II, Chapter 6a). Abraham of Saragossa was specifically absolved from exactions *on his trade* (*negotium* which can also mean *merchandise*), and was expected to *serve our palace faithfully*. The latter phrase also appears in the charter for the Lyonese Jews. Clearly, these recipients were merchants in the emperor's service, a position important enough for their charters to be included in a collection of imperial form letters.

⁷⁸ Einhardi annales, 1987: 74–76. A full reconstruction of the journey in Borgolte, 1976: 46–58. For the cultural implications see Hodges, Charlemagne's Elephant, in: Hodges, 2006: 72–79.

⁷⁹ Linder, 1997: 344, no. 579.

⁸⁰ Linder, 1997: 348, no. 587.

⁸¹ Linder, 1997: 333–4, 336–7, 341–2, nos. 572, 573, 576. For a reasoned commentary see Patschovsky, 1993: 334–5.

The same collection has two rather similar form letters for non-Jewish merchants, where the meaning of *to serve our palace faithfully* is explained: *in order that henceforth they should come to our palace every year or every two years in the middle of the month of May, and that everyone of them should apply himself to serve our treasury out of his commerce and out of ours.*⁸² Clearly, a similar function was assigned to both groups. The authoritative edition of the two sources of 1882 suggests an even closer relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish merchants. In the text version printed, the non-Jews' rights and duties were seen to be directly modeled upon those incumbent upon the Jews: they were to occupy a position and behave *like the Jews themselves* (*sicut ipsi Iudei*). Thus another keystone was laid for the enduring notion that Jews were the archetypical traders of the Carolingian Empire. However, already in 1908 this reading was proven to be mistaken.⁸³

The parallel legislation for non-Jewish and Jewish merchants raises some further issues. The language used shows a contrast between blurry formulations in regard to Jewish merchants and a sharp focus in regard to their non-Jewish colleagues. The charters for Jews are entirely lacking the specifics describing non-Jewish merchants in the charter of 828 and elsewhere. The latter are portrayed as *traveling in the parts of Francia, Burgundy, Provence, Septimania, Italy, Tuscia, Raetia, Bavaria, and Sclavinia* (Slavonic regions), as well as *owning ships* and *wishing to introduce their wagons to our realms*. They are found in the most important trade emporia of the period, Quentovic and Dorestad, as well as in a further toll-place Clusa, all places on the northwestern sea-board where there is no trace

⁸² Linder, 1997: 338–9, 339–341, nos. 574, 575. The original Monumenta edition by Karl Zeumer is *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi*, 1882: 309–311, 314–315, 325, nos. 30, 31, 32, 37, 52. The fundamental analysis of Carolingian mercantile legislation is Ganshof, 1957.

⁸³ The shorthand notation for the phrase in question should read *sicut iam diximus*, as we have already said, rather than the very similar abbreviation for *sicut ipsi Iudei*, like the Jews themselves. Linder, 1997: 340, note 316, is right in stating that “if this emendation is accepted, the text has no bearing on Jews”. He attributes the emendation to Patschovsky, 1993: 335, note 10. However, the credit should go to Michael Tangl, 1908. To the historiographical aberrations in the wake of the mistaken reading—listed by Patschovsky, 1993, and Kisch, 1978 (originally 1955): 49, note 20—should be added two highly influential scholars: Rörig, 1959 (originally 1952), 609–10, note 10, and Latouche, 1966: 193–4. Rörig knew Tangl's article, but in keeping with his views on the economic function of the Jews preferred to explain away its meaning. Latouche remained ignorant of Tangl's emendation, and so did a scholar of the stature of Ganshof, who unlike most Francophones did read German: Ganshof, 1957: 104. The first French-writing scholars to take cognizance were apparently Devroey & Brouwer, 2000: 360, note 83.

whatsoever of Jews.⁸⁴ None of these characteristics apply to the Jews of the three charters.

The favorable treatment of Jewish merchants by the Carolingian monarchs did not go unopposed. In 826/827 archbishop Agobard of Lyon penned a number of highly hostile epistles aimed at the “insolence” and “superstitions” of the Jews and at what he viewed as their excessive influence on both royalty and the populace.⁸⁵ In economic matters, the archbishop found fault with the employment of Christian domestics by Jews and with their slave trade (see below, Part II, Ch. 6a), as well as with their sales of meat and wine. Amulo, Agobard’s pupil and successor, expanded the catalog of grievances in his “Tract against the Jews” to include *some Jews, who had been illicitly appointed in some towns as toll officials, exert in removed places pressure on poor and ignorant Christians in toll matters, then persuade them to deny Christ, and subsequently send them away as if in a gentle spirit.*⁸⁶ The fear of wily Jews misusing their position of authority to undermine the simple faith of ignorant Christians could be discounted as yet more religious paranoia. However, there were some Jewish toll-farmers, although in later times. Even allowing for a large measure of polemical hyperbole, Agobard’s and Amulo’s complaints point to some economic impact of the Jewish population, certainly in Lyon and surroundings, where we have found since this period significant Jewish landholding.

In tune with the demographic growth charted above, in the course of the 9th and 10th centuries Jewish merchants became a stable feature in the legislation of the Carolingian kingdom and its French and German successors, where they are mentioned always together with Christian merchants.⁸⁷ A very early Hebrew Responsum, of the mid-9th century, reports Jewish merchants visiting a fair that might have been St. Denis just north of Paris. This is a question addressed to Natroni bar Hilai Gaon (flourished ca. 857 as head of the Babylonian Talmud academy at Sura) and in slightly different form to his contemporary Paltoy Gaon, head of the rival academy of Pumbedita, with regard to the permissibility of trading at *the fair of such-and-such idolatry*. The locale is not specified, but a

⁸⁴ For Quentovic and Dorestad according to the numismatic evidence see Coupland, 2002. Johanek, 1987: 58, identifies Clusa as an Alpine pass.

⁸⁵ Agobardi . . . Opera omnia, 1981: 115–117, 191–195, 199–221, 231–234. For Agobard and the Jews see Boshof, 1969; Albert, 1996; Heil, 1998.

⁸⁶ Amulo, 1852: 170D–171A.

⁸⁷ Linder, 1997: 349–350, no. 590; 351, no. 591; 349, no. 589; 377–379, 369–370, no. 598 (Arles); 377–378, no. 603; 380, no. 604; 382, no. 605; Thietmari . . . Chronicon, 1935: 98, 294.

place where they hold a fair in honor of the idolatry once a year, and the merchants come from all over and trade there, and when they depart a toll is taken from them in honor of the idolatry, and the fair is called by [the saint's] name such-and-such, must have been somewhere in Christian Europe.⁸⁸ In the mid-9th century, the fair of St Denis, held each October, was the most renowned of such events and is thus the likeliest match. In 932, King Henry I of Germany was asked in a letter sent from Venice to have his Jews baptized, if necessary by economic pressure, for instance by ordering *that the sign of the cross—whether on metal, cloth or any other material—shall not be handled by his [the Jew's] polluted hand in your kingdom*.⁸⁹ On a much more modest plane, around the year 993 one finally encounters an individual, a Jew named Salomon reported to have met the abbot of the venerable monastery Saint Victor of Marseille while leading four asses laden with honey. The source, an edifying tale designed to show off the abbot's sagacity, might be discounted as yet another pious invention. However, some hundred and fifty years later, in the very same region a certain count boasted a substantial income *from the honey, cinnamon and pepper that he derives from the Jews*.⁹⁰

The Latin sources, few and far in-between, thus provide proof for the existence of Jewish merchants, but not much more. With the onset of Hebrew Responsa since the end of the 10th century, much fuller light is thrown on commercial and other occupational matters. We use the queries directed to and Halakhic decisions enacted by the following sages:⁹¹ Meshullam bar Kalonymos (of Lucca and Rome, and apparently also briefly in Mainz, died ca. 1000/1010), with questions sent from the south of France, Germany and even Byzantium; Gershom ben Jehudah "Light of the Exile" (ca. 950/960 Metz—1028 Mainz); Jehudah bar Meir ha-Cohen (ca. 975/985—ca. 1050/1055 Mainz); Joseph ben Shmuel Tov-Elem (also called Bonfils, ca. 980 Narbonne—ca. 1050, active in Limoges and in the Anjou region); Rashi (R. Shlomo Yitzhaki, 1040/41 Troyes—1105 Troyes); and less august figures of the 11th century.

The complex commercial arrangements revealed in the Responsa were still subject to deliberation and must have been some time in the

⁸⁸ Brody, 1998: 134. The source is Responsa of Rav Natroni, 1994: II, 373–374, no. 243. On the problems in Jewish religious law see Ta-Shema, 1977/8, and the rejoinder by Jacob Katz, 1978/9.

⁸⁹ Linder, 1997: 555, no. 874.

⁹⁰ Cartulaire . . . Saint-Victor de Marseille, 1857 : I, 106, no. 77; Saige, 1881: 12.

⁹¹ For the following persons see Grossman, 1988 and 1995, passim.

making. One critical problem besetting business in the 10th and 11th century was the recurrent and apparently vital need to raise working capital. In consequence, partnerships are almost ubiquitous, to the point that one would talk of *the law of partnership* when it came to dismantling one such joint venture in Arles around 950.⁹² Another obvious solution, borrowing money from fellow Jews, ran into the stern biblical prohibition: *Unto a foreigner thou may lend upon interest, but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon interest* (Deuteronomy 23:20–21). In southern Europe, where landed property was abundant, the mortgaging of land was much employed (see below, Part II, Chapter 7a). In contrast, in the north of France and in Germany agricultural property of Jews was much more circumscribed. The problem urgently called for a solution, and a number of exceptions came to be permitted by the Halakhic experts. For longer-term partnerships in trade ventures, the legal instrument of *Isska* was developed. Very similar to the Italian *commenda* contract, it guaranteed the sedentary partner for his investment a part of the profits, while the actual work was carried out by a junior partner traveling the roads.⁹³ In a long process of deliberation, the regular interest-bearing loan too was legalized, provided the subterfuge of a pawn and a non-Jewish intermediary between Jewish lender and Jewish borrower were employed.⁹⁴ The sheer volume of Halakhic discussion is a conclusive pointer to the widespread need for ready cash, as well as to the fact that Jews indeed took interest from fellow Jews and agonized about it.

Another problem was competition in a constricted and highly personalized market, as indicated by the frequent litigation recorded in the sources. One of the earliest extant Responsa, by Meshullam bar Kalonymos, deals with a Jewish merchant who deprived a competitor in Arles of his livelihood by snatching up merchandise before it was brought by suppliers into town. Held to account, he claimed a point of procedure, namely that his residence in a suburb freed him from the jurisdiction of the Jewish court of Arles. The sage ruled against him that *the suburbs of Arles are part of the town Arles. For Arles contains a large Jewish population, may the*

⁹² Kalonymos of Lucca to Moses of Arles: Responsa of the Early Geonim, 1848: no. 107. The following matters have been previously treated for Germany in Toch, 1998: 260–266, and Toch, 2008a. Some of my conclusions there, especially on credit, are to some degree modified in the following.

⁹³ For the legal solutions see Soloveitchik, 1985: 9–10. For the origins of this type of contract see Udovitch, 1962.

⁹⁴ For the Halakhic discussions see Soloveitchik, 1985: 25–81.

*Almighty increase it a thousand fold.*⁹⁵ It is thus not surprising that among the earliest community legislation were two ordinances designed to curb economic competition that might lead to social anarchy: *Herem ha-yishuv*, which gave the community the right to veto the settlement of newcomers; and *Maarufiya* (see below), by which access to potent customers was regulated.

Commerce was clearly the mainstay of Jewish occupations, as succinctly stated by Gershom ben Jehudah “Light of the Exile” of Mainz: *Because their (the Jews’) livelihood depends on their commerce.*⁹⁶ What was the merchandise bought and sold? One commodity habitually mentioned by scholars—slaves—should be struck from the list. German and French Jews and indeed other European ones did not practice the slave trade to a significant degree and they certainly did not dominate it (see below Part II, Chapter 6a). Of other glittering treasures of inter-continental commerce too only little is found in the sources. Rather, this was a blend of staple goods such as wine, salted fish by the ship-load, horses and cattle, dye-stuffs, wool, ready-made garments, copper vessels. There were also more valuable articles such as furs and pelts of different animals; spices and medicines; garments made with gold threads and other costly fittings, including some imported ones; gilded vessels; precious metals; pieces of jewelry. Merchandise was packed in sachets, bags, and boxes and transported in saddlebags, carts, and boats. Sometimes it was considered so valuable as to warrant long delays in order to regain lost or stolen goods: *then Shimon too went on his way, and Reuben kept himself busy for fifteen months regaining [the loss].*⁹⁷

Most of the merchandise was purchased on inland markets from Jewish and non-Jewish business partners and suppliers. In Germany, the fair of Cologne was a major venue, in France apparently the one of Saint Denis and by the 11th century the fair of Troyes, as well as additional places not identified.⁹⁸ The main artery of transport in Germany was the north-south

⁹⁵ Ginzei Schechter, 1929: 276, no. VII.

⁹⁶ Gershom, 1955: no. 21. The last word—*sehorah*—means both commerce and merchandise. The context is once more the question, answered here in the positive, whether Jews might negotiate with Gentiles on the days of their “idolatrous festivities”. References for the following in Toch, 2008a.

⁹⁷ Gershom, 1955: no. 49.

⁹⁸ Cologne: Gershom, 1955: no. 29; Hebräische Berichte, 2005: 429. Saint Denis: see above, note 88; Troyes: Responsa of the Tosaphists, 1954: 39–42, no. 1, cf. Soloveitchik, 1990: 77–86. Unidentified fairs: Responsa Meir, 1891 (= Jehudah ha-Cohen): no. 898; Rashi, Responsa, 1943: no. 241; Mahzor Vitry, 1923: no. 82.

one of the Rhine River between Cologne, Mainz, and Worms. Secondary routes were opened by the late 11th century towards the Netherlands to the west and via the Main River to central Germany in the east.⁹⁹ Similar conduits must have existed in France, for instance along the Rhône and Saône rivers. Shipwrecks were frequent and occasioned complicated and lengthy attempts at salvage but also the development of legal norms to deal with such problems.¹⁰⁰ Along these circuits, over time routine schedules of shipping and hauling, lodging, partnership, and accounting were established.

Business trips to foreign parts were undertaken too, but concrete destinations beyond the standard expression *abroad* (*medinat ha-yam*) are seldom mentioned. From Arles, Jewish merchants are known to have traveled to Spain.¹⁰¹ From Germany they went to Hungary and Poland and via these countries to *Russia*, meaning either the realm of Kiev or, in a more confined sense, a region in eastern Galicia.¹⁰² Regensburg on the Danube served as the staging point to the south-eastern route, the towns Prague and Cracow as stations on the north-eastern one. The purchase of merchandise in such regions promised high returns, but was fraught with danger. *Reuben and Shimon were in Hungary and Reuben gave to Shimon ten gilded and two copper vessels to transport to Mainz.* When the merchandise got lost somewhere on the way, legal action turned around the price at which restitution was to be made—the lower purchase price in Hungary or the much higher sale price expected in Mainz.¹⁰³

By one opinion, there might also have been a route leading from the Danube along the Alpine mountain valleys of southeastern Austria towards Venice and the Adriatic coast. Austrian scholars have pointed out a number of place names, mainly in Carinthia, where the word *Jew* joined to the

⁹⁹ This follows from a royal charter of 1074 freeing the inhabitants and Jews of Worms from toll duties in a number of places: Linder, 1997: 388–91, no. 608. The phrase in question, *Jews and others* (of Worms), has been added to the text, as can be clearly seen in the original parchment kept in the Worms Town Archive (I thank Dr. Fritz Reuter for his courtesy). Against the judgment of earlier scholars, the first Monumenta editor of the text (1941) was convinced that the interpolation was a furtive, sinister and unauthorized one and took place after 1200: Die Urkunden Heinrichs IV., 1941/1978: 341–2. The re-editor of 1978, Alfred Gawlik, thought that this was done by the original writer of the document, the well-known chancery notary Adalbero. This would make the interpolation both contemporary to the late 11th century and fully authorized, in short authentic: Die Urkunden Heinrichs IV., Teil 1, 1941/1978: LXII, note 193.

¹⁰⁰ Passamaneck, 1978.

¹⁰¹ Ginzei Schechter, 1929: 235, no. XXXIII.

¹⁰² For references and details see below, Part I, Chapter 5.

¹⁰³ Responsa Meir, 1891 (= Jehudah ha-Cohen): no. 935.

names of villages and hamlets occurs in sources dated to the 12th century, long before the settlement of Jews in these parts. Located at crossroads, mountain passes, river fords, or outposts of royal authority, such places are assumed to have served since Carolingian times as roadside inns and way stations owned by Jewish traders. These commercial outposts are even seen to stretch northwards as far as Saxony, along the border between the "Frankish-German civilization" and the Slavs.¹⁰⁴ Besides geographical logic and the tenuous dating of place names, there is no independent corroboration, textual or archaeological, for this hypothesis. It certainly does not accord with the main trade directions seen above.

Of true intercontinental commerce there is but one reference fraught with problems of interpretation, which shall be examined later (below, Part II, Chapter 6c). In contrast, there is a wealth of documentation on limited local circuits, along which Jews solitary or in pairs made their rounds. For instance, in French Burgundy, *Reuben used to go to many places, and to many places [krahim] distant one or two days from the town where he dwelled; and he used to sell to the lords of the places and buy from them, his Maarufiya [regular clientele]*.¹⁰⁵ Weighed against such routine itineraries and the frequency of visits to inland markets, travel in foreign lands was clearly not the predominant mode of operation. Still, to be on the move was the normal condition for these merchants, one of whom explained in a legal argument: *I wished to take to the road, like all other men*.¹⁰⁶

The customers of this trade were bishops and priests, in one case an episcopal treasurer, rich ladies up to a queen of Hungary (scholars differ as to her identity), magnates, barons, counts, chatelaines, and lords of villages.¹⁰⁷ In short, these were the upper layers of ecclesiastical and lay society, resident in their townhouses and castles in the countryside. Business was often conducted within a context of familiarity, of extended relations with a stock clientele: *I have assiduously cultivated his friendship, often lent him money at no interest, and countless times served him in various capacities*.¹⁰⁸ This is the setting for the social symmetry noticeable even at the eve of the First Crusade (1096), for instance between *the renowned woman Minna, . . . whose name is widely known*, and her Christian counter-

¹⁰⁴ Wenninger, 1985 and 1996.

¹⁰⁵ Gershom, 1955: no. 36. See also Responsa Meir, 1891 (= Jehudah ha-Cohen): nos. 880, 901; Responsa of the Early Geonim, 1848: no. 66.

¹⁰⁶ Responsa Meir, 1891 (= Jehudah ha-Cohen): no. 880.

¹⁰⁷ For the Hebrew terms for Christian officials and holders of rank see Shatzmiller, 1983.

¹⁰⁸ Gershom, 1955: no. 69.

parts, *the great of the town and the lords of the land who would frequent her house*.¹⁰⁹ Only with such patrons in mind, prelates, aristocrats, and members of the urban elite, did it make sense to design the legal instrument of *Maarufiya* (a term of Arabic derivation), by which the local community gave to a single merchant exclusive access to a potent customer and his household.¹¹⁰ Simple folk, let alone the poor, are not yet found amongst clients. Rather, they appear in the employ of Jews as wagoners, craftsmen, and vineyard workers. In one case in or near Regensburg they were a pair of professional thieves who supplied two rival Jewish “fences” with stolen merchandise.¹¹¹

Credit and Monetary Transactions

Early French and German Jews were thus deeply involved in commercial enterprise, of which merchants and merchandise were however only one aspect. One of the earliest extant Responsa, a question sent to Meshullam bar Kalonymos (died ca. 1000/1010), portrays a man busy *in the affairs of the archbishop of Narbonne, supplying his needs; and the matter of the salt of the archbishop by which he earns income with much effort; exchanging his gold and silver; investing his [the archbishop's] money in merchandise; contracting with a junior partner; and lending money for interest*.¹¹²

When did Jews become involved in money lending and credit operations? There was nothing to suggest such participation in the sources of late antique and Merovingian times. From the later Carolingian period onwards, references to debts owed by Christians to Jews or to pawns put up as security become more frequent. However, their mere mention does not necessarily indicate money lending or professional money lenders. The earliest reference usually quoted, from ca. 841–843, speaks of debts owed to Christians and Jews *for manifold necessities* by Lady Dhuoda, then resident at Uzès. This is but one case of several where debt has unhesitatingly been seen as stemming from borrowing, even though it might have

¹⁰⁹ Hebräische Berichte, 2005: 286–289. On this lady see the perceptive essay by Yuval, 1997. Similarly in a Responsum by Rashi, Responsa, 1943: no. 240.

¹¹⁰ See Agus, 1969: 59–66, and Eidelberg, 1953.

¹¹¹ This text by Gershom “Light of the Exile” has been assiduously shunned by earlier scholars, one assumes for providing ammunition to anti-Semitic slander. It was first published by Abraham Grossman, 1975a. On the historiographical mine-field around this topic see below, Part II, ch. 6, note 101.

¹¹² Responsa of the Early Geonim, 1848: no. 140. I have slightly reshuffled the order of sentences in the quotation.

as easily accrued from the acquisition of merchandise.¹¹³ A further mid-9th century source from Lotharingia shows exactly the reverse situation, a Jew owing the sizeable sum of 24 pounds to a monk.¹¹⁴ We have already seen how borrowing from non-Jews was used to raise working capital.

By the 10th century, there is no mistaking that Jews in France and Germany did indeed extend loans on a regular basis. Queries sent to Meshullam bar Kalonymos repeatedly state *I lent him (or the Gentile) money against interest*.¹¹⁵ A Responsum wrongly attributed to Gershom describes two types of customers: *the violent oppressor* who will recover his pawn without paying interest, and the regular debtor, whose pledge can be kept until due interest is paid.¹¹⁶ Between Jews, outstanding debts were routinely accounted, divided between partners, bequeathed in wills, and litigated over in court. Pledges or pawns are ubiquitous in the source material. The earliest ones to be mentioned, in the mid-10th century in the vicinity of Vienne, were landed properties, small parcels of vineyards mortgaged for two to three years to Jews by their Gentile neighbors as surety for small loans. In all cases interest was to be paid in produce, a yearly quantity of new wine.¹¹⁷ This indicates the existence of a low-end lending market in rural areas in southern and central France, which is rather unlike the elevated clientele seen above in Germany. In France too, the well-heeled did not refrain from borrowing. Before 959, countess Arsinde of Carcassonne had engaged properties in the county of Narbonne to two Jews in exchange for a loan of the very substantial sum of 1000 solidi (50 pounds). Some hundred years later, the tithe of an entire village in north-eastern France was pledged for a loan of seven pounds.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ PL 106: col. 117. Bachrach, 1977a: 112, thinks that "some remarks by the Countess Dhuoda suggest that she borrowed noteworthy sums of money, perhaps on a regular basis, from Jewish sources." On the same case Devroey & Brouwer, 2001: 364: "neither a question of money nor of interest". For further similarly unwarranted inferences see Toch, 1998: 264–5 and notes 68–70.

¹¹⁴ Die Kaiserurkunden . . . Westfalen, 1867: I, 524–526.

¹¹⁵ Ginzei Schechter, 1929: 209, no. VII; 220, no. XXIII; Responsa of the Early Geonim, 1848: no. 140; Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 152.

¹¹⁶ Zedekiah ben Abraham ha-Rofe, 1968: 80, no. 45. Haim Soloveitchik kindly informs me that the Responsum is by R. Yitzhak ben Asher of Speyer (died before 1133) and thus a hundred years younger than previously assumed.

¹¹⁷ Cartulaire de Saint-André-le-bas-de Vienne, 1869: 6–7, 52–53, 74, nos. 5, 63, 64, 99. The further texts numbered 100, 105, 111, adduced by Lewis, 1965: 277, note 101, as evidence for "Jews of Vienne who also served as money lenders" merely document land sales, the last one without any Jew.

¹¹⁸ Histoire générale de Languedoc: vol. III, 151, and vol. V, 232–4, no. 106, cf. Régéné, 1912: 61; Rashi, Responsa, 1943: no. 240.

Officials and Entrepreneurs

Given the expertise in financial and monetary matters, were there fiscal advisors and officials in the service of princes and governments of the sort we have seen in Italy and shall see in Spain? The earliest evidence, Archbishop Amulo of Lyon warning in mid-8th century against wily Jews who use their position as toll officials to undermine the faith of simple Christians, is somewhat suspect.¹¹⁹ In the later 10th century, a Jew Aster and his sons were appointed stewards of a local monastery in Vienne.¹²⁰ This was of course not a public function, unlike the Jews who farmed much later, in the second half of the 12th century, the road tolls of the bishopric of Béziers and of the archbishopric of Narbonne.¹²¹ In Béziers, one of the men involved was to serve some years later as official (*baillie*) of the viscount, similar to another Jew employed in the same function by the viscount of Carcassonne.¹²² From this time onwards does one find Jews in similar tasks also in German principalities.¹²³ After the close of our period a heyday of Jewish officialdom can indeed be made out, brought about by the convergence of two conditions: political fragmentation that shifted sovereign rights into the hands of local authorities; and the incipient bloom of Jewish money lending, which made available the extensive capital necessary to farm tolls, customs, and taxes. Together, these conditions were to apply in Spain, Southern France and Germany and of course in Italy, but not in Northern France.

Jews were engaged in salt production, in the working of mills, and in some other enterprises. Earliest is a somewhat enigmatic reference of Ibrāhīm ibn Yakūb, the Jewish traveler from Tortosa (before 970), to a salt work situated in Eastern Germany on the river Saale and operated by Jews. This allusion, outlandish as it might seem, is corroborated centuries later, in 1230, when a Latin source mentions at the very same spot, near Halle on the river Saale, the Jewish member of a consortium engaged in salt refinery.¹²⁴ Halle was indeed one of the most important seats of salt production in medieval Germany. As significant were the salt-pits or salt lakes (*étangs*) in the neighborhood of Narbonne, where Jews are

¹¹⁹ Above, note 86.

¹²⁰ Above, note 64. *Cartulaire de Saint-André-le-bas-de Vienne*, 1869: 68–9, no. 91.

¹²¹ *Histoire générale du Languedoc*: vol. V, 1248; Régné, 1912: 95, 192.

¹²² *Histoire générale du Languedoc*: vol. VIII, 311; Saige, 1881: 17.

¹²³ Wenninger, 2008.

¹²⁴ Aronius, 1902: nos. 131, 447; for the geographical location see *Germania Judaica* I, 1934: 319–320.

documented from the 10th to the 12th century. Towards the end of the 10th century, the dealings of a Jew with the archbishopric of Narbonne included *the matter of the salt of the archbishop by which he earns income with great effort*.¹²⁵ In 1048, the two rulers of Narbonne, archbishop and viscount, granted to two churches the tithe from a number of salt works to the south-east of town, *excepting the tithe on salt produced at the Jewish allod*. A pious donation of the year 1100 by the viscount of Narbonne mentions a *stagnum* (étang, salt-lake) *called de Contesa that is in the territory of the villa Judaica*. In 1154, *Bonisaac, salt maker*, put up as security for a loan of 200 solidi his sizeable enterprise at *Pradel*—half of all the salt-works in this place—including the necessary equipment. He signed the deed in Hebrew letters as *Yitzhak bar Levi*.¹²⁶ *Pradel* is probably today's Prat de Cest (commune Bages, dépt. Aude), some ten km south of Narbonne, the same location that was mentioned a hundred years earlier.

Still in Narbonne, in 955 a consortium of four brothers acquired half a part of the mill *called Cazal on the river Aude below the bridge of Narbonne*. Twenty years later, the same family group sold a part of their property, *namely one mill entirely and two thirds of another in the river Aude on that bridge which is before the city of Narbonne*. In the later 11th century, when the scribes of the archbishop fabricated royal charters purporting to stem from the early 10th century, they included a claim to *the land and the mills that are below the bridge of that city and that are seen to belong to the Jews, also the mills that are in the place called Mactapedilius similarly belonging to those Jews*.¹²⁷ The river was the man-made branch of the Aude running through the city. It dried out in the Middle Ages, was dredged by royal order in the 17th century, and is known today as Canal de la Robine, a portion of the magnificent Canal du Midi. The bridge is the Roman one known as Pont-Vieux or Pont des Marchands. The three texts bear witness to at least two clusters of mills operated in the 10th and 11th centuries by Jews, one downstream on Pont-Vieux, the other in a place called *Mactapedilius*/Matapezouls on the northern river bank and outside the city-walls.¹²⁸ As with the salt-works, the operation of mills bore a marked entrepreneurial character, with shares and parts in the enterprise acquired and sold

¹²⁵ See above, note 112.

¹²⁶ Histoire générale du Languedoc: vol. V, 454–6, no. 193; Leroux, Molinier & Thomas, 1883: 125, no. V; Régné, 1912: 225–6, 189.

¹²⁷ Saige, 1881: 129–30; Histoire générale du Languedoc: vol. V, 283–4; Linder, 1997: 372–4, no. 600.

¹²⁸ For the places in the texts see Régné, 1912: 54–5, for the urban environment Caille, 1998.

according to circumstances. Further Jewish mill-owners are known from only one further place, the town of Auch (west of Toulouse) in the second half of the 11th century.¹²⁹

A further object of entrepreneurship was the harvesting and marketing of *kermes* (Arabic *qirmizi*), a crimson dye-stuff obtained from the dried bodies of the females of a tiny insect—*Kermes ilicis*—that lives its entire life on an oak tree or shrub (*Quercus coccifera*) common in Mediterranean regions. Towards the end of the 10th century, a sale of 200 pounds *kermes* was in dispute between two Jewish merchants, most probably in Arles.¹³⁰ In 1138 three Jews of Arles contracted with the abbot of Montmajour (some three km north-east of Arles) for the entire *kermes* output of the district. The bleak hills near the abbey with nothing much for vegetation except shrubs, grass and some trees have been rendered in 1888 in a number of drawings and an oil-painting by Vincent van Gogh. A similar arrangement for the *kermes* harvest appears to have existed in the same period on the possessions of the archbishopric of Arles.¹³¹ Two Responsa, by Meshulam bar Kalonymos and by Rashi, treat the Halakhic problems arising on the Sabbath and during Passover from partnerships between Jews and non-Jews in the ownership and operation of baking ovens.¹³² Although no localities are mentioned, it stands to reason that the questions came from places in France. The latter Responsum by Rashi contrasts the problem with the ones arising from fields owned and worked by Jewish and non-Jewish partners. Southern France with its significant Jewish population thus appears as a focal point of entrepreneurship in the mobilization of local resources. Even so, the scope and range of such enterprises was limited, and it seems excessive to credit them with more than local significance.

To sum up: Landholding, trade and credit operations appear as the main occupations of Jews in France and Germany, since the post-Carolingian period when these Jewries began their essential growth and into the 11th/12th centuries. In the south of France, Jews engaged in additional enterprises, the running of mills and salt-pans and the production of dye-stuffs. In France, credit operations were part of the occupational spectrum from an early time, apparently with a stress on small loans to neighbors secured by the mortgaging of tiny plots of landed property and interest

¹²⁹ Cartulaires... d'Auch, 1899: 44, no. 46.

¹³⁰ Responsa of the Early Geonim, 1848: no. 150 = Ginzei Schechter, 1929: 214.

¹³¹ Caro, 1908: I, 250; Gross, 1969: 77.

¹³² Responsa of the Early Geonim, 1848: no. 123; Rashi, Responsa, 1943: no. 111.

taken in produce, usually wine. In Germany, credit operations appear to have been carried out on a larger scale and with a higher-ranking clientele. Trade was mainly undertaken on a local and regional level. The evidence for international trade, though existing, is not extensive enough to warrant the traditional view of Ashkenazic Jews as the great Merchant Adventurers of the Early Middle Ages. To the contrary, our main insights come from the local level, for instance the frequent buying, selling and mortgaging of agricultural property. Similar to Italy and, as we shall see, to Spain, this provides us in many places with the very first information in the written record. More importantly, this points to the existence of a flourishing market in land and capital in which Jews regularly participated.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

Iberia (today's Spain and Portugal) experienced severe political upheavals during the early medieval period, and beyond.¹ By the early decades of the 5th century, the Roman provinces of *Hispania* were steadily inundated by bands of Germanic warriors—Vandals, Sueves, Alans, and since the mid-century Visigoths. Towards the end of the century the Visigoths completed their conquest of Roman *Hispania*. In the early decades of the 6th century they lost to the Franks their territory across the Pyrenees in Gaul, except for Septimania. In mid-century the Byzantines occupied parts of the south-eastern coastline around Cartagena, to be expelled ultimately only some seventy years later. In 585, an invigorated Visigoth monarchy put an end to the Germanic kingdom of the Sueves in the north-west of the peninsula. Shortly afterwards, in 589, the Third Church Council at the capital of Toledo marked the conversion from Arian Christianity to Catholicism, a step fraught with significance for Iberian Jewry. The Arab invasion of 711 did away with the Visigoth kingdom and led by 756 to the establishment of the powerful Omayyad Emirate (since 929 Caliphate) of al-Andalus, with its capital at Córdoba. Only a small part of the peninsula remained under Christian control. In the course of the 8th century the Franks under the Carolingian dynasty frequently intervened in north-eastern Spain, leading in 801 to the conquest of Barcelona and subsequently to the establishment of the “Spanish March”. By the early 11th century the Muslim Caliphate was disintegrating into numerous principalities, the so-called *Taifa* (party) states, while the Christian realms in the north gathered strength for the onset of *Reconquista* later in the century. Their advance was however slowed and then brought to a standstill by invasions of Berber tribes under the leadership of two subsequent dynasties, the Almoravids (1086/1090) and the Almohads (1170). Only by the early 13th century was the Christian re-conquest geared to gather new and decisive force.

¹ For political history see Collins, 1983, and Kennedy, 1996. A more detailed treatment in the chapters by A. Barbero & M.I. Loring, Hugh Kennedy, Roger Collins, and Peter Linehan in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vols. 1–4.

People and Communities

In order to establish when and where Jews lived in the Iberian Peninsula, we shall look at the Roman, Visigothic, and Muslim periods, in the latter also at developments in the Christian north. Where possible, we shall be attentive to distribution across space and to regional patterns. Again, we shall ask how many people, even though a definite answer is almost impossible. The starting point is the undoubted presence of Jews in Roman *Hispania*, for which some scholars tend to posit an early date, sometimes in the 1st to 3rd centuries.² However, unequivocal evidence comes mostly from Late Antiquity, the 4th to 6th centuries. This includes, in approximate chronological and geographic order: Latin and/or Greek and Hebrew epitaphs and inscriptions from Villamesias, Mérida, Adra, Mértola and Tortosa; from Tarragona, Roman provincial capital and harbor on the Mediterranean coast, the only place with more than a single archaeological find and thus clearly one of substantial Jewish population; the remains of a synagogue or assembly hall at Elche; and three lead sheets bearing a Hebrew name from Santa María del Camí near Palma on the island of Mallorca.

Further clues to the whereabouts of Jews in late-Roman Iberia have been drawn from the decisions of a church council convened around the year 306 in the town of Elvira (Roman *Illiberis*, very near Granada if not actually identical with it). Of its eighty one canons, four aimed to limit social contacts with Jews. These were indeed the earliest pronouncement of any church synod directed against the Jews. We have had plenty opportunity to see that in other places such deliberations did not necessarily stem from actual encounters or experiences with Jews. Furthermore, the synodal character and extent of jurisdiction of the Elvira meeting are far from being agreed upon in scholarship. It thus seems excessive to conclude from these canons that “Christian communities and a conspicuous, well-established Jewish population with its flourishing religious traditions were co-existing on the Iberian Peninsula”. At most, one might take them to impart that “about the year 300 we find proof of a group of Jews in the south of Spain, in the region of what is today Granada”.³

² Chiefly Beinart, 1962/1998. The most detailed treatment is García Iglesias, 1978: 31–67. For an overview see now Bradbury, 2006. For a sober evaluation of the historiography see Blázquez Martínez, 2003. References for the following places in Appendix 4, and see maps 5, 6.

³ Niquet, 2004: 167; Blumenkranz, 1977: 126.

This leads to hagiography, the most popular literary genre of the Early Middle Ages but one beset with severe problems of historical interpretation.⁴ One saint's story is located in the distinct maritime environment of the Balearic island Menorca. The encyclical letter *On the Conversion of the Jews*, after much discussion in scholarship now judged to be genuine and of the same period as the events, recounts how in 418 the arrival of the relics of the first martyr St. Stephen fired the Christians of the island with religious zeal. Bishop Severus and his flock organized a systematical and eventually successful campaign to compel the Jews, a total of 540 persons all resident in the port town of Mahón, to accept baptism. This story can be linked with material evidence to establish the presence of Jews on the Balearic Islands.

Somewhat more difficult is a further source, the *Passion of Saint Mantius*. Set in the 4th century, composed between the mid-7th and the 10th century, it is extant in four manuscripts written only in the 11th century and later. It recounts how the hero was brought by a company or family of Jews from Rome to *their* (the Jews') *landed possession now called Milana in the province of Lusitania in the territory of Evora*, where they proceeded to burden him with hard labor, taunt him for his belief in the Trinity, and eventually martyr him. One is tempted to discount this as a pious invention designed to furnish this remote region with its first saint, in particular as the geographical details appear only in the 13th century in the latest of the manuscripts. In a more generous view, the location, possibly today's Castillo de Milana north of Cáceres in southwestern Spain, might be combined with the epitaph from Villamesias mentioned above to establish some Jewish presence in the region.

A third pious story is placed some 140 km to the east in Mérida, capital of the province of Roman Lusitania, which unlike other places still maintained its splendor under the sixth-century rule of the bishops. One of them was Masona (573–606), who is credited with erecting the first hospital in Spain. The source is a 7th century collection of hagiographical narratives called *The Lives of the Holy Fathers of Mérida*. The story enlarges on the bishop's *sweetness of charity* by pointing out that he ordered no discrimination to be made amongst the needy, *neither between slave and free nor between Christian and Jew*. One might take exception at the literary device of "inclusiveness of opposites", already met in previous chapters, whereby the presence of "even the Jews" serves to heighten the protagonist's glory and testifies to the verity of his deeds.

⁴ Generally for Jews in late antique Iberian hagiography see Guerreiro, 1993.

The entire archaeological material consigns Jewish settlement solely to the late Roman period. Only hagiography, which is quite difficult to accept at face value, might be seen to point to a very spare presence in the Visigothic period. As far as Jews are concerned, this should be seen to last from the conversion to Catholicism in the late 6th to the fall of the kingdom in the early 8th century, when clergy and monarchy, driven by an escalating obsession with Judaism and with crypto-Jews, embarked upon more than a century of harshly discriminative legislation. In the same hostile vein run theological and historical treatises, by Isidore of Seville, Julian of Toledo and some lesser authors. The sheer bulk and fervor of these writings are unlike anything else encountered in early medieval Europe, and scholarship has labored valiantly to give meaning to this phenomenon.⁵ For our present purpose, one might note that the Visigothic-Catholic obsession has been understood by many as evidence for a significant Jewish population, for “an important and powerful element on the political and economic scene”. In a more restrained wording: “The unusual degree of attention devoted to them in the legislation of the Visigothic kingdom may be a further indication of a relatively sizeable Jewish population in the Iberic peninsula, in comparison with most other western Mediterranean regions”.⁶ There are a number of incongruities to this view. For one, there is a total absence of any material evidence clearly datable to the Visigothic period (save for one epitaph from Narbonne of the year 688/9, which raises the ultimately unanswerable question whether Southern French Jews should be regarded as Spanish ones as long as Septimania was under Visigothic sovereignty (until 711). Except for this one epitaph, there is not a shred of evidence of any kind produced by Jews themselves.⁷ In a study aptly titled “The invisible Jews of Visigothic Spain”, Hagit Sivan has noted the fact that “In the collective annals of the glorious Jewish community of medieval Spain (9th–12th centuries) no trace of the sufferings of their Jewish ‘ancestors’ or of the relentless persecutions launched by the Gothic state and church is evident. . . . Did the Visigoths indeed manage to eliminate not only their Jews but also to obliterate all souvenirs of the effects of their anti-Jewish laws? Were Jews

⁵ For the law texts see Linder, 1997: 257–332, 484–538, nos. 525–70, 839–62. For a running commentary see Juster (Rabello), 1976. For the polemical literature see now Drews, 2006. Of the vast scholarship I have found most useful and balanced Bronisch, 2005. See also the critical overview of the historiography by Romano, 1993.

⁶ Bachrach, 1977b: 45; Collins, 1983: 129.

⁷ For unsustainable claims in Tarragona and Seville see Appendix 4.

in 9th and 10th century Spain actually aware of the blood drenched past of their immediate ancestors? Were these later Jews newcomers who did not relate at all to any Jewish past in their adopted land?"⁸

What do the literary and legal sources actually say about Jews in the Visigothic kingdom, effectively in the capital Toledo alone? Of Jews in other places the Visigoth state seems not to have been really aware. Thus for instance in the Laws of King Erviga of around 681: *Any community of Jews, whatever places or territories they are seen to inhabit*.⁹ Discounting a hagiographic episode ostensibly set in early 7th century Toledo which cannot be considered reliable, some information can be culled from legislation. In 638 the *Jews of the city of Toledo* were made to sign a *declaration of promise and undertaking* to abjure Judaism. In 654 an *Oath of the Jews from all of us of the Hebrews of the city of Toledo, about to sign or make their marks below, was sworn in Toledo*, with similar content. In January 681, an oath of monstrous length was demanded of the Jews or rather of the baptized ex-Jews assembled in Saint Mary Church in Toledo. Altogether, it seems that the sole reason for their existence in the capital was to serve as extras for recurring stagings of Christian righteousness. Finally, a number of towns are mentioned in later Arabic sources as having housed Jews at the time of the Muslim conquest of Iberia in 711–712. These are places whose defense the conquerors are said to have entrusted to the local Jews, when Muslim troops were sparse or needed elsewhere to carry the invasion quickly forward.¹⁰ By one count, these towns included Illiberis (Granada), Sevilla, Córdoba, Toledo, and Béja (although the latter admittedly by a very late source), all "principal cities, but it is quite likely that the same thing occurred in smaller cities and in villages".¹¹ Another count, much more critical of the inconsistencies between the sources, names three places altogether: Granada (the town of Illiberis previously mentioned), Sevilla, and Córdoba, the latter with a question mark.¹² Except for theological writings, which have no need for real-life Jews as counterfoil, this exhausts the references to concrete

⁸ Sivan, 2000: 380, 385.

⁹ Linder, 1997: 323–325, no. 563. Again, references for the following are found in Appendix 4.

¹⁰ This issue has been entangled in the broader one of "Jewish treason", a pet notion in the Visigoth state as well as in medieval and modern historiography, which has only recently been laid to rest. See Roth, Norman, 1976; Meyuhás Ginio, 1995; Toch, 2001: 474–7; Heil, 2006.

¹¹ Ashtor, 1992: I, 15–24.

¹² Roth, Norman, 1976: 151–8.

places and communities in the Visigothic period. Thus neither the material nor the written evidence bears out statements of the sort: “a map of Jewish settlement . . . with the highest density of Jewish population in two areas: the valley of the Guadalquivir and the region of oriental Bética; the province of Gallia Narbonensis”.¹³ By all indications, the quite sparse Jewish population of Roman Late Antiquity seems to have barely held out in Visigothic times.

In the Muslim period, the earliest references point to the capital Córdoba. In a Responsum from the mid-9th century Natroni bar Hilai Gaon, head of the Babylonian academy of Sura, clinched a Halakhic argument by pointing to *Córdoba the place of royalty where Ishmael are plenty and Israel are few*. By the 10th century, there are some outstanding personalities such as Hasdai ibn Shaprut (ca. 905/915–ca. 970/5), physician and senior diplomat to emir Abd al-Rahmān III of Córdoba, prolific letter-writer, tireless defender of Jews abroad, and patron to a circle of Hebrew-Arabic poets as well as to Rabbinical learning. Another public figure of Jewish Córdoba was Jacob ibn Jau (died ca. 990), a wealthy silk merchant and successor to Hasdai as *nasi* (leader) of the Jews in Muslim Spain including parts of Morocco. The source for both persons is the 12th century *Book of Tradition* (*Sefer ha-Qabbalah*) by Abraham ibn Daud of Toledo, a classic of Jewish historical literature.¹⁴ Ibn Daud also reports on a contemporary who had seen a letter by Saadiya Gaon (882–942), greatest scholar of the Geonic period and leader of Babylonian Jewry. The letter is thought to stem from after 928 and was addressed to *the communities of Córdoba, Elvira, Lucena, Pechina, Calsena, Sevilla, and the great city of Mérida and all the cities of Israel in its vicinity*.¹⁵ Elvira was, as seen above, another name for Granada, where full sources become available only in the 11th century. The sea-port Pechina on the southern Mediterranean coast is slightly to the north of Almería, which towards the end of the 10th century took over from Pechina as a commercial hub and—extensively documented in the Cairo Genizah—a thriving Jewish community. Calsena, something of a phantom town mentioned only in early Muslim administrative records, is considered by some scholars to be identical with Pechina. Mérida is referred to already in the late-Roman period. Since the 11th century it

¹³ Orlandis, 1980: 152–3.

¹⁴ *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, 1967: Index under Ibn Shaprut and Ibn Jau. For a thorough introduction, analysis and interpretation see there, XIII–LXII and 149–303.

¹⁵ *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, 1967: 79 (English part), 59 (Hebrew part); cf. Gil, Moshe, 2004: 195–6 and note 129 for the earlier literature.

began to decline in favor of Badajoz. In this time, prominent families of Córdoba traced their ancestry from there.¹⁶ Neither Pechina nor Calsena figure any further in the documentary record. Seville appeared first as a place of Jewish habitation during the Muslim conquest, and comes into view as an important community again in the 11th century.

Of the places mentioned in Saadiya's letter, this leaves Lucena, about halfway between Córdoba and Granada. When Natroni bar Hilai Gaon remarked on Córdoba, he actually answered a question from Lucena:

Since Lucena is a place of Israel and Israel there are plenty, may the God of your fathers augment you a thousand times, and there are nearly no Gentile amongst you at all . . . And the greater part is Israel and Israel are the majority and those Gentiles are of no import in respect to Israel. And thus [concerning market arrangements] it is even in Córdoba the place of royalty where Ishmael are plenty and Israel are few.

In another place Natroni wrote: *by the grace of heaven there is no Gentile in Lucena to forbid you.*¹⁷ Of course, the Babylonian scholar might just have been playing with a well-known rhetorical device—if the few Jews of Córdoba act in accordance with the law, the ones of populous Lucena should do so “even more”. However, Natroni's remark is more than just literary rhetoric, as borne out by numerous references to the Jews of Lucena and their central place in Iberian Jewry. Later Arabic authors preserved a clear memory of the predominantly Jewish character of the town, even after the decline and eventual disappearance of its community in the Berber invasions of the 12th century. So did those Jews who migrated from Lucena to Tudela in the north, which they insisted on calling by the name of their old town.¹⁸ Further early places of Jewish habitation were Jaén, Málaga with a question mark; further north Saragossa the main town of the Ebro basin; Calatayud; and in the northeast Tarragona and Tortosa.

Altogether, the extant evidence for the presence of Jews in early Muslim Spain, between the 8th and the mid-10th century, consists of stray references by some Arabic authors; of a few allusions in the polemical writings of Christian ecclesiastics; of a very few epitaphs; and of some references

¹⁶ Huici Miranda, A., Badjdjāna; Torres Balbás, L., al-Andalus, 3. Urban toponymy and territorial divisions of al-Andalus; Lévi-Provençal, E., Mārida, all three entries in: EI (2007, online). Sefer ha-Qabbalah, 1967: 79.

¹⁷ Responsa of Rav Natroni, 1994: I, 279, no. 155; Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 25, but see Responsa of Rav Natroni, 1994: I, 335 and note 5, with the editor's doubts to Natroni's authorship of the second Responsum.

¹⁸ Máillo Salgado, 1993: 152–158; Lacave, 1996.

by sages of Jewish Babylonia, who came to take cognizance of the one European Diaspora that belonged, as the Babylonians did, to the political and linguistic realm of Islam. To this one can add some more utterings by Babylonian scholars that indicate contacts in writing with the Jews in al-Andalus and Spain in general.¹⁹ From this uneven material, the presence of Jews and of communities can safely be established in a number of major towns of early Muslim Spain: the capital Córdoba, Granada/Elvira, Sevilla, Lucena, Pechina, Calsena, Mérida, Jaén, and in the north Saragossa, Calatayud, Tarragona and Tortosa. This is of course not to say that no Jews were to be found in some other places, for instance in Toledo, where they reappear in the record slightly later.

By the late 10th and early 11th century, a greater number of places of Jewish settlement in Muslim Spain become evident, in writings produced by Iberian Jews themselves. This is a corollary of the turn to Talmudic studies, found also in other Jewish Diasporas at this point of time.²⁰ The sages answering to queries from their Iberian flock were, in chronological order: Moses ben Hanokh of Córdoba (died c. 965); his son Hanokh ben Moses (d. 1014), also of Córdoba; Joseph ben Isaac ibn Abitur (died after 1021), a native of Mérida and contender of Hanokh for religious leadership in Córdoba; Isaac ben Jacob Alfasi (known as Rif, 1013–1103), considered the greatest of Halakhic thinkers before Maimonides, of Fez in Morocco until his move to Spain in 1088, where he became head of the academy of Lucena; finally Joseph ben Meir ha-Levi ibn Migash (1077–1141), pupil and successor of Isaac Alfasi in Lucena. Letters and business documents written by, to and about people in Muslim Spain made their way to the Cairo Genizah. For instance, a letter of the year 999 sent from Qayrawan (Tunisia) to the head of a Babylonian academy explained that *were it not for the things that happened to me in Spain, I would by now be on my way back*.²¹ This implies the integration of al-Andalus in a southern Mediterranean network of commercial, family and scholarly contacts, itself a new phenomenon. From the late 10th century onwards, there is also material evidence, mainly epitaphs, from a whole range of places that appear for the first time in the record.²² The list of sources of Jewish origin is complemented by two collections of legal form-letters

¹⁹ Gil, 2004: 193–198, nos. 128, 129.

²⁰ See Ta-Shema, 2004.

²¹ Gil, 1997: II, 160, no. 58.

²² Collected for the larger part in Cantera & Millás, 1956, with some additions in the following.

of contracts.²³ Altogether, such growth in learning, law finding, and written communication depended on an expansion in the demographic and institutional infrastructure of Jewish Iberia. Compared to previous periods, the material available by the late 10th and early 11th century indeed reflects a different order of magnitude, both in the numbers of places inhabited by Jews and in their population numbers. This appears to parallel the general demographic curve in al-Andalus, which has been seen to exhibit strong growth between the early 9th and the mid-10th century.²⁴

In the period now under scrutiny, a Jewish presence was found in the following places in Muslim Spain. In the north of Andalusia, today's Castile in central Spain, there is Toledo, the old Visigothic capital and the first major town to be conquered with its region by the Christians (1085). Around the city a whole cluster of smaller places with Jewish habitation has been made out: Madrid, Uclés, Talavera de la Reina, Escalona, Ávila, Guadalajara, Sigüenza, Alcalá de Henares, possibly also Alba de Tormes. None of these was further away than 200 km but most lie closer, and can thus be seen as satellites of the metropolitan city. To the south-west of Toledo, in today's southern Portugal and south-western Spain, something of the scattered distribution of the late-Roman period appears to have obtained also in the Muslim era, in Mérida, Badajoz, and in Portugal in Coimbra, Santarém, Beja, and probably also Lisbon.²⁵ To the east of Toledo, on the Mediterranean seashore, Valencia and Denia housed important communities. Both were capitals of Muslim *Taifa* states flourishing in the 11th century, the latter also a maritime power of Mediterranean rank and in possession of the Balearic Islands for most of the century. In the Ebro valley, a Jewish presence is evidenced in Saragossa, in Huesca, possibly also in Tarazona. Tudela was an important community, judging from the lively economic activities of Jews that remained there after the Christian conquest of 1119 (see next sub-chapter). It was the birthplace of such luminaries as Judah Halevi (born at the latest in 1075) and Abraham Ibn Ezra (born 1092), and of course of the 12th century traveler Benjamin ben Jonah of Tudela.

Turning southwards to al-Andalus proper, we meet the most significant concentration of Jewish settlement, yet one that again reveals no overwhelming dimensions. Moving from east to west, there is Almeria

²³ Bills and Contracts from Lucena, 1994; Sepher Haschetaroth, 1898/1967.

²⁴ Chalmeta, 1994: 755.

²⁵ Wasserstein, 1979, is skeptical as to the identification of Portugal in Benjamin of Tudela's account.

on the south-easternmost tip of the Iberian Peninsula, founded in 950 by the Muslims as principal harbor and a center of silk industry, whose Jewish community promptly overtook the one of nearby Pechina. A commercial location and hub for merchants arriving from and leaving for North Africa, Sicily and Egypt, Almeria produced an exceptionally rich crop of Genizah documents, extant mainly from the early 12th century. In the remote countryside north of Almeria a Hebrew graffito raises the possibility of some Jewish presence, probably fleeting. In Granada, a community of great antiquity and clearly the largest of Iberia, the sources are dominated by the memory of the great persecution of 1066, which claimed the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of people. Northeast of Granada are Guadix and Baza, both smallish towns and centers of silk production and merchandising. Lucena and Jaén had earlier roots too, as discussed above. From the latter, a beautifully couched note or amulet in Hebrew from the Cairo Genizah reads: *If I forget thee Jerusalem let my right hand forget, Abraham, son of Jehudah may his rest be in Paradise, Spaniard from the town of Jaén called the moneychanger*, followed by the wish to go and dwell in the Holy City.

Córdoba, frequently mentioned above and clearly the central Jewish place in the 10th century, appears to have declined after the extinction of the Omayyad Caliphate in 1031. It figures though as one of the communities informed after 1103 on steps taken against an offender, together with Granada, Sevilla and Lucena, and was therefore still considered one of the major Jewish places of al-Andalus. Halfon ben Nethanel, Genizah merchant, intrepid traveler and friend of the poet Jehudah Ha-Levi, stayed there as well as in Granada, Almeria, Lucena and probably also Sevilla during his frequent travels to Spain in 1128–1130, following which he took himself to India for two years.²⁶ Further places on the southernmost Mediterranean coast were the port-towns Malaga and Algeciras (opposite the rock of Gibraltar), and further to the northwest Sevilla and, to the west and east of it, two smaller places, Niebla and Carmona. Some of these Andalusian towns were plainly the major cities of Muslim Spain. Others were smaller places which did nevertheless serve as capitals of Taifa states. There are some faint traces of a presence, probably fleeting, in the countryside, but Jewish settlement in Muslim Iberia was clearly an urban phenomenon. We shall see that this did not rule out extensive landed property outside the towns. Even though there are almost no direct

²⁶ Ashtor, 1964: 63–8, no. V; Gil & Fleischer, 2001: 58 note 8.

indicators, some of the overall growth of the 10th and 11th centuries has been seen as the result of an influx of Jews from other parts of the Muslim world, most probably from North Africa.²⁷

How many people? Clearly, the material at our disposal will not provide indications for population numbers. For such task, one needs tax lists or estimates as the ones provided by Benjamin of Tudela for places outside Iberia. For Spain he mentioned only Tarragona with its impressive buildings and Gerona with its *small congregation of Jews*.²⁸ Eliyahu Ashtor made a valiant attempt to compute the Jewish population of Muslim Spain by estimating the surface area of the Jewish quarters of the different towns. These figures were to be multiplied by a coefficient of mean density per hectare which he derived from studies on overall town populations. Thus, Ashtor computed over 5000 souls in Granada and Sevilla, close to 4000 in Toledo, 2000 in Almeria, and over a thousand in Saragossa, Tudela and Huesca. His procedure has been severely criticized as inflating what David Wasserstein basically saw as “a small minority by their numbers and their distribution in the Iberian peninsula”, whose “largest community in al-Andalus is unlikely to have counted more than eight or nine hundred individuals”.²⁹ Actually, Ashtor’s totals are not that far removed from this estimate, except for the largest places. Counting together all his numbers and adding some more in places not included for some reason in his tally, one arrives at around 25000 souls in all of Muslim Iberia in the mid-11th century. Taking heed of Wasserstein’s critique but disregarding his warning that “we do not know, and we cannot know how many Jews there were in al-Andalus”, one might lower the total to somewhere in the dimension of 15000. By both counts, the Jews of Muslim Iberia were indeed a small and predominantly urban minority. In the course of the 11th century they were to become an even lesser one, as the political anarchy in the Taifa states drove a sizable number of people to take refuge in the expanding

²⁷ Ashtor, 1992: I, 381–2, saw Jewish migration from North Africa (Morocco, Algeria) to Spain evinced by “the history of the Jewish intellectuals in Spain”, in essence by the figure of Isaac Alfasi. Roth, Norman, 1986: 191, and 1994: 13, also saw “an influx of migration from outside the country”, quoting the 10th century Muslim chronicler al-Razi who wrote that *other Jews outside the land of Spain came to settle* [the places] *which these* [Jews in Visigothic Spain] *had left*. In contrast, Wasserstein, 2002: 8, saw no proof for immigration and criticized Ashtor’s handling of the evidence. Ben-Sasson, 2004: 132, even pointed to emigration to Tunisia, Sicily and Egypt. The disagreement is part of the larger discussion on population numbers and in the last resort of a changing appreciation of the “Golden Age of Sephardic Jewry”.

²⁸ Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 1–2.

²⁹ Ashtor, 1963; Wasserstein, 1985: 191 and note 3; Wasserstein, 1995: 109.

Christian kingdoms to the north. Already by the early century there were Jews in far-away León that bore Arabicized names, as did almost all those appearing in the sources in Tudela long after it passed under Christian rule (1115), or in Christian Toledo throughout the 12th and 13th centuries. In the 12th century the Almohad persecution put an end to the existence of numerous communities, of which the most famous was Lucena.

Turning to the Christian realms in the north of Iberia, we shall disregard dynastic alignments and partitions and focus on four political units, from east to west: the County of Barcelona, the Kingdom of Aragon, the Kingdom of Pamplona-Navarra, and the Kingdom of Leon-Castile. These formed territorial blocks of varying size, all of which underwent processes of political stabilization and internal colonization. In the course of the Christian re-conquest they were extended southwards into Muslim territory.³⁰ As for the Jewish presence in these parts, the salient fact is its tardy formation as compared to the centre and south of the Peninsula. In late-Roman times Jews are found only in Tortosa and in the provincial capital Tarragona (5th–6th centuries), in the Visigothic period nowhere at all. The next time they appear is in the second half of the 9th century, in Frankish sources touching on matters in Barcelona, the main city of the Carolingian Spanish March. A hundred years later, Jews possess, buy and sell landed property in and around the city, including in an area to the southwest called the Jewish Mount (*Montjuïc*), the site of the Jewish cemetery. Property deeds also begin to include legal phrases and signatures in Hebrew, and the Jewish presence in Barcelona has clearly become a matter of well-established routine. Elsewhere in Catalonia, north of Gerona, in the later 9th century an estate *called Judaicas had been acquired by count Dela from the Jews who had dwelled there and whom he had settled in his town of Gerona*. The relocation effectively signals the beginnings of a Jewish community in this town. In Besalú, 26 km north of Gerona, a Jewish presence is evinced in the later 11th century. Two further places, Tarragona and Tortosa, came under Christian rule only in the first half of the 12th century (1117, 1148) and have been dealt with above as part of Muslim Spain. These few Catalan communities were all located on the main line of communication running north to south along the Mediterranean seashore.

³⁰ On the development of Christian Spain see the works quoted above in note 1. For an overview see now Castellanos & Martín Viso, 2005, for new approaches in scholarship Davies, 2007. For an overall view of the history of the Jews, Baer, 1978 (originally 1961) is still unsurpassed, but see now the short accounts, with useful maps, by Blasco Martínez, Carrasco Pérez, and Ladero Quesada in Cluse, 2004.

In the Kingdom of Aragon, to the west of Catalonia, the oldest communities were Saragossa and Calatayud, already present under Muslim rule in the 9th to early 10th century and treated above. Moving westwards, Jews are found in Lérida and Balaguer before the Christian conquest. Here as in many others places the evidence consists of Jewish property disposed of by the new rulers shortly after the towns had been taken by the Christians. Further to the west, two groups of communities can be made out. One consists of places located on the northern route to Huesca and onwards into the mountainous territory to the north and west, eventually joining in Navarra the flourishing pilgrims' itinerary to Santiago de Compostela: Huesca itself, Barbastro, Morillo de Montclús, Jaca, Uncastillo and Ruesta. The second group is located along and south of the river Ebro: Saragossa and Calatayud, Daroca to the south of Saragossa, Alagón further upstream the Ebro, and Tarazona. This sums up the early Jewish settlement in the Kingdom of Aragon.

However, political borders are of little relevance in our context. Both the northern cluster around Huesca and the southern one around Saragossa were but part of a larger pattern that stretched to the west, into the Kingdom of Navarra. In the north, it extended westwards along the pilgrimage route with an unidentified place in the bishopric (today the Basque province) of Alava, and then Sangüesa, Pamplona, and Estella. Settlement in the latter three places followed a common pattern of royal initiative, in which Jews were but one and probably a minor element in the repopulation of towns and areas devastated by centuries of border warfare. In the Ebro valley proper, there is Tudela, established much earlier as seen above. Recently the existence of small satellite communities in villages surrounding the town has been surmised, admittedly without documentary evidence.³¹ In Funes, some 30 km to the north, there might have been Jews at the beginning of the 12th century. Altogether, the number of early communities in Navarra was small and the forced development of Jewish settlement there belongs to a later period. We have found no hints in the sources for the notion that some of the Jews who made up the northern settlements in Navarra were "of trans-Pyrenean or French origin".³² Those of Tudela definitely belonged to the culture of al-Andalus, as shown by their exclusive use of Arabic names in property deeds long after the Christian conquest.

³¹ Carrasco Pérez, 2003: 226.

³² Carrasco Pérez, 2004: 164.

Moving westwards into the Kingdom of Leon-Castile, Jewish nuclei were located further along the Ebro route and then in a string of towns on the great highland plateau of the northern Meseta Central, leading finally towards the north-western corner of Spain: Calahorra, Soria, Nájera, Belorado, Miranda de Ebro (1099) and Pancorbo, Burgos, Castrojeriz (974), Barrio de Muñó (last third of the 11th century), Monzón de Campos (1097), and Palencia. By numbers, this is the most sizeable agglomeration in Christian Spain, even though it was spread over a huge geographical area. In Monzón de Campos, a village 12 km north of Palencia, the sole but persuasive evidence are the gravestones of two family members. Both died on 27 August 1097 when *the house fell on them*. The stones were discovered on top of a child burial at the outer edge of the moat of the ruined castle in the village. Here as in many other places the Jews dwelled apparently under the protection of the lord's castle.

The Santiago route leads from Burgos straight west to León. In a number of small towns and villages along it, a cluster of Jewish communities has come to light in a document of 1127. One year after his ascension to the throne, king Alfonso VII of Leon pardoned the inhabitants of three townships, Carrión de los Condes, Saldaña, Cea, and of a number of villages *for the malice that you have done at the death of my forebear king Alfonso* (Alfonso VI died in 1109) *to the Jews, whom you killed and whose belongings you took, and [the malice] you committed against my palaces which you destroyed*.³³ This was one of the social-political disturbances, combined with predatory attacks on Jews, very common when a ruler died without acknowledged heir as happened in 1109. It is not entirely clear, and also not likely, that Jews lived in all the localities mentioned, but they surely did in some. Additional information is available in Cea, where a *suburb of the Jews* (*barrio de iudeos*) is mentioned in 1100. In the nearby village Bustillo de Cea Jewish property owners appear some years earlier. Landed properties are also recorded near Villacidayo, Sahagún, and Mansilla de las Mulas. In Sahagún, however, unequivocal evidence for a Jewish presence becomes available only in the mid-12th century. This leaves León itself, capital of the same-named kingdom. The very first reference, of 905, mentions *Habaz* (or *Nabaz*), *once a Jew and afterwards a Christian and monk, who had turned over [to a church] his land and water with entry path in order to erect mills*. There is one further document from the later 10th century and then a wealth of 11th century deeds, almost all dealing with

³³ Rodríguez Fernández, 1976: 350–351, no. 15. Baer, 1929–1936: II, 9–10 discusses the context of this and other persecutions at that time.

landed property. Jews appear to have been of considerable weight in the town, at least in matters concerning real estate. The municipal law of 1020 states that before sale houses of a certain legal condition shall be evaluated by four assessors, two Christians and two Jews. By 1053 a sale deed was authenticated by the Jewish court and dated *according to the* (Hebrew) *calendar of León*. This phrase, signifying an advanced state of communal organization and a well-developed self-consciousness, appears also on the numerous Hebrew epitaphs found in the Jewish graveyard called Puente del Castro on the southeastern outskirts of town. The oldest stems from 1026 and belongs to *Sir Jacob bar Yitzhak ibn Cutas who was killed on the way* (of? to?) *Saia*[... Santiago?] *may the Lord avenge his blood and may he rest in Paradise and his soul rest in the bond of life*. Astorga southwest of León at a road junction was one more place in the group of new communities that developed along the pilgrims' way to Santiago. A Jewish presence has been found in some further places far removed from each other and from the denser clusters to the east of León: in Orense and in the harbor-town La Coruña in the extreme north-west of the Peninsula, as well as in two further places that have entered the record solely for the violence committed against Jews: near the monastery Sobrado dos Monxes in the mountainous countryside east of Santiago de Compostela; and on the mountain road between Albelda and Viguera east of Burgos.

The time table for the establishment of Jewish communities in the Christian north is quite clear. Barcelona and Gerona by the late 9th century are the earliest, doubtlessly due to the impetus given to these parts by Carolingian colonization in Catalonia. Elsewhere at this time, Jewish communities are only found in places still under Muslim rule, in the Ebro valley which can yet be seen as part of al-Andalus. In Leon-Castile, Jews came to be present in the capital during the 10th century, in other places in the course of the following one. In the Kingdoms of Aragon and Navarra, they appear not earlier than the 11th to early 12th century. The locales were first seats of political and military power, then in the course of time also road junctions along the Santiago route and, in the Ebro basin and between Burgos and León, medium and small towns serving as service centers for the agricultural hinterland. There are faint indications for some Jews living or sojourning in the countryside. Altogether, the formation of a Jewish presence was part and parcel of the substantial demographic growth undergone by the Christian realms in the 10th and especially the early 11th century.³⁴

³⁴ Collins, 2000: 691, and in detail Collins, 1983: 263–6.

One would greatly like to be able to quantify this growth, but the material at our disposal simply does not provide for such question. There is one sole indication for population numbers, from Barcelona of 17 May 1079. At this date, the two count brothers of Barcelona divided between them a long list of assets—agricultural holdings, churches, castles, the number of months each would dwell in the comital palace, as well as the city's Jews. As noted by Elka Klein, "the division was recorded in a long bipartite document, the two halves of which were sewn together. The names of the Jews are given in two lists at the end of each part; one group was associated with the new castle and one with the old. The document is by no means easy to interpret. Even the division of names cannot be done with certainty, due to the rather unclear punctuation. Thus the number of Jews represented on the lists can only be roughly estimated at around fifty-five."³⁵ Elka Klein put forward the reasonable hypothesis "that these were lists not of heads of households but of property owners. A survey of all of the names appearing in documents dated between 1070 and 1099 shows that all but a few of those who were probably alive in 1079 either appear in one of the lists or are likely to be the son, brother, or wife of someone who does appear, although some of these identifications are necessarily tentative." For a rough estimate, the number of Jewish households in later 11th century Barcelona can be put in the dimension of around 60, which would result in a total of souls between 240 (coefficient of 4 per household) and 480 (coefficient of 8). Even given a large margin for error, these are very modest dimensions for such an important city. Other places in Christian Spain were not likely to have had greater numbers.

The development of the Jewish population in Iberia did not follow a linear pattern of growth. For the longer part of the period under scrutiny, it was of very modest dimensions and confined to a small number of places. Under such adverse conditions, it is difficult to see an uninterrupted presence even in the most important locations. Expansion set in late, roughly a century after the Muslim conquest. The 10th and especially the 11th century saw further population growth, by now also in the developing Christian realms. Everywhere the demographic curve of the Jews appears attuned to that of the majority population. Despite the fact that so much of early medieval Jewish life in Iberia unfolded under Muslim rule and within Muslim culture, the parallels to other Diasporas in Christian

³⁵ The most thorough analysis is Klein, 2006: 36–9, esp. 38–9, who I follow here.

Europe are striking, in the main chronological phases, numeral dimensions, and spatial distribution of the Jewish population.

Economic Pursuits

Late Antiquity and Visigothic Period

The sources indicating economic pursuits in this period are minimal in number and far from explicit, a fact that has not deterred scholars from presenting sweeping conclusions. A first one asserts the existence of a sizeable Jewish class of large scale landowners—"latifundistas", "grand proprietors", "possessors of extensive estates"—in the south of the Peninsula according to the canons of the Council of Elvira, on the Balearic Islands according to Severus of Minorca, in the south-west according to the Passion of Mantius.³⁶ We have already made acquaintance with these three texts. In fact, none of them speaks of large estates. Canon 49 of the Council of Elvira merely *warns the* (Christian) *landowners that they should not suffer that their fruits—which they receive with thanksgiving from God—shall be blessed by Jews, lest they make our blessing null and void*. In Severus' story of 418, the leader of the Jews of Mahón is reported to have *gone to Majorca to inspect an estate*; another Jew proposes that he and his companions better *go to my farm*; and yet a third one states that *on my possession I have Christian partners*. The *Passion of Mantius* has the saint being taken to *their* [the Jews'] *possession*.³⁷ The Latin terms understood by scholars to designate "estates" (always in the plural) are all in the singular and range from "possession" (*possessio*) to "farm" or "land" (*fundus*) to humble "field" (*ager*). Given the Visigothic obsession with the specter of Jewish dominance, one would expect large scale landholding and its concomitant power relations to figure on top of the grievances held against Jews. This is barely the case. One of king Erviga's laws of ca. 680–687 mentions agricultural concerns as one way amongst others to withhold due reverence to the Day of the Lord: *If a Jew or a Jewess should exercise any agricultural or weaving work on Sundays or should manage works of any sort in houses, fields or such like*. A few years later, king Egica

³⁶ Alonso Avila, 1978: 235; Lotter, 1986: 313; González Salinero, 1998.

³⁷ Linder, 1997: 483, nos. 836; Severus of Minorca, 1996: 85, 107, 109, chapters 7, 18, 19; Díaz y Díaz, 1982: 334.

yet again tried to induce the Jews to convert to Christianity. Amongst other measures, he ordered the expropriation of *slaves, buildings, land, vineyards, olive groves, and any other real property that they are known to have received from Christians through sale or in any other way, even though many years have already passed*. In the same spirit, the 17th Council of Toledo of the year 694 ordered that they *should be stripped of all their properties, even the very small farms*.³⁸ Clearly, in this period Jews were among the owners of land, and we shall see many more in later times. It seems however excessive to inflate these references to mean for instance that “the Jewry of Mahón was composed of great Jewish proprietors who maintained relations with Palestine”.³⁹

Yet another questionable assumption concerns the “economic potency of the Visigothic Jews”. This has been seen indicated by a special tax supposedly paid by them, as ordered by 17th Council of Toledo (694). However, the law text merely spoke of *whatever duty to the public funds those Jews are known to have paid till now*.⁴⁰ As the law reassigned the tax duty from the Jews, now expropriated and exiled, to their manumitted slaves, surely not a powerful group, it seems farfetched to construct this as evidence for “economic potency”. Economic strength was also seen to arise from sustained mercantile activity that purportedly took place in “commercial colonies”. Such colonies of Jews, Syrians and Greeks have been postulated, in Spain as in Italy or Gaul, wherever Jews or other “Orientals” come up in the sources. Lacking direct evidence for commerce, mere or presumed presence is transformed by verbal sleight-of-hand into a flurry of commercial activity, with all the purpose, spatial structure and ongoing ties with a motherland suggested by the phrase “colony”. The very existence of such “colonies” has lately been called into question, to the north as well as to the south of the Pyrenees.⁴¹

Are there indications other than suggestion for an intensive commercial activity of Iberian Jews? The central proof text adduced for this view is King Egica’s law of after 687, reiterated by the 16th Council of Toledo (693),

³⁸ Linder, 1997: 294–295, 281–283, 538, nos. 548, 542, 862.

³⁹ Blázquez Martínez, 2003: 413.

⁴⁰ Linder, 1997: 538, no. 862. Special tax: Orlandis, 1980: 154.

⁴¹ “Commercial colonies” of Jews: Lacarra, 1959: 343, García Moreno, 1972. Keay, 1996: 38–9, does not use the term but nevertheless sees commercial links with the eastern Mediterranean indicated by the mere presence of a Jewish community who had “to play an important role in this”, as well as by “evidence for other easterners”. For the concept of Oriental colonies in general see Bréhier, 1903. On their non-existence in Francia see Devroey, 1995: 52–3; in Spain: Arce, 1999: 11, 13–4, and Retamero, 1999: 274–5.

whose purpose was yet again to induce the Jews to convert to Christianity. Amongst other enticements such as tax relief, converts

*should have entire freedom to hasten to the disembarkation point [cata-plus] and to have commercial dealings with Christians in the Christian way; Concerning the other Jews, who persevere in the perfidy of their heart, we have decreed that henceforth they should not dare to hasten to the disembarkation point in order to carry out overseas transactions nor enter into any business with Christians, publicly or secretly; but they should be allowed to carry out business transactions only among themselves. We admonish all the Christians and adjure them that henceforth no one should dare have any commercial deal with those Jews persisting in the obstinacy of their perfidy.*⁴²

The law clearly envisages local Jews and Christians meeting for buying and selling, amongst each other as well as with foreign merchants, at the quays of some unspecified port-towns. Four further clauses of the Visigothic Law regulated these disembarkation points or wharfs (*cataplus*) where locals met the “merchants from beyond the seas” (*transmarini negotiatores*). Even though not one of the four clauses mentions Jews, these foreigners too have been claimed to be Jewish, “the only ones that could have acted as *transmarini negotiatores* since the elimination of Christian Syrians by the Muslim expansion”.⁴³ This is one more instance where early medieval merchants must by default have been Jewish and slave traders to boot.

There is one single Jewish merchant directly evinced in the Visigothic period, in the correspondence between two important ecclesiastics of the 7th century, Julian archbishop of Toledo and Idalius bishop of Barcelona. The former had availed himself of the services of a Jewish merchant in order to relay to the latter a theological work. While praising the sender for his oeuvre, Idalius had found the courier to be *an ignorant brute, nay an animal*, a non-believer totally unfit to convey such sublime ware.⁴⁴

⁴² Linder, 1997: 281–4, no. 542; 527, no. 859. Constable, 1994: 86, reads this as evidence that “Jewish merchants were already well established in the Iberian peninsula during the Visigothic period, especially as ship-owners, slave traders, and marine merchants”.

⁴³ *Leges Visigothorum*, 1902: 404–5. The quotation comes from Lotter, 1999: 50–1. This notion was given exceptionally crass expression by D’Ors, 1958: 481, who singled out both the vendors of slaves and their transmarine buyers as belonging to the “perversion Judaica”. After his death in 2004, Alvaro D’Ors was eulogized as the “patriarch of Roman Law in Spain” and a “Christian gentleman”. He was also one of the intellectual pillars of “Opus Dei” and of dictatorship in Spain and abroad, and a great admirer and personal disciple of Carl Schmitt, the political philosopher of Nazism. D’Ors is still quoted as an authority on Jewish commercial matters: Ripoll López, 1998: 156 note 9.

⁴⁴ Sancti Iuliani Toletanae sedis episcopi opera, 1976: 4.

As in other regions of Christian Europe, the kings and church of Visigothic Spain expanded a considerable legislative effort to bar Jews from possessing and using Christian slaves. As in other places, this pre-occupation has been explained as a response to Jews trading in slaves, a notion to be treated in full below (Part II, Ch. 6a). In fact, the Visigothic laws nowhere mention Jewish slave traders. The only people branded for selling Christian slaves were Christian themselves, in a canon of the 10th Council of Toledo (656): *That none of the priests, the Levites, or anyone of the Catholic community shall dare to sell Christian slaves to Jews or Gentiles.*⁴⁵ Still, to some scholars the premise of an ever-present Jewish slave trade is of irresistible appeal. By a noteworthy dialectical twist, the prohibition of the 3rd Council of Toledo (589) for Jews *to purchase a Christian slave for their own use* has been offered as proof for the tacit approval and encouragement of what is not mentioned at all, the “Jewish slave trade.”⁴⁶ Altogether, Jews were clearly among the mercantile elements in the Visigothic kingdom. However, there is nothing whatsoever in the sources that would allow assigning them a monopoly, hegemony or leading role.

This should come as no surprise, since the whole economic climate of the period was far from conducive. As evident from the archaeological record, in this era the ties that had connected Iberia to the Mediterranean economy weakened slowly but inexorably. “The second half of the sixth century seems to have witnessed a very general contraction of wealth throughout Spain.”⁴⁷ By the early 7th century, there is “evidence of a definitive breakdown of any market economy. In the Iberian Peninsula, it was not before the middle of the 8th century that incipient symptoms of recovery can be detected. The reconstruction of the market was a slow process and was associated with the development of the Islamic state.”⁴⁸ A recent re-evaluation of the numismatic evidence has led to the conclusion that “all this leaves little room for thinking of a massive trade between the East and *Hispania* during the Visigothic period.”⁴⁹ It is against this background that the abysmally poor evidence as well as the mighty edifices constructed by scholarship must be considered. To put it bluntly: if

⁴⁵ Linder, 1997: 508.

⁴⁶ Lotter, 1999: 49. The source is Linder, 1997: 484–485, no. 839. See also above, note 43, for Alvaro D’Ors’ notion that only Jews could have been sellers and buyers of slaves.

⁴⁷ Kulikowski, 2007: 157.

⁴⁸ Lloret Gutiérrez, 1998: 184.

⁴⁹ Retamero, 1999: 277.

Jews were indeed as commercially inclined as they are made out to be, simple self interest should have told them to stay out of impoverished and plague-stricken Iberia. Such a poor environment could have sustained but a very limited number of merchants, Jewish or otherwise, exactly the impression emerging from the sources.

What about the holding of public or other office by Jews? As in other regions of Europe, information on such occupation comes from its frequent prohibition by the authorities, as in the canons of the 4th Council of Toledo (633) *that Jews and those who were formerly Jews should not seize public offices in any way, because they use this opportunity to harm Christians*. A law of king Erviga (680–687) concerns itself with the possibility that *any of the Jews should receive from any of the laics a charge or authority over Christians, that is, that he should manage Christian households*; as well with the prospect that *bishops or anyone among the priests or the ministers (also clerics and monks) should charge them with the administration of the church's property*. The council's prohibition is a general one and tells little about the specifics of such positions. The latter and more detailed ban suggests not public office but the more realistic prospect of Jews acting as estate managers. This is indeed implied in yet another law of the same king, *if a Jew or a Jewess should manage works of any sort in houses, fields or such like*.⁵⁰ It stands to reason that some Jews indeed acted thus. Much more substantial numbers will be met in such capacity in the fuller sources of a later period.

Finally, there are crafts, which in other Mediterranean regions have been found to make up the bulk of occupations of Jews in the Roman period, even though they are notoriously difficult to discern in the sources. The material at hand, one law text and one somewhat enigmatic epitaph, simply does not allow any definite conclusion. The text is a law of king Erviga of 680–687, quoted partly above, *that if a Jew or a Jewess should exercise any agricultural or weaving work on Sundays or should manage works of any sort in houses, fields or such like*. This can be understood to mean that *agricultural or weaving work* was seen as the most obvious manifestation of the work of Jews. But it might as well mean the simplified but basically correct observation that these were the most widespread occupations in general. The epitaph reads *I Jacob son of rebbi Senior have lived 63 years replete with the insight that furthers the art of craft*. Attempts at dating have ranged from the 1st to the 10th century, with good reasons to prefer

⁵⁰ Linder, 1997: 490–1, 320–1, 294–5, nos. 848, 561, 548.

a date before the end of the 4th century. The *art of craft* has been seen to hint to an expert craftsman or physician, both possible but inconclusive readings.⁵¹

In summary, the sources of the late Roman and Visigothic period show some Jews active in commerce, though not in an international one; others that possessed landed property of various size; yet others who managed estates of non-Jews; and probably some larger numbers in crafts and medicine. Nothing more than these general observations can be wrung from the sources, surely not a leading share in this or other occupation. This is in keeping with the occupational profile found in other parts of southern Europe as well as with the generally adverse economic conditions of the period.

From the 8th to the 11th Century

Landholding and Agriculture

Similar to parts of France and Italy, references to landed property make up the bulk of the information available for the post-Roman/Visigothic period. Part of it comes from the cartularies of ecclesiastical institutions in the Christian north, where monasteries and cathedral churches had long-standing landed interests. In and around Barcelona since the late 10th century, a thriving real estate market coupled to a legal tradition of fixing contracts in writing made for a rich documentary record, the most substantial in all of Iberia. Yet another part of the record stems from the exigencies of the Christian re-conquest. Occupation was followed in many places by a re-shuffling of property rights. Often properties were designated by the names of the old owners, thus revealing a situation going back to the Muslim period but hitherto unrecorded. In other places Jewish property owners remained in possession, but were often entered into the written record in the capacity of neighbors to properties whose status had changed. Unique in all of Europe, there are Hebrew property deeds that can be used in unison with the Latin and Arabic ones. Landed property is also a chief concern in law suits brought before Jewish courts, in the deliberations of Halakhic experts, and in the collections of legal form letters. The documentation is not full enough to reconstruct the landed property

⁵¹ De Navascués, 1959: 87.

of Jews (or of others) in the entirety of Iberia, but it does allow a quite detailed analysis in and around a number of places.

The greater number of references simply state that some land was at some point of time the property of a Jew, and only a smaller number render details. Vineyards were in direct evidence in 140 cases, as against half that number of "fields" and other terms for arable used to grow cereals. A much smaller number (16) were "gardens", and there were also olive and fig groves and single almond and mulberry trees. Around Barcelona there obtained a somewhat less pronounced ratio—45 vineyards against 35 fields. In the countryside around Toledo there were some properties called *white land*, fallow soil *that is not yet worked* as described in a contemporary document.⁵² Clearly, the numbers and ratios adduced above are not even an approximation of the total, since information is extant from 26 localities alone, a portion of all the places of residence. There are however indications that landholding by Jews was a significant phenomenon. For one, it is in evidence from all regions of early medieval Iberia under both Muslim and Christian rule, and from the surroundings of nearly every town with better than average documentation. In Cubells, a suburb of Barcelona, the vineyard of a Jew bordered in 973 on three sides on that of fellow Jews. Much more to the south, an Arabic sale deed of 1162 from Toledo refers to a vineyard of a non-Jew surrounded in all four directions by vineyards belonging to Jews, clearly an indication of substantial landholding in that particular village Peña Ventosa about 10 km southwest of Toledo.⁵³ In tune with the pace of population history sketched above, in some regions substantial Jewish landholding appears to have been a fairly recent matter. The ecclesiastical councils convened in 1068 and again in 1078 in Gerona (Catalonia) found it necessary to demand the tithe from lands owned by Jews, *because it is not right that the Church should lose tithes which it collected before the Jews settled in these lands*.⁵⁴

A small number of references, ten altogether, mention surface totals of properties, all except one vineyards in the vicinity of Barcelona. They ranged from ¼ to 2 hectare, almost exactly the scope still prevalent today

⁵² León Tello, 1979: 6, 7, 14, 16, 18, nos. 9, 12, 39, 45, 53. The document explaining the term: Pastor de Togneri, 1970: 357. The same expression in Hebrew (*sadeh lavan*) in a question directed to the Babylonian sage Hay Gaon: Gil, 2004: 597, and throughout Halakhic literature.

⁵³ Cubells: Miret & Schwab, 1915: 230, who localize the place as Cubellas, 52 km south of Barcelona. But see Romano, 1991: 103, who identifies it as a southwestern suburb of Barcelona. Peña Ventosa: León Tello, 1979: 9, no. 19.

⁵⁴ Baer, 1929–1936: vol. I, 5, no. 8; Linder, 1997: 559, no. 878.

all over winegrowing Europe.⁵⁵ There were quite a number of larger estates, often bestowed by the grace of kings upon Jewish courtiers and officials. Such properties were usually designated in a general way as *villa*, a “whole village” or “half a village”, in one case near Barcelona as an *allod* measuring 8 hectare. The term *allod* does not necessarily mean a large holding but mostly a property held in full possession. Hebrew sources say the same by different phrasing, as a *field which I, Joseph, inherited from my father*. Most holdings seem to have been held in full possession, except for the ones obtained by mortgage or pledges for loans (see below). At least in one village, near Granada before 1066, the holdings of one Jew were substantial enough for the whole place to be called after him.⁵⁶ Such large properties, while not rare, were clearly not as typical as the small family vineyard or field that appear as the single most prevalent category of possession throughout the Hebrew and Latin record.

The location of properties can be a first clue for the economic (or other) uses they were put to. Concentrations significant enough for conclusions to be drawn are in evidence in Barcelona, Tudela, and Toledo, besides many further places where information is more haphazard. Around Barcelona, all holdings owned, sold, acquired or mortgaged by Jews since the later 10th and till the mid-12th century were located immediately beyond the city walls, in suburbs that have all become part of the modern town.⁵⁷ In most cases they were but a few hundred meters distant from the town’s walls, a feature singular to Barcelona. It is to be explained by the very small dimensions of the *Pla de Barcelona*, the city’s immediate agricultural territory which is confined by geology to a fertile but narrow strip of land 6.5 km wide and 13 km long.⁵⁸ In further areas of cultivation beyond that slight belt, properties of Barcelona Jews are found only at two locations. This is at odds with the general pattern of landholding by Barcelonans, which ranged much further afar.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ As of 2006, “in the European Union, the average size of vineyards is roughly two hectares, although the majority of growers actually work on less than one hectare of vines”: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/245&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>. One hectare is 10,000 square meters or roughly 2.5 acres.

⁵⁶ Miret & Schwab, 1914: 72–73, no. XI; Klein, 2004: 21–22; Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 131.

⁵⁷ For a detailed exposition of the places and references see Appendix 4, Barcelona.

⁵⁸ Bensch, 1995: 23–44. On Jewish properties around Barcelona see Millás I Vallicrosa, 1967, Casanovas Miró, 1992, and the fine chapter, followed here in some respects, by Klein, 2006: 57–64.

⁵⁹ At Arenys de Mar on the coast some 40 km north-east of the city, and outside the castle-town of Terrassa 25 km inland to the northwest: Miret & Schwab, 1916: 6; Miret &

After a prolonged economic boom that was mainly driven by agricultural expansion in the immediate countryside, the general economic downturn felt in Barcelona at the end of the 11th century affected Jewish and Christian landholders alike. From 1050 to 1070, land purchases by Jews outnumbered sales. Although purchases fell off thereafter, a rough equilibrium was maintained until the 1090s. Sales peaked in the 1090s and outnumbered purchases considerably for the next fifty years. Values of sales also plummeted toward the end of the 11th century, recovering only slightly before the second half of the 12th century. The figures are consistent with those for the economy as a whole, in which Jews constituted but one numerically small and not particularly important component.⁶⁰ Given the fact that landed possessions were treated to such a degree as a commodity, one is hard put to see here the economic function usually associated with agriculture, namely a full-time livelihood. Rather, these small holdings served as a supplementary resource in addition to other occupations, most commonly as one further source of food and drink supply for the household.

Around Tudela in the central stretch of the Ebro valley, information on landholding is extant since shortly after the Christian conquest of 1119. The largest number of properties lay in the village of Mosquera to the southeast of Tudela, between the town walls and a southward bend of the Ebro River at the distance of 3.5 km.⁶¹ This village, the only one that can be considered a suburb of Tudela, became waste at some time and exists today only as the name of a road. Further places with landed properties lay to the southwest, at Murchante at the distance of 5 km, at Cascante and Ablitas (both 11 km), at Monteagudo (13 km), as well as at Valtierra 16 km north of Tudela.⁶² The loose settlement structure in the open countryside of the Ebro valley goes far to explain the distances, even though it remains unclear whether the proprietors, all or part of them, resided in the town of Tudela or, as has been surmised lately, in the villages in question.⁶³ The problem is largely a theoretical one, as the greater part

Schwab, 1914: 60, no. III. For general patterns see the maps of winegrowing and arboriculture in the Barcelona region in Bonnassie, 1975: 453, 458. For the subsequent paragraph I follow verbatim Klein, 2006: 60, there also the statistics.

⁶⁰ The figures for comparison in Klein, 2006: 60, Bensch, 1995: 92, and Bonnassie, 1975: 907, 914.

⁶¹ Navarra Judaica 2, 1995: 35–8, 44, 48–9, nos. 17, 19, 23, 33, 41.

⁶² Navarra Judaica 2, 1995: 27, 31, 36, 38–40, 45–6, 57–8, nos. 4, 12, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 35, 55. A further three places, Uscerán, Ahardassales and Almadec, remain unidentified.

⁶³ Carrasco Pérez, 2003: 226.

of the extant transactions in real estate—33 between the years 1133 and 1190—was undertaken by members of one single family, the Albofazán who by all signs were rooted in the territory from Muslim times and remained close to the royal court after the Christian takeover.⁶⁴ Besides simple purchase, family members acquired a good part of their property as pledges for loans. Jewish landholding in the surroundings of Tudela was thus largely tied to money lending, a very different economic function than the family plots prevalent around Barcelona.

Upon the Castilian conquest of Toledo in 1085 most of the Muslim population left while the Arabized Christian population—the Mozarabs—remained in place. Mozarab immigrants who fled the Almoravid and Almohad regimes in al-Andalus swelled the numbers of this community. A larger migratory wave came from the north, bringing Christian settlers from all over northern Iberia, as well as from France. In this ethnic mix, there was also a Jewish component, apparently both old-settled and newly arrived, the latter refugees from Muslim Spain. A vast number of private deeds in Arabic provide evidence for the property market around Toledo, including the part played by Jews in it.⁶⁵ By these documents, Toledo possessed an exceptionally large agricultural hinterland, stretching 35 km towards the north, 25 km beyond the Tajo River towards the south, westwards as far as Talavera de la Reina (80 km) and eastwards to roughly the same distance.⁶⁶ Still, most landed properties of Jews lay near Toledo. A significant number were clustered in a few villages to the north-east of the city: in Azucaica and Zalencas (ca. 5 km distant), in Magán (15 km), in Oliolas la Pequeña (13 km), in Alaitic and Monturque (ca. 12.5 km), and especially in Olias del Rey (11 km). Other estates lay to the south of the river Tajo, at Aceltuna and Peña Ventosa 10 to 11 km west of Toledo, at Daraletut at ca. 2.5 km to the south-east.⁶⁷ The holdings at Olias del Rey were smaller vineyards and fields, all pieced together within a few years by a single person, the *almojarife* (from the Arabic *al-wazir almushrif*—an official responsible for the collection of taxes) Abuomar Susan. Other lands were very substantial holdings, for instance the *village on the other*

⁶⁴ Carrasco Pérez, 2003: 227. The real estate deals of the Albofazán have been collated by Baer, 1929–1936: I, 923–30, no. 577. The full texts in Navarra Judaica 2, 1995.

⁶⁵ Olstein, 2006, 434–5. The material on Jews is collected in León Tello, 1979, and has been checked against the Arabic originals published and translated by González Palencia, 1926–1930.

⁶⁶ Pastor de Togneri, 1970: 354 and the map on 374–5, as well as the map in González Palencia, 1926–1930: IV, 97.

⁶⁷ See Appendix 4, Toledo.

side of the Tajo called Daraletut once possessed with all the rights and vineyards by Cidelo Jew, which Emperor Alfonso VII of Castile had assigned in 1155 to a monastery in Toledo. This *Cidelo Jew* was none other than Joseph ha-Nasi Ferrizuel Cidellus, physician and counselor to Alfonso VI of Castile (1072–1109), from whom he had undoubtedly received the estate.⁶⁸ The next king Alfonso VII gave in 1132 to *Haym Avenzadoch and his relative Aleazar the village of Otos on the other side of the Tajo, which holds in the east Ciruelos, for the good service that you have rendered to me*. The same was again the case in 1158, when king Sancho III, Alfonso's son and successor in Castile, gifted a sizeable estate to yet another official, the *almojarife Bon Iuda, in the village of Azaña, for the good and faithful service that you have rendered to my father the emperor and to me and in exchange for half of that village of Ciruelos which I have accepted from you and given to those brethren [monks] of Calatrava*. In 1185, the four daughters and heirs of Bon Iuda and their respective husbands and fiancés (at least one of them yet another royal official titled *alguacil alhaquim* = *al-wazir al-hakim*) sold the estate for a very high prize.⁶⁹ This *almojarife Bon Iuda* was most probably R. Judah ha-Nasi ibn Ezra, over whom his contemporary Abraham ibn Daud waxed enthusiastic: *God put it into the heart of King Alfonso the Enperador to appoint our master and rabbi, R. Judah the Nasi ibn Ezra, over Calatrava and to place all the royal provisions in his charge*.⁷⁰ Clearly, for such owners landed possessions did not serve as a livelihood or as elements of financial operations, but rather as symbols of their high social standing vis-à-vis both Jewish and general society.⁷¹

In most cases it is impossible to determine whether Jews actually worked the soil. The following is characteristic of the vague wording of the sources. It also illuminates stock raising, yet another branch of agriculture usually not associated with Jews: *when Sir Joseph ben Moshe, may the Lord avenge his blood, was killed he left to his infant daughter goats pastured in partnership with a Christian, and these were brought here to Toledo and the part belonging to Joseph's infant heiress was sold for 125 gold coins morabetinos* (a very substantial sum).⁷² Contracting out the chore

⁶⁸ Beinart, entry Ferrizuel, Joseph Ha-Nasi, in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2007: vol. VI, 764–5; Roth, Norman, 1986: 205–9.

⁶⁹ On Azaña and Ciruelos see Appendix 4, Toledo.

⁷⁰ Sefer ha-Qabbalah, 1967: 97–99, and the editor's remarks on 274–275.

⁷¹ For "court Jews as settlers" in the 13th century course of the Reconquista see Ray, 2006: 17–22.

⁷² Baer, 1929–1936: vol. II, 10, no. 18. A further instance of stock raising: León Tello, 1979: 10, no. 23.

of grazing flocks was a venture frequent enough to warrant two different Hebrew form letters, one from early 11th Lucena and the other from early 12th century Barcelona. Yet another type of petty agricultural enterprise appears in a form letter for borrowing *a rotating stone I needed for my olive press*. Much of the actual work appears to have been done by sharecroppers and tenant farmers, as envisaged in one more 12th century form letter, a Hebrew sales contract: the buyer *shall have power to plant and root up and plough and sow and dismiss the tenant farmer and install a tenant farmer*.⁷³ The owner of the huge flock mentioned above was most probably not a full-time shepherd but yet one more agricultural entrepreneur. The daily workings of the system are nicely sketched in a query to Isaac Alfasi: *Reuben lent to Shimon money and Shimon bought with this money a field from an idolater in [from] another country [recte town] . . . and the field was [held] in partnership of body and fruits between them*. Some sources suggest rising demand for agricultural land, as in the following: *Reuben had been under pressure by the authorities because of a debt and he had to sell one of his fields in order to ransom himself, and the field was bought by Shimon*.⁷⁴

Such operations also had a dimension of agricultural entrepreneurship, for instance near Tudela around the year 1180, when a man repeatedly mortgaged his holding to members of the pre-eminent family of Jewish moneylenders. Each time, he received it back in order to work it and render yearly payments, in produce or cash.⁷⁵ Some cases bring to mind emergency measures, as in a series of questions directed to Hanokh ben Moshe:⁷⁶ *Ruben's wife had business with a gentile to whom she owned [money] and she turned here and there to borrow and to mortgage a vineyard in order to pay the money*. Clearly, coping with a financial crisis by mortgaging property was practicable only within a highly developed legal system capable of acting speedily. In such an environment, agricultural property could also serve as a low-risk investment, as in a query to Moses ben Hanokh (died ca. 965):

This man Hezron does not understand merchandise and knows not his way in negotiating deals; he should not be trusted with money so as not to lose it in trade, and his assets should not be invested with others in partnership as they

⁷³ Bills and Contracts from Lucena, 1994: 214–5, 200; Sepher Haschetaroth, 1898/1967: 94, 45.

⁷⁴ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: nos. 75, 100.

⁷⁵ Navarra Judaica 2, 1995: 50–1, 53, nos. 44, 49.

⁷⁶ Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 204; similarly in nos. 206, 201.

*would burden him with their losses; but it should be invested in landed mortgage so that he should enjoy the fruits.*⁷⁷

Was there “a Jewish share in the development of the agricultural resources of the Iberian Peninsula”?⁷⁸ There can be no doubt to the significant involvement of Jews in agricultural activities, to a degree and extent not met in France or Italy. Our samples of Barcelona, Tudela and Toledo have uncovered a whole range of economic and also social functions and motivations for this involvement: as a livelihood, fully or partly; as a prop for elevated social status; as a by-product of money lending (on this further below); as agro-business in an economy increasingly oriented towards the market, and thus as a venue for the investment of entrepreneurial capital and energy; and as a fundamental attitude of traditional society towards safeguarding the family’s future. The involvement in landed property can be understood as one particularly apt way for Jews to participate in the general agricultural expansion characteristic of so many places and regions in Iberia of the 10th–11th centuries. By all signs, Jews did so in the same fashion and with the same tools as non-Jews. We have found no sign for a pioneering role in agricultural innovation, as implied for instance in the unsubstantiated notion “that Jews first introduced and cultivated the olive in Spain”.⁷⁹ We can conclude that Jews definitely had a share in the development of agricultural resources in the Iberian Peninsula. It remains however unlikely that this share was in any sense a unique or decisive one.

Commerce

Almost all we know of commercial ventures comes from the internal Jewish record—in particular Responsa and the Cairo Genizah documents—and concerns Muslim Spain, while the Latin record from Northern Spain provides not much in this respect. This discrepancy is in sharp contrast to landholding, which is equally and extensively covered by both internal and external documentation. The unevenness of the documentary record provides some serious checks on our ability to draw valid conclusions. For

⁷⁷ Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 178.

⁷⁸ Baron, 1957: IV, 316.

⁷⁹ Roth, Norman, 1994: 152. By the wording one might assume that the author embraces this statement, until his rider in note 73, where one learns that it was taken from an undocumented and apparently unreliable source. For the antiquity of olive cultivation in Spain see most recently A.L. Bonilla Martos, *La producción de aceite de oliva en época romana en la Colonia Augusta Gemella Tuccitana*, in: *Aldaba* 27 (2009): 19–23.

instance, the Genizah letters present such a lively and detailed picture that it is tempting to wax enthusiastic on the trade of Jews from Muslim Spain.⁸⁰ However, by its very richness this material is difficult to square with the much more blurred body of other evidence. In Responsa literature, commercial concerns figure only slightly in the earlier sources and much more in the ones of the 11th century. Does this mean that Iberian Jewry moved from other livelihoods to a more commercial orientation as time went by? This might not necessarily have been the case, as suggested by the two extant formulary collections, one from the early 11th and the other from the 12th century, where different livelihoods are equally represented and no special development towards mercantile interest can be discerned. Still, compared to earlier periods and other regions, this is an embarrassment of riches that should not deter us from making use of the sheer volume of commercial ventures documented in the sources.

Iberia is not unlike other European areas in the essential role attributed by scholarship to Jews in international commerce. Thus a first issue is its prevalence and relative weight as compared to more circumscribed local or regional trade. Indeed, intensive and far-reaching operations carried out by Jews from and to Muslim Spain are very well documented in the Cairo Genizah.⁸¹ Most of the Genizah material relevant to our concerns is extant for the time between the early 11th and the mid-12th century and presents an outside view. It speaks of a small number of expatriate Spaniards active abroad, from Morocco eastwards and as far away as the Indian Ocean, where Moses Maimonides' brother David perished in a shipwreck in 1168.⁸² More than of Spaniards, the Genizah speaks of North-Africans resident or sojourning in Spain, and in general of merchandise, shipping routes and ships to or from Spain. There is no information on the trade of Jews (or others) within Iberia and only a few business papers directly address Spanish matters. For instance, two Arabic documents of ca 1083 of the Jewish court of Denia tell amongst others of trade contacts with Tunisia and Egypt. One of them was a power of attorney, made out in Denia, validated in Mahdiya, revalidated in Alexandria, and finally accepted as legally valid in Old Cairo, thus neatly linking most of the southern Mediterranean in a single arch of legal formalities. Denia, capital of a *Taifa* state that

⁸⁰ For instance Azuar Ruiz, 1998: 69, but see the warning of Wasserstein, 1985: 192.

⁸¹ For an outline see Constable, 1994: 88–96, who could however not yet make use of several source editions that appeared since. See also the chapter "Economic Matters" in Gil & Fleischer, 2001: 258–270.

⁸² Goitein & Friedman, 2008: 157.

ruled the Balearic Islands for most of the 11th century, appears in the Genizah papers as the most important Spanish port of embarkation and a significant community in its own right. At some unspecified date, its superintendent of port was a Jew.⁸³ In 1138 Isaac ben Barukh, a merchant of Almeria, wrote to Halfon ben Nethanel ha-Levi, a prominent Egyptian trader then sojourning in Morocco, of a substantial money transfer from sales receipts to the eminent Hebrew poet Jehudah ha-Levi, himself a Spaniard and apparently a silent partner in trade ventures. Other matters touched upon in the letter are the changing market conditions in Almeria and ship movements between Spain and Egypt.⁸⁴ Another Genizah letter of ca. 1140 tells of a ship sailing directly from Tripoli to the port near Sevilla, with *36 or 37 Jews and nearly 300 Muslims on board*. Further letters report the arrival from Spain of a ship *with a group of our people*, that is relatives or business partners of the Genizah traders, on another occasion however *without a single Hebrew on board*. In the rich Halakhic material extant from Muslim Spain, wide-ranging trade ventures do appear but do not hold center stage. A Responsum by Alfasi mentions, apparently in Muslim Spain, *an Edomite [Christian] slave girl whose Edomite relatives came to her Jewish owner's house for trade*. A form letter of the early 11th century from Lucena envisages a pooling of funds *so that we may go together and trade by sea and by land*. And a question sent to Joseph ibn Migash (died in Lucena in 1141) shows the grid of mutual commitments produced by such ventures: *Lea's husband died and left behind a small boy and left debts and investments and partnerships in the Maghreb*.⁸⁵

It is very difficult to gauge the weight and volume of this Genizah trade with and out of Spain. It's very visibility and sharp relief does not mean that international trade was necessarily representative of Iberian Jewry at large.⁸⁶ Going by the entirety of Genizah documents that mention Spanish business (around 60 out of a total of about one thousand edited texts), Jews from Muslim Spain appear to have occupied a rather

⁸³ Ashtor, 1964: 76–9, nos. VIII, IX; Goitein, 1967: II, 379. On the town's place in the Mediterranean see Bruce, 2006.

⁸⁴ Goitein, 1973: 259–63.

⁸⁵ Goitein, 1967: I, 315; Gil, 1997: III, 414, 651, nos. 420, 494; Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 166; Bills and Contracts from Lucena: 1994: 205; Joseph ibn Migash, 1959: no. 52.

⁸⁶ As stated for instance by Constable, 1994: 61: "Jewish traders controlled a major portion of Andalusí commerce from the early middle ages until at least the middle of the twelfth century, during which time Geniza letters show traffic between Andalusí ports and those in the Maghreb, Egypt and Palestine." The second part of the sentence is indeed well indicated in the sources, while there is no evidence for the statistical postulation in the first part of the sentence.

peripheral position in the network of North-African Genizah traders. The peninsula itself was somewhat more important as a source of merchandise, chiefly silk and other textiles, raw wool, hides, and copper.⁸⁷ Still, this small group of people managed to operate an extensive trade system by which Muslim Spain and its resources were integrated into a much broader Mediterranean framework of highly mobile people and goods.

In keeping with the general tendency in scholarship to emphasize international trade contacts of Jews, a current notion stresses also the orientation towards Christian Europe: "the export of luxury goods from Andalusia to the Christian kingdoms of northern Spain apparently was mainly in the hands of Mozarab and Jewish merchants". By admission of the author, this statement has yet to be substantiated.⁸⁸ In addition, it has been asserted that "Jewish traders from Germany and France were constantly traveling on business to Spain, just as Jews from Spain and other Caliphate countries traveled to different areas of Christendom in the 9th–11th centuries". For the first part of the statement there is yet again little proof. It is barely warranted by the single mention of two merchants from Arles who had apparently traveled between 950 and 1000 to some parts of Muslim Spain.⁸⁹ An Arabic tale related by ibn Hayyán (died 1076) brought as further evidence remains inconclusive: it tells of a Jewish merchant sent by a Muslim notable to the town of Barbastro, in order to ransom the man's daughters.⁹⁰ In contrast, there is indeed some evidence that "Jews from Spain traveled to different areas of Christendom in the 9th–11th centuries". One such Jew was Abraham of Saragossa, undoubtedly a merchant, who was received around the year 825 into the service and under the protection of the Frankish Emperor Louis the Pious. On this occasion, he was promised exemption from different exactions, duties and tolls *on his private property and trade/merchandise*.⁹¹ We do not know where in the Frankish Empire this man took up residence, or indeed whether he

⁸⁷ Goitein, 1967: I, 21; IV, 169.

⁸⁸ Ashtor, 1992: I, 278, but see his accompanying note 48 on p. 436: "This is the view accepted by [Spanish] scholars investigating the history of Moslem and Christian Spain, although proofs for this have not yet been adduced."

⁸⁹ The quotation by Grossman, 1996: 116. Arles: Ginzei Schechter, 1929: 235, no. XXXIII.

⁹⁰ Ashtor, 1992: III, 201, declared this Jew to have been "not a Spanish native but a merchant from one of the countries beyond the Pyrenees who had business dealings in the cities on the banks of the Ebro". Apparently, Ashtor thought so because he understood the tale to say that the Jew could converse with a French crusader count but did not understand Arabic. However, the text says rather that the Christian understood highly ornate Arabic poetry even less than the Jew: Dozy, 1881: II, 345–348.

⁹¹ Linder, 1997: 342–3, no. 575.

went on to trade with his place of origin. The fact that the charter of protection was entered into a book of form letters suggests that he might have been one of a number of merchants similarly privileged. Indeed, a further Jew by the name Judacot and called *our faithful* by yet another Frankish emperor, Charles II the Bald, might have been a native of Catalonia and a merchant of similar status. He is mentioned in 855/7 or 876 as having conveyed ten pounds of silver and warm greetings from the Emperor to the bishop and inhabitants of Barcelona.⁹² Further, it stands to reason that Ibrahim b. Yaqub of Tortosa, who toured and surveyed Western and Central Europe ca. 965, had been a merchant too.⁹³ In contrast, a further Arabic source has plainly been over-interpreted. This anecdote set in the mid-11th century was seen to witness "Jewish merchants of Tortosa and maritime commerce of Jews in the Tyrrhenian Sea." Actually, the text has only the following:⁹⁴

Raymond Count of Barcelona, passing through Narbonne on his way to the Holy Land, fell in love with the wife of a local notable, and he planned to have her kidnapped. Upon his return, he sent a group of Jews to help carry out his plan. The [Muslim] lord of Tortosa, informed by the Count of this business, sent these Jews by galleys on to Narbonne.

Neither the lord of Barcelona nor the allegedly seaborne Jewish traders had their own naval transport at disposal, but needed to avail themselves of the good services of a Muslim *Taifa* lord. Even though commercial contacts between the frontier in Catalonia and Aragon and the Carolingian heartlands certainly existed, it is very hard to know whether indeed "the scope of business dealings of Spanish Jewish merchants with the Frankish Kingdom was by no means insignificant."⁹⁵

The same dearth of information holds for a later and much better documented period, when Hebrew legal sources and then the Genizah papers become available. In the whole run of the latter, there is not a single

⁹² Linder, 1997: 367–77, no. 596. The name has been seen to hint to a Catalan origin: Bachrach, 1977b.

⁹³ Constable, 1994: 87. For other interpretations see Ashtor, 1966; Miquel, 1986; Charvat & Prosecky, 1996; and the older essays reprinted in Sezgin, 1994.

⁹⁴ Ashtor, 1980: 430, and Ashtor, 1992: II, 287. The source is al-Himyari, see Lévi Provençal, 1938: 54–5.

⁹⁵ Ashtor, 1992: I, 278. From my acquaintance with the late Eliyahu Ashtor, who knew his sources better than most, I have the feeling that his verbal hedging here covers some uneasiness towards his own position on the matter, which in turn was much influenced by Ashtor's being—by his own proud admission—"a stubborn Pirenist, perhaps the last of the Pirenists".

reference to trade between Muslim Spain and Christian regions. In the Responsa literature from Muslim Spain there are two pieces, from the end of the 10th or the early years of the 11th century, which speak of single Jews *that went to trade to the land of the Christians*.⁹⁶ Incidentally, there is no reason to identify that *land of the Christians* as faraway France or Italy. It might as well or even better be seen to point to the much nearer Christian kingdoms of Northern Spain. Even then, it is still moot whether these or earlier references can sustain Eliyahu Ashtor's claims quoted above, or a similar one that "Andalusi Jews traded back and forth across the Iberian frontier".⁹⁷ To the contrary, the Jewries of Muslim Spain seem to have lacked routine contacts with the ones in France, as in a query to Isaac Alfasi on the difficulties experienced by a learned man *Reuben who lived in eastern France far away from [Muslim] Spain and left his wife and sons in their place and toured the land of Spain between the communities*.⁹⁸

The lack of information on long range ventures, outside the charmed circle of Genizah merchants, is not confined to Jews trading from Muslim Spain. For the citizens of Barcelona, "if evidence for extra regional trade has been notoriously hard to come by even during the prosperous 11th century, this is even more the case in the difficult decades after 1100. The role of trade in Barcelona's early growth has been greatly exaggerated."⁹⁹ That much said, still the only ones before the mid-12th century known in this city to have owned a ship were four Jews who received in 1104 from the Count of Barcelona a monopoly of shuttling back to Muslim lands Saracens that had been ransomed from captivity, for as long as it took to realize a profit of 12 pound silver.¹⁰⁰ As they were promised that *no Jew or Christian should travel on their ship with merchandise against their will*, these entrepreneurs were clearly traders in addition to having had some prior financial arrangement with the Count, perhaps as lenders of funds. These were the only Jews in the evidence that "traded back and forth across the Iberian frontier". But they were no Andalusians from Muslim Spain and they did so at a time and under circumstances—of Christian Reconquista—very different from the ones that had obtained during the centuries of Muslim hegemony before. And yet again, as has

⁹⁶ Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: nos. 191, 192.

⁹⁷ Constable, 1994: 87, as well as 61–2. In a similar vein Nelson, Lynn, 1978: 700.

⁹⁸ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 223.

⁹⁹ Thus Bensch, 1995: 115–6, 118, *contra* the weighty opinion of Bonnassie, 1975: II, 856– and Ruiz Domenec, 1977: 285–6.

¹⁰⁰ Baer, 1929–1936: vol. I, 7–8, no. 13.

been remarked, these four men scarcely amount to a merchant class. Such a class, of Jews and non-Jews, developed in Barcelona only from the later 12th century onward.¹⁰¹

Forms of commerce other than long range trade were much more clearly part and parcel of the occupations of Jews in Spain. A Responsum, most likely from the late 10th to early 11th century, enumerated the main ways by which Jews made a living: landholding (treated above), money lending against agricultural property and products (to be treated below), and commerce.¹⁰² Mercantile concerns permeate the Hebrew legal record, as for instance in a Responsum of Moses ben Hanokh intended to protect a simpleton, *this man Hezron who does not understand merchandise and knows not his way in negotiating deals*.¹⁰³ Another hint to the ubiquity of commercial affairs is found in a Responsum by Isaac Alfasi on the arrangements to safeguard the livelihood of a widow: *there is no way to have the heirs give up [liquid] money because they deal with it and make a livelihood from it and nourish her [the widow]*. Under normal conditions, trade was expected to assure a certain standard of living. A man on his deathbed making arrangements for his widow-to-be explained: *since I was not a merchant I do not leave her money, neither in large nor in small denomination*.¹⁰⁴

Responsa literature portrays the itinerant trader and his mobility in dimmer light than the bright one obtained in the Genizah: *Reuben had married a woman some years ago and merchandise became scarce in that town and did not suffice for his livelihood and he told her to come with him to another place*.¹⁰⁵ In such cases it was need that propelled people on the road. The dangers of itinerant trade were well-known and apparently routinely accepted:

Reuben and Shimon were partners . . . and bought merchandise and went both to a different town to sell it; and Reuben returned to his town and let Shimon sell and negotiate; and when he [Shimon] got his merchandise prepared, he

¹⁰¹ Klein, 2006: 58. For the post-12th century developments see Assis, 1998–1999.

¹⁰² Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 205. The editor Joel Müller thought that the Responsum came from France, but see Grossman, 1995: 61–2, note 57, for convincing arguments to place it in Muslim Spain. The same *Halakhic* problem and solution in a shorter Responsum, written according to Grossman, 2000: 276, by the same sages, either R. Nathan or R. Hanokh ben Moses (d. 1014): Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 165.

¹⁰³ Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 178.

¹⁰⁴ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 46; Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 200.

¹⁰⁵ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 216, and very similar in nos. 185, 214.

*joined a large caravan of Muslims and there came upon them robbers and took all he had with him.*¹⁰⁶

Dangers on the road were tangible enough to have traders provide their wives with a bill of divorce before setting out, so as not to leave them in the state of *agunah* (a widow barred from remarrying because her husband's death is not definitely established).¹⁰⁷ There was also an emotional price to be paid for the frequent dislocation of family ties, as in the case of *Reuben who married Leah and stayed with her a year and then went far away abroad to trade; and in the same courtyard dwelled Shimon, Reuben's brother, and he remained with her.* Upon his return, Reuben found that his wife had been and still was carrying on an affair with her brother-in-law.¹⁰⁸ Time and again people came to grief, for instance *Reuben and Shimon and Levi who went from their place to deal in merchandise in the townships and it became known that they were killed on the road.* Roving merchants were endangered in Christian Spain as well as in Muslim parts. In 1047 two Jews, surely traders, were killed on the road south of Logrono.¹⁰⁹ The scarce information on Jewish traders in the Christian realms can be supplemented by the fact that in a number of places tolls were taken from Jews, surely merchants arriving there from different places. Such references are extant from Leon (1074), Estella (before 1080), Belorado (11th century), Balaguer (1106), Tarazona (1123), Tortosa (1149 and 1156), Ávila (1176).¹¹⁰ A further place can be inferred from a legal contest waged 1044 to 1047 over a raid committed by a robber baron against the Jews of another nobleman. The latter had *kept his Jews, who carried out his commerce, in his house* near the monastery Sobrado dos Monxes in the mountainous countryside east of Santiago de Compostela.¹¹¹

To be on the road was of course not the only way to conduct business. In both Muslim and Christian parts, Jews and Jewesses kept shop: *Reuben of the town of Jaén was used to deal in merchandise in his place of abode and made his living in a shop.* In Barcelona, Preciosa, daughter of Nathan ben Isaac, and her brother Isaac sold in 1165 *a stall which we have in the market place, which had belonged to our father who sat and did*

¹⁰⁶ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 72.

¹⁰⁷ Responsa of the Geonim Shaare Zedek, 1965/6: part 3/b, no. 11.

¹⁰⁸ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 73.

¹⁰⁹ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 119.

¹¹⁰ Baer, 1929–1936: vol. II, 4, no. 10; Navarra Judaica 2, 1995: 703, no. 341; Cadiñanos Bardeci, 1994; Baer, 1929–1936: vol. I, 8, 9, 16–7, 19, nos. 14, 16, 28, 30a; Assis, Ávila, in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2007: vol. 2, 735.

¹¹¹ Baer, 1929–1936: II: 3, no. 6. The full text in Fita Colomé, 1893.

business therein all his life. In Lucena, shops were sublet by monthly rent.¹¹² Further references to shops in Jewish ownership are extant from Astorga (Leon), Gerona, Barbastro, Calahorra, Talavera de la Reina, and Toledo, surely only the tip of an iceberg. In addition to shopkeepers and grocers, in the Muslim South as in the Christian North there were Jewish brokers (the term is *sarssur*), and *the market* appears time and again as the place where deals are made.¹¹³ Commercial operations on this level brought the merchant into daily contact with the local consumer, in contrast to the Genizah commerce, much of which was transit trade with merchants buying from and selling to other merchants.

The types of merchandise sold and bought is a question to which our sources supply no general answer. To be sure, the Genizah papers easily furnish lists of goods handled in Spanish places, for instance in Almeria in 1138: burnished and cast copper, silk of at least four different degrees of quality, wax of Fez, pepper, myrobalan (an Oriental medical herb), turpeth (another Oriental plant, used as purgative).¹¹⁴ Of these, the copper was of Spanish origin as was all or some of the silk; the wax was from North Africa; the spices and herbs from beyond the Indian Ocean. This was clearly a transit trade. Other types of sources, the Responsa and Latin documents, are largely silent on the goods handled by merchants. The one commodity that does appear a number of times is silk: *Reuben and Shimon were partners and sold silk in the market in a shop.* When in 1044 a robber baron plundered the Jewish traders of another nobleman near La Coruña in northwestern Spain, he took from them a full 1700 pounds of silk along with 30 pounds of woolen cloth and 40 pounds of linen.¹¹⁵ The centrality of silk as Spanish merchandise begs the question of entrepreneurship in this branch, along the lines Genizah traders were involved in linen production in Egypt. Indeed, in Córdoba there

were two brothers, merchants and manufacturers of silk, Jacob ibn Jau and his brother Joseph; They became successful in the silk business, making clothing of

¹¹² Female shopkeeper: Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 63. For Jaén see Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 120, for further shopkeepers see nos. 77, 114, 266. Barcelona: Millás I Vallicrosa, 1927: 76, no. III. Subletting: Bills and Contracts from Lucena, 1994: 211.

¹¹³ Colección diplomática de la Catedral de Huesca, 1965–1969: I, 176, no. 154; Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: nos. 76, 77, 186, 244; Joseph ibn Migash, 1959: no. 80. On *sarssur*, which in modern Hebrew also means pimp, see the entries in the Historical Dictionary, Hebrew Language Project, Academy of the Hebrew Language, Jerusalem: <http://hebrew-treasures.huji.ac.il/>.

¹¹⁴ Goitein, 1973: 261–3.

¹¹⁵ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 77, also no. 136; Baer, 1929–1936: vol. II: 3, no. 6.

high quality and pennants that are placed at the tops of standards of such high quality as was not duplicated in all of Spain.

Eventually, Jacob ibn Jau was elevated to serve as head (*nasi*) of Jewry throughout the kingdom. He died ca 990. Another high-ranking personality alleged to have begun his career as merchant—of spices—was Samuel ha-Levi the Nagid (better known as Ibn Nagrela) of Córdoba and later of Málaga, who died in 1056.¹¹⁶ Further goods handled by Jewish merchants in Muslim Spain were wool, perfumes, and precious and semi-precious stones, a finding consistent with the Genizah. In Christian Spain there is mention of cloaks as well as of horses that apparently served as merchandise. The latter has been interpreted to hint to a possible involvement in “horse breeding and trading, a necessary and lucrative activity along the pilgrimage route”.¹¹⁷

The most extensive information in the sources concerns the modes and problems of commercial partnerships. This is only to be expected, after all this is where people were most likely to come into conflict. As a consequence, all sorts of day-to-day problems were aired in writing. Frequent and rapid changes in market conditions played havoc with even the best of business plans:

*Reuben came with merchandise to his partnership with Shimon, and Shimon entered merchandise of his own against these, and they dealt in all these goods until they sold most of them; and later Shimon wanted to take leave of Reuben, and the remaining merchandise was worth less than at the beginning because the price had dropped; and each should have taken his part, but Reuben did not want to divide.*¹¹⁸

Commercial success was not easy to achieve: *Reuben gave his money to Shimon to trade with and the Lord did not grant him any profit.* Another partnership gone sour neatly links landholding, treated above, with commercial ventures and moneylending, to be treated below: *Reuben took merchandise from Shimon at a higher price than its value because he was late in [paying Shimon's] money; and when the time came Shimon demanded his money and Reuben had nothing and wrote him a mortgage on his lands and gave them [the lands] to Shimon to eat of their fruits every year and*

¹¹⁶ Sefer ha-Qabbalah, 1967: 68–69, 71–75.

¹¹⁷ Muslim Spain: Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 253; Joseph ibn Migash, 1959: no. 105. Christian Spain: Baer, 1929–1936: vol. I, 30, no. 39; Cartulario de San Juan de la Peña, 1962–1963: I, no. 50; Nelson, Lynn, 1978: 700.

¹¹⁸ Joseph ibn Migash, 1959: no. 69.

deduct from the total of the debt until everything would be paid; and Shimon ate from the fruits some years and all this time the Holy One, may he be praised, did not give Reuben any profit. Cheating and taking advantage of one's fellow were as prevalent in this society as in any other: *Reuben wrote for Shimon a bill of debt over ten gold coins and Shimon told him that these ten gold coins were not the main issue, but five pounds of silk that you gave me, every pound worth one and a half gold coins; and since I was needy I took them at ten* [which makes a price of 2 gold coins per pound, an increase of 33%].¹¹⁹ The same sum was the subject of a dispute between two other merchants: *Reuben sold merchandise to Shimon and there was disagreement between them and Reuben said I sold for 10 coins, and Shimon said that he bought it but for nine.* Though chronically short of cash, these merchants were keen to make the most of an opportunity: *Reuben came to Shimon and said to him, give [lend] me one hundred gold coins and I shall buy with them merchandise and sell it to Gentiles for one hundred and fifty.* This clearly usurious venture raised some scruples but was ultimately approved by the foremost Halakhic authority of the day, Joseph ibn Migash, *since there is no prohibition on usury between Gentile and Israel.*¹²⁰

To sum up: nothing in our material allows quantifying in order to gauge the relative weight of long range, regional or local trade. Still, it seems that the former was mainly the domain of the North African traders of the Genizah, who really cannot be viewed as representative of Iberian Jewry at large. By numbers of participants and value traded, the Spanish leg of the Genizah trade was but a minor one. Its main contribution was to supply certain sorts of merchandise, a function that does not necessarily involve significant numbers of local Jewish traders. Contrary to a widely entertained notion, there is no evidence or likelihood that Jews of Muslim Spain had extended trade contacts with the Christian regions to the north, in the Peninsula or beyond. Their partners were fellow Jews and Muslims in the Maghrib, North Africa, Egypt and Sicily. Evidence from the Christian kingdoms is somewhat more forthcoming, but still not to the degree that one can postulate an intensive long-range commerce of Northern Spanish Jews. Except for the Genizah trade, the much-proclaimed international contacts have been found in Iberia, as in other regions, to be mostly a wishful notion of historians. Regional trade, as apparent in the tolls paid in this or other place, and local trade carried out in the market

¹¹⁹ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: nos. 71, 184, 136.

¹²⁰ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 78; Joseph ibn Migash, 1959: no. 56.

place appear to have provided a livelihood for a much larger number of people, both in Muslim and in Christian Spain. On this more humble level were engendered the manifold petty conflicts that permeate *Responsa* literature with real-life instances of commercial activities. It is on this plane that trade is positioned as a major occupation amongst Iberian Jewry. This we have found to have been the situation not from times immemorial, but from the 10th century onwards, a period of demographic, economic and political expansion very different from the preceding depressed one. Excepting again the Genizah merchants, the trade carried out by Jews does not appear to have differed significantly, in its modes of operation, dimensions, economic function and impact, from that of non-Jewish merchants.

Credit and Monetary Transactions

While older scholarship was inclined to overstate the early involvement of Jews in credit operations with non-Jews, the more recent one has tended to belittle it. Thus it has been noted for Barcelona Jews that the evidence for their money lending is "slim, with a mere handful of loans by Jews in evidence before the early thirteenth century. In fact, before 1150, Jews appear nearly as often as borrowers as they do as lenders." In a similar vein: "Of 83 loan contracts from 1100 to 1180, only 2% record Jewish loans to Christians and 3% Jewish indebtedness to Christians." The explanation for this situation is that "during the 11th century, lending permeated all levels of rural and urban society in the *Pla de Barcelona*. It was an age of innocence for the profit economy: an abundance of gold and silver coins and the precocious spread of lending, here considerably in advance of many parts of Europe, had not yet attracted the disapproving attention of theologians and religious moralists. Anyone with ready cash, layman and cleric alike, offered credit to anxious borrowers under explicitly usurious terms."¹²¹ Such explicitly usurious terms appear, for instance, in a Latin-Hebrew contract of 1088 by which *I Regina Jewess and my son David Jew mortgage for a year our 4 measures of vines that we have in the territory of Barcelona for 100 solidi, with their [the sum's] interest of [one] fifth which*

¹²¹ Klein, 2006: 58; Bensch, 1995: 195 note 45, 113. As an example for the tendency to overstate see the allegedly Jewish moneylender Bonhom of Barcelona with 6 documented loans between 1010 and 1020, as assumed by Bonnassie, 1975: I, 401. According to Romano, 1991: 325–326, all mentions of Bonus Homo really mean Christians, which leaves but one documented loan by a man with the similar name of Bonum Nomen (= Shem Tov).

is 25 [solidi].¹²² A fifth of 100 should be 20, but the text has clearly 25 in both the Latin and the Hebrew part.

It might well be that in Barcelona everyone lent to everyone. A fuller purview of the sources, in Barcelona and elsewhere, indeed finds Jews who borrowed money from non-Jews, but also a substantially larger number of non-Jews borrowing from Jews. As in France, the earliest recorded instances of money lending involve agricultural property and crops. A 10th century Responsum on taxes, already quoted, aimed to include in the tax roster those *people amongst them* [the unknown community in question] *who have no vineyards and take fruits from the Gentiles and fill storerooms with the fruits of vineyards that they take from Gentiles; those shall also be taxed who possess no vineyards and land but have gold [coins] to trade with and to receive fruits from the Gentiles with.*¹²³ Despite the awkward and somewhat ambiguous language, this means that some people apparently made a living by lending money to non-Jews in exchange for the produce of their vineyards, which the lenders then sold. Lending cash against agricultural real estate and its produce was practiced all over Iberia, as clearly arises from the mortgage bills extant from Barcelona (13 instances mainly from the 11th century), Tudela (14 cases, second half of the 12th century), and Toledo (2 cases, later 12th century).¹²⁴ This sort of credit operation involving cash money on one side, agricultural produce on the other side, and the collateral of agricultural property in-between, was no different from the loans against mortgages between Jews mentioned above. It is a further dimension of agricultural entrepreneurship, whereby moneylenders gained temporary control over landed assets and their produce.

Using these loan contracts, a few observations can be made on the modes of the credit business. Loans usually ran for one year, sometimes for half a year. There were small and large ones, ranging from 3 to 470 *man-cusi* (early Andalusí gold dinars) or 5 to even 2000 *morabetini* (Almoravid gold dinars). To put these sums into perspective: 210 gold *man-cusi* bought in 1065 near Barcelona two hectares of vineyard, while a hundred years

¹²² Gottheil, 1904: 705–706, no. 3.

¹²³ Responson der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: 205.

¹²⁴ Barcelona: Romano, 1991: 331, no. 19; 326; Baer, 1929–1936: I, 5; 1010, 1012, nos. 610, 614; Bonnassie, 1975: 431; Miret & Schwab, 1916: no. II; Miret & Schwab, 1914: nos. I, X, XI, XVI; Gottheil, 1904: 705–6, no. 3; Millás I Vallicrosa, 1927: 15–6, no. 2; Riera i Sans & Udina i Martorell, 1978: 24, no. 2. Tudela: Navarra Judaica 2: 32–3, 36–9, 40, 44–6, 50–3, 58–9, nos. 13, 19, 21, 24, 26, 27, 32, 34, 35, 43, 44, 48, 49; no. 56. Toledo: León Tello, 1979: 10, 17, nos. 23, 50.

later 49 *morabetini* paid for one hectare.¹²⁵ In 1163, a military commander in Toledo, surely a non-Jew, lent 170 gold *mithqals* (the unit of weight—4.25 grams—of the gold *dinar*) to a Jew, who in exchange for this very significant sum mortgaged substantial assets: a new house in the Jewish quarter of Toledo, all his other possessions such as vineyards, cattle etc., as well as another half house in the *Castle of the Jews* beyond the river Tajo.¹²⁶

Befitting this largely agricultural society, loans were sometimes extended, or asked for, in produce rather than in cash. In 1021 and again in 1023, Benvenist Nathan borrowed from Ermengard, both inhabitants of Barcelona, first ca 75 hectoliter of barley and then ca 250 hectoliter. In light of the substantial quantities involved, he did so most probably in order to resell the grains, and, for reasons unknown, the loan took the place of straightforward purchase. Sometime before 1067, again in Barcelona, a high-ranking Jewish financier by the name of David son of Jacob lent to a non-Jew a quantity of barley and received as surety *houses with attics, cesspools, gutters, and eaves, as well as a vineyard*.¹²⁷ After the debtor defaulted on his debt, David had the properties *valued by a judge and honest men, as is usage and law of the city*. In 1067 he sold them back to the son of the original debtor. David's other much more significant dealings, with the Count of Barcelona, shall be treated shortly.

Landed property as collateral looms largest in the documentation, but there were of course also movable pledges, as in the following, one of the few documents to inform on interest rates, in this case a hefty 100% per annum: *Reuben came to Shimon and said this gentile woman wants to borrow 100 dinars on pledges for 150 [dinars] and six months. Give me the sum from your [money] and he gave him 100 dinars and Reuben took them to the Gentile woman and gave them to her for 150 [dinars] on pledges and handed [the pledges] to Shimon*. Movable pledges were also involved in the case of a royal vicar in Calatayud, who was accused of having recovered by force objects he had pawned to a Jew. In yet another case a Jew pledged clothes to another Jew.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Gottheil, 1904: 703–4, no. I; Baer, 1929–1936: I, 1014, no. 617. In the decade prior to the year 2006, average Spanish vineyard prices have doubled, from € 6,600 to € 13,000 per hectare. In 2004, the average net yearly income of Spanish households was € 21,551.

¹²⁶ León Tello, 1979: 10, no. 23, cf. Roth, Norman, 1986: 204.

¹²⁷ Bonnassie, 1975: 431; Miret & Schwab, 1916: no. II. I have no explanation for the unusual details of drainage in the second source.

¹²⁸ Joseph ibn Migash, 1959: no. 110; Baer, 1929–1936: I, 11, no. 18; Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 281.

For what purpose people took out loans is usually difficult to fathom. The sale of grain mentioned above might very well have had a commercial background. Another case, from Tudela, hints to the nobility's money needs when setting out for military operations: before 1163, Acenar of Rada had borrowed from Jucef, brother of Albofazán, 870 morabetini *when King Sancho marched against Murcia*.¹²⁹ Indeed, only for a few persons can some approximate social standing be established—this noble, the above-quoted *qd'id* (military commander) from Toledo, a few persons in Tudela called lord or lady, some priests in Barcelona. A story from the Poem of the Cid, most likely invented, portrays the hero conqueror as customer of a rich Jewish couple of Burgos, from whom he attained by ruse an interest-free loan.¹³⁰ The social identity of customers from the rank of commoners remains unknown.

In all probability, money lending to non-Jews was much more extensive than can be directly gathered from the surviving documentation. There are a number of indications for this. As seen above, in Tudela and surroundings credit operations were largely responsible for the acquisition of landed property when borrowers defaulted on their debts. The main financiers there, members of the just mentioned Albofazán family, not only lent the largest sum on the record, 2000 morabetini. They were also the recipients of a privilege of 1143 whereby they were released from tithes *on lands bought and accepted in pledge from Christians*.¹³¹ In Christian Spain, credit operations by Jews appear to have been widespread already at the very beginning of Jewish settlement. To witness, the municipal law (*fuero*) of Nájera (in Leon, 1090) which was to serve as model for many other municipal codes, took account of a whole range of contact points between Christians and Jews. Still, it singled out *debts with or without pledges* as the main bone of contention for which legal provision should be made.¹³²

Entrepreneurs, Craftsmen, and Officials

Coinage and precious metals touch on a whole range of issues that are all connected in some way to entrepreneurship: monetary matters, trade,

¹²⁹ Navarra Judaica 2, 1995: 38, no. 24.

¹³⁰ León Tello, 1979: 10, no. 23; Navarra Judaica 2, 1995: 36–37, 52, nos. 21, 47; Riera i Sans & Udina i Martorell, 1978: 24, no. 2; Baer, 1929–1936: I, 1010, no. 610; Miret & Schwab, 1914: 72, no. XI; Cantera Burgos, 1966: 374–5.

¹³¹ Above, note 64.

¹³² Baer, 1929–1936: II, 6–8, no. 14.

money lending, tax farming, as well as the officials whose involvement in landholding we had occasion to view above. Merchants had to navigate a maze of fluctuating exchange rates between different currencies as well as between silver and gold, both as ingots and coined. Thus a loan transaction between two merchants from Arles, while on a business trip to Spain in the late 10th century, led to a dispute over the currency in which the loan should be repaid: silver coins of Arles or the *coins of the king in Spain*. Since Andalusian gold dinars are known to have circulated in Arles, the *coins of the king in Spain* might have either been of silver or of gold, thus adding a further complication to the issue. Similar questions were directed a number of times to Isaac Alfasi, the most illustrious Halakhic authority of the 11th century. The problem was that speculation on future exchange rates was feared to result in taking usury from a fellow Jew. Interestingly enough, the same issue was taken up for the same reasons at exactly the same time by Gershom “Light of Exile” in Germany.¹³³ Another quarrel between two Jewish traders concerned coins that were eventually revealed to contain base metals, copper and tin, rather than the standard silver. The fake was not discovered until a business partner of the injured party returned to town and applied the standard check to a small piece cut off from a coin.¹³⁴

A professional moneychanger would probably have spotted the counterfeit quickly. One of the very first specialists of this sort is documented in Jaén in the 11th century. Another one, in Barcelona before 1140, was *Bonjuda cambiator*, who was also involved in the finances of the Count-King of Catalonia-Aragon. Together with a member of the already mentioned illustrious family of Sheshet, yet another Jew and some Christians, *Bonjuda* made up a consortium to lease the commercial tolls of Barcelona in the years before 1150. He also seems at some point to have invested heavily in milling, a royal monopoly.¹³⁵ Coinage was thus definitely a *métier* that demanded both capital and technical expertise, both of which could be supplied by Jews. At least two such minters were active in 11th century Barcelona. One was called *Bonum Nomen* (*Shem Tov* in Hebrew) and produced between the years 1017 to 1024 three different dies of Arabic gold *mancusi*, all bearing in addition to Arabic writing also the minter’s name

¹³³ Ginzei Schechter, 1929: 235, no. XXXIII. Andalusian dinars in Arles: Constable, 1994: 40. Currency speculation: Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: nos. 243, 244. In Germany: Gershom ben Jehudah, 1955: no. 29. A similar case in Responsa Meir, 1891: no. 895.

¹³⁴ Ginzei Schechter, 1929: 272–3, no. I.

¹³⁵ Jaén: Appendix 4; Barcelona: Bensch, 1995: 107, note 43, 89, 414–5.

in Latin.¹³⁶ A second minter appears in 1066, when the Count leased for five years the minting of the Barcelonan silver coin to a consortium of three, two Christians and a Jew. The latter signed his name on the lease deed in Hebrew, as David bar Jacob. We have already met this man one year later, in 1067, as a lender of barley. The yearly fee for the mint lease was yet again grain, 5 *kaficios* of good wheat.¹³⁷ As one of the Christians had already leased the mint intermittently for a decade before and David bar Jacob appears twice with significant quantities of grains, it stands to reason that in this case the two Christians supplied the metallurgical know-how and the Jew the capital. An entrepreneurial dimension is also visible in yet another consortium of four Jews who contracted in 1104 with the Count of Barcelona for the monopoly of shipping ransomed Saracen prisoners of war back to Muslim Spain. We have already noted that these four were most probably merchants, who had however cultivated previous contacts with the ruler, possibly by extending loans or farming taxes. In any case, the contract saw to it that the four would recoup the very substantial amount of twelve pounds of silver.¹³⁸

Goldsmiths had the best technological qualifications to deal with coinage and money-changing. Indeed, this occupation was at the very top of the hierarchy of crafts and is the one most extensively documented. Goldsmiths are repeatedly mentioned in the 11th century in Barcelona, as well as in Jaén, Leon, Bustillo de Cea and in Huesca, and surely there were many more.¹³⁹ The little there is of other craftsmen in the record, however, can in no way be held to be representative. Of the fifty five Barcelona household heads in 1079, one was a tailor, one a shoemaker, and one a goldsmith, surely only a fraction of Jewish craftsmen in this city; in Leon another cobbler was documented in 1053; in the surroundings of Toledo in 1166 a man called *the Sevillian, butcher*; somewhere in Muslim Spain a perfumer who also traded with the Almoravid rulers. There are also some hints to Jewish women practicing crafts.¹⁴⁰ Humble craftsmen

¹³⁶ Romano, 1991: 326; Cantera, 1966: 378.

¹³⁷ Baer, 1929–1936: I, 4–5, no. 7. The *kaficius* is a liquid and dry measure. For grain, 12 sacks made one *kaficius*: Viader, 2007: 8.

¹³⁸ Above, note 100.

¹³⁹ Fita Colomé, 1903: 367; Miret & Schwab, 1916: 15–6, no. III; Miret & Schwab, 1914: 64, no. VI; Ashtor, 1964: 59, no. III; Cantera & Millás, 1956: 12–4; Cantera y Burgos, 1966: 374; Lacarra, 1982–85: 59, no. 45.

¹⁴⁰ Fita Colomé, 1903: 367; Loeb, 1882: 227–8; León Tello, 1979: 11, no. 26; Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 105 (possibly this man was no resident of Spain but of Northern Africa); craftswomen: Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: nos. 52, 284.

and craftswomen, be they Jewish or non-Jewish, were the least likely of all occupational groups to find their way into the written record, for their relatively lowly social standing, for their activities that usually did not necessitate written contracts, and for the fact that the documentation for our period deals to such a large extent with landed property rather than with urban matters. The dearth of information is thus not surprising and will be redressed only in the later Middle Ages, when documentation for significant numbers of craftsmen within Iberian Jewry, much more than in any other European region, will be forthcoming.¹⁴¹

In our period, there is some indirect information on textile crafts, in which Jews are more frequently mentioned. We have already met silk and silk products as a main Spanish staple of Genizah merchants. Spanish Jews were involved in silk manufacture, as suggested by the example of the Ibn Jau family, wealthy silk manufacturers and merchants in Cordoba. Another family, the Ibn Balia of Mérida, traced its descent from *Barukh, a noble of Jerusalem and a maker of curtains who was also skilled in silk-work*, who allegedly arrived to Spain at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple.¹⁴² It is of interest that the author of this tale, Abraham ibn Daud, had no qualms in joining the terms noble and entrepreneur/craftsman in one person, even though legendary. Some Jewish expertise in silk-work and possibly also in tanning is hinted at in a story by which King Ferdinand I of Leon in a sudden burst of generosity granted the church of this town in 1053 the sum of 500 solidi to shoe the canons, three well-tanned hides, and silken vestments for the divine service, all to be presented yearly by the local Jews.¹⁴³ There are thus good grounds to assume a significant Jewish participation in the textile and kindred branches.

However, here again scholars have been overly enthusiastic in their reading of the sources. One text has been understood to mean "that Jews had a monopoly in the craft of dyeing in Moslem Spain, even as it was a Jewish occupation in other Moslem countries." This is the *Handbook of Commerce* attributed to the 9th century author al-Jahiz:

It is said that crimson is a plant with a red worm at its root, which grows in three places in the world: in the West in the land of Andalus, in a district called Tārim [in the Hadhramaut Valley of eastern Yemen], and in the land of Fārs

¹⁴¹ Romano, 1993a. See below, Part II, Ch. 7c for our thesis to explain the spare presence of butchers in the record. On the methodological problems with medieval craftsmen (and craftswomen) see Toch, 1993, and below, Part II, Ch. 7b.

¹⁴² Sefer ha-Qabbalah, 1967: 68–69, 78–79.

¹⁴³ Baer, 1929–1936: II, 4, no. 10; Cantera y Burgos, 1943: 334.

[southern Iran]. *The only people who know this plant and the places where it grows are a group of Jews who pick it every year in the month of February.*¹⁴⁴

This strange *plant with a red worm* is of course none other than the *Kermes* insect (mentioned above, chapter 3) which Jewish entrepreneurs were busy harvesting not far away in Arles and surroundings. It follows that their counterparts in Moslem Spain conducted similar if not exactly the same operations, not surprising given the fact that the shrub that nourishes the insect is native to a number of Mediterranean regions. These were merchants-entrepreneurs, not textile craftsmen, and it is more than doubtful whether the passage can be made to say anything about a Jewish “monopoly in the craft of dyeing in Moslem Spain”.

Some Jews were active as building contractors for Christian rulers. In 1160 the Count of Barcelona contracted with his *alfaquim* Abram to erect and manage in the Count's gardens a public bath, from which the latter was to receive in perpetuity one third of the profits. Two thirds of the investments were to be borne by the Count, one third by Abram, who was also to have a monopoly to run a bathhouse in the entire city of Barcelona. By 1199 Abram's heirs sold their share to a non-Jew.¹⁴⁵ In 1170, the bishop of Huesca and two Jews signed a similar contract for the latter to construct near the church of Barbastro (45 km east of Huesca) within half a year a large number of market stalls, two of which shall be theirs for yearly rent of two pound of incense. The building wood, a scribe and a foreman for the workers were to be supplied by the bishop.¹⁴⁶ Similar to our findings in southern France, another venue for entrepreneurial energy and capital seems to have been the acquisition (by purchase or mortgage) and running of mills. Such activities are known from León in 905, actually the earliest evidence for a Jew there; from Astorga (43 km southwest of León); and from Barcelona.¹⁴⁷ In the latter place, this was yet one more instance of putting to use contacts with the ruler, who kept milling a comital monopoly. Another piece of equipment worked by Jews was olive presses. Its most expensive part, the grind-stone, was lent out, frequently enough to warrant a special contract in the early 11th century

¹⁴⁴ Monopoly: Ashtor, 1992: II, 198. For the source and quotation see Goitein, 1967: I, 416, note 9; Roth, Norman, 1994: 147; Ch. Pellat, “al-Jahiz”, in: EI, 2nd ed., 2007.

¹⁴⁵ Baer, 1929–1936: I, 22–3, no. 33. On the term *alfaquim* for a Jew close to the ruler see below.

¹⁴⁶ Colección diplomática de la Catedral de Huesca, 1965–1969: I, 267–8, 272, nos. 263, 269.

¹⁴⁷ Cantera y Burgos, 1943: 331; Rodríguez Fernández, 1976: 348–9, nos. 12, 13; Miret & Schwab, 1914: 77, no. XVI.

formula collection from Lucena.¹⁴⁸ This small detail speaks yet again to the entrepreneurial character of the involvement of Jews in agriculture as well as in the developing market economy.

Many of the entrepreneurial functions sketched above—tax farming, coinage, and agricultural ventures—were carried out by Jews close to the holders of military and political power. This class of courtiers and officials has been intensively researched for a later period, from the 13th century onwards.¹⁴⁹ In the Muslim caliphate, in the *Taifa* states, and in the Christian states with the beginning of their ascendancy in the 11th–12th centuries, such people did not yet make up a coherent group as they would later. Nevertheless, they certainly existed as individuals. A rhymed Genizah letter of recommendation for a Jew of Granada puts it succinctly: *his father was amongst those who saw the countenance of the king*. In another instance, much more damaging, *Shimon threatened Reuben in front of the king's servant and had him put in prison*.¹⁵⁰ In Muslim Spain, Jewish viziers and high officials, amongst them several physicians and even one military commander, are found in the Caliphate's capital of Córdoba, and later in Granada, Almería, Saragossa, Sevilla, Denia and other Taifa states, possibly also at Toledo. However, as has been stated,

One does not hear of Jews in more junior levels of government. Thus, such Jews were employed as individuals; apart from Granada, where there seems to have been a clear policy of using them in the administration as a means of maintaining the ethnic balance in the state between Andalusian Arabs and Berbers. In the other states in al-Andalus Jews were neither so numerous nor so significant a segment of the populace, and there was no need to placate them, or to use them as a balance against other groups in the state. There was thus extensive and important Jewish participation in the government and administration of a large number of Taifa states, in particular the more significant ones. On the other hand, such a picture should not be exaggerated. The Jews who attained high office did so, in all likelihood, as individuals, even though their background and their training and education as Jews may have fitted them well for such positions.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Bills and Contracts from Lucena, 1994: 200.

¹⁴⁹ For the historiography and some of the inherent ideological snares, see Klein, 2006: 83. For the conceptual framework see Zenner, 1990. See also below, Part II, Chapter 7.

¹⁵⁰ Ashtor, 1964: 60–2, no. IV; Responsa of the Geonim Shaare Zedek, 1965/6: part 4/a, no. 9.

¹⁵¹ Wasserstein, 1985: 119–223, the quotations on 214–5. See also Roth, Norman, 1994: 79–112.

To this political and administrative characterization we can add an economic one, namely the fact that in the Christian north one finds entrepreneurs of various sorts frequently bearing the appellation of *alfaquim* of a ruler. The term derives from the Arabic *al-hakim*, a learned man, and has been understood to mean in a Jewish context either physician or interpreter and clerk.¹⁵² Whatever the exact etymology, by the 12th century the title or designation denoted individual Jews in various positions of proximity to a ruler in the Christian states of Northern Spain. As has been noted,

in the administration of the counts of Barcelona, *alfaquims* appear since the first half of the 12th century, usually in ad hoc arrangements rather than as the result of official positions with titles or defined functions. Literacy and the ability to function in Arabic were certainly important. Their independence of the nobility, their dependence on the king, and the exclusive loyalty engendered by such dependence would be reasons to employ Jews, to which should be added the ability to offer credit. Wealth and comital-royal service were complementary. Without a degree of wealth, one was of little use to the king; on the other hand, royal service provided an opportunity to share in the profits of royal government, an opportunity that both facilitated the rise and secured the position of a number of Barcelona's Jews.

We have found such people with a mixed assortment of economic functions: as personal physicians and astronomers to rulers (too numerous to recount here in detail),¹⁵³ as recipients of grants of landed estates; acting as contractors and managers of enterprises (such as the public bath in Barcelona); as bailiffs, tax farmers and tax collectors.¹⁵⁴ There were others with other names that functioned in similar ways, for instance some persons appearing around Toledo with the title *almoxarife* or *almojarife*, from the Arabic *al-wazir almushrif*, an official responsible for the collection of taxes.¹⁵⁵ Even though quantitative assessments are notoriously difficult, there can be little doubt that Jews acting as officials and in functions close to rulers were much more numerous in Iberia, in both its Muslim and Christian parts, than in any other region of Europe.

To sum up: In the economic make-up of Iberian Jewry, little continuity can be made out from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. The Visigothic period

¹⁵² Baer, 1978: 91; Klein, 2006: 83, and there 82–84 for the following quotations.

¹⁵³ See Assis, 1996.

¹⁵⁴ Bailiffs: for Barcelona see the detailed inventory by Klein, 2006: 84–5; Gerona: Marquès Casanovas, 1988: 451; Lérida and Tortosa: Baer, 1929–1936: I, 27–9, 301–31, nos. 37, 40. For tax collectors in Alagón: Ashtor, 1992: II, 263.

¹⁵⁵ Roth, Norman, 1986: 210.

with its looming uncertainties does not bear out the idea of a significant economic footprint as claimed by traditional historiography. The Muslim period and the developments in the Christian north both provided a very different background, of political and military upheaval and of new economic dynamics, in which Jews found significant niches. As exemplified by the Genizah trade, for some centuries al-Andalus was integrated into the broader economic structure of the Muslim Mediterranean. The political dismemberment of the Spanish Caliphate and the rise of the *Taifa* states in the 11th century created favorable conditions for Jewish officials, physicians and other persons close to the powers that be. Yet another favorable environment was shaped by the dynamics of Christian conquest, whose first stage falls within our period. Its exigencies provided for an extended time a niche for Jews in the administrative, agricultural and commercial structures. Iberia of the first part of the Early Middle Ages made for a setting in which Jews, as the rest of society, were not flourishing, economically or otherwise. During the later part of the Early Middle Ages, new developments combined to form two different environments in which Jews were apparently thriving. However, we have not been able to confirm the notion current in scholarship that Jews performed a leading function in either agriculture, commerce, money lending or craft production. Money lending was part of the occupational structure from the beginning of Jewish settlement in Christian regions. Significantly, it first appears in the context of landholding. The possession of landed property provides at the same time a equalizing feature with majority society and an outlet for the entrepreneurial drive which might have been the one economic trait distinguishing Jews from other urban populations.

The reader will indulge the author to conclude this chapter on a personal and somewhat emotional note. Upon entering through the medieval town gate of Tudela, the visitor is transported in one moment from a rural landscape of fields and orchards that extend from the shimmering horizon of the alluvial plain up to the very ramparts of the town. Inside, in the stifling heat of a summer noon, the winding streets are emptied of mankind. Except for two tourist couples, one Israeli and the other French, the only living beings in sight are pairs of storks perching on each and every bell-tower and cornice of the many churches in this lovingly restored medieval town. To this memory, I might add my fathers' conviction gained over seventy years ago while fighting against despotism in Spain, that this is the most beautiful country he had ever known.

CHAPTER FIVE

EASTERN EUROPE

People and Places

This chapter treats the existence (at times and in places the non-existence) of Jews and their economic profile in the vast expanses of central-eastern, south-eastern and eastern Europe, in present-day Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, the Baltic and Balkan states, Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and the Ukraine. Of these, only the coastal regions of the Balkans, the provinces Illyricum (Dalmatia), Pannonia, Moesia and Dacia, were part of the Roman orbit. Jewish existence there has been treated in our first chapter on Byzantium, except for Pannonia (mostly modern Hungary), which shall command our attention in this chapter. Some more places with a Jewish presence were located on the northern shore of the Black Sea. They too have been treated above for Roman times, and shall reappear in this chapter in very different medieval garb. Byzantine rule, the heir of the Roman state in the Balkans, weakened during and after the 5th century, for internal reasons and for the impact of the great migrations. All over this vast stage, political history became the story of the arrival, settlement and sometimes disappearance of Germanic, Altaic, Slavonic and Finno-Ugric entities, of which the Western and Eastern Slavs, the Avars, Khazars and Magyars were to be most prominent.¹ Towards the close of the first millennium C.E., usually in step with the process of Christianization, most of these established more tightly organized political units, principalities and kingdoms. Throughout, their main political, cultural and religious partner, often a highly belligerent one, was Byzantium. Only in the westernmost parts were the Slavs, Avars and Magyars to meet Franks and later Germans. By one somewhat radical view, this “vast area of Central and Eastern Europe as a whole shares important characteristics. Compared to the West, history ‘began’ here only in the ninth–tenth centuries when

¹ For the political history see the chapters by Zbigniew Kobylinski, Jonathan Shepard, Thomas S. Noonan, Jerzy Strzelczyk and Kornél Bakay in vols. I–III of the *New Cambridge Medieval History*. For new approaches in archaeology and historiography see the essays in Curta (ed.), 2005. For an overview of the archaeological record see Callmer, 2007.

permanent states were established; Christianity spread; feudal institutions and private ownership, noble privileges and serfdom, as well as agriculture were introduced. This area experienced an approximate 500-year delay in development when compared to the western half of the continent. In the Baltic area, the delay was longer, about 800 years.”²

Something of this belatedness and accompanying vexation also holds for Jews, as clearly stated by Cecil Roth in 1966:

The entire mass of evidence however amounts to very little indeed. But the communities in this region were in later Jewish history, from say the 16th century onwards and down to the 20th, to be of overwhelming importance. Are the details which are about to be given in the ensuing pages simply the trivial visible evidence of a numerous Jewish settlement, or do they reflect the full reality of a handful of numerically unimportant and historically insignificant Jewish communities which may or may not have subsequently disappeared? We have seen above how the Jewish merchants pushed their adventurous way eastward, into central Germany. Did the same process continue eastwards also, the communities of Eastern Europe being mere trading-settlements of the Jewish merchants of the Occident? Or did they find ‘autochthonous’ communities already solidly established on their arrival? In that case, it must be presumed that their forebears arrived by a different route, and this can only have been from the South. It is arguable that the Jewish settlements not only in Eastern, but even in Central Europe derived hence.³

To these pertinent questions should be added the oblique and obscure nature of the extant source material, much less and much later than in any other part of medieval Europe. This has to do with the fact that the ones who were wont to write about Jews, the Christian clergy, appeared in these regions much later than elsewhere. The major stumbling block, however, is the near total lack of sources—written or archaeological—produced by Jews themselves. In their absence, scholarship in and on Eastern Europe has produced an astonishing abundance of speculation, even of high fantasy, on many of the debate points of the history of Jews. Here more than anyplace else, scholars felt and still feel at license to dispense with normal rules of source criticism and historical argument. The topic also attracts a significant amount of non-academic writing. All this is perhaps explainable by the extremely high stakes attributed to claims of historical antiquity and legitimacy. A prime example would be the sup-

² Berend, Ivan, 2005: 402.

³ Roth, Cecil, 1966b: 302, 303.

posed pernicious Khazar/Jewish influence on early Russia, an early medieval prefiguration of modern-day Jewish aggression. Discussed not less heatedly is the imputed Turkish origin of Eastern European Jewry, which supposedly negates the “birthright” of Ashkenazic Jews to the Land of Israel/Palestine.⁴ However far-fetched such concerns might appear, they keep surfacing time and again to make their way from political controversy to scholarship, and back again.

All evidence for a late antique presence of Jews in these parts comes from places at the edge of Roman civilization, in the Balkans and around the Black Sea shores. These have been treated in our chapter on Byzantium. There is yet one further area to address in the Roman province of Pannonia, a string of places along the Danube River in today’s Austria, Hungary, Croatia and Serbia, plotted in the top left corner of our map 1, Byzantium. The finds from ancient *Carnuntum* (today’s Petronell, Lower Austria, on the Danube River), altogether ten coins struck in Palestine at the time of the Bar-Kokhba uprising against Roman rule, are not straightforward evidence for a Jewish presence on the spot. They were probably brought there by soldiers of a Roman legion that had returned from military operations in Palestine to be stationed on the Pannonian border.⁵ About 28 km further south, near the village of Halbtürn (Burgenland, Austria), the grave of a small child in a late antique cemetery next to a Roman estate has recently yielded an amulet of the 3rd century. Hidden in a silver capsule and incised on a thin gold leaf, it renders in Greek transliteration the key Jewish prayer “Hear Israel”.⁶ A further 75 km to the south, from Roman *Savaria* (modern Szombathely, in the westernmost part of Hungary) come two finds: an oval gem lost in WWII, of a blue stone with the image of a short menorah, dated by style to a general “antique period”; and a clay lamp with tripod menorah and the symbol of the palm branch, dated to the 4th/5th century.⁷ Back on the Danube, about halfway between Bratislava and Budapest, in ancient *Brigetio* (modern Szőny) a

⁴ For the former, represented starkly though not solely by the writer Lev Gumilev, see Shnirelman, 2007. Of the latter, the latest in a long tradition to deny Jewish nationhood on Khazar grounds is Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, London 2009. His sentiments are echoed in an anonymous Hebrew leaflet titled “The Ashkenazi (Eastern European Jews) are Khazars”, which for decades has been stuck to telephone poles and distributed to Israeli mailboxes, lastly in July 2011 to my Jerusalem one. Apparently, someone still feels strongly about this.

⁵ Berger, 2005: 69–70, 134.

⁶ Taeuber, 2008. I thank the author for sharing his article before publication.

⁷ Berger, 2005: 87–9, 127–30.

Latin inscription for an assembly hall and prayer house devoted to “the great eternal God” has recently been re-read as Jewish, even though this reading is disputed.⁸ Further eastwards 43 km by the Danube we come to *Solva* (modern Esztergom), with a 3rd century Latin epitaph for *Judah and Cassia* embellished with a three-footed menorah.⁹ East of Esztergom the Danube turns southwards for 34 km towards ancient *Aquincum*, the capital of *Pannonia Inferior* and today the Óbuda district within the city of Budapest. There a 4th century Greek epitaph decorated with two menorot was found. It reads *Anastasius, Decusanis and Benjamin, our son. God is One. God is One. God is One.*¹⁰ At the distance of 65 km to the south, on the Danube, lies *Intercisa* (modern Dunaújváros), with four inscriptions of the 3rd century that might all or partly designate a Jewish presence. One of them, a votive offering to *The Eternal God for the well-being of Emperor Alexander Severus* (ruled 222 to 235) includes by one reading an *archisynagogus of the Jews*, by another reading merely a *synagogue*, in any case a clear reference to a synagogue community.¹¹ A further 89 km to the south-west at Dombóvár, yet another amulet was found in a Roman child's grave together with other pieces of jewelry. Made of lead and dated to the late 4th century, it exhibits a tripod menorah, shofar, lulav, and three palm branches, all unmistakably Jewish symbols.¹² To the south at a distance of 35 km, at *Sopianae* (modern Pécs, Hungary), a 4th century cemetery has yielded a finger ring of blue glass with the raised plastic image of a menorah with rounded branches.¹³ In Siklós, 25 km to the south and similar to the previous two places at some distance (43 km) from the Danube, a gravestone of *Septimia Maria, Jewess, who lived 18 years and her mother Actia Sabinilla* has been recorded by a 15th-century humanist. The epitaph, now long lost, might have originally come from Siklós itself, which has Roman remains, or from Pécs.¹⁴ At *Mursa* (modern Osijek, Croatia), on the bank of the river Drava, 46 km from Siklós and 25km upstream from the river's confluence with the Danube, an early 3rd century inscription, originally over 2 meters wide, speaks of *the restoration from the foundations of the prayer house fallen from age.*

⁸ Berger, 2005: 122–123.

⁹ IJO I: 1–3; Berger, 2005: 104–106.

¹⁰ IJO I: 4–7; Berger, 2005: 107–109.

¹¹ Berger, 2005: 112–121.

¹² Berger, 2005: 80–81.

¹³ Berger, 2005: 87.

¹⁴ Berger, 2005: 109–110; Scheiber, 1983: 42.

A second inscription, in honor of the "Eternal God", is somewhat doubtful in its Jewish identification.¹⁵

This sums up the evidence from late antique Pannonia. All places mustered were Roman towns or military camps, one a rural estate, on or near the Danube River which constituted the limit of Roman civilization. This string of finds visibly extends a similar one found on the Danube border with *Germania*, another boundary to the wilderness (above, chapter 3). Here too, the finds' distribution and nature is consistent with Jews accompanying the Roman army. Similar to Gaul, there are no remnants at all from the interior of the Roman provinces. However, in contrast to the solitary appearances in Roman Germany, in some places there are clear signs of synagogue communities and thus of a more highly developed community life. The latest finds date to the 4th century, most are earlier. This should come as no surprise. By 420/5 the Huns had established themselves on the Hungarian Plain and by 433 Pannonia itself was finally ceded to the enemy. By 487/8, the towns on the banks of the Danube were abandoned and their Roman inhabitants evacuated to Italy, yielding the stage to successive Germanic, Turkic and Slav entities.¹⁶

In the turbulent times to come, Jews do not appear to have fared well; in fact the few traces of them are most enigmatic. One comes from a necropolis in Ciglana/Čelarevo (near Novi Sad, Serbia), 73 km southeast from the last place discussed and again right on the Danube. The necropolis has been dated to the late 8th or early 9th century, the last years of the Avars' domination in this part of Pannonia before their demise at the hands of Charlemagne and his Franks. According to the grave goods and the anthropological investigation of the bodies, the people buried there "were of Mongol race, with clear traits of the north-Mongolian branch."¹⁷ After a few years of excavation, the necropolis had given up over 130 brick fragments with Jewish symbols, menorah, ethrog, and lulav. These were found in most cases out of archaeological context, in parts that had previously been dug up by local workers. Although some pieces were positioned at the bottom of graves, these had also been disturbed by excavators, thus leaving open the question where the symbols had originally been placed. One brick fragment has a Hebrew inscription read by one scholar as *Judah* and by another as *Judah woe*. Alexander Scheiber, doyen

¹⁵ IJO I: 16–19; Berger, 2005: 123.

¹⁶ For details and the archaeological evidence see Christie, 1996.

¹⁷ IJO I: 325–326, also for the following interpretations.

of Jewish studies in Hungary, thought that the Jewish symbols stem from the Roman period and that bricks from a nearby Roman Jewish cemetery were later reused in Avar graves. By this account, Ciglana/Čelarevo would be a most substantial easternmost settlement of Jews in Roman *Pannonia*, with only a fortuitous connection to the early medieval graves there. By another opinion though, the bricks were first broken into pieces (whole ones being too heavy for transportation) and then taken to the necropolis. The Jewish symbols were added later, as shown by their careful composition, in most cases corresponding to the size of each brick fragment. This would mean that early-medieval people of north-Mongol stock manufactured Jewish symbols for their own burials, an interpretation consistent with the Khazar hypothesis (see below) even though the location is far away from the borders of Khazaria.

Another discovery consists of two silver rings found in a cemetery in Ellend, near the above-mentioned Pécs in southwestern Hungary, one by a female skeleton and the other near a child's burial.¹⁸ The cemetery has been dated by coins to the second half of the 11th century. The better preserved ring has eleven short groups of letters engraved on it, some of them without apparent meaning, some of them that look like Hebrew, and yet others that look like Hebrew upside down. Altogether, the letters are clearly ornamental and do not constitute a meaningful script. The second ring bears somewhat similar lettering, however in such bad state of preservation as to render identification impossible. It has been thought that these Hebrew-like characters were brought to Hungary by one of the Judaized Turkic tribes constituting the Khazar Empire. This is possible, but not necessarily convincing, as the characters might as well be runes of a type usual amongst Turkic cultures. Equally unconvincing is the argument that a secondary use of objects dating from the Roman age can be ruled out because there is no precedent of finds from Roman *Pannonia* with Hebrew letters. This is only correct if one limits "Roman *Pannonia*" to modern Hungarian territory. There are Hebrew letters on Roman-age finds not far outside Hungary, and the two rings have been unearthed near Pécs (Roman *Sopianae*, above) where there was indeed an antique Jewish presence.¹⁹ Thus a secondary medieval use of antique Jewish objects is at least as possible at Ellend as it is at Ciglana/Čelarevo.

¹⁸ Kiss, 1970; Scheiber, 1983: 75–76.

¹⁹ No Hebrew letters: Kiss, 1970: 344. For Hebrew on antique epitaphs see IJO I: 378.

Further evidence for an early-medieval Jewish presence in Hungary was seen to come from the Hebrew correspondence of the Iberian-Jewish grandee Hasdai ibn-Shaprut with Joseph, Jewish King of the Khazars, which has been dated to the mid-10th century. Frustrated in his efforts to communicate with Jewish Khazaria via Byzantium, Hasdai reports an alternative mail route suggested to him by two Israelites who had come to Córdoba.

When they heard of my consternation, they consoled me, saying to me, 'Give us your epistles and we will cause them to reach to the king of the Gebalim. Out of respect to you he will send your letter to the Israelites dwelling in the land of HNGRYN, and they will likewise send it to Rus and from there to Bulgar, until your letter, as you desire, arrives at the place you wish it to.'

On strength of this source, it has been "confidently stated that already in the middle of the 10th century Jews lived in the lands of the Hungarians".²⁰ This would undeniably be the case if a) the Hasdai-correspondence can indeed be trusted (see below on the Khazar question and on the Kiev letter), and b) *HNGRYN* is indeed Hungary, which in contemporary Hebrew sources is usually called *the land of Hagar*. Unequivocal evidence for a Jewish presence will become available by the end of the 11th century (see below). Then it will be of the type easily recognizable by the traditional characteristics of Jewish identity, rather than the obscure hints seen above.

Things are not much clearer on the northern and north-eastern shore of the Black Sea, another region for which a continuity of Jewish settlement from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages has been postulated. Here the difficulty lies not in the opaque evidence, but in the ongoing confusion wrought by forgeries of the 19th century. Abundant archaeological remains have been gathered from the thriving antique towns of the region: from *Olbia* (the modern village of Parutino, Ukraine) on the southern Bug estuary; on the Crimea peninsula at and around *Kherson* (modern Sevastopol, Ukraine) and *Panticapaeum* (modern Kerč, Ukraine); across the Straits in Russian territory on the Taman' peninsula at *Phanagoria* (modern Sennaya/Sinna); at *Hermonassa* (near modern Temryuk); and *Gorgippia* (modern Anapa); and finally further to the north at *Tanais*

²⁰ The text: Golb & Pritsak, 1982: 92. On the mysterious name *Gebalim/Givlim* see Putik, 1996. The "confident statement" was by Scheiber, 1966: 315. See also Baron, 1957: III, 211, who mentions both the Hasdai reference and "such uncertain records as a document of 1526 in which the Jewish community of Sopron (Ödenburg) claimed that some of its tombstones were six hundred years old".

(Rostov-on-Don, Russia).²¹ These rich and variegated archaeological finds convincingly document a significant Jewish presence in the Greek towns of the Black Sea shores, lasting from the early 1st to the 4th/5th century.

Insistent voices have claimed that this presence continued into early medieval times. Thus for instance “10th and 11th century epitaphs” have been adduced from the large Jewish cemetery of Chufut-Qal’eh, near the town of Bakhchisaray north-east of Kherson. According to one scholar, this large Jewish necropolis supposedly superseded an earlier Christian one, leading to the conclusion that a sizeable population must have been proselytized.²² There are no grounds for such inference since the dates are all wrong. For over a century and a half, the Jewish epitaphs of the Crimea have been the subject of a heated debate over the manipulations and forgeries committed by the scholar Abraham Firkowicz in the early 1840s in his effort to produce evidence for the ancient origins of his fellow Crimean Karaites.²³ With the recent investigation anew of the cemetery of Chufut-Qal’eh, this debate can now be closed. Its earliest epitaph was shown to be not older than the year 1364. Firkowicz’s method for altering dates was reconstructed through his extant notebook, leading to the conclusion that all early medieval dates produced by him and still bandied about in scholarship are simply falsifications.²⁴ In the same area lies Kyz-Kermen, where a damaged plaque with a menorah and on the reverse Turkish runic signs (*tamgas*) has come to light during excavations in 1980. This find has been dated to the 8th/9th century and seems, by its description, similar to the artifacts found in far away Serbia. It has been cursorily reported and remains uncorroborated by other researchers.²⁵ The 19th century scholar Daniel Chwolson claimed to have seen additional early medieval epitaphs in another town with an antique Jewish population mentioned above, *Panticapaeum* (modern Kerč), as well as generally in the Southern Crimea. However, Chwolson largely walked in the footsteps of Firkowicz and his dating is today seen as having no reliability. One by-product of his defective readings is a *Cohen* with a Germanic sounding name who still courses like a phantom through scholarship. He is one of numerous proselytes claimed, without a shred of evidence, to

²¹ IJO I: 254–324. *Tanais* is the one location that did not find a place in our map 1.

²² Haussig, 1989: 27. Baron, 1957: III, 197, also argued for an early medieval presence. More circumspect was Golden, 1983: 137, note 28, who wrote of “Jewish communities of some significance in the Crimea”, but notes only Phanagoria (for which see below).

²³ On Firkowicz see now Shapira, 2006.

²⁴ Fedorchuk, 2007.

²⁵ IJO I: 260–261.

have come from the Crimean Goths. Lately, this man has been elevated to the rank of “a Gothic Rabbi, the author of Scripture translations into the Gothic language”.²⁶

However, a Jewish presence at Kherson in the Crimea around the year 862 and later is made somewhat plausible by hagiography. The Life of Saint Constantine (Kyrillos), extant not earlier than in a 15th century manuscript, tells of the hero being sent on a mission to the Khazars. Before entering their land, he made a stop in Kherson where he *learned the Hebrew language and scriptures* with miraculous speed and accuracy; it is to be assumed from Jews.²⁷ Kherson is also where other ecclesiastical chronicles choose to have their saintly heroes—Evstratij the Faster and Nikon—meet martyrdom at the hands of evil Jews. This is a much worn hagiographic fantasy, set however in a realistic geographical placement of a central port town of the Black Sea.²⁸ Across the Strait of Kerč in the Taman’ peninsula we have seen a significant Jewish presence in antique *Phanagoria*. Even later the town is mentioned twice as a place of Jews, in an entry for the year 678/9 by the early 9th century Byzantine chronicler Theophanes the Confessor and again in the mid-9th century by the Abbasid postmaster Ibn-Khordadbeh. Against these unequivocal references there are yet more assertions by Chwolson to the existence of early medieval gravestones, a dating again unconfirmed by scholarship.²⁹ *Phanagoria* also provided the setting for the nadir of fancy attained by one 19th century archaeologist who dug up a nearby “catacomb” and dated it to the 6th–7th centuries. Besides other grave-goods he discovered four or five copper gilded bells with silver rings attached. Since the custom of wearing bells on garments is mentioned for the Biblical high priest (Exodus, 28:34), he suggested that the site had been the burial place of such a person or at least of one of the heads of Jewish synagogues.³⁰ In *Kherson* and *Phanagoria* an early medieval Jewish presence is likely, in other places in the Crimea and Taman’ peninsulas it remains unsubstantiated by the evidence proffered. All this leads to the largest question mark of all, the Jewish Khazars:³¹

²⁶ IJO I: 329, and there note 22 for the quotation by Chwolson. “Crimean Gothic Rabbi”: Haussig, 1989: 25, again quoting Chwolson.

²⁷ Medieval Slavic Lives, 1983: 43.

²⁸ Birnbaum, 1973: 231; Chekin, 1995: 127.

²⁹ IJO I: 295, 330.

³⁰ Reported by Dan’shin, 1997: 143.

³¹ Of the immense bibliography, I have found the following most up-to-date, level-headed and useful: Simonsohn, 2004; the essays in Golden et alia (eds.), 2007, and there

The Khazars, a nomadic Turkic-speaking tribal confederation, established one of the earliest and most successful states situated within the territories of modern European Russia and Ukraine. After a major defeat at the hands of the Arabs, by the year 800 they relocated their political center from the north-Caucasus and established their capital in the Volga delta.³² The next one hundred years of Khazar history brought security and prosperity to the southern Russian and Ukrainian steppe and surrounding regions, permitting cross-continental trade to flourish via Khazaria and providing it with the necessary stability for the formation of a unique material culture known to archaeologists as Saltovo-Mayaki. At its height, in the early ninth century, the Khazar Empire stretched from the Danube in the west to the Volga-Ural steppe in the east and from the middle Volga region in the north to Crimea and the north Caucasus region in the south. It was populated by Turkic and Iranian pastoral nomads, Finno-Ugrian and Baltic foragers, Slavic and northern Caucasian agriculturalists, and urban Crimean Greeks, making it a multiethnic and multilingual state. Most Khazars practiced the traditional Turkic shamanist religion. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and various pagan cults were also found in the lands of Khazaria. Sometime during the reign of the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (786–809), by other sources before or after the mid-9th century, the Khazars converted to Judaism. Many questions remain concerning this conversion, its pervasiveness, and its actual date. By the 890s, Pechenegs and Magyars had infiltrated Khazaria from the east and occupied a large part of the Khazarian steppe, while the Rus' annexed Khazar territories in the forest region in the northwest, along with their tributary peoples. Khazaria was destroyed by the Rus' and their Turkic allies in 965.

According to writings by Byzantines, Muslims and Jews in Muslim Spain, there were Jews in Khazaria, both ethnic ones who most probably came from Byzantium and/or the Muslim regions beyond the Caucasus, and proselytes, an unknown portion of the general population. On their own, these Jews have not left a single sign to their existence, except for one Hebrew letter possibly written in Kiev while the town was still under Khazar rule.³³ Of the intensive archaeological study of Khazar sites (over a thousand burial sites have been investigated!), not one has yet yielded

especially Golden, 2007a, for the course of Khazar scholarship; and Kovalev, 2005a: 221–223, who I adhere to verbatim for the following overview.

³² The Russian archaeologist Dmitri Wasiljev announced on Sept 3rd 2008 the discovery of the long-lost Khazar capital Itil near Samosdelka, south of Astrakhan' on the north-western shore of the Caspian Sea.

³³ A convenient overview of the sources is Simonsohn, 2004. For the Kiev letter see Golb & Pritsak, 1982. For the fabrication by Firkowicz of a Hebrew document on "our lord David, the Khazar prince who lived in Taman" and the ongoing belief of some scholars in this tale see Shapira, 2006.

finds that fit in some way the material legacy of antique European or Middle-Eastern Jewry.³⁴ Nor are they in any way kindred to the numerous later Jewish epitaphs, extant from the 14th century onwards, that are scattered over the Crimea. These in turn do not differ, in script, language, and iconography, from Jewish burial customs elsewhere in Europe and the Middle East. In other words, the region exhibited clear traits of Jewish identity as we know it, before and after the Khazar Empire, but not during its span of existence. If this entity was in any way Jewish, this did not extend to its material culture. The only Khazar artifact, today, to point to some sort of Jewishness was found outside Khazaria, on the island of Gotland (Sweden). It is an imitation of an Arabic coin with the fictitious mintmark *Madinat as-Salam* 779–80. In place of the usual inscription *Muhammad is the messenger of God*, it bears in Arabic the words *Moses is the messenger of God*.³⁵ Numismatists conclude that it was actually minted in 837 or 838 in Khazaria, as a propaganda demonstration aimed at the Muslim and Byzantine neighbors. According to one interpretation, it is possibly also an expression of a profound internal upheaval, which would be the acceptance of Judaism. If this was indeed a Jewish collective of any substance, it must have possessed characteristics very different from the ones that serve everywhere else, and in Southern Russia and the Crimea also before and after, to indicate Jewish identity. This puzzling finding can either be explained by the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and constantly shifting composition of Khazaria, or by the fact that its Jewish component and character has been much overstated by scholarship. In the reasoned though minority view of Moshe Gil the Khazars never even converted to Judaism. And, current studies have refuted large-scale genetic contributions of Central and Eastern European and Slavic populations to the formation of Ashkenazi Jewry.³⁶ For our immediate purpose, the practical implication is that not even an educated guess can be ventured as to the location, extent and duration of early medieval Jewish settlement in the Khazar realm.

³⁴ Petroukhin & Flyorov, 2010. The Soviet archaeologist Mikhail Illarionovich Artamonov, excavator of the Khazar fortress Sarkel, printed in his Russian "History of Khazar" (1962, p. 277) drawings of some epitaphs with menorah, which however by the author's own admission are from 1st century Phanagoria and thus barely evidence for 8th-10th century Khazaria. Artamonov also held to the view that Judaism transformed the Khazars from an innocent pastoral and agricultural people into parasitical middlemen of international trade, and eventually destroyed Khazaria: Golden, 2007a: 34.

³⁵ Kovalev, 2005a.

³⁶ Gil, 2010; Atzmon et al., 2010: 1.

Between Hungary in the west and the Crimea in the east lies a vast span of land, whose very emptiness has encouraged scholars to stake huge claims, for instance that “in the Bulgar kingdom, Jewish traders were well received”. This was further enhanced to mean that “Jews were in a position of prominence and influence at the Bulgarian court, which had developed close contacts with them by the early 860s”. The documentary basis for both statements is one single sentence in an epistle by Pope Nicholas I, sent around 866 in answer to a query by the Bulgarian ruler: *You are unsure whether the many who had been baptized in your land by a former Jew are to be considered Christian or pagan and [you have] consulted [us] what you should do about this.*³⁷ Neither “Jewish traders” nor their “position at the Bulgarian court” are supported by documentation or by scholarly argument. The same holds for the statement that “near the road from Kiev to Mainz there were everywhere Jewish settlements”, or somewhat less categorical, that “Jewish communities, although almost certainly few in number, appeared between the Odra and the Vistula by the 10th century at the latest”.³⁸

What presence can reasonably be inferred from the sources? From the 11th century onwards German-Jewish authors mention individual Jews from Germany who traded to and from Russia, crossing on the way Bohemia, Hungary and Poland, three further large areas thus brought into the orbit of Western Jewry (see below). Such business travel is thrown into additional light by two antiques from north-eastern Germany, then wholly a Slavic area: an undated amulet with Hebrew letters and a silver ring comprising a precious stone showing an engraved menorah surrounded by the Hebrew inscription *to light the Sabbath candle*. Discovered in 1833 near Warlin (district Neubrandenburg, west of today’s German-Polish border), the ring was part of a treasure hoard of Arabic, central European and Western European coins, dated to the first half of the 11th century, as well as of jewelry and silver fragments. The provenance of the amulet is unknown but also early. The finds are far removed from the locations of contemporary Jewish communities in Germany and the owner

³⁷ The source is Nicolae I. Papae Epistolae, 1925: 599. “Well received Jewish traders”: Bachrach, 1977a: 126; “position of prominence”: Kovalev, 2005b: 95, relying on Bachrach.

³⁸ “Kiev to Mainz”: Haussig, 1987: 534; “between Odra and Vistula”: Gieysztor, 1986: 15. For a systematic critique, by some judgment excessive, of the cavalier attitude of scholars to the evidence see Weinryb, 1962. The apt characterization by Dimitry Shumsky of Soviet Jewish historiography as a ‘No-Man’s-Land’, in *Zion* 72 (2007), 457–470 (Hebrew), could easily be extended to scholarship on the Middle Ages. The actual Hebrew term used was “abandoned territory”.

might have been a roving merchant crossing Slav territory, who found himself in a situation that called for the hiding of his valuables.³⁹

There were individual Jews from Russia abroad, as in one Genizah letter from around the year 1000, which recommends yet another hapless man, *of the community of Russia* and now a guest in Thessalonica, where he had met his relative who had just returned from Jerusalem. The man *knew neither the Holy Tongue (Hebrew), nor Greek nor Arabic, but only the language of Canaan spoken by the people of his homeland*.⁴⁰ Further sources mention a few more individuals from Russia in Byzantium and in Germany (see below). In the 12th century, the scholar Isaac bar Dorbello, one of the best-known pupils of Jacob Tam, reported an epistle shrouded in mystery: *I saw in Worms a writing sent by the men of the Rhineland to the communities in the Land of Israel in the year 960, to ask about the coming of the Messiah, and it was signed by R. Jacob son of R. Mordechai of Russia*. Isaac knew the communities of Eastern Europe from personal experience, but both the dating of the letter and its Russian signer have aroused scholarly reservations.⁴¹ Even at a later date, for Jews in the West the condition of their co-religionists in Eastern Europe remained vague. Thus the 13th century *Book Or Zarua* makes reference to *R. Eliezer bar Yitzhak of Bohemia who found in the Land of Russia a certain book*. The same sage also noted that *most of the places in Poland and Russia and Hungary have no students of the Law because of their poverty*.⁴²

The sources mustered above indicate, partly, the existence of a very few places of Jewish habitation in Eastern Europe. Are there further sources that speak to this question? In the vast spaces of Russia, Jews are found solely in the south, actually in one place alone, Kiev. This is first evidenced by a Hebrew Genizah letter, which was seen by its editors to have come from the “community of Kiev”.⁴³ Similar to other letters of recommendation found in the Cairo Genizah, it tells the bad luck story of an individual whose quest for assistance from fellow Jews abroad was endorsed by a community: *we, the community of Kiev, inform you of the troublesome affair of this Mar Jacob ben R. Hannukah, who is the son of [good people]. He was*

³⁹ Harck, 2008. I thank the author for sharing this article and other material with me. On Jewish treasure troves see Toch, 2007.

⁴⁰ Mann, 1920–1922: II, 192; cf. I, 165–6 (paraphrasing the text).

⁴¹ For the text and doubts: Perles, 1887: 31. Abraham Grossman, though aware of the uncertainties, is more accepting of the historicity of the text (personal communication). On the author see Israel Ta-Shma, EJ, 2007: vol. 10, 37.

⁴² Isaak b. Mose, 1862/1887, part IV, no. 128; part I, no. 112.

⁴³ Golb & Pritsak, 1982: 10–15 for the text, and 20, 26, 43, 71 for a commentary.

of the givers and not of the takers, until a cruel fate was decreed against him. According to the editors' analysis, this is the autograph of a letter composed in Kiev by (presumably) prominent members of the Khazar Jewish community resident there. The reading *we, the community of Kiev, inform you* depends on a somewhat unusual Hebrew phrasing and could as well be understood to mean the addressees of the letters rather than the writers, as in *we inform you the community of Kiev*. However, the editors Golb and Pritsak view their reading of the writers as Khazar Jews resident in Kiev further confirmed by some Turkic and Slavic names amongst the undersigned. There is also a single word at the bottom of the document identified as a Turkic rune for *I have read*, presumably some sort of official endorsement. This detail alone has led the editors to date the letter to shortly before Kiev's conquest by the Rus', in the early 930's when there were still Khazar representatives in the town. By the editors' judgment, it was written by individuals who were probably proselytes but possessed the elements of rabbinical Jewish religion. This chain of reasoning is plausible but not necessarily compelling.

Some scholars have read further sources, exclusively of ecclesiastical origin, as evidence for a significant and even aggressive Jewish presence in early 11th to early 12th century Kiev: a zealous monk who leaves his cave at night in order to provoke the Jews into martyring him; a purported attack on the "Jewish quarter"; "political ambitions" and "conversionists efforts" attributed to the Jews, to climax in their involvement in an attempted coup-de-état and subsequent expulsion. Other scholars have subjected these views to keen criticism, up to the point of entirely discounting them.⁴⁴ Till today, no archaeological findings can be connected with the Jews of Kiev or with any Jews in medieval Rus' north of the Crimea. Thus, a significant Jewish presence in early medieval Kiev or indeed in Russia at large remains much in doubt.

On the Bohemian border, in present day Austria, Jewish merchants from the West appear very early, in a document of 903/905 which harks back to the later 9th century.⁴⁵ The very first explicit mention of Prague, around 961/2 or 965/6 by the traveler Ibrahim ibn Yaqub, where *Jews from the lands*

⁴⁴ For references and a positive evaluation see Baron, 1957: III, 215–216 (there the quotations), Ettinger, 1966: 320, and Birnbaum, 1973: 229–230. For a negative view see Pritsak, 1990: 13, and especially Pereswetoff-Morath, 2002: 97–98, 105–116. For a yet more positive re-evaluation, using also later literary sources, see now the work of Alexander Kulik, 2004–05 and 2008.

⁴⁵ Linder, 1997: 349, no. 589, for the Jewish paragraph. For the entire document see *Capitularia regum Francorum*: II, 249–252, no. 253.

of the Turks come to trade, is by itself not yet evidence for the existence of a community there.⁴⁶ A burial ground in the old town, tentatively dated to the 10th century, has recently been (even more tentatively) promoted from one of “foreign merchants” to the one of a Jewish community.⁴⁷ As with other claims for exclusive Jewish antiquity (see Appendix 3 under Cologne and Rouen and Appendix 4 under Tarragona), the dating and identification are full of question marks and there are no traces of Jewish epitaphs or other iconography. Still, the existence in Prague of a group of Jews sometime in the 10th century is entirely feasible. In the mid-11th century a Jewish boy was brought by Gentiles to be sold at the slave market of Prague, possibly with an eye to local co-religionists expected to redeem the captive as they were wont to do in other places.⁴⁸ From the last years of the century and into the first decades of the 12th one, Cosmas bishop of Prague made frequent reference to the Jews of his town. By all signs, the community of Prague came into existence at the latest in the course of the 11th century. In other places of Bohemia and Moravia Jews will settle only in the following centuries. One possible early exception, yet hardly a community, might have been the castle of *Podivin* in Moravia, which in 1067 was in possession of *Podiva Jew but later a Catholic*, whose son was to become a senior ecclesiastic.⁴⁹

Hungary exhibits a similar development along a similar time-line. Again, German Jews traveling through the country are the first to come into view, for instance around 1050 two men from Regensburg who got held up near a Jewish community on the Danube and were ostracized by its members for violating the Sabbath. The place has been identified as Esztergom (already met in Late Antiquity), which served at this time as the residence of the Hungarian ruler.⁵⁰ Further references from the mid-11th century, to be detailed below, bear witness to more Jewish merchants from Germany active in Hungary. From the end of the 11th century a series of legal sources, of an ecclesiastical council and by King Coloman, aim to regulate relations between Christians and Jews. Taken together with the Hebrew source, these are definitely signs for a more stable presence.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Ashtor, 1966; Kestenberg-Gladstein, 1966.

⁴⁷ This would make it, in the words of the archeologist Zdeněk Dragoun, “the oldest investigated Jewish cemetery in Europe”: Dragoun, 2002.

⁴⁸ *Sefer Rabiah*, 2006: part 4, no. 900.

⁴⁹ *Cosmae Pragenis chronica Boemorum*, 1923: 152, 164, 166, 187–8, 231–2, 113, 123.

⁵⁰ *Shibbolei ha-Leqet*, 1886: 47, no. 60. See Weinryb, 1962: 498, note 2; Scheiber, 1966: 316; and Berend, Nora, 2001: 226, for the dating and the place.

⁵¹ Linder, 1997: 560, no. 880; *Monumenta Hungariae Judaica* 1903: I, 2–4, nos. 3–7. On the political background see Berend, Nora, 2001: 113–4, 116.

By the 11th century Poland also appears, sparingly, in Halakhic deliberations on problems experienced by Jewish travelers from Germany. In the same period, a first community is mentioned, Cracow, by whose court foreign travelers had a conflict settled.⁵² None of this indicates significant settlement, which by both the Halakhic record and the numismatic evidence was to set in later, mostly during the 13th century.⁵³

To sum up: the earliest evidence for a Jewish presence in Eastern Europe speaks of a transient one, of traders coming mostly from the west—Germany—and less frequently from the east—the *lands of the Turks*. These merchants crossed Bohemia, Hungary and Poland on their way to and from Russia, but some of them were also active in the former countries. Discounting some doubtful polemical sources, we conclude that a stable resident community settled in Kiev in the 10th century (if one indeed accepts the interpretation of the Kiev letter by Golb and Pritsak), and in very small numbers—single communities each—in Bohemia possibly in the 10th, in Hungary and Poland in the 11th century. Thus Eastern Europe was populated by Jews considerably later and at considerably lower density than all other regions of Europe. Settlement outside a few principal places did not set in before the High Middle Ages, the 12th and 13th centuries. Despite a significant presence in Roman Pannonia and in the Greek towns around the Black Sea, nowhere, except possibly in the Crimean Peninsula, was there a continuity of Jewish life from Antiquity into the Middle Ages. This goes far to explain the cultural profile—a purely Ashkenazic one derived from the west—exhibited by Eastern European Jewry since its very first appearance in the sources.⁵⁴

Economic Pursuits

Such a sparse Jewish population in the vast spaces of Eastern Europe means that there cannot have been much economic activity altogether, in the same sense as there was yet little religious or cultural life. In contrast

⁵² Responsa Meir, 1891: no. 885; no. 912, and see Grossman, 1988: 140–141, note 123, for the dating and localization.

⁵³ Ta-Shema, 1988/1997; Gumowski, 1975: 110.

⁵⁴ For the hypothesis by Yitzhak Schipper on the Khazar origins of Polish Jewry and its scholarly criticism see the sympathetic account by Litman, 1984. For a rebuttal of further mostly polemical notions on a non-Ashkenazic origin of Eastern European Jewry see Ankori, 1979, Simonsohn, 2004, and now based on genetic analysis Atzmon et al., 2010.

to this obvious insight, scholarship has assumed here as elsewhere an unflinching impact. Thus it has been stated that in Khazaria

as elsewhere, Jews engaged in various pioneering pursuits. They taught their fairly primitive neighbors more advanced ways of cultivating the soil, and means of exchanging goods among themselves and with foreign nations. They may also have introduced various methods of irrigating the dry lands and cultivating rice. In any case, much rice was produced in the Volga region during the flowering of Khazaria, while it practically disappeared after the latter's downfall.⁵⁵

None of this has any grounding in the sources. Another hazard lies in the application of stereotyped notions of Jewish economic behavior, for instance to 11th century Kiev which has been peopled with "Jewish usurers" who supposedly aroused the righteous enmity of the ethnic East Slavs. In a classical circular argument, a legendary expulsion or persecution is thus explained by the one grudge Gentiles may legitimately hold against Jews.⁵⁶ As elsewhere, plain exaggeration is most common, for example that "merchants of Jewish origin manned the international commerce of the Bohemian lands to the north-west and the north-east, by water upstream and downstream on the rivers Elbe and Oder, exporting the articles of the Islamic world into the Baltic region, such as grains, spices, textiles, cosmetics and jewelry."⁵⁷ The entire evidence for Jewish merchants active in these regions (see below) does not yield anything near such weighty economic impact, and definitely none of the products mentioned.

One last foible to be mentioned (mainly for its inventiveness) takes Jews not only to be everywhere, but also to be the same everywhere.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Baron, 1957: III, 197. Thomas S. Noonan omitted any mention of Jews in his examinations of the Khazar economy. Even the more positive appreciation by Golden concludes with a question mark: "Did Jewish merchants, who appear to have been outnumbered in the Khazar capital by the large Muslim community, play a role in developing a symbiotic, political, cultural and economic relationship with the Khazars? Where the local Jewish merchants affiliated with the Radaniyya? Our sources provide no clearcut answer": Noonan, 1995, 2007; Golden, 2007b: 160.

⁵⁶ The scholarship arguing thus is aptly referenced—and rebutted—by Pereswetoff-Morath, 2002: 39–52.

⁵⁷ Novák & others, 2000. See also Polaček, 2007: 501: "That trade with Moravia was shared by Bavarian and mainly Jewish merchants. 'Radanites', who were of Jewish origin . . . controlled the circulation of goods across the whole Euro-Asian continent on both land and sea." The source for this is Třeštík, 2000 (on him and Verdun see below, Part II, ch. 6, note 18).

⁵⁸ Haussig, 1989: 30–31, 37–38, also for the quotations further in this paragraph. Similar conjectures, albeit more restrained, have been proposed by Kovalev, 2005a: 234, and 2005b: 93–95.

It combines evidence from entirely different periods and parts of the world: the one derived from the account of Ibn Khordadbeh on the Radhanites (a group of merchants from today's Iraq faultily identified as Europeans, mid-9th century) with the one of 11th century Ashkenazic Jews, with the one from the Cairo Genizah (Egypt, north Africa, Muslim Sicily and Spain, mainly 11th century), and with the Khazar entity (10th century) whose Jewish character, as we have seen, remains unfathomable. The result is a network of "Jewish trade in southern Russia", where the Khazars "accepted the Jewish religion for mercantile reasons", in order to raise credit from their new co-religionists and incorporate themselves into an intercontinental system of cashless transfer operated by Hebrew bills of exchange, letters of credit and order of payments. This "coinless trade zone" is claimed to have extended not only to "Khazaria, Iraq and Iran", but also to the whole of Ashkenazic Jewry, "from Kiev by Lwów, Cracow, Prague, and Regensburg to Mainz". It was supposedly so crucial to the world economy that after a period of decline, in the mid-10th century, three political powers—the German Emperor Otto, Emir Abd al-Rahmān III of Córdoba (represented by his Jewish courtier Hasdai ibn-Shaprut), and the Khazar Khan—initiated a concerted diplomatic effort to revive it. The alleged source for all this, the Khazar-ibn Shaprut correspondence (given that it can indeed be trusted), has not a single word on trade matters, nor is commerce mentioned in the report of the German embassy to Córdoba. In this interpretative overload, the mere fact that the Khazar correspondence was found in a Cairo synagogue is invested with significance, a "sign for the importance attached by the Khazar ruler to the Jewish merchants of Cairo, who were provided with a copy of the proposals". Egypt is made to fit into the system because it was "highly interested in the supply of slaves from southern Russia, who were badly needed as reinforcements for the army". By stroke of pen, the Genizah merchants of Fustat are thus turned into both slave traders and masterminds of the economic policy of their Fatimid rulers, two things they were emphatically not.

What can reasonably be inferred from the sources? The earliest and for a long time sole visible activity was the movement of a handful of Jewish merchants coming from abroad, as in Ibn Khordadbeh's relation—of the mid or later 9th century and the only source extant for this early period—on the fourth itinerary of the Radhaniya':

Some of them turn to beyond Rome [the Byzantine Empire] to the Land of the Slavs and from there to Khamlij the city of the Khazars and from there in the sea of Jurjan [the Caspian] and from there to Balkh and to what is beyond the river

(Transoxania) and from there they continue to the camp (Wurut) of the Tughuz Ghuzz and from there to China.⁵⁹

These men of Oriental origin were also active in the Mediterranean, and the full range of their activities is distinctive enough to be explored in detail further on (below, Part II, Chapter 6c). Others of Eastern origin were the *Jews from the lands of the Turks coming to trade in Prague*, mentioned together with a host of other nations in the mid-10th century by Ibrahim ibn Yaqub.⁶⁰ Even earlier, by the beginning of the 10th century, Jewish merchants coming from the West are mentioned at the German-Bohemian border.⁶¹ Throughout the 11th century, there is more information on German-Jewish traders traveling to and from Russia. Jehudah ha-Cohen (Mainz, first half of the 11th century) commented on some problems resulting from such voyages: for instance a slave abducted and taken to Russia, whom another Jew *preparing himself to go to there for merchandise* had been asked to return via Cracow.⁶² Yitzhak bar Jehudah, a slightly later contemporary, mentioned *a man and his companions who returned from the Kingdom of Russia and divided merchandise by lot*.⁶³ Eliezer ben Nathan of Mainz (12th century) wrote of *the early [inhabitants of our country] who used to travel to Russia with clothes and merchandise*, their practice of making contracts in Russian coin, and of arranging their wagons and transport gear in a defensive perimeter when resting on the Sabbath.⁶⁴ A 13th century Halakhic writer reported on a pair of 11th century brothers of Regensburg who *returned from Russia with loaded wagons* and were held up by a broke-down cart outside a Jewish community on the River Danube in Hungary.⁶⁵

These were all itinerant merchants coming from abroad. What about local ones? In the Hebrew letter from Kiev, dated above to the earlier 10th century, there are indications for at least one Jewish merchant resident in town. This was

Mar Jacob ben R. Hannukah, of the givers and not of the takers, until a cruel fate was decreed against him, in that his brother went and took money from Gentiles; this Jacob stood surety. His brother went on the road, and there

⁵⁹ Translated by Gil, 2004: 618.

⁶⁰ Ashtor, 1966; Kestenberg-Gladstein, 1966.

⁶¹ Linder, 1997: 349, no. 589.

⁶² Responsa Meir, 1891: no. 912. For the misspellings of what must be read as *Russia* and *Cracow* see Grossman, 1988: 140–1, note 123.

⁶³ Quoted from a manuscript by Grossman, 1988: 313–4.

⁶⁴ Eliezer ben Nathan, 1926: no. 5 and p. 68.

⁶⁵ Shibbolei ha-Leqet, 1886: 47, no. 60.

*came brigands who slew him and took his money. Then came creditors and took captive this Jacob, they put chains of iron on his neck and fetters about his legs.*⁶⁶

The story has all the elements characteristic of itinerant trade in this period: the necessity to raise business capital, if need be by taking a loan from Gentiles; the family partnership, here as elsewhere mostly between brothers; in the absence of more institutionalized forms of warranty, the personal collateral for loans backed up by grim sanctions; the taking of the road and the dangers frequently met there. By the end of the 11th century, Jewish *merchants of the place of Russia* went about their business in Byzantium, either in Thessalonica or in Constantinople, where they mingled with the local Rabbanite community.⁶⁷ Yet another Russian Jew abroad was a R. Benjamin of Vladimir, who arrived together with a second Jew in 1171 in Cologne, Germany, with intention to open business in the market place.⁶⁸ Amongst these traders was also a manumitted slave, *that Canaanite Suimil* (definitely a Slavonic name—Svemil/Wszemil) who together with his family of proselytes is mentioned in a lengthy legal discussion of the early 11th century.⁶⁹ After his death, his merchandise was left with another Jew (his former master?) and a number of litigants clashed over his inheritance, which included a golden ring and some gold that he had received in commission to purchase the apparently very expensive pelts of an unidentified animal, perhaps Russian sable.⁷⁰

Eastern Europe thus appears as the place of origin for goods, as in a Responsum by Jehudah ha-Cohen on *merchandise brought by one Jew from Poland* which two other merchants secretly plotted to buy up; or *salted fish carried by carts from Hungary to Austria*; or the furs mentioned above.⁷¹ Hungary also produced low-priced manufactured goods such as gilded and copper vessels and other unspecified articles, which were sup-

⁶⁶ Golb & Pritsak, 1982: 10–15.

⁶⁷ Mann, 1931: I, 50.

⁶⁸ Neubauer & Stern, 1892: 71–73. Aronius, 1902: 130, thought that *Vladimir* should be amended to read as *Vallendar* on the Rhine. However, four different manuscripts have clearly *Vladimir*.

⁶⁹ Responsa Meir, 1891: no. 887.

⁷⁰ Russian sable is still the most prized and expensive fur in the world for its legendary silky quality, rarity and light weight. At retail, a little sable jacket starts at about \$16,000, and a top quality silvery coat can run upwards of \$150,000: <http://www.furs.com/price.html>.

⁷¹ Responsa Meir, 1891: no. 885; Isaak b. Mose, 1862/1887: part A, Rulings on First Fruits, no. 481. The fish comes from a source of the earlier 13th century and is thus much later than our usual material.

posed to be sold with a large profit margin in Germany. Hungary was also the place where some German Jews attempted to use their contacts to the royal court to carry out a speculative scheme of coinage.⁷² The introduction of minted currency is a significant development that came late to the regions of Eastern Europe. Jews might indeed have had a hand in its early stages, as implied in the Hungarian case quoted. This may also have been the instance in Moravia, where a former Jew called Podiva was in 1067 the owner of a castle, which is thought to have been the oldest mint and one of the most important toll stations in the country.⁷³ From the late 12th century onwards, a series of Jewish mint masters were active in the principalities of Poland, producing a large number of coins that sometimes even bore their names—Abraham, Joseph, Jacob and Menahem—in Hebrew. It is thought that they also leased tolls and taxes as part of their duties.⁷⁴ For the longer part of our period, means of payment were carried about in ingots of silver and gold, table plate, jewelry, and foreign coins. Such was the case of *that Canaanite Suimil* discussed above, who was handed gold and a golden ring in order to purchase merchandise. Such was apparently also the case in the treasure trove from Warlin, also of the 11th century, hidden most likely by an itinerant Jewish merchant and very similar in its composition to many other troves found all over the western Slavonic and Danish-Frisian regions. In one silver and one ceramic vessel, it contained coins from England, Denmark, Cologne, Prague as well as one Arabic dirham from Samarkand, fragments of silver chains, rings and clasps, as well as a ring with menorah and Hebrew inscription. In this pre-monetary economy prevailing over all Eastern Europe (except Bohemia), precious metals were buried in the ground, not sent to the mint as in the kingdoms further to the West.⁷⁵

Our sources reveal few occupations other than trade, possibly minting, maybe also the farming of tolls and taxes. Money lending is not yet in evidence, to the point that the Jews of Prague, though reputedly rich and opulent, were not approached in 1107 when great sums, needed to redeem the Bohemian king from captivity, were raised from the clergy of the land

⁷² Responsa Meir, 1891: nos. 904, 935, 903. It is doubtful whether these three texts warrant the sweeping claim that “in the years after 1060 the trade between Hungary and Mainz was carried out by Jews from Mainz”: Kristó, 2000: 140.

⁷³ Cosmae Pragenis chronica Boemorum, 1923: 113, cf. Wenninger, 2008: 129.

⁷⁴ Gumowski, 1975: 110, 113.

⁷⁵ For the description of the Warlin find see Herrmann & Donat, 1979: II, 411–412. For treasure troves and Eastern-European monetary systems see Müller-Wille, 2000.

as well as from Jews in Regensburg.⁷⁶ Only in Hungary does a wider range of occupations become apparent, first in 1092 when a church council convened by the king and the archbishop prohibited Jews from working on Sunday or on other high holidays, on pain of loss of their tools.⁷⁷ If this was not simply a repetition of earlier church legislation abroad (for instance Narbonne 589), it would indicate Jews working in crafts or in agriculture. Further legislation by king Coloman of the year 1100 deals with Christian slaves held by Jews, which might again be an routine reiteration of earlier church canons or a hint to Jews working their land with Gentile workers. Indeed, another clause of this king's law deals with *the agriculture of the Jews, their possessions and their houses, which they should furnish only with pagan slaves*. Two further clauses regulate economic transactions—lending, buying and selling—between Christians and Jews, mandating pledges for every loan and written and sealed charters to be witnessed by both Christians and Jews for every transaction above a meager sum.⁷⁸ Even though this might just be one further instance of regulatory excess and probably never enforced, it is also a sure sign that by the end of the 11th century economic transactions by Jews in Hungary began to approximate the range of activities encountered in other parts of Europe. Judging from the tenor of bishop Cosmas' of Prague remarks about the Jews of his town, this seems also to have been the case in Bohemia, even though details are lacking. In both countries, economic concerns also entered into Christian consciousness, bringing it in line with the distrustful approach that was becoming the norm elsewhere in Europe. In Poland and Russia, the development of Jewish occupations other than itinerant trade becomes visible only at a later date, in the former with the growth of urban immigration from Germany in the 13th century, in the latter after the ending of Mongol rule at the end of the Middle Ages.

⁷⁶ Riches: Cosmae Pragenis chronica Boemorum, 1923: 152, 166, 231–2; Money raised in Regensburg: *ibid.*, 187–8.

⁷⁷ Linder, 1997: 560, no. 880.

⁷⁸ Monumenta Judaica Hungariae, 1903: 2–4, nos. 3–7. Cf. Berend, Nora, 2001: 113–114, 116, for the political context.

PART TWO

ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE

CHAPTER SIX

JEW, COMMERCE, AND MONEY

The history of the fateful association of Jew, Commerce and Money begins in the Early Middle Ages and is dominated by a dual estimation.¹ One is the Jewish slave trade, a notion that has become immensely pervasive since the 19th century. Adriaan Verhulst in the magisterial *New Cambridge Medieval History* of 1995 only expressed received opinion when he remarked: "Among the commercial agents of the [Carolingian] king, the Jews, who acted mainly in groups, took a special place. One reason for this is that they were dominant, as non-Christians, in the slave trade".² Founded or unfounded, this idea might still be regarded as marginal to the more substantial issues of early medieval economics. However, the domination of the slave trade has become the main prop for a much more important economic role assigned to the Jew. Established across the commercial centers of the Euro-Asian continent, privileged and protected by rulers, uniquely equipped by inbred inclination or by their Diaspora experience, community organization, family ties, common language and law, they are held to have been the only ones capable of breaching the borders between Christianity and Islam. As Roberto Lopez put it in the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*: "As a rule, only the Jew could freely go back and forth between France and non-Catholic lands because they had no definite nationality and were politically harmless. In Carolingian France they became so predominant in trade that the texts often divide traders into two classes, 'the Jew and the other merchants'." Alexander Gieysztor in the same volume: "There is no reason to doubt that it was the Jew who maintained the economic contacts—via a still lethargic Europe—with the other end of the Arab world".³

¹ The groundwork for this chapter has been laid in a series of studies: Toch, 1998–2001a, 2008a, 2010.

² Verhulst, 1995: 508, but see his much more nuanced position in Verhulst, 1970: 22–3. See Toch, 2000: note 3, for many more scholars holding this view, a veritable honor roll of economic historians such as Henri Pirenne, Archibald Lewis, Friedrich Rörig, Maurice Lombard, Renée Doehaerd, Raymond Latouche, Hermann Kellenbenz, Alexander Gieysztor, Armando Citarella, Michel Rouche.

³ Lopez, 1987: 322; Gieysztor, 1987: 486.

This idea of an early medieval trade ascendancy goes back to a twin parenthood of the 19th century, to Heinrich Graetz, the Jewish author of the first full scale history of the Jews, as well as to the influential German economist Wilhelm Roscher. It is firmly rooted in the 19th century experience, when historical arguments were used to articulate anxieties and preoccupations arising from Jewish emancipation. For some, the notion of commercial pre-eminence could serve as a proud memoir of medieval Merchant Adventurers turned modern Merchant Bankers. For others this was a pre-figuration of modern day economic domination, and mercantile ventures of Jews were seen as “infiltration”, “penetration”, “expansive force”, their abodes as “bases” as if in a military campaign.⁴ The documentary grounding of the trade ascendancy thesis is even slimmer than the one of the slave trade thesis, as we shall see. Nevertheless it too was taken up, wholly or partly, by a host of most distinguished scholars.⁵ The problem of the Jewish slave trade is thus mixed up in discussions of early medieval economic actors and trade relations between Europe and the outside world, in the ongoing debate over the Pirenne thesis. It serves as the prop, conceptual as well as in terms of evidence, for a more comprehensive thesis of Jewish trade ascendancy. Beyond scholarship, throughout the 19th and 20th centuries both issues have served and still serve to articulate ambiguities towards Jewish existence in Europe.

Slave Traders?

The slave trade thesis made its appearance in rudimentary form in the works of some influential authors of the early and mid-19th century. By 1905, most of the Latin and Arabic proof texts had been assembled by Joseph Jacobs in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*.⁶ From there, it appears, they were taken over in their entirety by Charles Verlinden, who went on to become the grand master of slavery studies in the 20th century. From his

⁴ Graetz, 1895 (1860): 206–7; Roscher, 1875. For “Merchant Adventurers” see Rabinowitz, 1948. For the language of aggression and confrontation see Cracco-Ruggini, 1964: 931, 948, 949, 952. See also Rouche, 1993: 433, “the Jews moved to the cities of Burgundy and Champagne without relinquishing their bases in the Rhone area and in Septimania”.

⁵ Of the more recent ones one could mention Hans van Werveke, Lellia Cracco-Ruggini, Rolf Sprandel, Peter Johanek, Michael Postan, Georges Duby, as well as Eliyahu Ashtor and Abraham Grossman. See Toch, 2000: note 8.

⁶ See below note 18 for Depping, Renaud and Dozy; J. Jacobs, Slave trade, in: *Jewish Encyclopedia*, London 1905: XI, 402.

numerous writings the thesis made its way into the mainstream of scholarship: into practically every work dealing with early medieval economics and trade, into the textbooks and historical dictionaries as well as into the monographs of specialists. Persistently reiterated by Verlinden from 1935 to 1995 in two heavy volumes and at least twelve articles, these sources are meant to provide the factual basis for the complete Jewish slave trade thesis. They are supplemented by a few texts from the 6th to 7th centuries, as perused by a number of scholars of whom Friedrich Lotter is the most recent and prolific one. The Jewish sources on slaveholding were first assembled in 1938 by Simha Assaf in a Hebrew article. Even though highly pertinent to the issue, they were never noticed, let alone used, by scholarship outside Jewish Studies. In the following, we shall query Verlinden's and Lotter's work as the most prominent exponents of a consensus from which there were very few dissenters.⁷ We shall first deal with a group of sources that have clearly been misread, moving then to a much smaller number of more ambiguous ones, asking finally what archaeology, the Hebrew record, and our own examination of settlement history can contribute to a better understanding. Our thesis is that European Jews had no significant part in the early medieval slave trade, even though some might have been involved to some extent in some places. The only noteworthy historical fact to be arrived at is the obvious one that for a time, Jews indeed kept slaves in their households.

Nothing that can be construed as Jewish slave trade is reported in late antique times. Its earliest instances are thought to be found in the 6th century in some hagiographic encounters of saints with Jews. In 508, archbishop and later saint Caesarius of Arles is reported to have used his church's treasure to ransom Frankish and Burgundian prisoners of war, so *that they shall not be made into Arians or Jews*. Somewhat later, bishop Germanus of Paris (ca 555–576, likewise to be sainted) is credited with miraculously breaking the bonds of a young boy whom he met in the countryside. Asked why he was led about in chains by some Jews, the lad replied *for being unwilling to subject himself to the Jewish laws*. Both sources have been taken as instances of slave trade, the second one with

⁷ Full references to Verlinden's works in Toch, 2000, note 10. Lotter, 1999, 2001–2006. Hebrew sources: Assaf, 1938/9–1939/40. To my knowledge, the first scholar outside Jewish Studies to take notice of them was Constable, 1994: 267, note 8. Dissenting opinions in general, Baron, *Economic History*, in EJ, 1st and 2nd eds.: vol. 6, 106: "a Christian ecclesiastical myth, adopted by some modern historians". For the 5th–7th centuries see Täubler, 1916: 381–392; Henning, 1992: 403–405. For the later period Caro, 1908: I, 198; Verhulst, 1970: 22–23; Devroey & Brouwer, 2001; and this author (above, note 1).

the stark image of “Jews leading shackled Christians across the country”.⁸ Both document nothing more than Jews who purchased and possessed slaves, as well as the fear of ecclesiastical authors that such slaves might be converted to Judaism. Conversion is indeed a religious duty enjoined by Biblical law upon the Jewish owner, as well as a practical measure to enable the slave to function in the household without violating dietary and other ritual laws. For females, this entailed ritual immersion in water, for males circumcision. The painful and often life-endangering procedure makes sense only if the slave is indeed destined to become a member of the household, surely not if he is to be traded away shortly afterwards. Selling a converted slave to Gentiles is prohibited by Jewish law, as is castration. Fear of circumcision looms large in the minds of some ecclesiastics and also of some modern scholars, to the point that it became mixed up with fear of castration, a strikingly Freudian slip with dire historiographical consequences.⁹

In the correspondence of Pope Gregory the Great (end of the 6th century), “countless” epistles allegedly witness that “the traffic in slaves became the monopoly of the Jewish traders of peninsular Italy.” Of the actual eight letters adduced for this claim, six are irrelevant as they merely mention Jews possessing household slaves. Two further letters refer to the purchase of domestic slaves as well as to one single case of slave import by some Jews of Naples, carried out for the benefit of local Christian potentates.¹⁰ In Spain, the 3rd Council of Toledo of the year 598 *prohibited Jews from acquiring a Christian slave for their own use*. This has been understood to mean that while household slaves were indeed forbidden, trading was not, as “the Jewish slave trade was apparently not to be impeded”.¹¹ By this method of establishing fact by its non-mention, the slave trade is self-evident and slavers will turn up everywhere, for instance in the environs of a 7th century archbishop of Canterbury: “Jewish long-distance merchants already visited at this time England, itself also an

⁸ *Vitae Caesarii episcopi Arelatensis*, 1896: 469; *Venanti Fortunati vita Germani*, 1919: 411. The latter story in a shortened 9th century version: *De vita et miraculis... Germani*, 1899: 128. Slavers in Arles and “shackled Christians”: Lotter, 1999: 47, 54. The source itself has only a single *lad who*, not the plural sense claimed.

⁹ For the Jewish position on castration see Assaf, 1938/9–1939/40, and Gil, 2004: 607–14. On historiographical castration see below note 18.

¹⁰ “Countless”: Cracco-Ruggini, 1964: 952, similar Lotter, 2001: 228. For the letters see Linder, 1997: 431, no. 713; 436, no. 718.

¹¹ Lotter, 1999: 49. The text: Linder, 1997: 484, no. 839.

export country of slaves".¹² For the entire 5th to 7th centuries, the idea of a Jewish slave trade thus rests on one single instance from Naples. Whether this warrants the sweeping inference of a monopoly is to be doubted.

In a somewhat later period in Eastern Europe, hagiographic heroes were once more celebrated for redeeming prisoners and slaves from Jewish captivity. When Adalbert (Polish Wojciech), bishop of Prague, became so dismayed with his parishioners as to resign in 988, his grievances included the inability to *redeem the captives and slaves of the Christians bought by a Jewish merchant with his miserable gold*. In another Life of the saint, the reasons for his anger are rephrased as a list of stereotyped sins: *The [Christian] people were obstinate, given to incest and polygamy; they sell Christian slaves to the perfidious Jews; and observe the feast days in a confusion of religion*. In the third and latest version of the saint's Life (produced ca 1175), the hagiographic reverie, still set in the context of castigating fellow Christians for their alleged sins, has finally come true. Eighteen bas-relief panels on the bronze door of the cathedral of Gniezno, where Adalbert was buried after lastly achieving martyrdom at pagan hands, portray his life and struggles. In one of them, the bishop has a vision of Christ ordering him to save Christians from slavery. In the next panel he does just that, standing in front of the duke of Bohemia and pleading to free two shackled slaves while two Jews look on. A similar purpose animated Judith, duchess of Poland, who *before the day of her death* (Christmas 1086) *carried out works of piety and redeemed many Christians from the servitude of the Jews*.¹³ These hagiographic exercises have been accepted by most historians as hard evidence, not for the keeping of slaves by Jews but for their slave trade.

Medieval hagiography also picked up the trope, derived from Scripture accounts of Crucifixion and much beloved in Late Antiquity, of the saint cruelly martyred by Jews. A story from the Crypt Monastery in Kiev relates how Eustratius the Faster (died 1097) was sold together with fifty other war prisoners to a Jew in the Byzantine town of Kherson in the Crimea. All the captives died of hunger and thirst except for the hero, who was inured by having fasted since childhood. Nailed to the cross by the Jew and still

¹² Lotter, 2001: 229. Already in 1970, this conjecture was dismissed by Cecil Roth, England, in: EJ, 1971: vol. 6, 410: "the slender evidence formerly adduced in support of this (e.g., the references in the *Liber Poenitentialis* ascribed to Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury, 669) has no validity."

¹³ *Johannis Canaparius*, 1841: 586; *Brunonis Vita s. Adalberti episcopi*, 1841: 600, cap. 11. Gniezno panels: Cerny, 1993. Judith of Poland: Gallus Anonymus, 1851: 445.

alive after 15 days, Eustratius disputed with the Jews and prophesized that they would be called to account for his and the other Christians' blood. True to type, the angered Jew pierced the saint with a spear, and the soul of the martyr was borne to heaven on a chariot of fire. As foreseen, the same day the Byzantine Emperor intervened against the Jewish trade in Christian slaves. The Jew was hanged, other foreign Jewish tradesmen killed and the local Jews, having seen the light, baptized.¹⁴ Plainly, such excesses committed in the public space of an 11th century Byzantine town are hardly credible. Neither is the source's trustworthiness furthered by the fact that the stories of the Kiev monastery were compiled much later, from the first third of the 13th century onwards, to be preserved in manuscripts written not before 1406. Another story, from the *Life of St. Naum*, is set in either Moravia or Serbia in the later 9th century, when the saint and two hundred other disciples of St. Methodius were attacked by Franks after the latter's death. While Naum and his elder companions were left to die, the younger ones were *sold to the Jews at a price. And the Jews took them, and brought them to Venice, and sold them in accordance with Divine Providence*, there to be redeemed by a Byzantine ambassador.¹⁵

For this later period of the 8th to the 11th century, documentary sources are available in somewhat larger numbers. The two best-known pieces are Arabic of the 9th and 10th century respectively: Ibn-Khordadbeh on the Radhanite merchants (see the sub-chapter below) and Ibrahim ibn Ya'kub on Prague *from where Muslims, Jews and Turks who have come from the lands of the Turks export slaves, tin and pelts*. Both have been used to demonstrate that European Jews were moving Slavonic and other European slaves to the realm of Islam.¹⁶ However, the Jews in both sources were not European but Oriental ones. The Radhanites most probably stem from modern Iraq and the Jews congregating in Prague are said by the author himself to have come *from the lands of the Turks*. Methodologically, this is but one more instance of the unwarranted joining together of sources belonging to different parts of the Jewish world. Yet another celebrated text of the 10th century, by Liudprand of Cremona, reports how *the merchants of Verdun do this [castrating slaves] on account of the immense profit they can make, and they are accustomed to bring them to Spain*.¹⁷ Even though the text evidently lacks Jews, Verdun is portrayed as "a veritable

¹⁴ Chekin, 1995: 127.

¹⁵ Kusseff, 1950: 143–4.

¹⁶ For instance by Verlinden, 1983. The texts: Gil, 2004: 618; Jacob, 1927: 12.

¹⁷ The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona, 2007: 199.

manufacture of eunuchs" operated by Jews. In a widely used textbook, it is marked with big scissors and placed at the center of a map of slaving routes.¹⁸ In order yet to uphold both castration and the Jewishness

¹⁸ "Manufacture of eunuchs": Verlinden, 1974: 33–6; 1983: 126–7, and in a host of earlier and later works. Scissors: Lombard, 1975: 197. This is the one instance that Verlinden's reading was ever contested, by Blumenkranz, 1960: 13, note 81; idem, 1991: 19–21; by Oelsner, 1962: 189, note 27; and by Ashtor, 1970: 185, note 2. Verlinden's answer to Blumenkranz was a personal attack on someone "hypnotized by the desire to study exclusively the variations of good or bad relations between Jews and Christians" (Verlinden, 1974: 22–3), as if such focus, barely fifteen years after the Holocaust, was somehow in bad taste. Utilizing a slight mistake (she wrote Luitpold instead of Liutprand of Cremona), Oelsner's critique was dismissed as "badly informed on the famous text" (Verlinden, 1974a: note 13). To Ashtor, a ranking fellow in the European fraternity of economic historians, Verlinden merely responded by cataloguing his own articles on the topic and pledging to return to the subject (Verlinden, 1983: 114), a promise not kept until his death in 1996.

Amongst the historiographical oddities stands out castration, a practice more easily attributed to Jews who after all perform circumcision. It has led Verlinden to read as evidence for castration a Merovingian church council's condemnation of *Jews, if they shall presume to draw Christian slaves to Judaism or if they should inflict on them harsh torments* (Verlinden, 1983: 117; idem, 1995: 116; the source Linder 1997: 479, no. 823). Verlinden was not the only one to be hypnotized by harem fantasies and fear of castration. His "manufacture of eunuchs" was taken verbatim from the eminent orientalist Reinhart Dozy, 1861: III, 60, who wrote: "For the Jews, speculating on the misery of the nations, bought children of both sexes and conducted them to sea-ports where Greek and Venetian ships called to transport them to the Saracens. Others, destined for service in harems, arrived from France where there existed large manufactures of eunuchs run by Jews. Those of Verdun were far famed and there were others in the Midi." The first sentence in Dozy's quote comes in its entirety from Joseph Reinaud, *Invasions des Sarrazins en France*, Paris 1836: 238. Even before, in 1834, Georges Depping had written in a very similar vein: "And the Jews, who speculated on everything without scruples of conscience and hated the Christians by principle and for the persecutions suffered at their hands, had probably no difficulty to become the suppliers for the Moors. One reads in Luitprand that the inhabitants of Verdun made eunuchs in order to sell them into the land of the Saracens. If this was indeed the case, suspicion would likewise fall on the Jews; for the Lotharingians, deeply as they might still have been mired in barbarity, would not have given themselves to the revolting speculation, wholly repugnant to their customs, of supplying the harems of the Saracens with attendants": Georges Depping, *Les Juifs au Moyen Âge*, Paris 1834: 50. In this view, non-Jews by their very essence are incapable of dealing in slaves, unlike the Jews. Aronius, 1902: 55, no. 127, followed Depping and thought it possible that the merchants of Verdun were indeed Jewish. He also noted, rightly, that Verdun on the confluence of the rivers Saône and Doubs (Verdun-sur-Doubs, today a hub for river cruises and cycling tours) is a much more likely location than the one on the river Meuse. But then he wrote before Verdun on the Meuse became indelibly imprinted in the European imagination. The authoritative *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Gilbert Cahen, Verdun, EJ vol. 20: 508, both in the first edition of 1972 and in the electronic one of 2007) refers rather imprecisely to "Christian sources according to which the merchants engaged in this [slave] trade were Jews, but from Hebrew sources this appears to be doubtful". The Czech archeologist Dušan Třeštík, 2000, once again named the Verdun merchants as Jews and Radhanites at that (I thank Roman Grabolle of Leipzig for this reference). The last one to touch on the subject, the Israeli scholar Youval Rotman, 2009: 72–3, withheld judgment: he mentions the

of the Verdun merchants, they are coupled to another Arabic source, Ibn Hauqal (10th century) who wrote: *all Slavic eunuchs on earth come from Al-Andalus, because they are castrated near that region and the operation is performed by Jewish merchants*. The phrase *near that region* has been elucidated by recourse to yet another Arabic source, Al-Muqaddasi of the same century: the Slavonic slaves are brought to *a town behind Pechina whose residents are Jews; and one castrates them*. As has been noted, this sentence is ambiguous; it may mean that they are brought to be castrated there, or that the local Jews did it.¹⁹ Either way, this was certainly not Verdun on the Meuse, which lies at the distance (by motorway) of some 1000 km from the Pyrenees mountains, 1500 km from Madrid, over 1900 km from both Cordoba and Pechina on the southern Spanish coast. It makes more sense to look for Ibn Hauqal's *near Al-Andalus* and al-Muqaddasi's *town behind Pechina* in the nearby Muslim Maghreb, rather than in north-eastern France of which both authors had no knowledge at all.²⁰

The pagan slaves marched to Muslim Spain have been seen to originate from the Slavonic border regions with the Germans, where war brought in a steady booty of prisoners. Thus a further arbitrary linking of sources has been placed in Eastern Germany. One text speaks in general terms of Slavs enslaved in the border wars of King Henry I (918–936), without mentioning Jews. The other one of 965 notes in the future sense *Jews and other merchants* who shall be subject to the archbishop of Magdeburg's authority, once his see will eventually be set up.²¹ Neither is evidence for actual Jews, nor for their slave trade. Nevertheless the two are combined to lead to the firm conclusion "We see that wherever the Germanic armies passed by, the Jewish merchants followed shortly after".²²

Yet another instance of relating the unrelated is set on the slave trail to Venice. It links a custom ordinance from Raffelstetten (on the Danube

Verdun merchants in the context of "Jewish merchants who specialized in the slave-trade" without explicitly identifying them as Jewish.

¹⁹ Ibn Hauqal, 1964: I, 109–10; al-Muqaddasi, 2001: 200; Gil, 2004: 608–9.

²⁰ For the almost total ignorance of the Christian West on part of the Arab geographers before the 12th century see Cahen, 1965: 423–4.

²¹ Widukindi *Rerum Saxonicarum libri III*, 1971: 68; Linder, 1997: 377–8, no. 603.

²² This phrasing of Verlinden's first article of 1935 was copied verbatim into his book of 1955. In 1974 it was slightly changed to read: "The Jewish and other merchants followed the armies in order to buy the slaves": Verlinden, 1935: 399; 1955–1977: I, 219; 1974: 32. Blumenkranz, 1960: 160, saw fit to use a very similar wording, however deftly turning rancor into acclaim: "Where the Jews followed, accompanying the vanguard of the conquering armies, they uniquely contributed to the economic penetration of the recently acquired territories."

south of Linz, Austria, beginning of the 10th century but possibly earlier) to another custom list from Walenstadt (Kanton St. Gallen, eastern Switzerland, around 1050) and then to some uncertain 12th century references to *Judendörfer*, rural places in Alpine Austria bearing the name *Jew* or *Jewish*. The earlier Austrian custom list does indeed mention Jews and their slaves, not so the later Swiss one. None of the Austrian places can be linked to merchants in general or to slavers in particular. The inclusion of the Swiss source of ca 1050 is justified by recourse to yet another text more than two hundred years older, the charter of protection granted between 822 and 827 by Emperor Louis the Pious to a Jew from Lyon and his grandson.²³ It is addressed, amongst others, to *clusarii*, officials in charge of frontier stations and allegedly also of the Alpine passes Septimer and the Great and Little St. Bernhard. By modern highways, these passes are located at 110, 322, and 424 kilometers respectively from Walenstadt, apparently near enough to warrant its inclusion as a location of Jewish slave trade even though no Jews are mentioned in the text. By this tortuous construction spanning three centuries and huge distances, a slave trail is constructed that leads from the Austrian to the Swiss Alps and then back eastwards to Venice.²⁴ One would expect slavers to have better sense of geography than haul their caravans around in circles.

Yet another document cited as evidence for Jewish slavers supplying the Venice market means something different. This is a directive of the year 960 ordering the republic's ship-captains *not to take on board slaves, from Venetia, Istria, Dalmatia or other places; nor shall he take on board his ship a merchant or Jew*. There is no Jewish slave dealer here, but the second sentence could with some effort be connected to the first one. It makes more sense when seen as an almost verbatim precursor to the Byzantine Golden Bull of 992 which prohibited non-Venetian cargo or passengers carried under Venetian flag: *And these Venetians shall bring on their ships under the privilege no one of those that have commerce with Constantinople, such as Amalfitans, Jews, Lombards, [those] from the city of Bari, and others, but they shall bring only their merchandise.*²⁵

²³ Inquisitio de theloneis Raffelstettensis: Linder, 1997: 349, no. 589; Walenstadt: Churrätisches Reichsguturbar, 1955: 382–383; Austrian "Judendörfer": Verlinden, 1977 and 1983. Louis the Pious' charter: Linder, 1997: 333–335, no. 572.

²⁴ Verlinden, 1974a: 724; Verlinden, 1977.

²⁵ 960: Tafel & Thomas, 1856: I, 20, no. XIII. 992: Linder, 1998: 159, no. 340. The rendering of 960 by Hoffmann, 1968: 173, is anything but an accurate translation: "that no Venetian ship-captain shall leave one of the ports of Venetia, Istria, Dalmatia or other places, nor shall he altogether take on board a slave trader, be he a Jew or not."

Still, the Raffelstetten ordinance mentioned above does speak of Jewish and other merchants supposed to pay customs on slaves and can thus be presented as yet another linch-pin of the slave trade thesis. Tolls due from Jews for their slaves are also mentioned, apparently in mid-10th century, in another customs ordinance much further to the West, in Koblenz on the confluence of the rivers Rhine and Mosel.²⁶ Both documents are similar in form and content. In both the Jewish paragraph is placed at the very end and phrased in general terms, possibly referring back to past circumstances, while other clauses dealing with non-Jewish merchants are much more detailed. In the Raffelstetten document, they speak of the slaves of Bavarian and Slavonic merchants in association with beasts of burden (horses or oxen) and transport gear. François Ganshof has pointed out that these slaves of non-Jewish masters are to be understood not as merchandise but rather as a servile work force.²⁷ The same interpretation must be applied to the Jewish paragraph with its *slaves and other things*. The Koblenz document too associates slaves and beasts of burden and should thus too be seen to speak of Jewish merchants and their transport personnel. Indeed, slaves employed in mercantile ventures of their masters are found in the Hebrew sources of the period and are a most common occurrence in the Genizah material.

Further documents thought to speak of a Jewish slave trade are the three Imperial privileges of the early 9th century mentioned in varying contexts throughout this book. They allow the Jewish recipients *to sell from their property to whomever they wish and have permission to buy foreign slaves and sell them in our empire*. These were not permits for the slave trade, as has mostly been taken for granted.²⁸ Rather, the leave given to buy and sell slaves caters to a recognized need of Jewish owners to replenish or sell off their body of household slaves as circumstances demand. At the same time, taking into consideration the long-standing ecclesiastical opposition to Jews owning Christian slaves, this license is limited to pagan ones.

This leaves us with two remaining proof-texts. One is a letter of 826/827 by Agobard, archbishop of Lyon, complaining about the Jewish slave trade in general and about instances when Jews of his town had sold Christian boys to Muslim Spain:

²⁶ Verlinden, 1977; Elenchus fontium historiae urbanum, 1967: no. 39.

²⁷ Ganshof, 1966: 209, note 49.

²⁸ By Rörig, 1959: 615; Lotter, 2004a: 351–2; McCormick, 2002a: 44, and note 64, *contra* both Devroey & Brouwer, 2001: 355–7, and Toch, 2000. The texts: Linder, 1997: 335, 337, 342, nos. 572, 573, 576.

After the preceding note had been dictated, a certain man from Cordoba arrived, fleeing from Spain. He said that he had been stolen as a little boy by a certain Jew of Lyon 24 years before and sold, and that he had fled this year with another boy from Arles who had been likewise stolen by a Jew six years earlier. When we sought out those known to the man who was from Lyon and found them, some said that others had been stolen by this same Jew, others bought and sold, and that this year another boy was stolen and sold by a Jew. At that moment it was discovered that many Christians are sold by Christians and bought by Jews and that many unspeakable things are perpetrated by them which are too foul to write.²⁹

Conveniently placed on the highroad from Verdun to the Mediterranean, nicely fitting the Radhanites supposed to stem from the Rhône River, and possibly also hinting to castration, this letter has figured as star evidence for the slave trade thesis.³⁰ As already demonstrated, the Radhanite connection cannot stand. Also, Agobard's complaint should be seen in context, which is a series of epistles of the archbishop aimed at the imputed influence of Jews at the imperial court. There is a double thrust to his arguments. On one hand they were yet another exercise in polemics, employing ready elements of a tradition reaching back to Late Antiquity. On the other hand his series of epistles was a move in a larger game over Carolingian church politics, aimed to recuperate confiscated ecclesiastical property.³¹ Still, the wording is straightforward enough and can be considered as evidence, the first hitherto, that some Jews of Lyon of the early 9th century might indeed have been involved in the slave trade.

Some decades later, the church council of Meaux (845, east of Paris) legislated anew against Jews, with special emphasis on their Christian slaves. Most of the resolutions derive from Agobard's successor Amolo's polemical collection *Book against the Jews*, who in turn had scoured the church synods of the Merovingian period for his material. However, one paragraph (canon 76) departs from previous canons and cannot be seen as a mere pious repetition, as were all the others:

That the merchants of this kingdom, Christians or Jews, who travel through so many peoples and cities of the faithful, leading pagan slaves into the hands of the infidel and harshest enemies of ours (and in this way those unfortunate slaves, who could have been saved if they were bought by Christians, perish miserably, and the huge number of the enemies of our kingdom

²⁹ Agobardi Lugdunensis Opera Omnia, 1981: 195.

³⁰ Verlinden, 1974, and almost everyone who has touched upon the topic.

³¹ Heil, 1998.

increases)—that these merchants should be checked by our pious princes and compelled to sell them within the boundaries of the Christians.³²

Yet again, the role played by Amolo of Lyon's polemic in the genesis of the Meaux canons, the systematic gathering of each and every piece of restrictive legislation against Jews, and its altogether extreme tenor demand caution. For instance, that *the sons of the Jews should be separated from their parents and entrusted to Christians*, as copied from canon 60 of the Visigothic church council Toledo IV (633), is without precedent in the Frankish church. It is entirely possible that canon 76 of Meaux too owes its birth to this extremely militant spirit. But yet again, the geographic and chronological proximity of Agobard's letter and the Meaux canon make it likely that in this region and period, some Jews indeed tried their hand at the slave trade.

By the early 12th century, when Eastern Europe was largely Christianized and the supply of pagan slaves came to an end, Jews ceased to employ slaves, as did most of Europe at large.³³ Yielding to market forces and increasing ecclesiastical pressure, they had instead recourse to paid labor. Their man-servants and maid-servants were certainly free persons, yet Jewish sources go on calling them by the old Hebrew appellation for slave (male *eved*, female *shifha*). Ecclesiastical writing employed the same anachronism. Even though in practice slavery of Jews had come to an end, popes, bishops, councils, and most forcefully teachers of canon law kept fuming against Jews lording it over Christian slaves. This ongoing, indeed growing anxiety over something long gone demands an explanation. Such prohibitions stem from theological preoccupations going back to Patristic times. They echo a central element of Christian-Jewish polemics, the need to demonstrate time and again St. Augustine's notion of the elder *Synagoga* as hand-maid and slave of the younger triumphant *Ecclesia*. The thread of agitation over Christian slaves and Jewish slave-owners, running from Late Antiquity right into the Late Middle Ages, should be understood as a rhetorical device designed to demonstrate time and again the right order of subordination. This manner of speaking spawned off a secondary rhetorical device, the stereotypical reproach put into the mouth of saints by their hagiographers, blasting their flock for all sorts of alleged

³² Linder, 1997: 548, no. 869, and see there pp. 540–548, nos. 866–868, for the other canons copied from the councils of Clichy (626/7), Rheims (627/30), and Chalon (647/53). For references to Amolo's collection see the notes in Linder's edition.

³³ The latest identifiable reference to slaves proper is in the writings of Elieser b. Nathan (Mainz, died ca. 1150): Moskin, 1989: 239, note 47.

sins. One such stock offence is selling Christians to the Jews, a powerful metaphor for reversing the right order of things in which by Augustinian tradition Christians are on top, Jews at the bottom. Tales of saints redeeming Christians thus served a purpose: posing a moral example by accentuating its counter image, restating the right order by pointing out its subversion and eventual renewal. Clearly, when read in context, these are not observations on the reality of slave trade but moralizing comments on a world ostensibly turned upside down.³⁴

Altogether, one text for the 5th to 7th centuries and two more for the 8th to 11th centuries portray Jews buying and selling slaves. Most of the other sources usually cited are wholly irrelevant; others can be more convincingly read as evidence for the purchase, employment and selling of household slaves. We must thus come to the conclusion that there is no textual basis for the slave-trade thesis. This fully accords with our findings, presented in the first part of this book, on the population numbers, spatial organization, and economic pursuits of early medieval European Jews. When the slave trade was supposedly at its height, Jewish settlement and distribution in Europe were still at an all-time low. Its mere handful of itinerant merchants could not have moved, as has been claimed, many thousands of Slavonic slaves. Our conclusion is supported by recent archaeology, which has established a geography of the slave trade very much at variance with the one assumed by the thesis. There is no archaeological support for Slavonic slaves driven across the width of Christian Europe to Muslim Spain. Rather, the distribution map of slave shackles retrieved from the soil and dated between the 8th and the 11th century is centered much more to the East: "It clearly points to Bulgaria as an important supplier of eastern markets, first and foremost of Byzantine ones, but perhaps of Muslim markets as well. With one exception, all early specimens come from Bulgaria and the steppes north of the Black Sea." This re-focused geography is further supported by the distribution patterns of Muslim coins found across Europe. "Of 1656 hoards, recorded to date and containing almost half a million dirhams, close to three quarters were deposited in northern Europe from c.800 to c.1100. They were brought there mostly via Russia and exchanged for items in great demand in the 'House of Islam'—furs and slaves".³⁵ In the period under consideration,

³⁴ On the hagiographic trope of ransoming captives see Graus, 1961.

³⁵ Shackles: Curta, 2003: 290, for the quotation, based on Henning, 1992: 403–5. Dirhams: Kovalev & Kaelin, 2007.

the Jews living in Northern and Eastern Europe or visiting these parts amounted from nil to negligible numbers, and even this only towards the end of the period. This again makes it difficult for them to have played a decisive role in large scale slave ventures. What little there is in the source material suggests a very different environment, one in which both free persons and slaves were a rare experience: *Reuben claims that he had a slave which Zimri had stolen from him and taken to Russia; subsequently I readied myself to go there for trade and Shimon came to me and persuaded me to try for him to take the slave away from Zimri and walk him with us to Cracow.*³⁶

Lastly, the absence from the slave trade is borne out in full by the legal sources extant in Hebrew since the 10th century.³⁷ The only slaves mentioned in this huge corpus of writings are household servants, male and female, as in a question directed before the year 1000 to the Italian sage Meshulam bar Kalonymus: *Reuben who had a Canaanite (Slavonic) slave girl who was manumitted and lived in his house, and he wants to marry her to a Canaanite slave, is it forbidden?*³⁸ Indeed their employment as workers in the home and business agents outside was the same as of the many slaves encountered in the *Responsa* of the Babylonian Geonim and in the business accounts of Genizah merchants. For Middle Eastern Jewry too the huge corpus of documentation fails to provide evidence for any slave trade, except for the Radhanites (see below) and maybe a few more instances.³⁹ In conclusion, the slave-trade thesis has only a tenuous basis in historical reality. Even though Jews might perhaps have participated to some degree in the trade, they never constituted a significant element in it. They surely did not dominate it.

A Monopoly of Intercontinental Traders?

This brings us to the notion of a Jewish monopoly or dominance in early medieval commerce at large. What sources, other than the ones relating to the slave trade, support this idea? For the Carolingian period there is

³⁶ A query to Jehudah ha-Cohen (Mainz 11th century), *Responsa* Meir ben Barukh, 1891: no. 912. See Agus, 1965: I, 94, for a commentary.

³⁷ See Assaf, 1938/9, and Moskin, 1989. For a short but incisive treatment of the problems of cohabitation of Jews and their non-Jewish servants/slaves in Ashkenaz, see Katz, Jacob, 1989: 49–56.

³⁸ Ginzei Schechter, 1929: 273–4, no. I.

³⁹ Goitein, 1967: 130–147; Gil, 2004: 607, 609.

the edifying tale of a mock mouse from the Holy Land, procured on order of Charlemagne by a Jewish merchant in order to publicly shame a smug bishop.⁴⁰ Then there is a bigger animal, the elephant *Abulabas* brought back to Europe by the Jew Isaac, the only survivor of a delegation sent by Charlemagne to Baghdad.⁴¹ There are the Radhanite merchants from Iraq, erroneously declared as residents of the Rhône region (see below, next sub-chapter). Then there is a royal order for a police operation looking for illegals in the quarters of Jewish and Christian merchants in Aix-la-Chapelle.⁴² Finally, there are three privileges granting Jews exemption from tolls and road dues and freedom to *sell and exchange their property* in the kingdom.⁴³ The recipients are not “the” Jews as such, as has been claimed, but individuals: one man and his grandson, two Jews of Lyon, and a Jew from Saragossa in Spain. The latter was specifically absolved from exactions *on his trade* (*negotium* which can also mean *merchandise*, a Latin expression that exactly parallels the Hebrew *sehora*), and was expected to *serve our palace faithfully*. All these sources hint to a tiny number of Jewish itinerant merchants in Carolingian times. They can hardly be credited with maintaining the whole international trade of the kingdom, or indeed of Europe at large. Significantly, they are totally absent from the economically most potent regions, the dynamic zone of trade *emporia* and “gateway” settlements developing in the valleys of the rivers Scheldt, Meuse and Rhine and on the continental seaboard of the North Sea. Jews were but one element, significant only for their religious difference, among many more merchants of different creeds and nations. These non-Jews, of which the Frisians were the most renowned, have been well known for a long time from a whole range of sources extensively researched.⁴⁴ Yet by some strange trick of amnesia, they are forgotten the moment one comes to speak of the Jews.

Let us move to a slightly later period, 10th century Germany of the Saxon rulers. Here too the case for a trade monopoly cannot stand. It is based on four sources mentioning *Iudaei et ceteri mercatores*, “Jews and

⁴⁰ Notkeri Gesta Karoli, 1969: 342 (ch. I, 16).

⁴¹ Annales regni Francorum, 1968: 76, 78. On the whole affair see Borgolte, 1976.

⁴² Capitularia regum Francorum, I, 1883: 298.

⁴³ Linder, 1997: 333–338, 342–343.

⁴⁴ For more recent accounts see for instance Johanek, 1987: 60; Siems, 1992; Contamine, 1993: 71ff., 96ff., 179ff.; Devroey, 1993; and with abundant documentation McCormick, 2002b.

other merchants".⁴⁵ This wording has been understood to mean that in 10th century Germany Jews were the proverbial merchants, non-Jews but an insignificant appendage. Here too there is a simpler way of reading. Both groups of merchants were named for their most notable characteristics. For the administrators who wrote these texts, Christian merchants differed from the rest of the population by their trade activities and were thus designated as merchants. Their Jewish colleagues on the other hand are distinguished by religious identity. The only thing these sources do say is that there were both Jewish and non-Jewish merchants, and thus by simple logic no trade monopoly. A similar misunderstanding has been the lot of the Hebrew phrase *medinot ha-yam* and *medinat ha-yam*, literally *the lands/land of the sea*, met in a significant number of *Responsa* in the context of Jews going about their business. Bringing to mind the medieval *Outremer*, this has been taken to suggest Jewish Merchant Adventurers sailing the Seven Seas. However, *medinot ha-yam* is nothing more than a Talmudic expression meaning initially any place reached by sea outside the Land of Israel, and later simply abroad, outside one's place of residence. Romantic as it might sound, this phrase tells nothing about overseas travel or sea-faring ventures.

Our conclusions are borne out by the Hebrew sources extant from Iberia and Ashkenaz since the late 10th century. Arising from the legal deliberations of a community largely making its living by commerce, this body of texts is much more extensive and explicit on trade matters than the scant contemporary Latin one. It frequently mentions not only Christian (or in Spain—Muslim) customers but also business associates, thus once more contradicting the notion of a trade monopoly. In addition, the notion of a Jewish commercial pre-eminence owes much to an optical illusion created by the uneven chronology of sources. Most of the Hebrew sources documenting extensive trade and credit were written because of a legal and religious problem felt acutely by 10th to 12th century Jews: the taking of interest, forbidden by Biblical law, from a fellow Jew, a daily occurrence at this early stage of commercial life and the main mode for raising business capital. The regulation of this problem is amongst the earliest issues taken up by Jewish sages and law courts, thus furnishing us with a wealth of information on commerce and finance. Not surpris-

⁴⁵ *Capitularia regum Francorum*, II, 1897: 252; *Die Urkunden Konrad I, Heinrich I. und Otto I.*, 1879–1884: 416, no. 300; *Die Urkunden Otto des II. und Otto des III.*, 1893: 38, 225, nos. 29, 198; *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, 1935: 98, Liber III,1.

ingly, it paints the entire evidence in a distinctive commercial hue. In contrast, Christian society became aware of the problem later, and accordingly the written discussion sets in later, from the 12th century onwards. But once Christians woke up to the legal and religious problems of commerce, their world of merchants and financiers too becomes illuminated in the sources.

Again, the chronology and dimensions of the Jewish presence in Europe leave no room for the fanciful idea of a monopoly or ascendancy in commerce. Significant Jewish communities, in numbers and distribution sufficient to supply the physical infrastructure for a trade network, eventually developed during the 11th century when both the slave trade and international land transport were on the wane. There is a time-gap between a supposed early medieval commercial ubiquity and the much later actual establishment of the vast majority of communities, despite unflagging attempts to predate their founding by centuries. Thus, for instance, Regensburg and Augsburg have been dated to the 9th century, Salzburg to the year 1074. The correct dates should be, respectively, the 10th century, the early 13th century, and not before 1282.⁴⁶ Most telling, our detailed examination of commercial operations in the different European countries has found little evidence for a sustained international engagement. The few itinerant traders making the rounds between central and Eastern Europe belong to the segment of regional trade, the dominant mode of Jewish commerce as shall be argued at the end of this chapter. This leaves as true long-range traders two groups of Oriental Jews, one an enigma to this day, the other abundantly documented. These are the Radhanites and the North African traders of the Cairo Genizah.

The Lure of the Orient: Radhanites and Genizah Traders

For many decades now, propagated by the immense scholarly repute of Henri Pirenne and picked up again by a number of more recent scholars, there is an idea about of “colonies of Oriental merchants”, Syrian and Jewish ones. In the waning of Late Antiquity and during the Merovingian/Visigothic period, they are thought to have taken up residence in Western

⁴⁶ Bachrach, 1977a: 123; Verlinden, 1983: 124; Verlinden, 1955–1977: II, 122. For the correct dates see *Germania Judaica* I, 1934: 15, 236, and *Germania Judaica* II, 1968: 728. See also Part I, chapter 3 and Appendix 3 for Cologne and Normandy.

Europe in order to conduct the long-distance trade with their Oriental home countries.⁴⁷ In this view, a single community would amount to a “merchant colony”. A number of “colonies” would make up a trade network, specifically planted for that purpose as some scholars would have it.⁴⁸ A newer school of thought is casting doubt on the very existence of such “colonies”, to the north as well as to the south of the Pyrenees.⁴⁹ As pointed out by Peter Brown, Pirenne “insisted that this trade was the distinguishing characteristic—indeed the *sine qua non*—of the Romania of the pre-Islamic era.” However, “when disentangled from the skein of related phenomena that made up Pirenne’s Romania, the Syrian merchant cuts a poor figure. The discreet ministrations of merchants of luxury goods survived the Arab invasions precisely because they had always been sporadic and marginal.” This has been unequivocally confirmed by archaeology: “The archaeological evidence is firmly against the view of trade on a massive scale”.⁵⁰ As for Jews, it is difficult to accept a vague Oriental kinship with “Syrian merchants” (whose very existence is itself uncertain) as evidence for actual trade between Europe and the Orient. This makes sense only if one believes that Jews (or by the same token “Orientals”) will trade by default.

Some weighty arguments for such commerce have been proffered by scholars from Judaic Studies. They consist of general considerations and some concrete sources. To the former belongs the argument that stresses the religious solidarity and geographical distribution which afforded the Jewish merchants an advantage by providing an international infrastructure of economic contacts.⁵¹ A case based on the notion of an innate “Jewish solidarity” cannot stand by itself without supporting evidence. For one, we have seen in our chapters on population that the European part of such a network was not very impressive, and indeed came into being only at the very end of the period. Secondly, contacts between European, Iberian and Oriental Jews, as documented in the writings of the Babylonian *Geonim* and the Genizah papers (on which see below), were quite feeble and mainly of a cultural and religious nature. Nevertheless, for the period before the

⁴⁷ Pirenne, 1992 (orig. 1937): 18, 79–85; Lopez, 1987: 324; Bachrach, 1998: 228; Lotter, 1999: 50–51, and many more scholars.

⁴⁸ See this chapter above, note 4, for Cracco-Ruggini, 1964: 931, 948, 949, 952, and Rouché, 1993: 433.

⁴⁹ Verhulst, 1970: 17; Devroey, 1995: 52–53; Arce, 1999: 11, 13–14; Retamero, 1999: 274–275.

⁵⁰ Brown, 1982b: 77–78; Hodges & Whitehouse, 1983: 76.

⁵¹ For instance Grossman, 1996: 112. But see the reasoned refutation of this well-known argument by Ben-Sasson, 1984: 35–7. On the network argument see Toch, 2010.

11th century commercial links have been inferred from such contacts, occasional ones by Moshe Gil and robust and enduring ones by Abraham Grossman. In addition to the network argument, Grossman proposed to learn on “the strength of the commercial ties between the Jews of Ashkenaz and those living in Muslim lands in the 10th century and first half of the 11th one from the Arabic phrases [three altogether] that found their way into the language of the Jews of Germany and Northern France”. In a further study, Abraham attempted to explain the Ashkenazic turn to monogamy, amongst others, by “the long absences of many members of the German communities in distant countries because of the international trade in which they played an active part.”⁵² As shown in this chapter below and in Part I, Ch. 3 above, we have found regional and local travel, not an international or intercontinental one, to be the dominant mode for trade ventures.

Two further sources have been offered by Abraham Grossman as positive evidence but raise more difficulties than they answer. One is a question possibly from North Africa and addressed in mid-9th century to Paltoi Gaon, a Babylonian head of academy, which the sage summarized as following:

*And you asked: Ashkenazi are used to come to us with merchandise in the dry season and a few of them in the days of rain. . . . When one hears that another caravan will come after them or when they have the opportunity to leave, one hurries quickly to buy everything and sell everything, even on the intermediate days of a holiday. . . . Are we who have waited for them a whole year . . . allowed to buy from them and sell to them on the intermediate days of a holiday?*⁵³

The Mediterranean climate (dry season and days of rain), the presence of caravans, and the isolated setting most probably speak for a North African location, possibly in Tunisia. The *Ashkenazi* of the first sentence have aroused the suspicion of the text's editor, who added a note “should possibly be Arabs”, a correction accepted by Agus but implicitly rejected by Grossman.⁵⁴ The latter sees this as “one of the earliest accounts of the prevalence of commerce between German Jewry and Jews living in

⁵² Gil, 2004: 200–206; Grossman, 1996: 112–119; Grossman, 1988a: 11.

⁵³ Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 149, my translation, which differs from both Grossman and Agus (next note), for instance in the use of *caravan* for the Hebrew *shayara* rather than the maritime *convoy* of Grossman.

⁵⁴ Grossman, 1996: 114; Agus, 1965: I, 53. The divergence of opinion on this text was prefigured almost a hundred years earlier in the contrary position taken by Eppenstein, 1919: 168, against Brann, in: Germania Judaica I, 1934 (originally 1917): 7.

Muslim lands". In contrast, Agus thought it possible that these *Ashkenazi* were not Jews at all but rather Gentiles. In addition, Grossman held the *one* of the second sentence to mean *us*, the local Jews, while Agus thought it to mean *them*, the foreign merchants. With such caveats, it is difficult to come to a decision whether the text indeed means European Jews traveling to the Muslim world for their trade. Fittingly, the Italian Jews mentioned in another Geonic Responsum of the 10th century as sojourning in Tunisian inns were scholars, not merchants.⁵⁵ Lastly, in an 11th century query to Jehudah ha-Cohen, some colloquial expressions from the Arabic and a hint to merchandise that might have been silk have been understood to witness "Jewish merchants [from Germany] who journeyed to Muslim countries". Again, the text is ambivalent, and silk was imported into Europe by a wide variety of merchants, not necessarily by Jews.⁵⁶

The most intricate and intriguing witness of all is Ibn-Khordadbeh's report on the routes of the *Jewish Radhanite Merchants*, of the mid-9th century. On one hand, it is held to be "the most impressive testimony to the international ties of Jewish merchants and the far-reaching scope of their business activities". On the other hand, it is so remarkable that, as Claude Cahen put it, "the historian finds himself from time to time vis-à-vis texts that exert on their readers some kind of collective hypnotization, removing the capacity to look at them with ordinary judgment".⁵⁷ This then is the unabridged text, checked against the manuscript sources and translated anew from the Arabic by Moshe Gil:⁵⁸

The Route of the Jewish Radhanite Merchants, who speak Arabic and Persian and Rumi, and Ifranji and Andalusí and Slavic. They travel from east to west and from the west to the east, by land and by sea. They market slaves from the west and maidservants and boys, and silk cloth, and rabbit hides and sable furs and swords. They sail from Firanja (Christian areas of western Europe) in the western sea and leave from Farama (Pelusium, on the Sinai coast) and transport their goods on the backs (of beasts of burden) to Qulzum (on the Red Sea coast)...; then they sail in the eastern (Indian) sea... to Sind and

⁵⁵ Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 33, as interpreted by Ben-Sasson, 1984: 36.

⁵⁶ The quotation is by Grossman, 2004: 118. The source, quoted throughout this book, is Responsa Meir ben Barukh, 1891: no. 880. When queried, Abraham Grossman granted that the text is not explicit proof but can be seen as convincing indirect evidence (July 17, 2011). For an example for silk imports see our Appendix 3, Cologne, and of course Jacoby, 1991 and 1997.

⁵⁷ The quotations from Grossman, 1996: 112, Cahen, 1964: 499. The immense literature on the text is aptly summarized by Gil, 2004: 615–37. See also Pellat, 1993, for a concise description and full bibliography.

⁵⁸ Gil, 2004: 618. I have left out the diacritic signs employed by Gil.

to Hind and to China. They transport from China aloe wood, cinnamon and more (goods that they regularly) transport from those areas; they then return to Qulzum and then transport them to Farama, then they set sail in the western sea; sometimes they turn to Constantinople with their merchandise and sell it to the Byzantines; sometimes they travel with it to the king of Firanja and sell it there; and if they wish they transport their goods from Firanja, in the western sea, and they go from Antioch and travel by land... and from there they sail the Euphrates to Bagdad, and from there they sail the Tigris to Ubulla (today a suburb of Basra)... and to Umman and to Sind and to Hind and to China... Those of them who go from Andalus or Firanja cross (the sea) to Sus al-Aqsa (Morocco, near modern Tangier) and arrive at Tanja (Tangier) and from there to Ifriqia (Qayrawan) and from there to Egypt and from there to Ramla and from there to Damascus and from there to Kufa and from there to Baghdad and from there to Basra and from there to al-Ahwaz (in Khuzestan, southwestern Iran) and from there to Faris (Iran) and from there to Kirman (Kerman, southern Iran) and from there to Sind and from there to Hind and from there to China. Some of them turn to beyond Byzantium to the land of Slavs and there to Khamlij the city of the Khazars and from there to the (Caspian) sea and from there to Balkh and to what is beyond the river (=Transoxania) and from there to Wurut Tughuz Ghuzz and from there to China.

With such world-wide travels, the *Radhanites* serve as the ultimate proof for the maximalist view of Jewish commercial prowess. In an article titled *Les Radaniya et Verdun*, Charles Verlinden connected them to that other center piece of his slave trade thesis, the Verdun “manufacture of eunuchs”. Eliyahu Ashtor revisited them in *Aperçus sur les Radhanites* in order to buttress his thesis of trade ascendancy. A recent encyclopedia entry has them “dominate trade between the Christian and Muslim worlds during the Dark Ages; it is largely through their efforts that the trade routes established under the Roman empire stayed open during that period”. And even more sweeping, “Radanites’, who were of Jewish origin... controlled the circulation of goods across the whole Euro-Asian continent on both land and sea.”⁵⁹ Fitting the Europe-centered orientation of scholarship, for a long time these Radhanites were taken by most to be Western Jews, resident in the Rhône area from which they are supposed to have taken their name *Rhodanites*. This Western version, based as it was on some doubtful etymology and a selective reading of the text (leaving out the first part of the itinerary *They travel from east to west*), has finally been laid to rest by Gil:

⁵⁹ Verlinden, 1983; Ashtor, 1977; Cynthia Clark Northrup ed., *Encyclopedia of World Trade: From Ancient Times to the Present*, 2005, vol. 3: 763; Polaček, 2007: 501.

These merchants sailed from the east to the west, not as in all the translations of the fragment. Ibn Khurdadhbih does not mention the goods that the Radhanites hauled from the east to the west, when setting out. This is natural, because he himself and his readers were interested in what was arriving from distant lands. The Radhanites, people of Radhan, in the center of the caliphate, are those who brought those precious and scarce goods both from the west (Western Europe and Western Africa), and from China, and they would sell them, not only in the areas of the caliphate, but also in those of Byzantium and Firanja. . . . The place where these merchants embarked is to be found in the eastern part of the Muslim world. It is Jews who lived in this part of the world who were, therefore, the haulers and distributors of those goods.⁶⁰

The Radhanites were thus definitely denizens of the Middle East, most likely a region of Iraq, and nothing in that fascinating report can be credited to European Jews. Even so, lately they have once more been associated with Jewish merchants from Europe as belonging to “one of the multiple subgroups” which had been “collapsed by Ibn Kordadhbēh into a single human group” called Radhanites.⁶¹ It is indeed feasible that one regional or occupational group of Oriental merchants has been made to carry the characteristics of a much larger coalition or association of different groups. We shall see in the next sub-chapter that such an interpretation can be fruitfully integrated into our argument of local and regional stages of trade activities. However one reads the text, it remains singular in the entire source tradition and unmatched by any other evidence.

For the later part of our period, the late 10th century onwards, the place to look for economic ties between a European and an Arabic-speaking

⁶⁰ Gil, 1974 and 2004: 615–37, 626, 629 for the quotations and 630–6 for the location of the Radhan district of Baghdad. My Jerusalem colleague Michael Lecker disagrees with Gil on the exact location in Iraq and is preparing a written expose on the problem. After this chapter had been written, I was apprised of the latest summary of the issue by Phillip Ackerman-Lieberman, 2011. It is succinct enough to be quoted in full: “The difficulty of interpreting this source and textual differences that appear in the tenth-century geography of Ibn al-Faqīh (*Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. de Goeje, Leiden, 1885, pp. 270–271) led a number of prominent scholars to conclude that the Radhanites were actually of Western European origin, and that the system of trade they brought to the lands of Islam revolutionized the economic life of the Jewish communities, which until then had focused on agriculture, crafts, and local trade. In this view, the name Radhanite came from the Rhône River or from the Latin term *verdarii* (emissaries). However, Gil’s analysis suggests that the Radhanites derived from the eastern part of the Islamic world, and he links the name to a district in the vicinity of Baghdad. Emerging from the Baghdad community, then, their forays into international trade should be seen as an extension of other trading ventures of contemporary Babylonian and Persian Jewry rather than as a paradigm shift in economic life from agriculture to international trade introduced from Western Europe.”

⁶¹ McCormick, 2002b: 690.

Diaspora (in the Middle East, in North Africa, and in Muslim Sicily and Spain) is the rich material of the Cairo Genizah. As seen in previous chapters, in this huge documentary treasure not a single Italian Jewish merchant is mentioned in the Maghreb, in contrast to numerous Italian (and other) Christians whose arrivals and dealings in Muslim ports were carefully noted. It seems extremely unlikely that all evidence for Jewish trade between Italy and the Maghreb has been lost, whereas the evidence for Christian trade along that very same route has been abundantly preserved in the Genizah. Conversely, Genizah merchants from North Africa found themselves occasionally on Italian shores, but this was not where they intended to do business. A few of them would pass the winter in Italian ports, but in general this was not accompanied by significant transactions. The Genizah's silence on trade with Italy also contrasts sharply with its abundant evidence for wide-ranging exchanges with other Muslim countries; chiefly among them Sicily as long as it was under Muslim rule. As for Jewish merchants from Byzantium, they appear in the Genizah not as business partners but mainly as prisoners taken by Muslim pirates and shipped to Egypt for ransom. Other Europeans in Egypt were not merchants at all but refugees from all walks of life, stranded there by adverse circumstances and seeking poor relief.⁶² As for Muslim Iberia, we have found a small group of Maghreb merchants resident in or visiting the peninsula, while the greater number of local Jewish merchants appears to have had no part in their international trade. Shlomo Dov Goitein, grand master of Genizah studies, put it succinctly:

To all intents and purposes, the Arabic-speaking Jewish merchants of the Mediterranean area were confined to the realm of Islam. They were connected to their coreligionists in Europe by bonds of general culture, religion, and philanthropy (extended by the former to the latter), but not by business relations of any significance. The European traders with whom the Genizah merchants dealt were exclusively Christian, Italians and Byzantines.⁶³

With as tight a documentary coverage as the 11th century Genizah, one can for once argue from the silence of the sources: Jewish merchants from

⁶² Cohen, Mark, 2003.

⁶³ Goitein, 1967: 211, and 1971a: 12–13, see also 1967a. A similar judgment by Cahen, 1965: 423–4, Citarella, 1971: 396, and Ben-Sasson, 1984: 37, whose conclusions I have to some extent paraphrased in this paragraph. In contrast, Abulafia, 1987: 424, sees the absence of the Genizah merchants from Christian regions merely as a result of their specialization, whereas “the Babylonian Jews . . . may have been much more active in trade in Morocco, the Spanish Levant, southern France and Byzantium”. Sadly, there is no documentation for “Babylonian Jews active in trade” in these regions.

Italy, France, Germany or Byzantium were not active in the Mediterranean trade towards Muslim lands, at least not in its best documented period. The same holds, vice versa, for Jewish merchants from the Maghreb, North Africa and the Middle East. In a letter of 1064 or 1084 a Genizah merchant had the following to say of European Jews, their commerce, hospitality, and pace of life:

Let me know if your son has decided to take the risk and travel to a land whose people and customs he does not know. With the best of luck, he will not arrive in less than three years. Then, by God, he will reach people who are cruel by nature . . . If a strange Jew comes to them they will not greet him but most reluctantly. Then, when he stays a month in their town, they will tell him: Leave, because they have laws that a stranger shall not stay with them longer than a month. He will find himself—by the life of God—with nothing and God forbid that he will have merchandise to make a living from. Also, what happens here in a month will not happen there in a year. I do not know any reason for his decision except folly.⁶⁴

The hazy allusion to the Ashkenazic ordinance of *Herem ha-yishuv* (*settlement clause*) regulating admittance of newcomers (above, Part I, Ch. 3, and next sub-chapter) hints to a European location. It is the only Genizah document to do so, but this Europe—barely known to the writer—is a backward, forbidding, inhospitable and unprofitable place. Arabic-speaking merchants traded throughout Muslim lands and all the way to India. They did not do so in Christian Europe (with the enigmatic exception of the Radhanites) and definitely not with co-religionists from Christian Europe. Both parties kept to their own parts; they did not connect to create an international network.

Re-dimensioning Jewish Trade: Local and Regional Contacts

We have concluded that neither the slave trade nor intercontinental ventures were characteristic of European Jews. Nevertheless, the presence of merchants is instantly recognizable, to the point that in some regions Jewish society can largely be characterized as a commercial one. This is only an apparent contradiction, for the main activity took place on the regional and local level. Not only the absence of international and intercontinental ventures from the record brings to such conclusion, it is also

⁶⁴ Gil, 1983: III, 329–30, no. 530. I owe this reference to Dr. Miriam Frenkel of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

confirmed by our scrutiny of the sources. Some examples will show the range of possibilities and variations.

The most basic arrangement is the sedentary merchant sitting in his shop, as in one of the earliest hints in a 6th century papyrus from Byzantine Egypt on the lease of a wine shop to a Jew named Peret. Half a millennium later in a query to Yitzhak Alfasi, *Reuben and Shimon had a partnership to sell silk in the marketplace in a shop and later he sat in another shop*. Not surprisingly then, renting a shop was frequent enough to require a special form letter in the collection of contracts from early 11th century Spain. A somewhat different local profile appears in another query from Muslim Spain on *Shimon who has deals in the perfume [Hebrew *bossem*] business and trades in perfumes with the Ishmaelites called Almoravids*.⁶⁵ Here one envisages the merchant running errands between the Berber rulers' palaces and villas. A similar business model of somewhat broader dimensions become visible in one of the earliest Responsa from France, a question sent to Meshullam bar Kalonymos (died ca. 1000/1010). It portrays a man busy

in the affairs of the archbishop of Narbonne, supplying his needs; and the matter of the salt of the archbishop by which he earns income with much effort; exchanging his [the archbishop's] gold and silver; investing in merchandise; contracting with a junior partner; and lending money for interest.

Though impressively extensive, the business deals of this man were all conducted in the town and archbishopric of Narbonne. The same sage was called upon to decide another case, of a merchant who had deprived a competitor in Arles of his livelihood by snatching up the merchandise (apparently foodstuffs) before it was brought by suppliers into town.⁶⁶ Held to account, he claimed that his residence in a suburb freed him from the jurisdiction of the Jewish court of Arles. In this case, the commercial territory was circumscribed by the town's suburbs and focused on the town's markets. Matters of the local market and its well-to-do patrons—prelates, aristocrats, and members of the urban elite—were indeed weighty enough to bring about the earliest community legislation in Ashkenaz: *Herem ha-yishuv* (*settlement clause*), which gave the community members the right to veto the settlement of newcomers; and *Maarufiya* (*regular clientele*),

⁶⁵ Tcherikover, 1964: 99–101, no. 511. Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 77. Bills and Contracts from Lucena, 1994: 211. Joseph ibn Migash, 1959, Responsa: no. 105.

⁶⁶ Responsa of the Early Geonim, 1848: no. 140. Ginzei Schechter, 1929: 276, no. VII.

by which access to potent customers was regulated.⁶⁷ Both ordinances are eminently local measures designed to regulate local competition for a limited local clientele. We have just seen this “regular clientele” in operation in Narbonne, as well as the breach of the norm in Arles.

Merchants taking the road to another place and back home come up most frequently in the sources, for instance in a query to the above mentioned Meshullam bar Kalonymos, apparently from Southern France: *Reuben who made a deal with Shimon and bought from him 200 pounds of crimson . . . and gave him as security [for payment] three pieces of clothing for a month until he will go [back] to his town.*⁶⁸ Sometimes such movements were undertaken in the saddle, as in a query to Jehudah ha-Cohen from 11th century Germany: *the horse I received from you when I wanted to take the road like all other men.* At times transport arrangements were more elaborate, as in a question to the same sage: *Reuben and Shimon were in the same town and Reuben had a boat loaded with salted fish to conduct to another town and Shimon found that he too wanted to load a boat with fish to send to that same town.*⁶⁹

Regular forays into the countryside are evident in the affair of a man who disappeared, apparently in 11th century French Burgundy: *Reuben used to go to many places, and to many places [krahim] distant one or two days from the town where he dwelled; and he used to sell to the lords of the places and buy from them, his Maarufiya [regular clientele] the lords of the places.*⁷⁰ Basically the same arrangement, apparently without the “regular clientele” but also with fatal outcome, in 11th century Spain: *Reuben and Shimon went from their place to the townships [ayarat] to deal in merchandise, and there was a rumor that they were killed on the road.*⁷¹ Here as in Ashkenaz the record has many more discussions of the status of presumed widows (*agunot*) to husbands who had disappeared on the road, as for instance in a query on two widows going to court over debts from a partnership between their husbands, both of them now missing.⁷²

A recurring regional focus was provided by the yearly fairs at which merchants—Jewish as well as non-Jewish—congregated: in the Rhineland

⁶⁷ See Agus, 1969: 59–66, and Eidelberg, 1953.

⁶⁸ Responsa of the Early Geonim, 1848: no. 150.

⁶⁹ Responsa Meir ben Barukh, 1891: nos. 880, 898. Responsum no. 910 has a man planning to go to Cologne in a ship, most probably downstream from Mainz or Speyer.

⁷⁰ Gershom, 1955: no. 36. The Hebrew *krahim*, usually translated as *towns* but here as *places*, presents a fine quandary. I suspect, but have no proof, that here it means *fiefs*.

⁷¹ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 119.

⁷² Responsa Meir ben Barukh, 1891: no. 876.

the fair of Cologne, in Northern France apparently the one at Saint Denis and by the 11th century the seasonal fairs of Troyes. In Iberia and elsewhere there were other such places not identified: *a fair instituted by priests in order to take tolls, and Israelites sell and buy there cattle and clothes and a toll is taken from what is bought and sold*.⁷³ Regional trade is also evident in the duties and tolls demanded in many towns in Italy and Iberia from Jewish (and other) merchants arriving to the market. A look at the value of business deals leads to a similar conclusion. Even though no valid statistics can be adduced, the vast majority of price-tags—for partnerships, sales, and purchases—are of a modest dimension. Adding what we know about the nature of merchandise (above, Part I, Ch. 3), the picture is one of a palette of routine goods at modest prices, and only very little in the manner of expensive exotic wares.

Even ostensibly international ventures invariably possessed a local dimension. Thus the Byzantine morality tale of *Doctrina Jacobi* of ca 642/3 portrays a much traveled hero making his way from Constantinople as far as North Africa. Yet once arrived in his chosen market, his *modus operandi* was peddling merchandise from door to door (above, Part I, Ch. 1). In a similar way, the all-Mediterranean dimensions of another business venture turn out to be very much local ones. This arises from a Hebrew business letter dated to the late 10th or 11th century that was possibly sent from Crete and addressed to Egypt, where it eventually ended up in the Cairo Genizah.⁷⁴ The writer and some other Jews operated a relay system for the shipment of hides from abroad, in which one link was a [Christian] *priest, the son of the apostate* [woman]. Local artisans, one of them a Jew named Moses the dyer who also acted as entrepreneur, then processed the hides. One of the places the letter-writer asked hides to be sent to is Crete, possibly his place of residence. International trade this might be, but of very modest proportions and one best fitting an artisanal mode of production. A similar profile was probably characteristic of many of the silk merchants active in Byzantium and Iberia. Further on Byzantium, we have found sea-faring merchants there to have been more common than in any other region. Given the geographical configuration of the Byzantine

⁷³ Cologne: Gershom, 1955: no. 29; Hebräische Berichte, 2005: 429. Saint Denis: see above Part I, ch. 3, note 90; Troyes: Responsa of the Tosaphists, 1954: 39–42, no. 1, cf. Soloveitchik, 1990: 77–86. Unidentified fairs: Responsa Meir, 1891 (= Jehudah ha-Cohen): no. 898; Rashi, Responsa, 1943: nos. 241, 233; Mahzor Vitry, 1923: no. 82, for the quotation. In Iberia: Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004, Responsa: no. 186.

⁷⁴ De Lange, 1996: 21–27, no. 4.

state and its maritime dependencies, merchants active in that environment must perforce have been sea-borne to a degree not found elsewhere. Still, there is no indication at all that their sailing the Mediterranean Sea turned them into intercontinental adventurers.

It has been remarked on the Radhanites that “this fascinating group belongs in the more variegated mix of contemporary trade, in which regional merchants bridged, at overlapping points, the exchange of products from far away”.⁷⁵ This insight should be applied to many more merchants, Jewish or others. With a few exceptions, their activities were of a limited local and regional dimension. Only in the aggregate, by stages and relays, did their ventures attain a larger geographical dimension. Besides such cumulative movements of goods over larger distances, there still remains the local shop-keeper and regional peddler touring the “townships”. It is in these more modest dimensions that the true economic significance of trade by Jews should be sought. Consequently, the economic functions to be ascribed to such commerce will be very different from the ones usually attributed, as shall be explored in the last chapter of this book.

Credit and Money

Money lending was an integral part of medieval (and later) Jewish livelihoods, and one extremely difficult to grapple with. Of all occupations, this particular one with its imaginary—usury, pound of flesh, destitution and ruin—was and is certain to arouse powerful offense. Still, in our period it did not yet stimulate the anxiety of majority society as it would from the 12th century onwards.⁷⁶ There are however other obstacles to a realistic appreciation, first and foremost the problem of sources. Evidence from non-Jewish sources is meager and cannot in any sense convey a coherent or representative picture. Some regions like Italy and Eastern Europe supply only hagiographic tales, for instance on a bishop or cleric borrowing money from Jews, often in the context of an internal ecclesiastical struggle in which one side found it useful to slander the other by association with Jews.⁷⁷ More and better information on the modalities of

⁷⁵ McCormick, 2002b: 614–7, quoted by Holo, 2009: 196.

⁷⁶ The question what changed in this century will be central for the two company volumes planned for this book. Still unsurpassed is Little, 1969.

⁷⁷ For references see below, note 100.

lending comes from regions with extant Halakhic sources, Iberia, Ashkenaz, and to some degree Southern France. However, these too do not provide concrete information on moneys actually lent out. Such data are present in a few places in Iberia and rural France as a by-product of the mortgaging of landed property (see next chapter). Unlike most of Europe in the Later Middle Ages, none of the European regions in our period has yet produced evidence on interest rates or any other quantitative indication, for instance on the market share of Jewish moneylenders as compared to non-Jewish ones.⁷⁸

Credit is manifest in all regions with reasonable documentation: in Iberia, central and southern France, Ashkenaz. Everywhere, lending against interest appears as one of the earliest modes of conducting business, as early as the first Halakhic documentation. This is an important finding that invalidates the long regnant view, held also by this author, of a linear progression whereby money lending replaced trade at a later stage.⁷⁹ The evidence suggests that this was not the case and commerce did not have to wane for credit to increase. This is not to imply that there was no process whereby money-lending indeed became the prime livelihood in most parts of Europe, as was the case since the 12th century, with time lags according to region. Byzantium, Iberia and Southern Italy were exceptional in that money lending would never attain such an exclusive position. One must also take leave of the idea that Jews entered into it somehow against their will, allegedly pushed out of other more respectable occupations such as trade and coerced to practice despised money lending. This is a polemical notion of the 19th century, born of the need to fend off the age-old accusation of inborn greed, and not supported by the evidence. On the other hand, the early appearance of credit does not mean that all references to debts owed by Christians to Jews necessarily indicate money lending or the presence of professional money lenders. Debts could and would easily accrue from deferred payment for the acquisition of merchandise. Neither is the frequent incidence of debts necessarily a sign of destitution, as scholars have unhesitatingly assumed.⁸⁰ Such a view is clearly conditioned by centuries of moral censure of "usury" which could detect no redeeming feature or economic contribution. In

⁷⁸ These are some questions I attempted to answer for Germany in the Later Middle Ages: Toch, 2005a and 2008a. For other regions see the surveys in Toch, ed., 2008.

⁷⁹ The last time in Toch, 2008a. I should have been more attentive to Soloveitchik, 2005: 117, who had already suggested this point.

⁸⁰ Kellenbenz, 1963: 216: "One went to the usurer only in direst need".

the period under consideration very different conditions prevailed: barter, straightforward loans, delayed payment, and pawns put up as collateral until completion were all part and parcel of conducting business. The context is nicely sketched in a query to Gershom "Light of the Exile", partly quoted above: somewhere in northeastern France, *Reuben used to sell to the lords of the places and buy from them, his regular clientele. And when they had no ready coin they would put in his hand their pawns of silver and gold, and sometimes he would exchange with them merchandise for the cattle that they looted from their enemies.*⁸¹ Pawns and sureties were also the rule in commercial ventures between Jews: *and I did not believe him [did not rely on his word] without a pawn*; in another query, also from Germany in the late 10th/early 11th century: *and Reuben answered him I do not believe you without a pawn.*⁸² Such sentiments are yet more reason to curb the eager trust scholars have put in Jewish solidarity.

Lending appears from the very beginnings mixed up with trade, with operations in currency and precious metals, and with agricultural and industrial entrepreneurship. The blend is nicely sketched in a query to Meshullam bar Kalonymos from ca. 1000, quoted above, on a man busy *in the affairs of the archbishop of Narbonne, supplying his needs; and the matter of the salt of the archbishop by which he earns income with much effort; exchanging his [the archbishop's] gold and silver; investing in merchandise; contracting with a junior partner; and lending money for interest.* Such high social standing of the clientele appears also in another query to the same sage: *Reuben who frequents this one official [sar] and lent out his [the official's] moneys to Gentiles and to Israelites.* In money lending as in trade, the main body of clientele appears to have been the higher echelons of society, in the countryside and in town. These were the *Maarufiya* (*regular clientele*), on which yet another query to the same scholar, surely from France, remarked: *there came to me one Gentile rich and trustworthy and asked me to lend him ten pounds against interest.*⁸³ Though there might have been more lowly customers, the greater numbers of townspeople

⁸¹ Gershom, 1955: no. 35. Joel Müller, the editor of *Responsen der Weisen von Frankreich und Lotharingen*, 1881: no. 101, thought that the military operations referred to in the *Responsum* took place in 1006 in Valenciennes, Northern France. However, they should be located much more to the south in the duchy of French Burgundy, see *New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. III, 1999: 337–8.

⁸² Gershom ben Jehudah, 1955: nos. 24, 25.

⁸³ *Responsa of the Early Geonim*, 1848: no. 140; Ginzei Schechter, 1929: 220, no. XXIII; *Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens und Westens*, 1888: no. 152. The Hebrew *sar* can also mean captain and in general a high-ranking person.

and peasants did not yet avail themselves of Jewish credit, taking instead advantage of local and familiar networks of assistance and of non-Jewish professional money-lenders. A significant exception to this rule is the low-end credit market discovered in rural areas in southern and central France (see next chapter). Here small agricultural holdings were routinely mortgaged to Jews by their Gentile neighbors for minor sums of money and interest was paid in new wine. The web of Jewish and non-Jewish lending, by professionals and non-professionals, to the high up and the humble alike, was characteristic of medieval society at large, which relied on credit arrangements of the most different sorts to a degree hardly imaginable even today.⁸⁴

The most basic and probably most frequent application of credit by Jews concerns their dealings with fellow Jews. Responsa literature is full of such cases, some of which have already been adduced above. Commercial partnerships invariably involved credit arrangements, whereby each party invested to varying extent funds, labor, and risk, against sureties of various types. These could be informal—simple trust or reputation staked—or formal—a contract bill issued by a court of law (Jewish or Gentile) and claimable there, material pledges of the movable kind, or real estate mortgaged.⁸⁵ Selling and buying merchandise or landed property again created credit relations, when one party remained debtor for a longer or shorter time for all or part of the value exchanged. Thus in a query to Isaac Alfasi: *a partner sold on credit and the debtors disowned [the debt]; does he owe his partner since he did wrong and sold on credit, or is it that he does not owe anything since selling on credit is the custom of the land?*⁸⁶ Responsa literature discusses credit operations as a daily occurrence that does not demand explanation. In 11th century Muslim Spain: *Reuben came to Shimon and said to him this Gentile woman wants to borrow one hundred dinar on pawns for six months, let me have the sum.* In the same place and time: *A Gentile who wanted to have deals with Israelites for interest and he [a Jew] did not trust the Gentile with this; and another Israelite said to him, you deal with him [the Gentile] and I shall be your guarantor for the capital sum and the interest.*⁸⁷ Debts were treated as assets and routinely bought,

⁸⁴ See for instance my case study of credit in late medieval rural society: Toch, 1995a.

⁸⁵ I beg to differ from Greif, 1989 and throughout his oeuvre, who bases his analysis of the “Maghribi traders” (that is the Genizah merchants) solely on trust and reputation. By reducing manifold other documented forms of warranty to just this one category, Greif has bestowed on these traders a uniqueness they did not possess. Cf. Toch, 2010.

⁸⁶ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 191.

⁸⁷ Joseph ibn Migash, 1959: nos. 110, 111.

sold, bequeathed and litigated over between Jews: *the orphans shall have their livelihood from what is in their possession, such as debts by Gentiles and Jews and investments with others and commenda partnerships*.⁸⁸

With such prevalence of credit, the biblical prohibition on usury between Jew and Jew must have weighed heavily on the minds of the people. In Ashkenaz, as we have seen in the first part of this book, moral qualms on taking interest from a fellow Jew were eventually resolved by inserting a Gentile straw-man between borrower and lender. Spanish and Southern French Jews were able to surmount the prohibition and routinely raise capital—for business and for consumption needs—by mortgaging their extensive landed property (see next chapter). Thus a Hebrew contract formula from early 11th century Spain would read:

*Since I took and received his money, so and so many dinars, and mortgaged for them to him all that courtyard and the houses that I have here in Lucena, in full mortgage so that he can eat of the proceeds so and so much per year; and he shall dwell in the courtyard a full year; and if it was a vineyard it shall be written: so and so shall go and work the vineyard and eat its fruits for a full year.*⁸⁹

Real life instances abound: in 1096, the *nasi* Sheshet, son of the *nasi* Shlomo, mortgaged for 100 solidi and a good horse his plot of 3 measures near Barcelona to the *nadib* Mosse ben Joseph and his wife. The borrower was none other than the founder of the line of *nesi'im* ("princes") of the illustrious house of Sheshet, who would serve the counts of Barcelona as suppliers of capital, advisers on Muslim affairs, Arabic secretaries, and negotiators. This makes it very difficult to assume destitution or consumption needs as the borrower's reasons to enter into the transaction. It might rather have to do with the fact that the lender's land bordered on the one concerned by the deal, thus possibly making this yet another round of consolidating landed property.⁹⁰

Eventualities arising from credit relations were covered by different types of contracts, for instance a special formula for the public denunciation of a debtor who refused to honor his obligation. With habitually lax payment morals, sometimes even stronger measures were needed. By one drastic procedure, titled *Bill of Loan*, the debtor engaged himself thus:

⁸⁸ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 143, see also Joseph ibn Migash, 1959: no. 119.

⁸⁹ Bills and Contracts from Lucena, 1994: 131–2, and see also 140–1, 143–4, for further contracts involving mortgages against loans.

⁹⁰ Millás I Vallicrosa, 1927: 15–16, no. 2. On the Sheshet clan see Encyclopedia Judaica, 2007: III, 385.

*As he has a loan on me for so and so many dinars in the king's coin; and if, God forbid, I delay in paying him . . . he shall be free to go to the [Muslim] authorities and bribe against me and disparage me and take [a loan] for those [dinars] on me with interest.*⁹¹ Besides having his name blackened where it counts, the debtor authorizes the lender to take out a counter loan from another (Gentile?) moneylender, leaving the debtor saddled with the high interest. For this community and its legal experts the smooth functioning of the credit market was apparently a most serious concern. Exactly the same procedure was employed from the 13th century onwards by German merchants against doubtful debtors, but with the moneylender now a Jew.⁹² By then the practice was called *Schadennehmen*, literally “to take [out a loan] for/against damage”. Town-governments used the same device to ensure prompt payment of taxes: they impounded a valuable belonging to a tax dodger and then satisfied themselves by pawning it to a Jew. The procedure might seem harsh, but there is at least one real-life borrower on record who claimed to have no means at all to honor his debt. Consequently, he was discovered to have hidden *utensils and merchandise and [cash] consignments with other people*, all of which he asserted to belong to other persons as deposits or in partnership.⁹³

Collateral, the objects taken to secure outstanding debts, was to develop into a major issue fraught with implications. In our period, the most common form was clearly the tangible pawn or pledge, either a valuable object or some landed property. With increasing legal elaboration—clearly visible in the Hebrew and Latin material—came additional forms such as the written deed claimable in court, issued by the debtor himself, by a notary, or by a court of law, or the warranty promise by a third party. There was also a curiously medieval custom called in German *Einlager* (literally “depositing”) and in Hebrew *eating on someone as surety*. In case of failure to pay, the debtor agreed to lodge on his account a party in an inn, with their horses in the stable, to eat and drink merrily away until payment was effected. This was also practiced between Jews, albeit in a more restrained manner and apparently without the horses:

Shimon became Reuben's surety to a Gentile and Reuben stipulated with the Gentile that if he delayed payment after a specified date, Shimon would right-fully eat on him as surety. Reuben shall pay for Shimon's standard eating, as

⁹¹ Bills and Contracts from Lucena, 1994: 150, 151; 119–20.

⁹² The earliest extant reference dates to 1257: Aronius, 1902: no. 632.

⁹³ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 209.

*Jews eat in a Jewish home, that is a medium and limited eating, since it is the custom of the sons of Abraham, Yitzhak and Jacob to take pity on their brethren... and not to eat on them cruelly. If Shimon ate large meals cruelly and had delicacies that are not usual with the rest of Jews who stand surety, he shall pay himself the difference to a standard eating.*⁹⁴

The type of collateral depended on the trustworthiness of the debtor, of which his social standing and family was a major component. As evident from the Hebrew record, all forms were employed, separately and in combination, by Jewish lenders. But there was also a further variant fitting the yet personal and intimate character of economic interactions sketched above. We are told by Ephraim bar Jacob of Bonn (later 12th century) that Jewish financiers in France lent *on faith* (*be-amanah*) and thus suffered heavily from the moratorium on debts decreed by the King of France during the Second Crusade (1146).⁹⁵ Some half century earlier, *debts owed to us by Gentiles on faith* are mentioned by Rashi in litigation from France, but as an exception to accepted rule.⁹⁶ When around 1130 the aspiring young trader Jehudah of Cologne (called Herman of Scheda after his conversion to Christianity) failed to secure a pawn in one of his first business deals, *as required by their* [the Jews] *custom*, his elders were scandalized.⁹⁷ As anonymous market forces came to the fore by the early 12th century, loans that relied solely *on faith and belief* were clearly becoming an exception and would be granted only to special customers, the *Maarufiya* treated above: *Reuben brought his Maarufiya to Shimon and told him lend a sum to my Maarufiya for such and such interest a week on faith and I take upon myself any loss of yours, and under that condition Shimon lent the sum to Reuben's Maarufiya.*⁹⁸ Even so, this was risky business and things could go very wrong. R. Yitzhak b. Shmuel of Dampierre, the great French Tosafist (died 1189), had some pertinent advice to investors in the lending business:

And do not lend without a good pledge of gold and silver; and put the money regularly beneath the earth to safeguard from fire and thieves without people knowing about this, so that it shall not be known to thieves and makes them think of stealing; and when you receive a pledge of gold and silver conceal it in a secure place beneath the earth. And he (the investor) shall instruct him

⁹⁴ Responsa Meir, 1891: no. 83.

⁹⁵ Neubauer & Stern, 1892: 64, 196.

⁹⁶ Rashi, Responsa, 1943: 80.

⁹⁷ Hermannus quondam Judeus, 1963: 72.

⁹⁸ Eliezer ben Nathan, 1926: no. 104.

(the agent) *not to take pledges of gold and silver from great townsmen and violent men so that he shall not be forced to return them without security against his will.*⁹⁹

The nearly universal employment of pledges was to give rise to serious tensions. From early on, to pawn to the unbelieving Jew ecclesiastical utensils endowed with the quality of holiness was felt to be sacrilegious. It was this quality that made such accusation an efficient argument in internal ecclesiastical quarrels, one that would be used to trip or smear an adversary.¹⁰⁰ Little less fraught with difficulties was the privileged status granted to Jews (and to the Italian money lenders called Lombards) in regard to stolen goods ostensibly put up as security for loans but actually sold to the money lender. Civil authorities trod a thin line between the need to deter theft and the wish to promote the smooth performance of the market place. Thus it became accepted practice to let the lender swear that such pawns had been accepted in good faith as pledge, rather than acquired as cheap goods of doubtful provenance. Known as *Takkanat ha-Shuk* (*Statute of the Market*), this arrangement was most likely taken into general usage from Talmudic law.¹⁰¹ Conversely, an increasing range of objects were prohibited as pawns: ecclesiastical utensils; goods whose wet or bloody condition suggested theft or robbery; the weaponry and armor of the members of urban militias; the buckets, axes and shovels kept at different locations throughout town in case of fire; and a whole range of

⁹⁹ Rabad of Posquières, 1978: no. 140. Haim Soloveitchik informs me that this Responsum was wrongly attributed to Abraham ben David of Posquières. On the hiding of valuables see Toch, 2007.

¹⁰⁰ False Capitularies of Charlemagne: Linder, 1997: 345–346, no. 581; Flodoardi *historia Remensis ecclesiae*, 1881: 493; *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium*, 1864: 452–453; Régéné, 1912: 107, note 3 = *Histoire générale de Languedoc*: III, 306 (Narbonne, 1042–1057).

¹⁰¹ The historiography on this topic once more reflects the apologetics medieval Jewish history has been entangled in. 19th century Jewish scholars saw this privilege as deriving from Talmudic law: Caro, 1908: I, 181; *Germania Judaica* I, 1934 (originally 1917): XXXI. By the early 20th century anti-Semitic propagandists appropriated this finding, termed it “fence-law” (“*Hehlerrecht*”), and used it to point an accusing finger. Guido Kisch invested considerable labor to disprove this idea. With poignant trust in the efficacy of rational argument, he chose this topic to open the first issue of the journal edited by him in America after his escape from Europe: Guido Kisch, “The Jewish Law of Concealment”, in: *Historia Judaica* I (1938) 1–30. After World War II scholars were loath to go near anything that might be considered slanderous to Jews. Kisch’s view thus became accepted opinion, despite grave problems in his interpretation of sources. This was finally remedied in a perceptive study by Lotter, 1990, who proved beyond doubt the Talmudic origins of the statute, and thus the early influence of Jews on legislation pertaining to them. For more general confirmation of this finding that charters for Jews were, in large part, issued in response to Jewish requests see Ray, 2010.

tools and raw materials essential for the livelihood of artisans. In short, accepting pawns as security could easily develop into pawn broking, a practice fraught with social problems as was to become very clear in the Later Middle Ages.

Currency, Minting, and Officials

Exchanging gold and silver was one of the activities described towards the end of the 10th century in Narbonne. It also appears some decades later in Germany: *It is forbidden to do as they do in this kingdom, to give at the fair of Cologne one pound of pure silver which is 12 (ounces of silver), and then to receive in their lodgings in Mainz or upon their return to Worms 13 ounces in coin.*¹⁰² This Responsum, attributed by Rashi to Gershom “Light of Exile”, has been offered as proof for widespread money lending to Gentiles already at the turn of the 10th to the 11th century.¹⁰³ Money lending certainly existed, but this particular source speaks of something else. This was an early form of currency speculation, taking advantage of the price difference between bullion and coined silver and making use of coinless transfer of obligations, in short “dry exchange”. Such deals are evidenced between Jews as well as with non-Jews, in Muslim Spain as well as in Ashkenaz.¹⁰⁴ *The free right to exchange gold and silver* was important enough to be licensed, surely upon Jewish insistence, in the privilege granted by the bishop of Speyer to his Jews in 1084 and in a similar one by the German king to the Jews of Worms in 1090.¹⁰⁵ In the latter case, they were to have *free authority throughout the whole city to exchange silver with whomever they wish, excepting only the front of the mint house or wherever else the mint masters should settle down for exchange.* Such freedom was once more conceded as late as 1182 to the Jews of Regensburg by Emperor Frederick I: *that they should be allowed to sell and to purchase according to their ancient usage gold, silver, and any kind of metal and merchandise.*¹⁰⁶ At that time there are also some indications that Jews engaged in the grain trade, or rather in speculation on the price of rye after the harvest.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Gershom ben Jehudah, 1955: no. 29. A similar case in Responsa Meir, 1891: no. 895.

¹⁰³ Germania Judaica, I, 1934: XXIX–XXX, followed by Kellenbenz, 1963: 208.

¹⁰⁴ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: nos. 243, 244. For Ashkenaz see above and also Responsa Meir, 1891: no. 911.

¹⁰⁵ Linder, 1997: 400–1, no. 611; 396–8, no. 610.

¹⁰⁶ Linder, 1997: 403–4, no. 613.

¹⁰⁷ Responsa Meir, 1891: no. 396.

Expertise in precious metals necessarily leads once more to the question of Jewish minters, for whose existence in the late-antique and Merovingian periods we have found no evidence. The Edict of Pîtres (864), which regulated coinage and minting in the Carolingian Empire, also mentions Jews in one of its numerous clauses: *That henceforth no one in our kingdom should presume to make or consent to make for sale an alloy of gold and silver; If he should be a Jew, he shall lose the alloyed object that he offered.*¹⁰⁸ Since other paragraphs of the Edict make full and detailed provisions for the operation of a small number of tightly controlled mints, it is unlikely that this passage deals with coinage. Rather, it aims at merchants dealing in precious metals and metal objects.

We have found a few minters in 11th century Barcelona, perhaps some in 11th century Hungary and Moravia, and a more significant number in Poland since the late 12th century.¹⁰⁹ Except for the last-mentioned, the evidence does not corroborate the notion that Jews were especially active in this capacity. Despite their undoubted expertise in monetary matters, it seems that rulers would rarely trust them with such a politically sensitive task. Beyond that, coinage appears in the record only when rulers ordered arbitrary changes in exchange rates, thus playing havoc with obligations entered in by merchants and financiers. Halakhic scholars were called upon a number of times to disentangle such problems.¹¹⁰

One last aspect concerns Jews active as advisors and finance officials in the service of princes and governments. We have found a few higher ranking individuals in Italy, in the South and in the papal city of Rome. Much greater numbers were active in Iberia, both in Muslim and Christian regions. They acted as personal physicians and astronomers to rulers; as recipients of grants of landed estates; as contractors and managers of enterprises (such as the public bath in Barcelona); and as bailiffs, tax farmers and tax collectors. With these activities some combined entrepreneurial functions in agricultural ventures, as stewards managing estates for the Christian owner (see next chapter). They were called by different names: in Hebrew *those who saw the countenance of the king*, in Latinized Arabic *alfaquim* (*al-hakim*, a learned man, understood to mean

¹⁰⁸ Linder, 1997: 349–350, no. 590. For the full text: *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 1897: II, 310–28.

¹⁰⁹ Above Part I, chapter 4, notes 135–137, chapter 5, notes 72–74. See Wenninger, 2008, and 1996, the latter *contra* attempts to tie the early appearance of Jews in the Austrian Alpine regions to assumed but unproven activities as minters and tax/toll collectors.

¹¹⁰ Ginzei Schechter, 1929: 235, no. XXXIII; Responsa Meir, 1891 (= Jehudah ha-Cohen): no. 903; Rashi, Responsa, 1943: nos. 222, 223, 241.

in a Jewish context either physician or interpreter and clerk), *almoxarife* or *almojarife* (*al-wazir almushrif*, official responsible for the collection of taxes). Even though quantitative assessments are notoriously difficult, there can be little doubt that Jews acting as officials and in functions close to rulers were much more numerous in Iberia, in Christian and especially in Muslim parts, than in any other region of Europe. This probably had to do with the extreme political fragmentation of the peninsula in the period under consideration, but also with the need of rulers to connect with religiously and ethnically heterogeneous populations. For such tasks officials drawn from minority groups were best suited. It seems significant that no Jewish officials at all are met in Byzantium, the bureaucratically best organized state in all of Christian Europe and the one possessed of a negative attitude towards Jews long before all other countries.

Our picture of trade and money lending, the two main occupations usually seen as the mainstay of medieval Jewish livelihood, must thus be significantly amended. For one, there is no neat separation in the commercial aspects these people dealt in. Money lending and trade were part and parcel of servicing the upper layers of majority society. Secondly, there is no factual basis for the tremendous impact accorded by both scholarship and popular opinion to Jewish trade, be it of slaves or of other exotic treasures. Still, there are some major aspects yet missing from a full composite picture. The next chapter shall treat the range of entrepreneurial practices, in landholding, agricultural pursuits, industries and other enterprises. One further question that must be asked concerns the livelihoods of the lower classes of Jews.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LANDHOLDING, CRAFTS, ENTERPRISES, MEDICINE, AND THE INTERNAL JEWISH ECONOMY

Landholding and Agriculture

Since the early 19th century, Jewish community leaders, educators, thinkers and public opinion in general were unhappy with the “abnormal” structure of contemporary Jewish occupations in Europe, best known perhaps as Ber Borochov’s “inverted class pyramid”. Their misgivings were shared by political authorities concerned with the “occupational amelioration” of the Jews, and of course by anti-Semites who eagerly turned a perceived anomaly into a genetically conditioned pathology. In such climate there was a strong appeal to the idea that Jews had once been sturdy peasants and vigorous tillers of the soil, with examples easily found in the Land of Israel before the fall of the Commonwealth, before the loss of normality in this as so many other regards. In contrast, the Middle Ages, the era of the Ghetto, the usurer, itinerant peddler and other unwholesome trades, appeared as the nadir of collective unhealthiness, both physical and moral. In the 20th century, attempts at agricultural colonization in many parts of the world and of course the Zionist movement and the Jewish State with their pioneer ethos were adding a further moral dimension to the quest. All this could not but influence the historiographical search for Jewish peasants, each historian according to his orientation. In 1957, Salo Baron put the emphasis on the Jewish contribution to progress when he wrote that “a full length monograph on the Jewish share in the development of the agricultural resources of the Iberian Peninsula and the adjoining Italian and French regions should prove extremely rewarding”. In 1959, Bernhard Blumenkranz published evidence for the existence of “Jewish farmers and vine growers in early medieval Burgundy”. This material served him well to bolster his thesis of 1960 that in this early period there was yet little difference between Jews and non-Jews, in their occupations as well as in other regards. Also in 1960, Eliyahu Ashtor found in Iberia a “body of Jewish peasantry”, “simple Jews”, “farmers who defended their rights most stubbornly”. For Ashtor, this held vital moral meaning:

As long as they were not compelled to transfer to these occupations (trade and other branches of the economy far removed from productive activity and toil), the Jews never, any time or any place, showed a tendency to earn their bread as nonlaborers.¹

Jewish landholding in medieval Europe is in clear and abundant evidence but has never been explored in its entirety. In numerous places, landed property appears in the earliest extant sources, in some it is the sole proof for a Jewish presence. The most substantial documentation—contracts, leases and sale deeds in Latin—comes from southern Europe, from the Iberian peninsula (here reinforced by Arabic and Hebrew deeds and Halakhic and other internal sources), from parts of Italy, and from southern and central France. No similar record exists for Northern France and Germany, with the exception of the 13th century *Schreinsbücher* (property registers) of Cologne, which indeed yield precious information for non-Jewish and Jewish properties alike, however only urban ones. Still, as indicated by early Ashkenazic sources of the northern regions, in all probability landholding had also been substantial in the winegrowing areas which have recently been shown to coincide with the areas of early Jewish settlement.² These are Halakhic deliberations on property transfers by inheritance, marriage and divorce; on the equitable taxation of landed versus mobile assets; and on the manifold problems around the ritual permissibility of wine production. One can contrast the frequency with which landed possessions are treated in the queries and rabbinical deliberations extant from Iberia and from Northern France and Germany. They figure in both regions, but definitely more often in the former. This would seem to match the exceptionally solid Latin, Hebrew and Arabic documentary record from Iberia. In the peninsula, it seems improbable that significant swaths of land in Jewish ownership have gone entirely undetected. In contrast, were one to go only by the non-Jewish sources, the very existence of landed property in the North would be very much in doubt.

What were the common features associated with landholding, what economic or other functions did it fulfill, what was its impact on the status of Jews in society? Was there a Jewish “peasantry” of the Early Middle Ages?

¹ Baron, 1957: IV, 316; Blumenkranz, 1959 and 1960; Ashtor, 1992 (1960): I, 267, 268, 271. Baron repeated his assertion of “early medieval Jewish pioneering contributions to European agriculture” in the entry *Economic History*, EJ 1st and 2nd eds.: vol. 6, 109. The main arguments of this sub-chapter have been laid out in Hebrew in Toch, 2010a.

² Soloveitchik, 2003: 37–58.

And what about the “Jewish share in the development of the agricultural resources”, that is a unique contribution to agricultural modernization? Everywhere, the lands owned by Jews intermingled with those of non-Jews. This does not mean, however, that there were no significant concentrations, but these tended to be local. Near Barcelona in 973, the vineyard of a Jew bordered on three sides on those of fellow Jews. Near Toledo, the vineyard of a non-Jew was surrounded in all four directions by those belonging to Jews. In a village near Granada before 1066, the holdings of one Jew were extensive enough for the whole place to be called after him.³ Similar concentrations can be seen in a Responsum, most probably from Italy before the year 1000, which mentions *Jewish owners of villages*.⁴ On the other hand, there must have been places with a single isolated Jewish holding, as in a query, apparently from late 10th century Narbonne, on a *Jew in a village far away who cannot purify his wine, may he let gentiles do that?* Some two hundred years later, still in Narbonne: *you asked about Israelites who possess vineyards in villages of Gentiles, and Israelites do not dwell in those villages but they do have there courtyards and houses, and their wine is prepared [there] in their own wine-presses and casks*.⁵

How important was the landholding of Jews in Southern Europe? Eliyahu Ashtor’s categorical judgment on a “body of Jewish peasantry” has been quoted above. David Romano has put forward the equally decided opinion that despite relatively widespread ownership in Iberia, “no evidence has been found of any Jewish habitat in the countryside”. From this largely correct observation he inferred that “agriculture is not recorded as a noteworthy activity among Jews”.⁶ This reasoning ignores the Hebrew record, whose contribution we shall see in the following. Secondly, in all regions landed possessions were predominantly small plots located near or adjacent to towns, typically in suburbs, as in the Italian *Scroll of Ahimaaz: one day he went out to his vineyard and his estate*.⁷ The best documented examples, Barcelona in Spain and Vienne, Mâcon and Chalon-sur-Saône in central France, were ringed by small-holdings. In other places such as Tudela or Toledo, distances were somewhat larger, but everywhere plots owned by Jews would still be within walking distance from town.

³ Miret & Schwab, 1915: 230; León Tello, 1979: 9, no. 19; Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 131.

⁴ Responsonen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 165. On the geographic origin see Grossman, 1988: 55–6.

⁵ Sefer ha-Eshkol, 1984: 156 and 150a.

⁶ Romano, 1991a: 367.

⁷ Bonfil, 2009: 308.

Given this suburban location of most properties, an urban habitat was no obstacle to agricultural engagement. As has been pointed out for Iberia in a somewhat later period, "The political, economic and social divisions between larger towns and rural villages were often ambiguous, a fact which explains why the presence of an essentially urban population such as the Jews is to be found throughout the rural landscape of thirteenth-century Iberia."⁸ Thus, the weight and function of agricultural concerns cannot be gauged by residence but must be appraised by other means.

The majority of identifiable plots were small vineyards, measuring from $\frac{1}{4}$ to 2 hectare, almost exactly the range still prevalent today all over winegrowing Europe. There were also fruit gardens, olive and fig groves and single almond and mulberry trees that were expressively mentioned as being bought and sold apart and must have been especially valuable. Besides vineyards, there were arable fields, and in the countryside around Toledo properties of fallow soil, *white land that is not yet worked* but will eventually be brought into cultivation.⁹ These fallow soils served as regular reserves in a dynamic system of land use that became especially important in our period: after exchanging with another Jew *a vineyard for arable fields adjacent to his own property, Jacob went into the fields and invested in them the money that he had taken, until he turned them into a fine vineyard*.¹⁰

Smaller plots everywhere would usually be bequeathed in the family or bought and sold in the land market. In contrast, larger estates in Spain were often granted by rulers to court Jews employed in their service. Large farms are also encountered in Italy. Clearly economic enterprises, they are mentioned in a number of cases to have been worked for the Jewish owner by others, apparently non-Jews. This was typically done in a sharecropping arrangement (*mezzadria, metayage*), whereby the owner supplied the capital equipment (land, seeds, tools, beasts), and sometimes even provisions. One Latin contract of 1163, signed in Hebrew, is titled *to work and improve well for bread and wine*.¹¹ The sharecropper contributed the labor and received a certain agreed share of the fruits, usually

⁸ Ray, 2006: 37, and 36–41.

⁹ *White land*: León Tello, 1979: 6, 7, 14, 16, 18, nos. 9, 12, 39, 45, 53. The document explaining the term: Pastor de Togneri, 1970: 357. The term in Hebrew (*sadeh lavan*—*white field*) appears in Hebrew sources from the Gemarah to the Babylonian Geonim and medieval and modern commentators.

¹⁰ Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 176, and see Grossman, 1988: 72, note 149, for the Spanish origin of the text.

¹¹ Miret & Schwab, 1914: 76–77, no. XV. On sharecropping in general see Toch, 1997a.

between one third and a half. In both Italy and Spain, yet another way to attract labor was by a type of lease called *ad complantandum* ("for planting"), which was employed by landowners to bring waste lands back into cultivation. Having worked the holding for a number of years, the laborer or entrepreneur (who could either be Jewish or non-Jewish) would then receive part of the land in perpetuity, typically again one third. All this is evidence for one important feature in this period: After hundreds of years of military and political unrest, of a shrinking population and a drop in productivity, agriculture in the surroundings of the towns of Southern Europe was experiencing renewed growth. Production expanded by improving existing holdings and bringing fallow land into cultivation. This took labor, capital, and entrepreneurial management, all aspects in which Jews could and did participate.

To what purposes did Jews put their landed property? Judging by the prevalence of small vineyards, the most widespread use was surely to supplement the household's food supply with kosher wine. Such an arrangement accords with the need to invest Jewish labor in order to safeguard *kashrut*, the need for a lot of working hands at the time of vintage, and the location of most holdings near the town walls. Something of this can be gauged in a query from Regensburg, Germany, in the early 11th century: *When the days of vintage came and he was at the gathering of the grapes, he went there with his wife and left no one in his house except for one small daughter and a Gentile maid and wet-nurse.*¹² Some of this wine might eventually reach the market, to be sold to Jews and non-Jews, as shall be explored further on. Another function of landed property was social. In Iberia, Jews close to Muslim and Christian potentates displayed their social standing and elevated life style by the possession of large estates. Often they were given ownership by the ruler itself, which might also mean that they could be deprived of it by a whim.

In Iberia, where the quality of the source material is best, we can also make out significant numbers of agricultural entrepreneurs who managed estates belonging to a landlord, usually an ecclesiastical body. This was also the case in France, as shown by one exceptionally well documented case in Vienne. In exchange for holdings in the countryside, one Jew and his sons were given a plot in town, two houses, and the hereditary stewardship of the monastery Saint-André-le-bas, to be *responsible for the affairs of the monks and be charged with their service and help them in their*

¹² Grossman, 1975a: 194–198, the text quoted on 196.

sustenance.¹³ Others leased land and brought fallow soil into cultivation, usually by contracting with non-Jewish peasants and laborers to carry out the actual work. Agricultural entrepreneurship appears as the most fitting means to apply a number of resources: the urban habitat and proximity to urban markets, the possession of know-how and of capital looking for profitable investment, and the demand stimulated by a growing population, economy and polity. Jews participated alongside others in this booming activity, which has been credited for Barcelona to have “established the bases for initial accumulation of capital, which facilitated the development of market-oriented production around the year 1100”. Even more, “In Catalonia generally the agricultural sector proved the first to break through owing to the predominance of allodial property, the ease of real estate transfers, the creation of local markets, and the rapid penetration of coinage into the country-side”.¹⁴

One main way for money to penetrate into the country-side and for easing real estate transfers was by the development of a mortgage market for landed property and its produce, by accepting land and its fruits in lieu of payment owed for merchandise or moneys lent. Indeed, landed pledges or pawns are ubiquitous in the source material, in most instances as security for moneys lent. In short, this is credit, which appears at the same time as landholding and intertwined with it, at the very beginnings of Jewish settlement both in central France and in Muslim Iberia. Judging by the Latin, Arabic and Hebrew record, Jews all over southern Europe participated whole-heartedly in this activity by which capital was both raised and invested. While it is true that some Jews were indebted to non-Jews, the other way round was much more common, in Iberia by a ratio of 1:5. Again, we are nowhere near the actual volume of transactions and this is certainly no workable statistic. But it can be taken to signify that Jews were much more likely to act as lenders than as borrowers. In central France of the mid-10th century, in the vicinity of Vienne, a good number of landed properties, small parcels of vineyards, were mortgaged for stretches of two to three years to Jews by their Gentile neighbors as surety for small loans.¹⁵ This indicates the existence of a low-end lending market in rural areas in southern and central France. In all cases interest was to be paid in produce, a yearly quantity of new wine. This begs the question,

¹³ Cartulaire de Saint-André-le-bas-de Vienne, 1869: 68–69, no. 91.

¹⁴ Ruiz Domenec, 1977: 286; Bensch, 1995: 121.

¹⁵ Cartulaire de Saint-André-le-bas-de Vienne, 1869: 6–7, 52–53, 74, nos. 5, 63, 64, 99.

to be dealt with in the following, to what use such wine deliveries would be put.

Neither did the well-heeled refrain from borrowing against landed collateral, for instance the countess of Carcassonne who before 959 engaged properties to two Jews in exchange for the very substantial sum of 50 pounds. Some hundred years later, the tithe of an entire village in north-eastern France was pledged for a loan of seven pounds.¹⁶ Around Tudela in Spain, the greater part of the extant transactions in real estate were pledges for loans, for instance *half that village of Cascante that I Petrus of Cascante mortgage to you don Jucef brother of don Albofazán for a year inclusive of judicial rights for 2000 morabetinos*, an immense sum and the largest met for a single transaction in all our material from Iberia.¹⁷ The basic situation is concisely summed up in a privilege granted in 1143 by the local bishop to the same Albofazán and his brothers: *with good heart and because of the manifold services that you have done to me and still do to my church*, relief is granted from tithes payable in the past *on lands that you have bought and accepted in pledge from Christians*.¹⁸ Jewish landholding in the surroundings of both Vienne and Tudela and probably in many more places was thus tied, largely or to some extent, to money lending to non-Jews. It stands to reason that such massive engagement in agricultural credit can be linked, as has recently been suggested, to the structurally conditioned, recurrent and extensive credit needs of the wine-producing sector.¹⁹ Conversely, in Southern Europe the mortgaging by Jews of their real property, to non-Jews as to fellow Jews, was the prime procedure to raise capital for all sorts of commercial ventures or other purposes.

One further economic function is the sale and marketing of agricultural produce. One can assume that this came rarely into play for the owners of small vineyards who made up the majority of landholders. However, since the onset of documentation in the early 9th century, this has been a topic in ecclesiastical polemics, blaming the Jews for cornering the market in foodstuffs and for unloading on Gentiles ritually unclean portions of their produce. Thus Agobard of Lyon complained that the Jews *boast that they have received from Christians many, many pounds of silver from the sale of*

¹⁶ Histoire générale de Languedoc: vol. III, 151, and vol. V, 232–234, no. 106, cf. Régéné, 1912: 61; Rashi, Responsa, 1943: no. 240.

¹⁷ Navarra Judaica 2, 1995: 45–6, no. 35. For the tricky issue of the value and exchange rate of this widely used Almoravid gold coin see Bensch, 1995: 104–6 and note 39, and above Part I, ch. 4, note 125.

¹⁸ Navarra Judaica 2, 1995: 32–33, no. 13.

¹⁹ Soloveitchik, 2003.

wine. His successor Amolo perceived an even more sinister purpose: *Also, their wine, often polluted on purpose, which they drink and sell all the time in many our parishes, serves to consecrate the Holy Mass.* Jews are credited here with successful marketing in order to vent their innate anti-Christian hostility. Does this clearly polemical grudge disqualify the economic implication to be drawn from the sources?²⁰ Altogether, there is some but not a great lot of additional evidence for an engagement of Jews in the sale of wine, be it of their own growth, from plots mortgaged to them, from debts paid in produce, or just as a commercial item. One Spanish Responsum of the late 10th to early 11th century discusses the tax due from those who market their own wine or the fruits of others. A query to Rashi (later 11th century France) speaks of Rachel who sold wine in order to redeem pawns held by a Gentile, hardly an indication for regular marketing. In roughly the same period, in 1090, the privilege by the German king to the Jews of Speyer gave them license to *sell their wine to Christians*.²¹ The spare source material makes an engagement in the wine trade probable, which will be much better documented in later centuries.²²

The employment of Gentiles by Jews was a charged issue for medieval contemporaries, and remained such also for historians, for instance Eliyahu Ashtor with his proud dictum on Jewish toil quoted above. Non-Jews would be employed as daily or seasonal wage labor, as contractors at fixed rates, or in varying sharecropping arrangements. To different degrees, such service involved a hierarchical relationship, in which Jews were—contrary to Christian doctrine—in a commanding position. Since

²⁰ Agobardi Lugdunensis Opera, 1981: 194; Amulo, 1852: col. 170D. Agobard's complaint has been used to buttress a somewhat hyperbolic view of Jewish business acumen: Bachrach, 1977a: 94: "In the Lyonnais, for example, Jewish wholesale and retail dealers in meat and wine dominated the local markets. The wine merchants also seem to have played a role in supplying the imperial court at Aachen with their wares. These businesses, according to a contemporary report, were very profitable." Blumenkranz, 1959: 115, used the same "contemporary report" but confined himself to "large suppliers of the market".

²¹ Spanish Responsum: Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 205. The editor Joel Müller thought that the Responsum came from France, but see Grossman, 1995: 61–2, note 57, for convincing arguments to place it in Muslim Spain. The same Halakhic problem and solution in a shorter Responsum, written according to Grossman, 2000: 276, by the same sages, either R. Nathan or R. Hanokh ben Moses (d. 1014): Responsen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 165. Rachel: Rashi, Responsa, 1943: no. 240. Speyer 1090: Linder, 1997: 395, no. 609.

²² Except for indirect clues in the Halakhic material, there is insufficient information to verify a recent thesis whereby Ashkenazic Jews, driven by a ritual instinct of deep revulsion towards Gentile wine, refrained from buying such wine as merchandise but did accept it in place of payment for debts: Soloveitchik, 2003.

Late Antiquity, this perceived anomaly has painted the evidence in bold polemical colors, making it very difficult to decide whether the non-Jews working the land of Jews were real or virtual ones put there for the sake of the argument. Thus in the earliest medieval reference to landholding by Jews, Pope Stephen's III letter of 768–772 found fault that in Septimania *Christian men cultivate their* [the Jews'] *vineyards and fields*. Similar around 845 in archbishop Amolo of Lyon's polemic, that *some of their* [Christian] *maids and man-servants keep the Sabbath with them* [the Jews] *and work with them on Sundays*.²³ Later evidence makes it clear that this was not a mere talking-point of zealous church-men. In late 11th century France, Talmudic scholars found reason to scrutinize whether

*an Israelite who has a field or a vineyard, may he let a Gentile plough and sow and harvest it and pick [the grapes] on the Sabbath, that is when the Gentile has received it [the field or vineyard] by a half or a third or a fourth? But if he [the Gentile] works it for money and labors in it even as a contractor, then...*²⁴

A third or a fourth means of course sharecropping while *as a contractor* means the alternative arrangement whereby work is done for fixed remuneration. It is worth noting that the ruling takes into account the entire work load of the agricultural year, in both arable and vintage cultivation. The Iberian and Italian planting contract (*ad complantandum*) mentioned above appears in Hebrew garb as far away as Ashkenaz, in a query sent to Gershom "Light of the Exile": *a Gentile to whom Reuben gave land to plant at one half*.²⁵ Contrary to a notion still current in scholarship, our sources mention no slaves employed on agricultural holdings of Jews, even though this period definitely knew slaves working in agriculture.²⁶

Altogether, a "body of Jewish peasantry" is difficult to establish, in France, Italy or even Iberia. Yet, the Hebrew sources emphatically do not bear out Romano's implied conclusion—derived at solely from Latin sources—that in Iberia no Jews made a living from agriculture. Some people clearly drew their income from it, as for instance a widow furnished by her brother *with a courtyard and a vineyard so that she could draw her sustenance from them*. Returns from agricultural land could be substantial: *Reuben raised an orphan in his courtyard and that orphan had land*

²³ Linder, 1997: 444, no. 724, and above, chapter 3, note 50; Amulo, 1852: col. 170D.

²⁴ Mahzor Vitry, 1923: no. 91, and similar there nos. 92, 93.

²⁵ Gershom ben Jehudah, 1955: no. 53.

²⁶ For the historiographical background to this notion see the previous chapter on the slave trade.

*bringing him fifty gold coins per year.*²⁷ A long and detailed Responsum of the late 10th to early 11th century, again from Muslim Spain, deals with the need to tax landed holdings in the same way merchandise and business capital are levied, as well as taxing those who market their own wine or the agricultural products of others.²⁸ The implication is clear: at least in Muslim Iberia, numbers of Jews substantial enough to count in tax returns derived their income, or part of it, directly from agriculture.

Does this make them into peasants? Some clearly labored in the sweat of their own brow: *Jacob married Lea and she brought for her dowry a field, and they had sons and daughters born to them. And when the sons grew up they helped their father to fence in Lea's field and plant it with beautiful trees and vines until it became a first rate vineyard.*²⁹ This might have been a more wide-spread occurrence, as suggested by Hebrew form letters for sharecropping contracts, where both sides—the owner of the holding and the laborer contracted to work it—would be obligated by a Hebrew text. The reasonable inference is that both were Jewish:

*And I contracted to him the vineyard that I have here in Lucena; and some of it is waste without vines so that he shall plant and renovate between the vines wherever necessary; and he shall work this vineyard with pruning and digging so and so many years with good work; and he shall haul there on his own account so and so many loads of manure in such and such a time span; and he shall safeguard the vineyard, and bring the grapes to the wine press, and tread them; and for all this he shall receive such and such a part of the fruits and after a time when all the conditions are met he shall receive such and such a part of the vineyard and its fruits.*³⁰

This is an exact Hebrew rendering of the provisions of the sharecropping contract called *ad complantandum* (“for planting”) and quoted above. In 1154, the prior of a Toledo monastery used an almost identical Latin version to contract with a Jew called Avenzafo, who was to *work and dig*

²⁷ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: nos. 96, 116.

²⁸ Responsonen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 205. The editor Joel Müller thought that the Responsum came from France, but see Grossman, 1995: 61–2, note 57, for convincing arguments to place it in Muslim Spain. The same Halakhic problem and solution in a shorter Responsum, written according to Grossman, 2000: 276, by the same sages, either R. Nathan or R. Hanokh ben Moses (d. 1014): Responsonen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 165.

²⁹ A query to Hanokh ben Moses (d. 1014): Responsonen der Lehrer des Ostens, 1888: no. 202.

³⁰ Bills and Contracts from Lucena, 1994: 104–5, as well as less detailed on 113. Very similar a form letter for the same matter from Barcelona, one hundred years later: Sepher Haschetaroth, 1898/1967: 99.

and plant and manure a holding 5 km north-west of the city, eventually to receive part of it in perpetuity.³¹ A more complex situation can be seen over the span of fifty years at Talavera de la Reina, where a number of local Jews had ongoing dealings with the nunnery of San Clemente, based in Toledo some 80 km to the east but owner of extensive lands in Talavera. They exchanged with the monastery fields and olive groves, one time a mere number of olive trees; they rented and planted vacant land (*white soil*); and seemed in general to have functioned as entrepreneurial work force and semi-independent local agents of the nunnery.³² There were thus Jews whose livelihood depended entirely or mainly on agricultural pursuits, as entrepreneurs or as laborers. But again, the size, type, and location of most holdings suggest that for the majority of owners this was not the main livelihood but rather a subsidiary one, in addition to other occupations.

Such low-key tenor and small-scale dimensions do not sit well with exalted claims for a momentous role in agricultural innovation. Jews have been credited with “early medieval pioneering contributions to European agriculture”; with the “re-introduction of olive-growing in Calabria after an era of grave decline”; with having “first introduced and cultivated the olive in Spain”; with “introducing in Khazaria various methods of irrigating the dry lands and cultivating rice”; and with “first cultivating the watermelon in France”. We have not found any sources to corroborate these claims.³³

The extent of landholding and especially the fact that properties intermingled to such a degree with that of non-Jews, has important implications beyond economics. They directly contradict established wisdom

³¹ Ruiz Domenec, 1977: 273; Bensch, 1995: 90, 110; Baer, 1929–1936: vol. II: 16, no. 33.

³² Leon Tello, 1979: 7, nos. 12, 13; 14, no. 39; 15, no. 42; 16, nos. 45, 46.

³³ “Pioneering contributions”: Baron, *Economic History*, EJ, vol. 6: 109; Calabria: Falcone, 1983: 216. The appendix adduced there for this statement does not mention a single Jew. Spain: Roth, Norman, 1994: 152. By the wording one might assume that the author embraces this statement, until his rider in note 73, where one learns that it was taken from an undocumented and apparently unreliable source. Khazaria: Baron, 1957: III, 197, without reference. Watermelon: Baron, 1957: IV, 163: “the French term *bousache* for watermelon makes it likely that Jews were the first to cultivate it in France”, without reference. I have been unable to find any further mention of *bousache* (recte *pastèque*, Arabic *battikh*, Hebrew *avatihah*) for watermelon, not even in the different editions of the *august Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, nor for its alleged Jewish background. Rather, watermelons were apparently introduced into southern Europe by the Moorish conquerors of Spain, who left evidence of its cultivation at Cordoba in 961 and Seville in 1158: Andrew M. Watson, *Agricultural innovation in the early Islamic world: the diffusion of crops and farming techniques, 700–1100*, Cambridge 1983, 58–61.

on Christian-Jewish relations as laid down by two eminent French medievalists: Georges Duby who thought that in Mâcon, “the Jewish colony constituted a foreign body encysted [sic!] in the Christian milieu”; and Robert Latouche who saw the Jewish community of Vienne as “a veritable *ghetto*”.³⁴ Rather, amongst these Jews there was a developed sense of landed proprietorship. For instance, a man from Germany bequeathed a total of four vineyards, amongst them *one that I have from my fathers and their fathers*. Another man, probably in France, also willed four vineyards and stated: *I do not wish that my forefathers’ nahala [estate or hereditary possession] should come into the hands of strangers* [in this case Jewish ones]. In yet another query to Rashi (end of 11th century): *and I was distressed that the nahala of my fathers should be dispossessed by the Gentile*. The last text has also been understood to witness a further challenge to received wisdom: namely the possibility that some Jews might have been integrated into the feudal order.³⁵ In this particular long-drawn out affair, Jews and Jewesses, a Gentile, and the high-ranking lord of an unidentified place in France contended over a tithe and a vineyard that had previously been mortgaged for movable pawns. In the course of these maneuvers, Lea asked the lord *to return the tithe to her in the manner of a reward [prass], so that she may hold it from him as other recipients of prass [hold] from the lords, and she held it a number of years; and when she died, it [the tithe] returned to him*. The whole language and context is highly reminiscent of the feudal arrangement: a “benefice” [*prass* in Hebrew, *beneficium* or *feudum* in Latin] to be “held” from a superior “as do other recipients”, to “return” [escheat] to the lord after the death of the beneficiary. True, the word *prass* does not reappear anywhere else in medieval Rabbinic Hebrew in a similar meaning, and neither do situations similar to the one described here.³⁶

³⁴ Duby, 1971: 110; Latouche, 1966: 195.

³⁵ Responsen der Weisen von Frankreich, 1881: no. 49; Rashi, Responsa, 1943: nos. 242, 240; and see Baer, 1949: 321–322, and Schwarzfuchs, 2001: 80–1.

³⁶ Grossman, 2004: 199 (Hebrew version of 2001, the passage does not appear in the English translation) understands the text similar to our reading, however without commenting. Schwarzfuchs thought that the *lord* of the text was the count of Champagne, a conjecture for which there is no indication. Both he and Baer held *prass* to be an awkward Hebrew translation of *feudum* rather than the exact rendering of the Latin *beneficium*. In another Responsum, by Jehudah ha-Cohen, the phrase *baal chazer* [possessor of a yard or garden or courtyard] has been thought to designate yet another feudal rank, namely a Jewish *lord of the manor*: Agus, 1965: 83. The humble *chazer*, met time and again in rabbinic writings, does not really lend itself to such an interpretation.

The period of Jewish landholding was one of renewed population growth. Under such conditions, investment in landed possessions and in agricultural production made eminent economic sense. In contrast, the divestment of Jews of their landed possessions in the 11th and 12th century is a more difficult question and not solely one of economics. That there was such a process is entirely clear from the external record, which shows that in most places by the 11th and at the latest by the 12th century Jewish landed possessions were sold or transferred by some other ways into Christian hands. In the Iberian Peninsula the same process was to take place somewhat later and took much longer. Some indications can be gathered from the internal Jewish evidence: Meshullam bar Kalonymos (died ca. 1000/1010) wrote: *in this [our] time it is the custom to include landed and mobile [properties in the tax assignment]; while the early generations [in the Talmudic Middle East] realized the woman's Ketubah only from land, now we realize it from landed and mobile property*. A similar position was taken in Germany by Gershom "the Light of Exile" (died 1028).³⁷ By the late 12th and 13th century the Tosaphists (commentators) of Northern France did not discuss mortgages any more, in clear contrast to the earlier southern French sages.³⁸

There are a few possible approaches to the question why Jews divested themselves or were divested of their lands. The most common one maintains that "because of the Church laws' most of the Jews of France were driven from the branch of agriculture".³⁹ We have more than once seen the opinions of ecclesiastical authors on Jewish landownership, predicated as they were on the scandal of Jewish rule over Christians. We have also seen that many modern scholars have taken such utterances at face value. If the preaching of the Church was indeed responsible, one has to ask why it remained ineffective for over half a millennium, only to be heard and acted upon by the holders of power after the turn of the millennium. It is of course entirely possible that in this as in other matters it took the Gregorian Reform and the new religious sensitivity of the period to make people listen. But there is still a link missing, which can be found in

³⁷ Responsa of the Early Geonim, 1848: no. 132; Gershom ben Jehudah, 1955: no. 59. Two Responsa, by Joseph Tov Elem (Meir ben Barukh, 1891: no. 941) and Rashi (Responsa, 1943: no. 248) have been viewed as evidence for a withdrawal from agriculture: Eidelberg, 1954. This has been convincingly critiqued by Soloveitchik, 1990: 60.

³⁸ Soloveitchik, 1971–1972a: 322.

³⁹ Eidelberg, 1954: 48.

the proposal of Robert Moore and Richard Landes to see the moving factor in the “Castellan Revolution”.

Robert Moore wrote: The greatest losers by the enormous changes which engulfed rural Europe in the 11th century had been those who possessed land, but not in sufficient quantity or with sufficient patronage to defend it against the castellans and greater lords, who in those years established their seigneuries [lordships] wherever there was profit to be had from cultivation of the soil. Among such landowners in several regions were Jews, in numbers certainly not negligible, though incapable of any kind of useful estimation. And Richard Landes: First among the allodial landholders to lose in this process the Jews were probably prominent; this marks the moment Jews were driven from the land into the city where their financial activities will become so prominent.⁴⁰

This “castellan revolution” first occurred in Burgundy, from where it spread to other regions. Burgundy, unlike northern France and similar to southern France, northern Spain and southern Italy was until then characterized by a system of landholding of

a relatively large number of free landowners in control of small estates worked by a few slaves, and also by the number of free peasants who possessed their land allodially [non-feudal] or in tenancy. It may well be that in Burgundy, as in these other regions, allodial property disappeared in the late tenth century and was replaced by ‘feudal tenures’.⁴¹

It was exactly in regions of small-holding and allodial tenures, not in the ones dominated by huge feudal manors, that we have found Jews participating in the landholding regime. When this regime changed, as it did in Burgundy in the 11th century, Jewish landholding largely disappeared. By such a view, the late 11th century *prass* in the query to Rashi quoted above witnessed a last and apparently futile attempt to integrate Jewish landholding into an agrarian regime turning feudal. How futile is borne out by another Hebrew text from the Cairo Genizah. It tells of the dispossession by a ruler, apparently the duke of Normandy in the early 11th century, of a Jew called Reuben b. Isaac from Rouen, who *had waxed rich in silver, gold and labor of his land*. The man had *sent his only son with his servants out to his work in the field*, where he was killed by Gentiles. *Thereupon the lord became his enemy. For when he saw his sorrow, he despoiled him, taking everything which he had and leaving him as an empty vessel; for he*

⁴⁰ Moore, 1992: 37–8; Landes, 1996: 106–7.

⁴¹ Verhulst, 1991: 197–8.

said to him: "You are old and do not have a son—thus I will have all these riches."⁴² Abelard (died 1142) in his "Dialogue between a Philosopher, a Jew and a Christian" combined both explanations when he put a speech of vindication in the mouth of his Jew: "*we are allowed to possess neither fields nor vineyards nor any landed estates, because there is no one who can protect them for us from open or devious attack. Consequently, the principal gain that is left for us is that we sustain our miserable lives here by lending money at interest to Gentiles.*"⁴³

Yet another explanation has the advantage of being solidly grounded in sources, but also the drawback of a very limited geographic scope. It derives from recent investigations by the French historian Henri Falque-Vert into the micro-history of the village of Vitrieu near Vienne; by sheer chance the very place where we have found an extraordinary concentration of Jewish landed property. His observations on the chronology of the local land market can be connected to the fact that Jews there began to divest themselves of their landed property—mainly vineyards as we have seen—in the late 10th and early 11th century. This was the time when the value of wine-growing lands around Vienne had risen to an all-time peak, four to five times that of arable. This was also the time when the land market had become the most volatile in recorded history.⁴⁴ It is surely not far-fetched to see here a parallel to the Catalanian process whereby money penetrated into the country-side and real estate transfers were eased, not least by the spread of mortgaging which is indeed well evidenced in the region. Divestment by Jews can thus also be seen as an economic move that took advantage of the high level of land prices attained by then. This does not rule out the possible impact of ecclesiastical prohibitions and of sheer expropriation by powerful secular lords. Clearly, the end of our period, earlier in Italy, France and Germany, later in Iberia, saw a process of disinvestment of landed property.

Whatever the reason or combination of reasons, landholding by Jews to a significant extent can thus be seen to have come to an end at the onset of the High Middle Ages. This was, however, not the case at all. As shall be

⁴² Golb, 1998: 553–4, and 19–31 for the text in English, a convincing identification of the hero's place as Rouen, and more speculative arguments for the time of writing and a "hereditary Jewish vassalage in Normandy in the eleventh century". See my detailed reviews of Golb's book in *Zion* 65 (2000): 255–9 (Hebrew), and *Deutsches Archiv* 55 (1999): 845–6 (German).

⁴³ Peter Abelard, *Dialogue of a Philosopher with a Jew and a Christian*, trans. Pierre J. Payer, Toronto 1979, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Falque-Vert, 2004: 45.

explored in future volumes of this book, Jews all over winegrowing Europe and also in further regions will yet again be found involved in agricultural entrepreneurship. The earlier process of disinvestment was no obstacle to a subsequent re-engagement. Contrary to a widely-held image of rural immobility, one did not need to cling to the soil for generations in order to invest in landed concerns. Indeed immobility there was, caused less by an alleged stubborn peasant mentality but rather by systemic poverty. But this did not apply to the suburban agricultural market economy in which we have found Jews mainly engaged. Rather, Jews (and others) managed to acquire land anew and develop other practices, for instance as financiers of wine production. By the same token, they would sell holdings or liquidate their engagement if required by changing economic or political circumstances.

What appears to set apart the Jewish place in the agriculture of the period is its pronounced entrepreneurial character, alongside the much more traditional function of household production. Looking at the timeline, one cannot but notice that in many places where Jews first took residence, they also secured for themselves at that very same time a share in landed property, by purchase or mortgage. Might it be that this was an attempt to hedge ones' bets, to even out the inevitable risk inherent in commercial ventures?

Crafts, Enterprises, and Medicine

All our sources—of every kind, external or internal, Halakhic or ecclesiastical, even funerary epigraphy—are slanted towards commerce, money and landed property. This has to do with the fact that the written Hebrew record was largely produced for members of the possessing classes, whose occupations tended to be in these fields. It also has to do with the fact that the economic activities of Jews likely to be noticed by majority society and its Latinate writers were the ones that involved exchanges. Christian ethics had problems of its own with commercial exchanges, which gave rise to a frequent discourse and indeed a whole genre of polemical literature penned by ecclesiastic writers, of which the two Byzantine tales of *Doctrina Jacobi* and *Christ the Guarantor Savior* (Part I, ch. 1, above) were probably the earliest. The activities of humble craftsmen and crafts-women were unlikely to arouse such fervor. They were the least likely of all occupational groups to find their way into the written record also for their lowly social standing and for their activities that usually did not

necessitate written contracts. The dearth and slant of information is thus not surprising and will be somewhat redressed only in the Later Middle Ages. Then documentation for significant numbers of craftsmen will be forthcoming, in Byzantium and Italy (where there is already evidence from the previous periods), in Iberia (where there is some earlier record), and even in Ashkenaz (where previously there is almost none). All this means that in the early period treated here we shall never know the real weight and proportion of non-commercial livelihoods, let alone their place in the broader economy. The following sub-chapter seeks to sketch an approximate picture, noting what crafts, enterprises, and services rendered by the poor for the well-off can be established from the sources.

In Late Antiquity, the archaeological and written record from the Eastern Empire and to some extent also from Italy leaves no doubt to the existence of many men (and also some women) in a broad range of crafts, in the textile business, in glassblowing, metallurgy and others. In Iberia, Northern France, Germany, and Eastern Europe no evidence is extant, little wonder given the small to non-existing Jewish populations we have made out there. In the Middle Ages proper, there is a clear dividing line between Southern Europe—Byzantium, Italy and Iberia—and the North. In Ashkenaz Jewish artisans are a rare occurrence. A few texts of the 11th century can be understood to refer to such craftsmen working for internal needs. Artisans catering for Jewish and at times also for Gentile customers become more clearly visible by the 12th/13th centuries and studies for the Later Middle Ages clearly indicate that many more must have existed than just the few ones mentioned in the sources.⁴⁵ There is no information at all on Eastern Europe, once more a paucity corresponding to the negligible population numbers noted.

In stark contrast, in medieval Byzantium a plethora of craftsmen is visible in a broad range of professions and especially in the textile branches including silk-working, dyeing, as well as tannery. Whether this amounts to a “major impact the Jews may have exerted on the Byzantine silk industry” can only be decided by quantitative analysis for which no data exist.⁴⁶ In medieval Italy, especially in the South and here particularly in Sicily, by far the most important employment was again in the textile branches, as dyers, walkers, and silk-workers, the latter also introduced from coastal cities of nearby Byzantium. But this too is far removed from

⁴⁵ Toch, 1993 and 2008a.

⁴⁶ Thus Muthesius, 1992: 25.

the monopoly claimed for Jews in the dyeing and weaving industries, in the manufacture of silk and woolen brocades and of dyed cloths. In Iberia of Late Antiquity and the Visigothic period there is practically no information. The two sources possibly hinting to artisanal livelihoods are too vague in their dating and meaning to permit a plain conclusion. In the medieval period, the situation is different, and a range of professions becomes visible in Iberia: goldsmiths, textile workers, especially in silk (a staple export by Genizah merchants), tanners, tailors, cobblers, and others. There are also some hints to Jewish women practicing crafts. Such contrast is once again indicative of the demographic dearth of the first medieval centuries and the subsequent population growth, as argued in this book. Here too scholars have been overly enthusiastic in their reading of the sources, for instance “that Jews had a monopoly in the craft of dyeing in Moslem Spain, even as it was a Jewish occupation in other Moslem countries.”⁴⁷ We have found this to be nothing more than an innocent reference to the harvesting of a dyeing agent, the *Kermes* insect collected by Jewish entrepreneurs in places in southern France and Iberia.

Halfway between commerce and crafts we find entrepreneurs mobilizing and exploiting local resources. The ones dealing in the just-mentioned crimson dye-stuff would be a prime example, both for the technical and logistic problems of harvesting it from the scrub vegetation of the region and for the need to purchase permission from local lords to do so. In the south of France, Jews also ran flour mills and large scale salt-pans, the latter possibly also in one place in Eastern Germany. In Iberia, Jews were active as building contractors for Christian rulers. They also managed public baths, mills and olive presses. In Byzantium with its fluid and informal structure of crafts there was a place for Jewish entrepreneurs with a hand in the silk trade.⁴⁸ The most widespread and economically significant entrepreneurial activity was to develop agricultural resources in the surroundings of Southern European towns. Jews thus participated in the commercializing and monetizing of agricultural activity, the one feature that can indeed be counted as a modernizing one. Agricultural entrepreneurship also connects directly, by mortgaging, to money lending and the penetration of money relations into the countryside. No monopoly here either, as this and so many other occupational positions were shared by Jews and many more non-Jews.

⁴⁷ Ashtor, 1992: II, 198.

⁴⁸ See Maniatis, 1999.

Physicians are the one profession found from the very beginnings and everywhere, from Byzantium to the lands of the Franks and Iberia. Their situation is very differently portrayed in Latin and in Hebrew sources. A look at the evidence from France and Germany might pin-point the problem. Jewish physicians appear in the Latin record from the earliest time. A bishop, apparently of Salzburg and possibly bishop Arno who died in 821, asked an acquaintance to send him *that Jewish or Slav doctor called N.*⁴⁹ The letter was included by the scribes of the bishopric in a collection of form letters, a hint that the call for such a doctor was perhaps not a single occurrence. Indeed, Jewish physicians attending Christian rulers, lay and ecclesiastic, became a fixed feature in Latin writings from the Carolingian period onwards. Their proximity to the elite made them a convenient vehicle to express different messages, for good and for worse, which once again poses the familiar problem of virtual Jews as opposed to real-life ones. The next reference, in Hincmar of Reims' *Annals of St. Bertin*, notes for the year 877 the death of Emperor Charles II the Bald:

Charles, stricken by a fever, drank a powder, which his Jewish doctor Zedechias, whom he loved and trusted all too much, had given him to cure his sickness. But he had drunk a poison for which there was no antidote.

The tale was immediately taken up by two further chroniclers, however with some reservation: *it is said; rumor has it.*⁵⁰ The idea had such strong appeal that almost a thousand years later Georg Heinrich Pertz, the august editor-in-chief of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, did not hesitate to emend another tale, of King Hugh Capet's death in 996, to read *that is killed by Jews, apparently doctors, as Hincmar wrote of Charles the Bald.*⁵¹ The murderous physician was thus to become part of the broader trope of the Jewish menace to Christianity (or to Communism, as in Joseph Stalin's doctors' plot of 1952).

The theme of proximity and close contact could be played upon in yet a different way, as one more device to make the Jew bear witness to Christian truth. After long discussions with his patron the bishop, the "good" Jewish doctor is eventually made to see the truth and converts to Christianity, in Liège ca. 1031 and in Trier ca. 1102 to 1124.⁵² In the former case the doctor,

⁴⁹ *Formulae Merowingici et Karolini aevi*, 1882: 448, no. 38.

⁵⁰ The *Annals of Saint-Bertin*, 1991: 202. The two other chronicles are *Annales Vedastini* and *Regionis chronica*, in: Rau, 1969: 292; Rau, 1960: 252–253.

⁵¹ Above, Part I, Chapter 3, note 71.

⁵² *Gesta episcoporum Leodiensium*, 1846: 216, ch. 44; *Gesta Treverorum*, 1848: 195, ch. 21.

outstanding in the art of medicine, treated not only the bishop but also the Emperor, an enhancement of the missionary success with which the bishop is credited. In the latter case, the Jew is presented as *most erudite in the art of physics, the best in computing, the most perfect in Hebrew letters and all the science of Judaism, and one who led a chivalrous lifestyle*. This sounds hyperbolic, but elevated social standing is indeed much in evidence with real-life Jewish doctors in contemporary Spain as well as with the ones who attended German emperors in the Later Middle Ages. In Muslim Spain and possibly also in Southern Italy, they were closest to rulers and wielded a tremendous influence in Jewish society, as suggested by the figures of Hasdai ibn-Shaprut and Maimonides.⁵³ To bear witness to Christian truth can also be achieved by making the Jewish doctor the mouthpiece of rationalistic skepticism eventually trumped by simple Christian belief. In a tale originally by Gregory of Tours and re-worked in the 10th century, a peasant asks the saint to intercede for his lame son during a procession of relics at Toul. For his pains he gets a measure of blasphemy and scorn from a passing Jew: *What service can you ask of someone who is himself already rigid and motionless?*⁵⁴ Instead, the Jew offers his own medical advice, only to be confounded by the miraculous healing of the boy.

In contrast to such literary elaborations, Halakhic writing has almost nothing to say about physicians besides trivial references to medical treatment. Within Jewish society of Northern Europe, they apparently did not command the same prestige as with their Christian neighbors. A reference by Eliezer ben Nathan of Mainz (ca. 1090 to ca. 1170) to *an amulet made by an expert doctor* can be juxtaposed to the highly learned and rational profile accorded by Christian writers. Another case discussed by the same sage puts the physician and the artisan on the same level, for the nuisance caused to neighbors by the constant coming and going of customers.⁵⁵ This practical craft aspect seems more characteristic of reality than the erudite one suggested by the ecclesiastical sources. In the Later Middle Ages a large range of practitioners of healing will become visible: humble dispensers of medicine and ointments, simple surgeons, a sizable number

⁵³ Assis, 1996; Wenninger, 1995. A social history of Jewish physicians is still lacking, but see Shatzmiller, 1994.

⁵⁴ Ex miraculis S. Mansueti auctore Adson, 1841: 512, ch. 2,20.

⁵⁵ Eliezer ben Nathan, 1926: Sabbath, no. 350; Responsa, no. 45.

of specialists in ophthalmology and dentistry, veterinary surgeons, and women practicing general medicine as well as midwifery.⁵⁶

The Internal Jewish Economy and the Domestic Mode of Production

“Under normal circumstances, the members of a given community required a series of specifically Jewish services and products that met local standards for such disparate concerns as: kosher edibles, capable scholars, scribes etc. . . . This (internal or inner) economy is defined by its inward orientation. It assumes Jewish preparation and production of goods, and training for services, specifically for the benefit of Jews.”⁵⁷

Such a broad definition, including the production of non-material religious and legal values, would lead us to consider Jewish life in all its elements, which cannot be the task of this book. In a narrower sense, one can ask to what degree were these tiny Diaspora groups independent of or dependent on their surroundings for producing the food, shelter, clothing and other elements of their daily livelihood. A first quandary concerns, as always, the sources. Our previous statement on the improbability of craftsmen entering into the written record holds even more for the men and women employed to work for the households of the well-to-do and for communities, as producers of consumption goods or of services. Such lowly people left only the slightest traces, if at all, to their existence. To take the most obvious case, kosher butchers are mentioned but twice in our material, even though reason (or rather our instinctive grasp of Judaism) commands that they must have been present in each and every community ever since.⁵⁸ After all, the *shohet* (butcher) is as much part of Jewish folklore as is the *mohel* (circumciser). For once, the problem is not solely one of missing sources. We can suggest another reason why there are so few craftsmen and craftswomen in the record, namely that they did not yet exist. Chronologically, this society was in an early stage of occupational differentiation, in which a whole range of activities were not yet performed by specialized craftspeople. This is not something peculiar to Jews: for exactly the same period the trade emporia of north-western

⁵⁶ Toch, 2008a: 209–10.

⁵⁷ Holo, 2009: 78.

⁵⁸ Thus for instance Katz, Jacob, 1995: 44.

Europe have been characterized as “products of kin-based societies in which the division of labour was still in an embryonic state.”⁵⁹

The Jewish religious tradition (Babylonian Talmud—Chullin 2a, Chapter I) is straightforward in this regard: *All may slaughter, and their act of slaughter is valid, except for a deaf-mute, an imbecile or a minor, lest they invalidate their slaughter; and if any of these slaughtered while others were standing over them [supervised them], their act of slaughter is valid.* This is home butchering by non-professionals, by men (and women!) held as a matter of routine to be proficient in the relevant commands and techniques.⁶⁰ A household task was also the preparation of kosher wine which we have found to be the most significant feature of Jewish landholding. For considerable numbers of vineyard owners and their households, the labor invested must have been significant, as in the query from Regensburg already quoted in this chapter: *When the days of vintage came and he was at the gathering of the grapes, he went there with his wife and left no one in his house except for one small daughter and a Gentile maid and wet-nurse.*⁶¹ The home baking of bread should be viewed in a similar way. To wit, a brawl between the rural Jews and Jewesses living around Venosa was fought *with long staves used for scraping the oven and charred by fire, with these the men and woman beat one another . . . And the women came out from their ovens, and they struck the men with their forks.*⁶²

“Household production is the production of goods and services by the members of a household for their own consumption, using their own capital and their own unpaid labor. Goods and services produced by households for their own use include accommodation, meals, clean clothes, and childcare.” Specifically, the term “*subsistence production* fits the definition of household production when the goods produced are used within the household that produced them.”⁶³ If such a large share of consumption needs was met by domestic production rather than by specialized craftspeople and personnel, one has to ask who provided the

⁵⁹ Hodges, 2000: 70.

⁶⁰ For routine slaughtering by women see Grossman, 2004: 190–1. I thank Israel Yuval and Abraham Grossman for enlightening me on ritual slaughtering, even though I remain solely responsible for the thesis presented here.

⁶¹ Above, note 12.

⁶² Bonfil, 2009: 256. The characteristic oven in the courtyard can still—or perhaps again—be found on many farms throughout the Italian peninsula, particularly on “holiday on the farm” (*agriturismo*) establishments.

⁶³ Ironmonger, 2001: 6934–5. For the anthropological, sociological and cultural dimensions see Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Ages Economics*, Chicago and New York 1972, 41–148.

labor for such tasks. One answer is of course Jewish women, whose work will be treated in the following final chapter of this book.⁶⁴ Yet another complementary answer lies in a feature that has come up repeatedly in this book and has been characterized by Jacob Katz as follows:

The Jewish household in European countries, at least in the well-to-do class, was undoubtedly dependent upon 'slaves and handmaids' to perform the major household tasks. The quotation marks framing the expression 'slaves and handmaids' are necessary because their legal status included a number of categories: bought slaves who were in every respect their owner's property, some having been circumcised and ritually immersed in water and others who remained uncircumcised and without such immersion. The term 'slaves and handmaids', however, is also applied to servants merely hired for their work either for a fixed period of time or with no such limit.⁶⁵

So widespread was their employment that the sages developed a large body of writings discussing the ritual and legal problems arising from the presence of non-Jews (later to be called "Shabbes Goy") in serving positions in the Jewish household. An equally important hint lies in the nearly constant complaints by churchmen on the slaves and servants of the Jews, which for once should be taken seriously. Combining both indications, we must come to the conclusion that for a time, from the initial settlement of Jews and for some centuries, one major way to obtain consumption goods was not the market economy but household production by a sizeable work force of women of the household and of dependent man servants and maids. Towards the end of our period, in the 12th century, ecclesiastical pressure must have brought about a significant reduction in the size of this servile work force. This is the time when specialized craftspeople, men and women, indeed begin to appear in the record. This is also the time when Jewish population numbers became more considerable, creating a critical mass of demand that would now increasingly be met in the market-place by specialized craftspeople and community personnel. Even the production of religious goods, treatises, handbooks and a whole range of Halakhic services came to be the province of professionals.⁶⁶ This is also the time when class distinctions and status symbols become visible

⁶⁴ It is no coincidence that one of the reasons for the re-discovery of the household economy by economists in recent decades was the desire "to make women's work visible": Ironmonger, 2001: 6937.

⁶⁵ Katz, Jacob, 1989, and p. 49 for the quotation.

⁶⁶ See my studies of one community and its servants as well as of the entire record for craftspeople, both in Germany of the Later Middle Ages: Toch, 1980 and 1993. For the professionalization of religious services see I. Yuval, *Juristen, Ärzte und Rabbiner: zum*

in Jewish society, which means in our context that the drudgery of the lady of the household might have become a source of embarrassment for the higher ranks.⁶⁷

Beyond economics, our interpretation of household production might provide a new angle to the old question of Jewish dietary apartness. The fact that Jews produced their own food does not necessarily mean that they strictly kept themselves ritually apart. If they baked their own bread the same as did almost everyone else, prepared their own wine, and slaughtered their own meat, one might ask whether these were not simply minutiae of daily life embedded in a household mode of production common to many, rather than choices heavy with meaning for the existential condition of Jews.⁶⁸ All this speaks to the complicated issue of a specific “ritual instinct” which is certainly present in modern-day orthodox Jewish religiosity and has also been seen, perhaps somewhat prematurely, as a central component in the identity and self-view of medieval Jews.⁶⁹

typologischen Vergleich intellektueller Berufsgruppen im Spätmittelalter, in: J. Carlebach (ed.), *Das aschkenasische Rabbinat*, Berlin 1995, 119–31.

⁶⁷ For Germany, I have traced the emergence of more pronounced class distinctions to the 13th century: Toch, 1998a: 16–7.

⁶⁸ As for instance in Bonfil's, 2009: 128, conclusion from the same vignette of *Megillat Ahimaaz* to “attest that Jews did not consume bread baked by Christians nor did they avail themselves of the public oven used by Christians”. Further on, Bonfil uses the same passage to differentiate between the norms of the Babylonian versus the Palestinian halakhic systems.

⁶⁹ The phrase “ritual instinct” is by Jacob Katz, 1989: 231, but see also Robert Bonfil, 1994, and Haim Soloveitchik, 2003.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HISTORICAL CONCLUSIONS

Jewish History, General History

Population numbers and distribution are a critical factor in a realistic appreciation of the weight and role of Jews in the economies of Europe. There can be no doubt that in Late Antiquity some groups in Southern Europe—in Italy and Byzantium—were quite substantial, even though the millions proffered in scholarship do not stand up to scrutiny. Our investigation too has turned up no indications for such extensive figures. In other parts, Spain and southern Gaul, much smaller numbers were present, while northern Gaul had few and the Roman parts of Germany no Jews except for some itinerant merchants or craftsmen. The administrative center of Trier might have been an exception, and the same has been alleged for Cologne. Along the Danube border in Eastern Austria and Hungary more Jews were present, in some places amounting to synagogue communities, and the same holds for the Black Sea shores and the Crimea. In Eastern Europe proper as in Germany beyond the Roman border, no evidence for an antique Jewish presence however slight has been found. Not surprisingly, such existence was confined to the urban landscape of the Roman world, in its Western and even more in its Eastern parts.

In the first centuries of the Middle Ages, Jewish life continued on a diminished scale in the Byzantine Empire. Elsewhere the evidence dwindles to almost nothing, except for a few places in Italy and Southern France. In Visigothic Spain, clear indications for a spare Jewish population—the total absence of archaeological finds and of evidence produced by Jews themselves—are difficult to square with the spate of repressive legislation enacted by the Visigothic monarchy and church after the conversion to Catholicism. In a similar way, in northern and central Gaul our investigation has raised doubts whether the literature of the Church can provide confirmation for actually existing Jews, rather than for virtual ones serving a polemical or rhetorical purpose. Everywhere, indicators point to a severely restricted Jewish population, although to different degrees in different regions. Mention should be made once more of the intriguing hypothesis by Edrei and Mendels on a linguistic-cultural

separation that developed in Late Antiquity between Eastern Rabbinical and Western Biblical Judaism.¹ In this process, the Western Diaspora was left without ties to the new centers of Judaism in the Middle East, and might as a consequence have largely assimilated into the Christian community. This would explain, complementary to our environmental thesis developed below, the unmistakable demographic decline of the late antique Mediterranean Diaspora. It would also explain the clean slate for the renewed build-up of the medieval European Jewish population which was to exhibit a very different cultural and linguistic profile, of a Hebrew-Aramaic writing Rabbinical Judaism clearly nourished from Mid-Eastern—Babylonian and Palestinian—sources.²

By the 9th/10th century this new growth, slow at first and then accelerating, becomes visible everywhere. In Spain and possibly also in Sicily, it is clearly tied to the more favourable Arab regime, to immigration from North Africa and to new links forged with the mid-Eastern centres of Jewish learning. In Italy and southern France the sources for growth are still obscure, but trends are similar. In central and northern Gaul and western Germany, the Jewish presence was a new phenomenon wholly dependent on immigration from the south. From there it drew demographic and cultural resources, to be transmitted and transformed with a time lag to the north. Save for the enigmatic Khazar entity whose Jewish character is much in doubt and which completely disappeared from the stage, Jewish population in Eastern Europe began its growth at the very end of the period under consideration. By this time, the 11th century, both northern and southern Jewries had come of age: part of the European landscape; strong enough to claim their intellectual independence from the centres of religious authority in the Middle East; equipped with ready legal procedures to navigate a range of economic pursuits that were very different from the antique ones. In this and many other senses, the medieval Jewries of Europe represent a rupture, a new phenomenon quite dissimilar to the Greek-speaking Mediterranean Diaspora of Late Antiquity.

How does the Jewish population curve speak to the general one? The proto-Byzantine world knew demographic growth until the plague epidemic of 541/542 and economic growth up to around the year 550. Then a decline set in, gradually till 615/620 (the Persian invasion of Asia Minor), accelerating to 636 (the disastrous battle of Yarmouk against the Arabs),

¹ Edrei & Mendels, 2007.

² Simonsohn, 1974.

and even more abrupt until around 670. The loss to Islam of the Near Eastern territories with their large urban agglomerations must have further shrunk population totals and markets. During the 7th century the Byzantine countryside became of primary importance, the cities few in number and small in size. This was a time of “headlong depression and deflation”.³ There is some evidence for increasing population numbers by the later 8th and definitely in or after the mid-10th century, parallel to and probably caused by Byzantium’s military and political restoration in the Mediterranean and in the East.

For Northern Italy at the end of the Roman period (in particular in the 6th and 7th centuries), it has been stated on strength of the archaeological record that

Many towns disappeared altogether, and those that survived shrank in population and density of settlement.... However, towns in this period perhaps fared better in Italy than they did in most other parts of the former Empire. A large number did survive, and the evidence... shows some continuity of occupation and of urban sophistication. In the 8th and 9th centuries... urban life revived. In Italy the revival was particularly widespread and dramatic.”⁴

In large parts of early medieval Gaul, as well as in today’s German and Belgian regions to the east and north we have found an extended hiatus in the Jewish presence. This again fits the general economic and demographic curve—clearly downwards—that has been pointed out by recent research. At the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries, some regions of the Carolingian empire—the north-western ones—experienced renewed economic and demographic growth, while others—the South with Marseilles is a particularly well researched example—slid into even deeper depression.⁵

In early medieval Iberia the ties that had connected the peninsula to the Mediterranean economy weakened slowly but inexorably. By the early 7th century, there is

evidence of a definitive breakdown of any market economy.... It was not before the middle of the 8th century that incipient symptoms of recovery can be detected. The reconstruction of the market was a slow process and was associated with the development of the Islamic state. All this leaves

³ Laiou, 2002b; the quotation by Lopez, 1959: 69.

⁴ Ward-Perkins, 1988: 16.

⁵ Loseby, 1992, 1998, 2000.

little room for thinking of a massive trade between the East and *Hispania* during the Visigothic period.⁶

In the Balkans where antique Jewish settlement dovetailed the Danube border of Roman civilization, by 420/5 the Huns had established themselves on the Hungarian Plain and by 433 Pannonia itself was finally ceded to the enemy. By 487/8, the towns on the banks of the Danube were abandoned and their Roman inhabitants evacuated to Italy, yielding the stage to successive Germanic, Turkic and Slav entities. There was to be no more urban life until the re-conquest of the Balkans south of the Danube by Byzantium in the 10th century.

The time-line is thus quite clear and similar in almost all parts of Europe: by the 7th century towns dwindle into “black-earth nothingness”, to reappear again in the 9th century.⁷ Jews, a distinctly urban segment, disappear in many places even earlier. From the 9th century onwards, new medieval Jewries were formed in both Iberia and the areas north of the Alps, while the old-settled ones of Byzantium, Italy and Southern France changed their character thoroughly. How is one to explain this remarkable congruence in the different regions of Europe, under so diverse regimes as Christianity and Islam? Is there a “unifying theory” to explain their convergence on a single time-line? It might be worthwhile to take a look at some issues which have not yet found their rightful place in the investigation of Jewish history, even though they are recognized in general history as paramount: environment, ecology and pandemics.⁸

A first consideration must be the grand stage of climate and ecology on which the decline and subsequent surge of European population history played out.⁹

Archaeological surveys and rescue archaeology have now dated the disappearance of occupied sites in late antiquity with considerable precision, especially in the Rhône valley and northern Gaul. Landscape archaeology has shown a conversion from arable to pasture and reforestation during the same period. Recent studies of the climate of the first millennium show

⁶ Lloret Guitiérrez, 1998: 184; Retamero, 1999: 277.

⁷ The expression is by Hodges, 2000: 61: “In the hundreds of trenches excavated in towns throughout Italy the commonest, if most prosaic discovery is not the remains of buildings but ‘dark earth’. This is the hallmark of the transformation of the Roman world.”

⁸ An exception appears to be Dean Bell, *The Little Ice Age and the Jews: Environmental History and the Mercurial Nature of Jewish-Christian Relations in Early Modern Germany*, in: *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 32:1 (2008): 1–27.

⁹ The following paragraph relies on the pioneering study of Fred Cheyette, 2008. The quotation is from the abstract of the article.

that this was also an extended period of wet and cold climate. As to the question how these phenomena were connected, a preliminary suggestion is that since reversion from arable to pasture affected regions as far apart as Italy and Poland it cannot simply be ascribed to the political and fiscal dislocation of the ancient world, but should be understood as one effect of the climatic anomaly.

This climactic anomaly has been made starkly visible in a recent study that has looked at “2500 Years of European Climate Variability and Human Susceptibility” by reconstructing central European summer precipitation and temperature variability from tree ring data.¹⁰ Precipitation rose in the 5th century before dropping sharply in the first half of the 6th century. What caused or more plausibly exacerbated climate variability and heightened human susceptibility, was a hemispheric-scale cooling that has been linked to an explosive near-equatorial volcanic eruption in 536 C.E.¹¹ By a different interpretation made public at the fall 2010 meeting of the American Geophysical Union, yet another possible catastrophic occurrence was a huge meteoric impact which might have followed that volcanic eruption by a few years. Any one of them or both together probably produced the huge dust veil covering the planet for some years, which has been reported in contemporary historical sources.¹² With or without a sudden mid-6th century catastrophe, there was increased climate variability from around 250 to 600 C.E. By 542/543 occurred the first pandemic of Justinian Plague that spread throughout the Mediterranean regions, made forays across the Alps, and kept re-appearing until the mid-8th century.¹³

The most important outcome, in our respect, is the “thinning out of habitation sites during the fifth and sixth centuries and the impoverishment of the few that remained. This has been confirmed in the region of Metz in northeast Gaul, in the Eifel west of the Rhine, in the Paris basin, along the Danube frontier, in northern and southern Italy. . . . The major exceptions to this story so far discovered in the west (and their location is significant) were along the coasts of the Adriatic and the Gulf of Taranto.”¹⁴ Incidentally or not, these are exactly the areas where Jewish habitation continued from Late Antiquity (see map 7), whereas it disappeared from most other European regions and significantly shrunk in the Byzantine

¹⁰ Büntgen et alia, 2011.

¹¹ Larsen et alia, 2008.

¹² Arjava, 2005.

¹³ On this pandemic and its consequences see now Little, 2006, and especially his opening chapter.

¹⁴ Cheyette, 2008: 139–40.

Empire. The sequence seems to have been: climatic anomaly combined with epidemics, unsettled political circumstances and war; a narrowing of the agricultural base of society and a shrinking population; a mounting inability of state authorities to collect taxes; all which translated into a decline of urbanism and the abandonment of some towns and ruralization of others; which in turn impacted on the demand for services to the reduced rural populations and thus on the viability of urban ones. Among the latter were the Jews whom we have met in Late Antiquity in a broad range of urban occupations. To put the consequences bluntly, for instance in regard to Iberia: in the absence of positive or even circumstantial evidence, why should one assume the ongoing existence, nay the dominance of Jewish and other "oriental" merchants, when the peninsula in the first medieval centuries was racked by the Justinian Plague and exhibited the cessation of all trade connections with the wider Mediterranean?

A further consideration must thus be overall economic trends. A century of archaeological and textual research has been aptly summarized by Simon Loseby for the Mediterranean Economy of the Early Middle Ages and by Stéphane Lebecq for the countries around the Northern Seas in the same period.

By the 8th century the polyfocal exchange system of the eastern Mediterranean had disintegrated, leaving in its wake the series of regional economies which had always existed. . . . At privileged western sites like Rome and Marseilles, or Carthage and Naples, the archaeological evidence suggests that the late-antique exchange-network persisted in an etiolated form through to the close of the seventh century. But over the intervening period the whole system had relentlessly declined in the West, such that participation in interregional exchange gradually became the exception than the norm. In the East, the collapse of this tier was similar. Some trading ships continued to ply the Mediterranean in the 8th century, and some regional economies around its shores were thriving, although others, for example those of southern Francia, parts of northern Italy and probably North Africa, were sunk deep in recession. The interregional Mediterranean economy ceased to exist around 700. . . . When an integrated, complex Mediterranean economy, as opposed to a series of incidental exchanges, began slowly to re-emerge in the Middle Ages, its organization, its poles of activity and its currents would be substantially different from those of antiquity.¹⁵

¹⁵ Loseby, 2005: 633, 637.

As for the northern sphere:

The seas of Northern Europe came to form a single economic basin at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries. This development of a true maritime economy in northern Europe from the 7th century onwards was the result of the combination of three factors: 1) The vitality of the hinterland, stimulated by agricultural growth, organized by ever more powerful aristocracies and religious institutions, and benefiting from a relative peace. 2) The vitality of the maritime milieu, starting from the central region of the Northern Seas between south-eastern Britain and the mouth of the Rhine and which then extended to new horizons, from Ireland as far as Scandinavia. 3) The coming together of these two dynamic forces in the median places of trade: the great coastal monasteries, the markets, the fairs, the riverside cities with their suburbia and their churches, the river ports and especially the sea ports. . . . By the end of the 8th and the early 9th century all this was deeply disrupted by the Viking incursions. Only after two centuries a new trade atlas would be sketched out, round about the year 1000. Its horizons would be extended to match the Viking voyages; there would be a new distribution of ports, there would be a new generation of *animateurs*. The Frisians, Anglo-Saxons, Franks and Celts would give way to Iro-Scandinavians, to Anglo-Danes, to Flemings, to those from the Meuse and, later, to those from the Hanseatic lands."¹⁶

This sequence has significant meaning for the small Jewish minority. In the best case scenario, the period of a supposed Jewish commercial effervescence was in reality one of reduced regional exchanges, in the worst case one of total collapse. When the European economies took an upswing again, Jews were not present. This holds, chronologically, first for the boom of the emporia and gateway-settlements on the Atlantic and North-Sea shorelines in Carolingian times: Quentovic, Walcheren, Dorestad, Haithabu, Ribe, Bornholm, as well as a number of locations in England, all places where we have not found a single Jew. This also holds for a later phase of commercial take-off, the rejuvenated Mediterranean trade led by Italians from the 10th century onwards. As we have seen, in some of the towns taking the lead as Amalfi, Jews were present, but only to play a subordinate role as craftsmen, not as traders. In other leading commercial cities such as Venice or Genoa, none were admitted until late in the Middle Ages. Thus the course of economic history has no place for a monopoly or dominance of Jews, but definitely one for a less exalted participation as mid- and low-level merchants, in some and definitely not in all regions. Riding the rising demographic crest and mounting demand

¹⁶ Lebecq, 2005: 658–9.

for foodstuffs, Jews also found a place in the emergent class of agricultural entrepreneurs active in the market economy of the suburbs and surroundings of south-European towns.

South and North: One Jewish World?

The correspondences and even more the differences between the parts making up the Jewish people—Ashkenazim, Sephardim and Orientals—are standard fare in Jewish Studies and in the broader sphere of Jewish culture.¹⁷ One way to go about the cultural divides is to look for their economic consequences. Thus the next sub-chapter will attempt to gauge the economic status and functions of women and the different ways these were handled in the South and the North of Europe. After that, we will draw together the data uncovered in this book to ask about the occupational structures of southern and northern Jewries.

The Sexual Division of Labor: Women in the Economy

What can be learned about the economic status and functions of women? Despite the impressive interest in these topics, there is very little scholarship for the early period under consideration here. Abraham Grossman dedicated some pertinent remarks to the issue and proposed a significant difference between the situation in Muslim Spain and the one in Ashkenaz, with Christian Spain somewhere in between. Many more sources become available from the High Middle Ages onwards, but the contrast is visible already with the onset of Responsa literature in the 10th to 11th centuries.¹⁸ As a corollary of the “Mediterranean code of honor”, women in Iberia were denied freedom to move outside the household sphere and interact with the external world.¹⁹ Economically, interaction means meeting customers,

¹⁷ See for instance the Israeli writer Abraham B. Yehoshua’s novel of 1997, *A Journey to the End of the Millennium*, which pits a merchant from Algiers and his two wives against an Ashkenazic woman and her kin.

¹⁸ Grossman, 2004: 111–21. The detailed entry by Renée Levine Melammed and Judith Baskin on Women, in EJ, 2nd ed. 2007: vol. 21, 165–174, differentiates between Iberia and Ashkenaz, but not between the medieval sub-periods. For bibliographical guidance see Cheryl Tallan, *Medieval Jewish Women in History, Literature, Law, and Art: A Bibliography* (2006): www.brandeis.edu/hbi/pubs/MEDWOM_2006_bib.doc.

¹⁹ For the concept see C. Stewart, *Honor and Shame*, International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, Amsterdam-New York 2001: 6904–6907.

vendors and buyers, in one's own home or in the customers' abodes, in the marketplace, on fairs and on the road. It also means, sometimes, the need to negotiate permits, licenses and taxes with political authorities. A culture unwilling to allow its women outside interaction will restrict them to the household sphere and household scores. A culture less concerned with the "honor" of its women will allow them larger freedom of movement. In this view, culture is the decisive variable, but the argument can also be turned around: namely that a society in need of the labor of its women beyond the household sphere will allow them more leeway. This should have been the case in Ashkenazi society which numerically was so much smaller than the Iberian one and thus, our inference, needed to rely to a greater extent on women's work.

Not surprisingly, everywhere the basic charge on women was the household provision of food, clothing and shelter. These are activities by nature unlikely to find their way into the written record (see the previous chapter, at the end), except for a very few indications, for instance the already quoted vignette from Venosa, where *the women came out from their ovens* for a brawl in the square.²⁰ What one does find in large numbers throughout the record are stay-at-home wives, mentioned in the sources most commonly as *agunot*, presumed widows whose husbands went missing on business trips. It is reasonable to assume that both in the South and the North, the larger number of married women, of working-age girls, and of younger and older widows was predominantly engaged in the provision of food, clothing and childcare. In light of our previous insight into the household mode of production, this included a much larger share of tasks than we would be led to assume by our modern Western experience. Even so, "in many (late 20th century!) countries the household economy absorbs more labour and at least one third the physical capital used in the market economy".²¹ Such a heavy work load leaves a smaller part of women free to engage in other economic pursuits, either separate or more plausibly in addition to such household tasks. For this there are indeed indications in the evidence, but not to the extent of enabling us to gauge its true volume. In the following we shall examine some sources that do cast light on the variety of women's work.

A few sources hint to crafts, as in a query from 11th century Muslim Spain on a *widow who has a craft that suffices for her livelihood*. In Ashkenaz:

²⁰ Bonfil, 2009: 256.

²¹ Ironmonger, 2001: 6939.

a woman used to work her craft in her husband's house and he does not supervise her handiwork. Apparently, she was blessed in her labors, for *she gathered together gold and rings and jewels . . . and shortly before her death called her two daughters and gave it to them.* As noted in the last chapter, in the Later Middle Ages female practitioners of medicine were also to make their appearance. One frequently meets in the South as in the North women with substantial dowries, mentioned as part of marriage and widowhood settlements: vineyards, houses, courtyards, fields, as well as jewelry, fine garments, precious metal, cash, investments in partnerships and due loans. There were of course also women, usually single ones, who lacked income-producing property and other sources of earning, as the widow in a Spanish query who had to be furnished by her brother *with a courtyard and a vineyard so that she could draw her sustenance from them.*²²

Business women are a more common occurrence than crafts, in Iberia as in Ashkenaz. They can be part of the family business, such as the widow who *during her husband's lifetime negotiated business in the house*, a case discussed in light of a passage of the Mishnah (3rd century) on *he who lets his wife work as shopkeeper* (literally: *sits her down as a shopkeeper*). In another query, *Lea lent money in mortgage on a shop and received the store for a year.* She might have been an independent shopkeeper, or alternatively a real estate entrepreneur. Roles were switched when *Reuben lent Rachel one hundred gold coins in mortgage on her courtyard for a year, with power of attorney to sell it should she not repay him within that year.* In yet another case from Muslim Spain, a wife with an absent husband organized a shipment of bales of wool to be sent abroad.²³ Similar enterprises are mentioned in Ashkenaz, for instance that *wife of his* who gave a travelling merchant a gold ring and a gold piece in order to acquire rare pelts somewhere in Eastern Europe, possibly sable in Russia.²⁴ In all our cases except one, women stay put while men are travelling the roads. This one exception tells of a woman who came to ask Rashi whether she might put off a fast *for the bother of the road because she had to ride to the ruler.*²⁵ Under such circumstances, one can see how there developed in early Ashkenaz the image of the *important woman*, such as lady Minna of Mainz whose *name was widely known since all the great of her town and the*

²² Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: nos. 52, 96; Responsa Meir ben Barukh, 1891: no. 219.

²³ Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: nos. 63, 114, 241, 253; Mishna, Seder Nashim, Masekhet Ktuvot, 9.

²⁴ Responsa Meir ben Barukh, 1891: no. 887.

²⁵ Rashi, Responsa, 1943: no. 128.

*lords of the land used to frequent her.*²⁶ Still, in many cases in the Halakhic sources of Ashkenaz as well as of Sepharad, the woman is only mentioned as *his wife*. In other cases the courtesy of a fictional private name—usually Rachel or Lea—is accorded to women as it is to men.

The true outlines and dimensions of women's work remain faint in our early period and will become more distinct in the source material from the 12th century onwards. Jewish women appear to have been active in stationary crafts and businesses in both Iberia and Ashkenaz, but to larger extent in the latter than in the former region. Given the Mediterranean obsession with keeping women from interacting with the external world, this difference is not surprising. Crafts, money lending and certain aspects of trade—investing in partnerships for instance—can indeed be carried out from the safety of one's home. There is but one recorded instance of a Jewish woman moving outside the household sphere, a telling indication that cannot of course be assigned a statistical value. Somewhat later, indications for mobility abound in the evidence from Ashkenaz. South and North were thus not poles apart, but the difference is significant: in this regard, this was not one Jewish world. Information on Southern France and Italy should have supplied the intermediate parts of the continuum, but is, sadly, entirely missing. Nowhere is there an indication that the medieval patterns of women's work foreshadowed the early modern situation of some segments of eastern-European Jewish society, whereby men are studying and women provide. Neither do these patterns differ in any significant way from the situation of women in the host societies, be it in the South or in the North.²⁷

The Occupational Spectrum

The "imbalanced", "abnormal" or "skewed" occupational structure of medieval (and modern) Jews has exercised the imagination for a long time. We have had opportunity to notice the almost emotional stance of some scholars, for instance Eliyahu Ashtor with his dictum on Iberian Jews who never shrunk from physical labor unless forced to do so. Beyond obvious

²⁶ Hebräische Berichte, 2005: 286–289; Grossman, 2004: 117–8; and the perceptive essay by Yuval, 1997. Similar in Rashi, Responsa, 1943: no. 240.

²⁷ Our (and other historians') findings certainly do not square with the ready generalization of Slezkine, 2004: 11, that Jews in their quality as "service nomads" "assign more visible and economically important roles to women than do peasants or warriors, and some trading nomads depend primarily on women's labor (while remaining patriarchal in political organization)."

apologetic concerns, Ashtor had his basic facts right: the most extensive evidence for crafts comes from Southern Europe, from Byzantium, Iberia and Italy, in Late Antiquity as in the Middle Ages. Again, no quantitative estimate is possible, but the impression is of a widespread engagement in these branches, especially in textiles. Being broadly engaged does not mean however, as has been inferred, a leading role or even a monopoly of Jews in such crafts. Simply, the quantifiable data needed for this conclusion to be valid are totally lacking. Also, here as in other matters the slight population numbers make such an impact difficult to envisage. Thirdly, as only to be expected from the opaque nature of our source material, in some places and times crafts, entrepreneurship and commerce blended into one other. In Byzantium and Spain, some Jewish craftsmen in silk appear to have taken on the role of entrepreneurs, which in turn lead them to commerce. Quite possibly this is not so much a question of source optics, but rather one of an economic reality lacking the clearly defined borderlines between craftsmen organized in guilds vis-à-vis the class of merchants, entrepreneurs and contractors apparent in other places, for instance in the textile towns of Tuscany, Southern Germany and Flanders.

In other branches too, we have found entrepreneurs halfway between crafts and commerce, mobilizing and exploiting local resources: as building contractors, processing dye-stuffs, running flour mills and salt-pans, managing public baths and olive presses. The most widespread and economically significant activity was to develop agricultural resources in the surroundings of Southern European towns, which can indeed be counted as a modernizing feature. In contrast, crafts are barely documented in Ashkenaz; a negative finding that appears to fit an occupational structure much tilted towards commerce, but also one to be explained by the household mode of production in which a whole set of craft occupations in victuals was yet barely existent. Crafts and entrepreneurial activities, especially in the agricultural market economy, are almost entirely missing from the Ashkenazic experience, and not only for plain lack of sources. In the North, commercial concerns and trade dominate in the evidence. In this regard again, Ashkenaz and Sepharad clearly differ, but not to the degree that one can speak of diametrically opposed situations. Rather, as before there seems to have been a continuum of emphasis, on which one would very much have wished to plot data on Italy and southern and central France. Sadly, these regions almost entirely lack the rich Halakhic material of Ashkenaz and Sepharad.

One further difference concerns trade patterns. We have found no evidence for significant international trade ventures between Ashkenaz

and the South, be it the with Muslim Spain, North Africa or the European shores of the Mediterranean, nor for such contacts with the Muslim Middle East. Commercial links with Eastern Europe existed, but did not add up to the significant dimensions usually postulated in scholarship. The main exception to this rule are Muslim Iberia and Sicily, where at least one commercial segment, the one brought into stark light by the Cairo Genizah, was part of a truly international network connecting these regions to central hubs in Tunisia and Egypt. Below this level, regional and local traders operated in Iberia in a way similar to that found in all other regions. Trade patterns in Byzantium remain in the dark, except for the impression, difficult to flesh out, of a stronger orientation towards maritime ventures.

As far as trade patterns and networks are concerned, South and North were not part of one Jewish world. Put differently, we have not found a unified Jewish world of trade, but rather discrete segments operating within their respective environments. Against these structurally differentiating features there is one unifying one: in all parts except for Byzantium, one finds money lending and credit from the very beginnings of the medieval European Diaspora, usually with the higher echelons of Gentile society but in some places also with their peasant neighbors. The absence of credit in Byzantium is probably due to the dismal situation of sources, but might possibly be an indication for an occupational structure much more oriented towards craft production. If we have interpreted the overall patterns correctly, Jews in Southern Europe and specifically in Byzantium were less differentiated from majority society in the ways they earned their living than the ones of Ashkenaz and Northern France.²⁸ At the same time, wherever the sources allow a more tangible picture, credit, trade and entrepreneurship blend together in a mix that seems to characterize Jewish economic activity more than anything else.

Minority Status

Thus the question, unavoidable in light of two centuries of scholarship trying to explain Jewish exceptionalism: in the economy, is there anything special about the Jews? Is the occupational structure established in the

²⁸ This has already been pointed out by Caro, 1908: I, 10, and is a salient point in Blumenkranz, 1960.

chapters of this book really an “abnormal” one? And if so, is “abnormal” the norm for Jews? One must of course remember that in most regions, the period treated in this book saw only the first stages of Jews settling down. Still, by and large the occupations found do not differ substantively from the situation one hundred years later, except for one significant change, the massive move into money lending.²⁹

As a concept, the “imbalanced”, “abnormal” or “skewed” occupational structure has haunted the history of the Jews, economic or other, for close to two centuries. Echoing emancipation debates, scholars have used metaphors of health and disease, of decline, of something that needs to be put right. Also, Gentile society and especially the Church were often made responsible for bringing about this deplorable situation. Two grand old men of Jewish historiography, Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson and Salo Baron, both writing in the authoritative *Encyclopaedia Judaica* of 1971 (and reprinted verbatim in the electronic 2007 edition) saw the question thus: “The Jewish occupational structure was gradually eroded with the destruction of the ancient Jewish social pattern and with the change in social attitudes through the relentless pressure from the Christian church, from the fourth century on”. And Baron: “Jewish economic life took a drastic turn. . . . This (medieval) lopsided economic stratification carried over into the modern period and was only slightly rectified in the emancipation era.” One generation later, Nahum Gross still held fast to that explanation: “In what respects were Jews different from other minorities in their economic behavior and fate? Such differences were the result of the two major characteristics of Jewish history: the exceptionally long duration of their legal discrimination in the Christian and Moslem countries, and their world-wide dispersion.”³⁰ The latest to investigate the issue and among the few to turn away from the plaintive view were Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein. Their intriguing hypothesis for the late antique transformation of the Jewish peasants of the Middle East into urban and skilled occupations is basically a cultural one. Rather than the result of restrictions, prohibitions, persecutions, and expulsions, they saw the specific occupational selection as an outcome of the transformation of Judaism

²⁹ See my overview on Germany, Toch, 2008a. This will be a central issue in the two companion volumes to this book, planned to cover the High and Late Middle Ages in the South and North respectively.

³⁰ Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, *Crafts*: EJ (2nd. ed.), 2007: vol. 5, 265–6; Salo Baron, *Economic History*, EJ (2nd. ed.), 2007: vol. 6, 104; Gross, Nahum, 1992: 22. Salo Baron won fame as a militant combatant against what he was the first to term the “lachrymose view of Jewish history”.

in the first-second centuries C.E. into a religion focused on literacy and education.³¹

This outcome was already a given for the people we have been dealing with. In the South as in the North of Europe, in Late Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, Jews had never been peasants, despite their varied agricultural concerns treated in this book. From its very beginnings, the European Diaspora was one of urban, skilled occupations, and has remained so until today. We too have found no evidence for discrimination or compulsion to practice this or another trade. And why should these people need to be coerced into occupations that afforded them a standard of living significantly higher than that of surrounding society? No hard figures are available, but the overall impression for a good part of the Jewish population, in our early period as well as later, is one of affluence. It is surely not too farfetched to tie this to the precise occupational selection we have seen throughout this book.³² The Jews a Christian would normally meet were mostly of the possessing classes, merchants or money-lenders that by definition needed to be well off. Such middle or upper-class people lived and acted in a manner befitting their socio-economic position and used all the status symbols associated with it. These might be dwellings (stone houses, if only to safeguard valuable merchandise and pledges), the sumptuous attire, clothes and women's jewelry singled out for criticism very early, lavish festivities, and the servants which we had more than one occasion to note. True, these occupations and the associated power relations—a perceived turning upside down of the “right” order, Jews on top rather than Christians—have aroused in the Middle Ages and ever since enmity and resentment, sometimes dangerously so. But this was not yet the general case in the centuries scrutinized in this book.³³

Actually, despite or perhaps because of the almost emotional attachment of generations of scholars to the question of normality and abnormality, the issue is badly put, as noticed by Simon Kuznets over half a century ago:

The economic structure of a small, cohesive minority is likely to differ substantially from that of the majority, and hence from that of a country's total population. Given its desire for cohesion, the minority rather than be dispersed, tends to concentrate in selected industries, selected occupations, and

³¹ Botticini & Eckstein, 2012.

³² Empirical data on income levels have barely been proffered in scholarship, but see Toch, 1999a.

³³ As indeed noticed by Cahnman, 1974: 160.

selected classes of economic status. If this consequence is an indispensable condition of a minority's survival as a cohesive unit, much of the popular discussion about lack of 'normality' loses point. If the economic structure of a country's total population is 'normal,' then, almost by definition, the economic structure of a small and permanent minority must be abnormal. It would perhaps be more appropriate to describe the narrower range of industry, occupation, and status distribution as normal for distinctive small minorities, and an economic structure similar to that of the total population as abnormal.³⁴

This argument can and should be taken one step further. Yes, Jews were a "middleman-minority", possessing essentially urban, mediating, and commercial skills.³⁵ But why compare them to the overall population of a country? Does it not make more sense to compare to immediate neighbors, business partners and competitors, to the non-Jewish townspeople—merchants, craftsmen and women, providers of services, entrepreneurs of different kinds, and, yes, money men and women. Instead of keeping Jews conceptually apart from everybody else, are they not better viewed as one sub-set of a much larger urban "middleman-minority" situated within a total population that was definitely non-urban, non-literate, not engaged in craft production or services? Even in their agricultural concerns (besides the household production of food and drink), these Jews were a sub-set of a larger entrepreneurial sector of urban society and economy, and the same holds for commerce, craft production, and financial services. Jews had no monopoly in any of these fields; in all of them were always many more Gentiles active.

This brings us to the last question of the pioneering role filled by Jews in economic development, a notion expressed by numerous scholars and most forcefully by Salo Baron:

Pioneering has indeed been a major keynote of all Jewish history. It was natural for a permanent minority entering any new area to find that all normal positions in the economy and social structure of that area had already been occupied. Simply to make a living, it was absolutely necessary for these new arrivals to find new openings by exploiting certain hitherto undetected

³⁴ Kuznets, 1960: 1600–1.

³⁵ The formulation is by Karp, 2008: 267. For the huge literature on middleman-minority theories see Zenner, 1980. In the period under consideration, there is no appearance yet of the aspect of scape-goating which has been seen as integral to the concept of middlemen-minority (for instance Hubert Blalock, 1967). Needless to say, there is no trace of "Judaism as pariah-religion" (Max Weber, 1917–1919), of "sojourners" (Edna Bonacich, 1973), or of similar theoretical constructs predicated on the discrimination or persecution of Jews.

possibilities, and to widen, so to say, the crevices in the body politic of the host nations into regular fields of endeavor.³⁶

In his entry on “Economic History” in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* of 1971, Baron pointed to “rabbinic legislation (that) was to prove quite useful to the Jewish communities in their medieval pioneering”, and to the “vital role played by the Jewish economic contributions for the general society”.³⁷ We have already had opportunity to weigh and dismiss Baron’s claim for a pioneering Jewish contribution in agriculture, be it the introduction of the watermelon in France or of rice cultivation in Khazaria (above, Part II, ch. 7a). Other claims, for the introduction or re-introduction of olive cultivation in Iberia or Calabria, equally lack foundation.

Baron’s and other scholars’ general argument, expressed in the quote above, rests not on empirical evidence but on the premise of an assumed economic function that could only have been carried out by the minority. As argued previously, it is simply not correct that this particular minority upon entering Europe found “that all normal positions in the economy and social structure of that area had already been occupied”. None of the techniques and instruments of trade or credit, of crafts or agricultural and other entrepreneurship were an exclusive domain, conceived or even merely amplified by Jews.³⁸ Sheer numbers, geographical distribution, the weight of environmental and economic history, and the evidence itself speak against this assumption. One can also ask whether medieval Judaism had anything to offer in the way of a cultural predisposition towards commerce. The question has been asked and answered thus:

One must emphasize that one cannot find the slightest evidence in medieval Jewish writings of the Middle Ages of any ‘capitalistic’ or even ‘pre-capitalistic’ outlook. . . . Finally, not a line is to be found in Jewish writings that so much as hints that worldly activity, not to speak of worldly success, is an indication of man’s chosen or redeemed state. Indeed, these very categories do not exist in Judaism. Money lending was seen neither as disreputable nor as some pre-capitalist activity. It was simply a way of earning a living.³⁹

In a *Responsum* quoted a number of times in this book, Gershom “Light of the Exile” put it thus: *Because their livelihood depends on their commerce*.⁴⁰

³⁶ Baron, 1964: 31.

³⁷ EJ 1971: vol. 6, 103, 113.

³⁸ The case for a Jewish authorship of the *Commenda* contract has been made, investigated and dismissed: Udovitch, 1962.

³⁹ Soloveitchik, 2005: 125, 126.

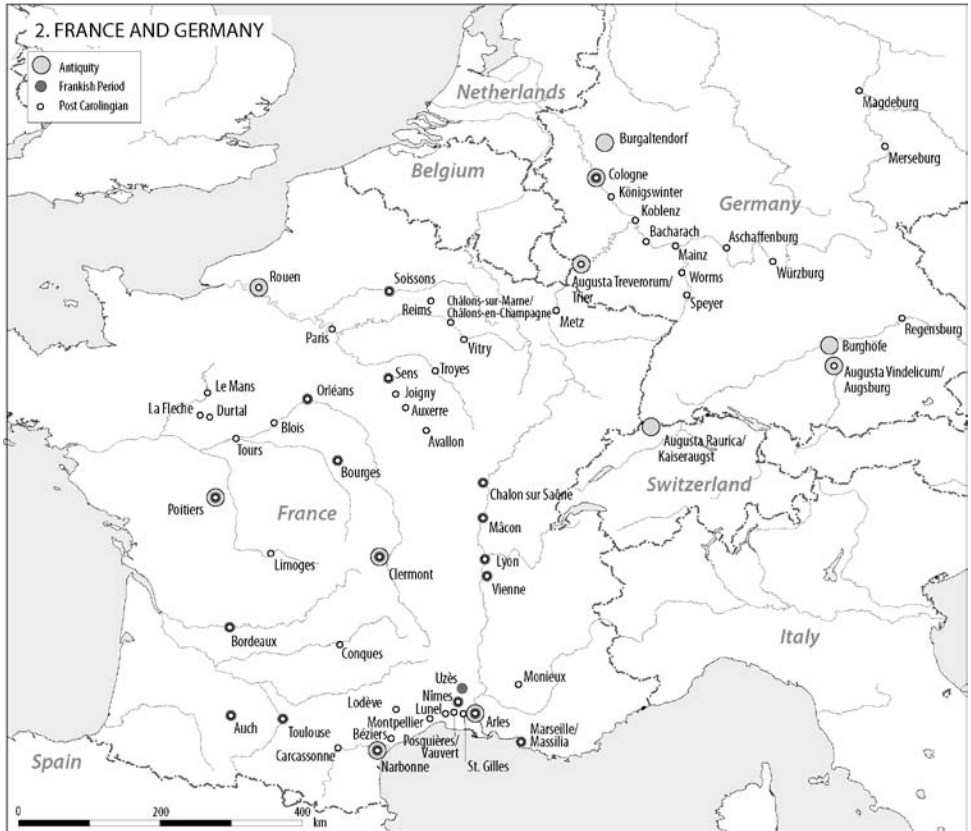
⁴⁰ Gershom ben Jehudah, 1955: no. 21.

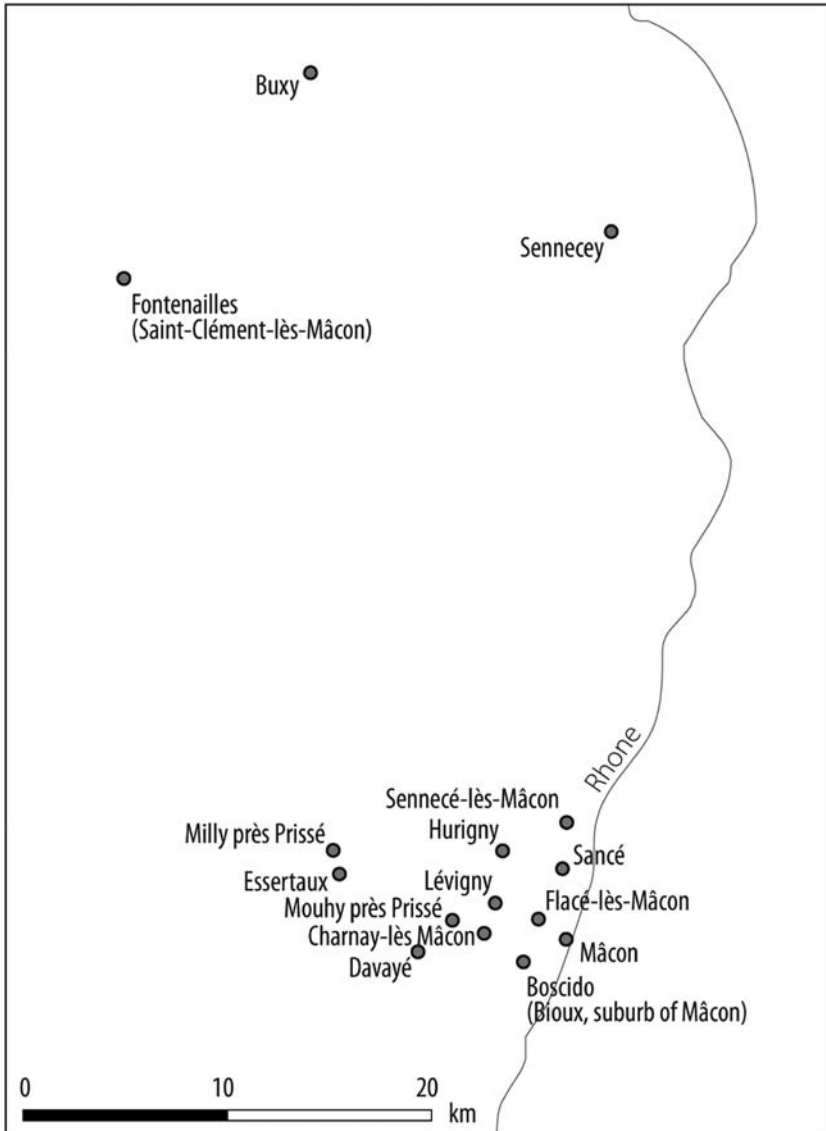
Our investigations have all led towards this one key word: *parnasa*, livelihood with no metaphysical or mega-historical purpose to it. The trade carried out by Jews was just that, trade by Jews, not “Jewish Trade” in capital letters. This is not to deny that of all occupations of medieval Jews, trade and kindred occupations indeed characterized and set apart the European Diaspora. After all, this was an urban sub-set of society geared towards livelihoods that rewarded initiative and the individualistic effort as well as accumulated experience and specific skills tied to literacy. The instances of entrepreneurship found in different sectors, periods and regions seem best to characterize what one might loosely call the “Jewish economic temper”. At the same time, Jewish law and its interpretation by the sages did focus on the settling of conflicts arising from the business background of this society, thus shaping a culture of discourse that was (also and definitely not solely) commercial. Within parameters decisively set by the European environment, the Jewish community and its evolving culture can be seen to respond to circumstances very different from previous patterns of Jewish existence. In this formative period of the European Diaspora, Jews and Jewries were able to adapt and succeed quite well in mastering such challenges. Thus, at the end of our journey and to this writer, the past visited here does not look that foreign; by all appearances, people did not do things very differently there.

MAPS

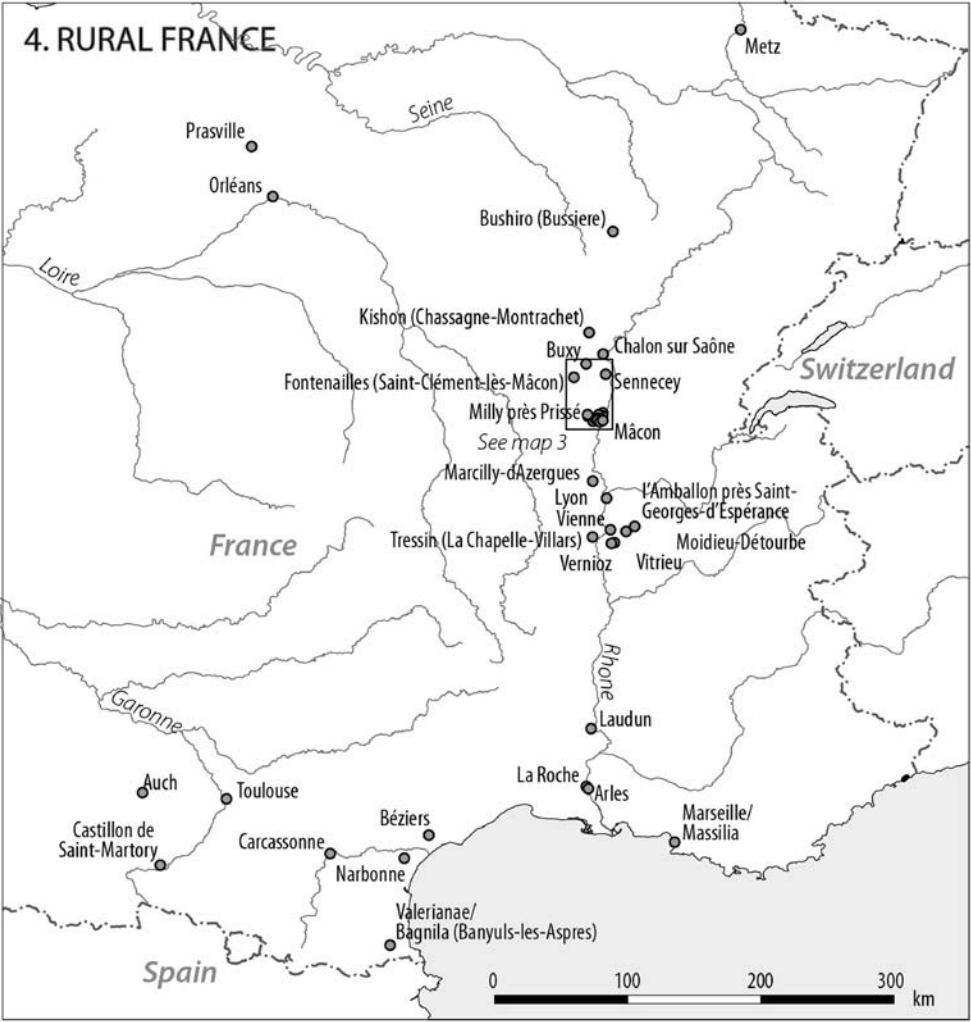


Map 1. Byzantium





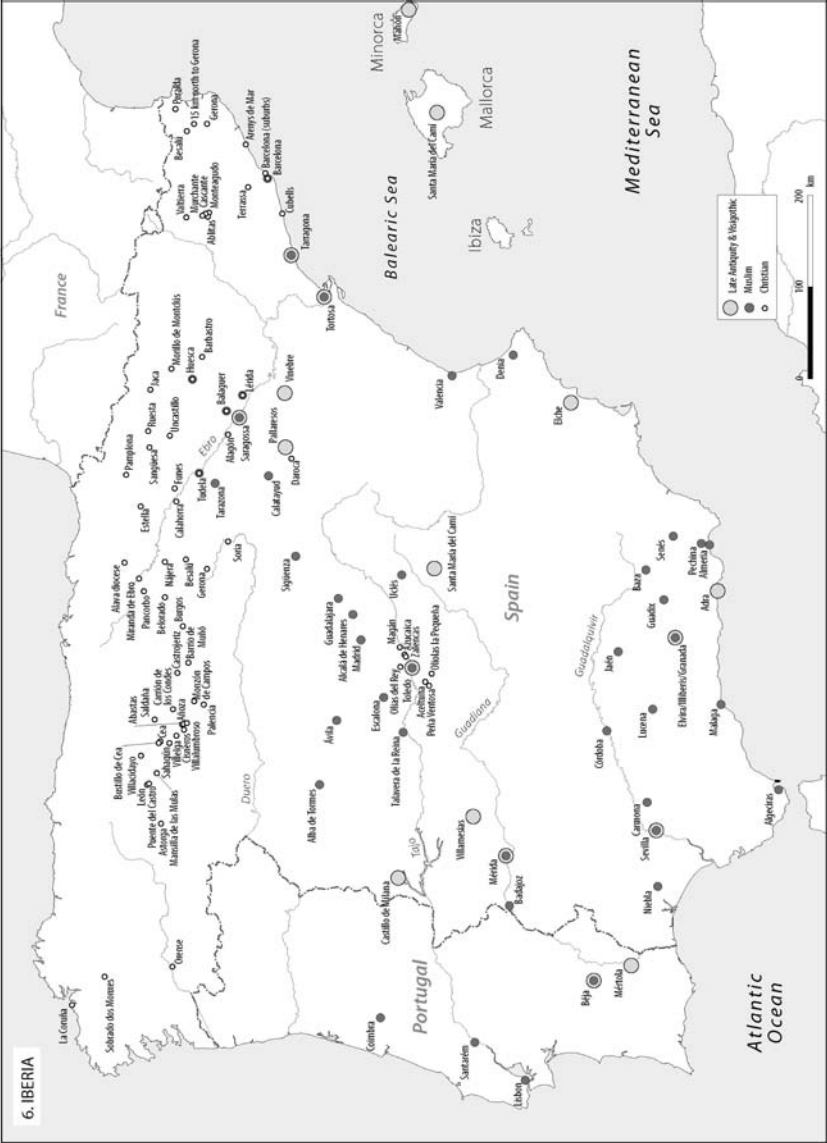
Map 3. Rural Bourgogne



Map 4. Rural France



Map 5. Rural Spain



Map 6. Iberia



Map 7. Italy

APPENDIX ONE

PLACES OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE (MAP 1)

Note: For conversion tables of antique Greek/Roman place names to modern Turkish ones and back see Abraham Galanté, *Histoire des juifs d'Anatolie*, Istanbul 1939, vol. 2, 331–3, and the two maps at the end of his book.

Ancient Period (1st to 6th Centuries)

a. *Synagogues*

Balkans:

Mursa (Osijek, Croatia): IJO I, 16–9.

Salona (Solin, north-west of Split, Croatia): IJO I, 24–7.

Doclea (Montenegro): Solin, 1983: 762.

Stobi (Macedonia): IJO I, 56–75.

Saranda (Albania): Colafemmina, 1974: 88; Noy, 1993: no. 107.

Philippopolis (Plovdiv, Bulgaria): IJO I, 38–50.

Crimea and the Black Sea:

Chersonesos (Sevastopol, Ukraine): IJO I, 260–4.

Olbia (between Mykolaiv and coastal Ochakov, Ukraine): IJO I, 254–9.

Pantikapaion (Kerch, Ukraine): IJO I, 264–94.

Gorgippia (near Anapa on the Black Sea shore, Russia): IJO I, 303–23.

Phanagoria (opposite Kerch on the east side of straits of Kerch, Russia):
IJO I, 294.

Amastris (on the southern Black Sea shore, east of Zonguldak, Jewish?):
IJO III, 314–17.

Mainland Greece and European Turkey:

Athens: IJO I, 144–64.

Beroea (Veria, west of Thessalonica, Piraios): IJO I, 76–87.

Perinthus/Herakleia (Thrace, east of Tekirdag, European Turkey): IJO II, 67–8.

Corinth: IJO I, 181–9.

Mantineia (west of modern Tripolis, central Peloponnese): IJO I, 196–7.

Taenarum (Kyparissa, Peloponnese): IJO I, 197–200.

Patras (Achaia, northern Peloponnese): Rutgers, 1998: 129.

Philippi (Kavala, east of Thessalonica): IJO I, 88–9.

Thessalonica: IJO I, 91–106.

Volos (Magnisia): Rutgers, 1998: 129.

The Islands:

Delos (island off the island of Mykonos, southern Aegean): IJO I, 210.

Aegina (Egina, island off the coast of Athens, Piraios): IJO I, 202–210.

Kissamus (on Crete, Kastelli Kissamou, the commercial center of western Crete and a sea-port): IJO I, 251–3.

Chios: IJO II, 44–6.

Samos: IJO II, 46–51.

Cyprus:

Golgoi (Athienou): IJO III, 218–220.

Salamis: IJO III, 220–2.

Asia Minor:

Acmonia (Ahat-Keui, east of Izmir): IJO III, 345–79.

Antioch (Antakya, south-central Turkey): Rutgers, 1998: 129.

Aphrodisias (Geyre, south-east of Izmir and west of Denizli): IJO III, 70–123.

Edessa (Urfa, south eastern Anatolia): Rutgers, 1998: 129.

Ephesos (Efes, south of Izmir on the Aegean shore): IJO III, 147–62.

Hierapolis (Pamukkale, southeast of Izmir and north of Denizli): IJO II, 398–440.

Hyllarima (Kapaklar, east of Usak and Izmir, province of Mugla): IJO III, 123–7.

Iconium, Ikonion (Konya, central Anatolia): IJO II, 485–7.

Laodicea (Goncalı-Eskihisar, half-way between Izmir and Antalya): Kraabel, 1987: 50.

Myndos (Gümüslük, on the western shore of the Bodrum/Halicarnassus peninsula): IJO III, 134–6.

Nevsehir (between Ankara and Kayseri/Caesarea): IJO II, 537–43.

Nicomedia (Izmit, south-east of Constantinople): IJO III, 324–32.

- Nysa (halfway between Efes/Ephesos and Denizli/Laodicea ad Lycum): IJO III, 136–9.
- Philadelphia (Alasehir, east of Izmir): IJO II, 202–8.
- Phocaea (Focha, on the Aegean shore north-west of Izmir): IJO II, 162–7.
- Priene (Güllübahçe, south of Izmir): IJO II, 172–4.
- Sardis (south of Sart Mahmut, east of Izmir): IJO II, 209–97.
- Side (east of Antalya): IJO II, 462–9.
- Smyrna (Izmir): IJO III, 174–95.
- Tarsos (the birthplace of Paul, between Adana and Mersin): IJO II, 525–33.
- Tella (Constantina=Viransehir, east of Urfa, south eastern Turkey): Rutgers, 1998: 129–30; Kraabel, 1987: 50.
- Teos (south-west of Izmir): IJO II, 195–6.
- Thyateira (Akhisar, north-east of Izmir): IJO II, 297–302.
- Tralles (Aydin, south-east of Izmir): IJO III, 139–44.

b. Additional inscriptional and other archeological evidence

- Balkans:
- Aquincum (Óbuda district, Budapest, Hungary): IJO I: 4–7; Berger, 2005: 107–9.
- Brigetio (Szőny, between Bratislava, Slovakia, and Budapest, Hungary): Berger, 2005: 122–3.
- Dombóvár (Hungary): Berger, 2005: 80–1.
- Halbturn (on the Danube, Burgenland, Austria): Taeuber, 2008.
- Intercisa (Dunaújváros on the Danube, Hungary): Berger, 2005: 112–21.
- Mursa (Osijek on the bank of the river Drava, Croatia): IJO I: 16–19; Berger, 2005: 123.
- Oescus (Gigen on the Danube, northern Bulgarian border with Romania): IJO I, 30–6.
- Peratovci (near Jajce, Bosnia-Herzegovina, north-east of Split.): IJO I, 20–1.
- Savaria (Szombathely, in the westernmost part of Hungary): Berger, 2005: 87–9, 127–30.
- Senia (Senj, coastal Croatia): IJO I, 22–4.
- Siklós (Hungary): Berger, 2005: 109–110; Scheiber, 1983: 42.
- Solva (Esztergom, Hungary): IJO I: 1–3; Berger, 2005: 104–6.
- Sopianae (Pécs, Hungary): Berger, 2005: 87.

Crimea and the Black Sea:

Hermonassa (Taman', near Kerch, Crimea, Russia): IJO I, 302–3.

European Turkey:

Perinthus-Heraclea (Marmara Ergelisi, west of Constantinople): IJO I, 51–3.

Greece:

Almyra (Almiros on the Gulf of Volos, Thessaly): IJO I, 141–2.

Argos (central Peloponnese): IJO I, 189–93.

Bizye (Thrace): IJO II, 64–7.

Coronea (Korone, Peloponnese, west of Sparta): IJO I, 194–6.

Larissa (Thessaly): IJO I, 107–126.

Pherae (Velesinon, between Volos and Larissa, Thessaly): IJO I, 143.

Phthiotis Thebes (Nea Ankhialos, Piraïos, south-west of Volos and Pherae): IJO I, 126–41.

Piraeus: IJO I, 164–7.

Plataea (Piraïos, Greek mainland, north of Sparta): IJO I, 180–1 (doubtful).

Samos (island of): Kant, 1987: 695 note 147.

Unknown origin, Mt. Aleison (Arcadia): IJO I, 193–4.

Crete:

Arcades (Kassanoi, south of Heraklion): IJO I, 249–51.

Cyprus:

Kition (Latnaka): IJO II, 223–6.

Kourion (southern Cyprus): IJO II, 222–3.

Lapithos/Lapethos (Karavas, northern Cyprus): IJO II, 214–6.

Morfou (central Cyprus): IJO II, 216–8.

Asia Minor:

Amorium/Emirdağ (to the north-east of Afyon, central Anatolia): IJO II, 380.

Anemourion (Anamur, east of Antalya): IJO II, 498.

Arnaut-Keni (suburb of Constantinople): Juster, 1914: I, 194.

Blaundos (near Usak, east of Izmir): Kant, 1987: 705 note 228.

Chrysopolis/ Üsküdar (suburb of Constantinople): IJO II, 317–9.

Cotyaëum (Kütahya, west-central Turkey): IJO II, 441–2.

Denizli (Laodicea ad Lycum): IJO II, 443–7.

- Diocaesarea/Olba (Uzuncaburç, south-eastern Turkey near the Syrian border): IJO II, 498–500.
- Diokleia (Aghar Hissar, Ahir Hissar): IJO II, 387–8.
- Dokimeion (İşcehisar near Synnada/Schifout Kassaba/Şuhut in Phrygia, Turkey) = Doryleum (Eskihisar, west of Ankara)? IJO II, 388–93.
- Eumenia (Isikli, east of Izmir): IJO II, 393–8.
- Gdanmaa (Cesmelisebil, between Ankara and Konya): IJO II, 483–5.
- Germa (near the village of Kayakent, south-east of Ankara): IJO II, 337–8.
- Hypaipa (Odemis, south-east of Izmir): IJO II, 199–201.
- Iasos (Assim Kale, island off Mugla, Turkish Aegean coast): IJO II, 127–32 = Ciasmus (unidentified, maybe Iasmos, Piraïos): Kant, 1987: 698 note 170?
- Korykos (Fethiye, west of Antalya): IJO III, 500–20.
- Limyra (near Finike, south-west of Antalya): IJO II, 470–2.
- Magnesia (Manissa, north-east of Izmir): IJO II, 201–2.
- Milet (south-east of Aydin): IJO II, 167–172.
- Nasli (Nazilli, south-east of Izmir, east of Aydin): Juster, 1914: I, 191= Syllion, cf. IJO II, 469?
- Near Bolu (south of Zenguldak, west of Ankara): IJO II, 320–1.
- Nicaea (Izник): IJO II, 321–4.
- Pithoi (Kadinhani, between Akhsehir and Konya): IJO II, 488.
- Sebastopolis (Sulusaray, west of Tokat): IJO II, 332–4.
- Seleukia (Silifke, southern Turkish coast): Rutgers, 1992: 113; but see IJO III, 520–524 (Seleukia ad Kalykadnum in Cilicia).
- Synnada (Schifout Kassaba/Şuhut, Phrygia): IJO II, 447–8.
- Tavium (Evcı, near Ankara): IJO II, 338–41.
- Termessos (near Antalya): IJO II, 453–5.
- Tlos (east of Fethiye): IJO II, 477–80.
- Tyana (near Kemerhisar, east of Konya): IJO III, 542–3.

9th to 12th Centuries (Textual and Archaeological Evidence)

- Aitolikon (Piraïos, western Greece), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 10; emended to Aphilon by Starr, 1939: 229.
- Amorium (Emirdağ to the north-east of Afyon, central Anatolia), 9th century: Starr, 1939: 98, no. 20.
- Armylo (Harmylo, probably Almiros or nearby Amaliapolis on the Gulf of Volos, Thessaly, Greece), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 11.

- Arta (about 20 km inland from the Adriatic shore, region of Ipiros, western Greece), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 10; emended by Starr, 1939: 229, 233, to Larta on the island of Levkas, south-west of Arta.
- Attaleia/Antalya (on the southern Turkish sea-shore), 1028: Ankori, 1959: 47, note 56. Again attested in 1148: Starr, 1939: 219, no. 167.
- Bissena/Vissena (unidentified), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 11.
- Cherson (on the northern Black Sea shore, Ukraine), mid-9th century: Starr, 1939: 122, no. 55.
- Chios (Greek island in the North Aegean Sea, off Izmir on the Turkish shore), 1049: Linder, 1997: 160–3, no. 341. Again attested ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 14.
- Christopoli/Hrissoupoli (antique Neapolis, Makedonia, north-eastern Greece) or Chrisopolis/Usküdar (Constantinople), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 11.
- Cigłana/Čelarevo (on the Danube, near Novi Sad, Serbia), late 8th or early 9th century: IJO I: 325–326.
- Constantinople, in continuous evidence: see Jacoby, 1995 and 1998a.
- Corfu, late 12th century: Benjamin of Tudela: 10.
- Corinth, ca. 900–950: Starr, 1939: 148, no. 85. Again in 1147: Starr, 1939: 223, no. 173. And again ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 10.
- Cotyaëum/Kütahya (west-central Turkey), 1071–1078: Starr, 1939: 202, no. 149.
- Crissa/Krisa (unidentified, probably on the golf of Corinth, Greece), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 10 = possibly Larissa (Thessaly)?
- Cyprus, ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 15.
- Demetrizi/Mitrousi (between Thessalonice and Drama, Makedonia, north-eastern Greece), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 11.
- Drama (Makedonia, north-eastern Greece), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 11.
- Egripo (Chalkis/Halkida, on the island of Euvoia, Greece) ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 10.
- Ellend (near Pécs, southwestern Hungary), 11th century (?): Kiss, 1970; Scheiber, 1983: 75–6.
- Ephesus (south of Izmir, western Turkey), 11th century: Starr, 1939: 196–7, no. 141.
- Gagry/Gagra (on the eastern shore of the Black Sea, Georgia) or Gangra (Germanicopolis/Chankiri/Cankiri, north-east of Ankara), 1207: Ankori, 1959: 125–7.
- Gallipoli/Gelibolu (European Turkey), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 14.
- Gardiki (possibly Gardiki Fthiotidas to the north of Lamia, central Greece), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 11.

- Iconium/Khonai/Konya (central Anatolia, Turkey), ca. 1150: Starr, 1939: 224–5, no. 176.
- Jabustrissa (unidentified, possibly in the area of Thermopylae, Greece), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 10–11; communication by S. Bowman.
- Kales, one of 31 places called Kale in Turkey, maybe Canakkale south of Gallipoli, which would however not square with the distances given by Benjamin, ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 14.
- Kifto/Napfpaktos = Lepanto/ancient Naupactus (Aeolia, Greece), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 10.
- Mastaura/Mastavra (near antique Nysa, southeast of Izmir and east of Ephesos, western Turkey), 1022: de Lange, 1996: 1–10, no. 1. Again ca. 1040: Mann, 1920–1922: I, 92–93. Norman Golb however reads the place name as Marathaia: *Bulletin of Judeo-Greek Studies* 1, 1987, 7. In this he is followed by Holo, 2009: 226–8, who also provides an English translation of the letter.
- Mytilene/Mytilini (island of Lesbos/Lesvou, Greece), where Benjamin found ten Jewish communities, ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 14.
- Nicaea/Iznik (western Turkey), mid-9th to early 10th century: Starr, 1939, p. 121, no. 54.
- Pa(l)ia (unidentified, about a hundred km from Seleucia), 1137: Goitein, 1964: 301, 302. Cf. IJO III, 521: ca. 20 km from Seleucia there is indeed a place called Palaia(i)/Philaia, last in evidence in the 10th century.
- Patras (on the Ionian coast, western Greece), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 10.
- Rabenika/Rabonica (unidentified), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 11.
- Rhodostos/Rhaedestus/Rodosto, Turkish Tekir Dagħ (west of Constantinople, European Turkey), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 14.
- Rhodes, after 961: Holo, 2000; and again ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 14.
- Samos, ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 14. Benjamin remarks that the islands have many congregations of Jews.
- Seleucia, most probably Seleucia Tracheotis = Silifke (south-eastern Turkish coast), 21 July 1137: Goitein, 1957–58, 1964.
- Sinon Potamo (near present-day Lamia, central Greece), ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 11.
- Sparta (Peloponnes, Greece), ca. 985: Starr, 1939: 167–9, no. 115.
- Strobilos (south-west of Bodrum/Halicarnassus, south-western Turkey), ca. 1034: Mann, 1920–1922: II, 344; Holo, 2001: 219–21. Again in 1135: Starr, 1939: 228, no. 181. Cf. Foss, 1990: 164–8.
- Synnada (Schifout Kassaba/Şuhut, Phrygia, Turkey), mid-9th to early 10th century: Starr, 1939: 119–20, no. 54.

Thebes/Thiva (Greece), ca. 1130: Goitein, 1971b: 23–31 = de Lange, 1992: 41, no. 23. Again in 1147: Starr, 1939: 223, n. 173. And again ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 10.

Thessalonica (Greece), ca. 1000: Mann, 1920–1922: II, 192 = Starr, 1939: 171–2, no. 119. Around 1071: Goitein, 1971b: 11–22 = De Lange, 1992: 41, no. 22. Before 1097: Starr, 1939: 205, no. 153. Ca. 1130: Goitein, 1971b: 23–31 = De Lange, 1992: 41, no. 23. Ca. 1160: Benjamin of Tudela: 11. For later documentation and a thorough sketch of the Jewish community there see Jacoby, 2003: 123–130.

Trebizond/Trabzon (north-eastern Black Sea coast of Turkey), 1188: Ankori, 1959: 123.

APPENDIX TWO

PLACES OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN ITALY (MAP 7)

Northern Italy

Ancona:

Klar, 1974: 50–51; Roth, 1966a: 111. The source is a Parma manuscript of 1311, Biblioteca Palatina MS Codex de Rossi 12 (2004), colophon. 967: Colorni, 1980: 258. For Ancona there are two 10th century references. One mentions a R. Menahem of Ancona who apparently was engaged in religious controversy, maybe against the Karaites, as he has *broken the horn of the scoffer in the land of Romanza*. This has been tentatively taken to denote the region of Romagna, in which Ancona lies. A charter of 967 speaks of a piece of land in the territory of Ancona, which belonged to the church of Ravenna and was held by a Jew.

Aquileia:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: nos. 7, 8; Noy, 1995: no. 238; Solin, 1983: 744, cf. Cracco-Ruggini, 1977.

Medieval: Colorni, 1980: 262, 304.

In Aquileia, halfway between Venice and Trieste and the most important trading place of the region, a very early epitaph of the first century B.C.E. was found. A 3rd–4th century C.E. epitaph from Rome mentions a man of Aquileia. In 381, after the synagogue had apparently been burned down, the future bishop of the town complained to an ecclesiastical council held there of the undue influence of the Jews. In the 5th century the town lost its commercial position and the population moved to nearby Grado, where indeed a contemporary epitaph (of an ex-Jew) has been located. An epitaph of 1140 from Aquileia signifies a return of Jews to this place. It is the oldest medieval Hebrew tombstone found north of Rome.

Asti:

Medieval: Colorni, 1980: 247, note 20: a field *bordering on the other side on the land of Dondonus judeus*. Dondonus might not have been a Jew but someone surnamed *Judeus*, as were not a few medieval persons.

Bologna:

Antiquity: Ambrosius, *Exhortatio virginitatis*, 7–8, in: PL 16, 351–354. This single source for antique Bologna is suspect: in 393 archbishop Ambrosius of Milan told a Florentine audience how he was accompanied by Jews in his search for the bodies of two Christian martyrs buried in the Jewish cemetery of Bologna. This is the only evidence until the Later Middle Ages. A supposed expulsion of 1177 adduced by Roth, 1966a: 115, is in great doubt, cf. Colorni, 1980: 272 and note 117.

Brescia:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: nos. 4, 5: two epitaphs of probably the 4th century, and then naught.

Concordia (north-east of Venice):

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 6. A late 4th–early 5th century epitaph of a soldier's wife or daughter from a military cemetery clearly does not denote Jewish settlement there, especially as the soldier and his troop were in some way connected to the Syrian city of Homs.

Genoa:

Antiquity: Linder, 1997: 201–4, nos. 401, 402.

Medieval: Urbani & Zazzu, 1999: 4, 5, 9, nos. 4, 7, 11; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 5. Jews are first documented early in the 6th century and not again until 1134 and onwards. Benjamin of Tudela found the Jewish population of that highly important commercial port to consist of two brothers, both from the city of Ceuta (Morocco).

Lucca:

Medieval: Luzzati, 1999: 23, 25; Colorni, 1980: 256–7; Luzzati, 1999: 25; Colorni, 1980: 257; *Vita Symeonis eremitae*, in: *Acta Sanctorum*, July 6, 328–9; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 5.

The leading city in Tuscany and the best-documented one in all northern and central Italy. Its early medieval Jewish presence is witnessed by an unusually large number of reliable documents between the years 859 and 1068. Some are notaries' records on the sale of landed property, at

times complete with Hebrew signatures that show Jews possessing in and near Lucca houses and homesteads. However, after 1017 such properties are only mentioned in the past tense, having passed into the hands of Christians. This might well have had to do with a baptism tale dated to 1016, which credits a visiting anchorite monk with the mass conversion of Jews. Even if the extent of conversion might have been exaggerated, something definitely happened to Luccese Jews in that period. Except for two references to former Jews that would seem to corroborate the conversion tale, a community reappears only one hundred years later, when Benjamin of Tudela reports about forty Jews in the town.

Milan:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: nos. 1–3; Linder, 1997: 205–6, no. 404.

Three epitaphs of the 5th century or later, and the protection granted between 523 and 526 to “the Milanese Jews” and their synagogue in the legislation of king Theoderic. Nothing more until the 13th century.

Modena:

Medieval: Colorni, 1980: 258.

A charter of 1025 tells of the bishop turning over to a church *that tithe held by Ardingus Jew* in a place called Saliceto. Both Milano, 1977: 577, note 37, and Roth, 1966a: 115, doubt this man’s Jewish identity.

Pavia:

Medieval: Carmen de Synodo Ticinensi, 1878: 190; Alcuini . . . epistolae, 1895: 285, no. 172; Council of Pavia, canon 24; Lex Romana Canonice Compta, canon 92; decree of 855: all three in Linder, 1997: 548–9, 332, 348–9, nos. 870, 571, 588; *Scroll of Ahimaaz*, Bonfil, 2009: 310.

The third Italian capital, first under Theoderic, then of the Lombard kings, and to some degree also after the Carolingian occupation of northern Italy. Despite the city’s importance as political junction and place of trade fairs, after Rome the “principal Italian center for the sale of luxury goods and the products of the Orient”, settled Jews cannot be clearly confirmed. There in 661 Aripert I, the first Catholic king of the Langobards, is said to have decreed the compulsory baptism of the Jews, and three more laws with anti-Jewish clauses were enacted in Pavia in or around the mid-9th century. The last piece of 855 was appended to the chapters promulgated in Pavia in 855 but certainly does not belong there. While included in the first Monumenta edition of 1835 (MGH, Leges I, p. 437, lines 11–15), in the 1890 re-edition (MGH, Capitularia II, p. 97, lines 12–22) it

is titled “ascribed to Lothair or Louis II. Time and origin uncertain”. Other sources suggest some presence of Jews, but not their regular residence. In a letter of around 799 Alcuin, the outstanding scholar of Charlemagne’s age, recollected the days of his youth, roughly around 760. On his way to Rome he tarried in Pavia and witnessed a religious disputation between master Peter of Pisa, *the most erudite of the distinguished grammarians at the imperial palace*, and a Jew called *Julius* (rendered in another manuscript as *Lullus*). In the Hebrew family chronicle, the *Scroll of Ahimaaz*, one of the protagonists is compelled to leave Oria, goes to Capua and from there journeys to Pavia. None of these can be understood to imply more than a transitory presence. Indeed, the *Honorantie Civitatis Papae*, the most important document on the economic, social, and administrative history of northern Italy in the 10th century, provides negative confirmation. It lists dues owed by merchants coming into Italy over the Alps; the special gifts owed to officials and the palace of Pavia by the king of England and the duke of Venice; the percentage payable to minters of Pavia and Milan in return for striking coin and their tolls owed to the palace; even the taxes of the gold-panners of the rivers of northern Italy and of the fishermen, leatherworkers and soap makers of Pavia. Trading and minting are occupations commonly associated with Jews, yet there is not a single word on them. Cf. Wickham, 1981: 89, and for the source Brühl & Violante, 1983.

Pisa:

Medieval: Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 5. There is no earlier documentation, and attempts to argue from later information to a pre-crusade presence are not convincing: EJ, entry Pisa; Ashtor, 1980: 423, but see Alessandra Veronese, *L’insediamento ebraico a Pisa nel Medioevo*, in: M. Tangheroni (ed.), *Pisa e il Mediterraneo*, Milano 2003: 175.

Pola (Pula, at the southern tip of the Istrian peninsula in today’s Croatia):
Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 9.

Ravenna:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 10; Linder, 1987: 272–6, nos. 42, 43, and note 1 on pp. 273–4; Anonymus Valesianus 2, 81–2, 92, 94.
Medieval: Agnelli . . . *liber pontificalis*: 365, 372, chs. 133, 143; Colorni, 1980: 258.

Ravenna served as capital of the Western Roman Empire during most of the 5th century, of the Ostrogoth king Theoderic in the early 6th century, and of Byzantine Italy from the late 6th to the mid-8th century. A 5th–6th century amphora with Hebrew script is more easily suggestive of a passing merchant than of a settled community. Equally undecided are two laws of 415 and 416, given at the court of Ravenna by the western Emperor Honorius to regulate the possession of Christian slaves and the return of Jewish converts to Judaism. Both were addressed to *Annas the Didascalus* (an otherwise unknown person bearing a purely honorific title) and to the elders or heads (*maiores*) of the Jews. This has been taken to mean the heads of the Jewish community of Ravenna, a conclusion not borne out by the documents, which mention Ravenna only as the place of issue. Rather, “both laws seem to indicate a continuous activity of Jewish representatives of the Western communities in the Court of Ravenna” (Linder, 1987: 275). Between 509 and 526, there occurred a violent confrontation between Christians and Jews, leading to the burning of the synagogues (in the plural!) and Jewish intervention with the king, in which a Jewish advisor seems to have been involved. In the 9th century account of Agnellus of Ravenna, the city’s archbishop St Damian (688–705) is given credit for baptizing a Jew under somewhat miraculous circumstances. Of his own time, the writer reports the discovery of a treasure belonging to the church of the city, the evaluation of which was entrusted to a Jewish expert. Thus a sizeable community was present in late antique Ravenna, while its existence in early medieval times is more doubtful, even though this important political center was surely visited by Jews. Such chronology dovetails with the archaeological findings that show Ravenna in sharp decline by the later 7th century (Hodges, 2006: 76–7).

Rimini:

Medieval: Colorni, 1980: 260; Simonsohn, 1988: 45, no. 45.

In 1015 the bishop granted his cathedral priests together with other rights the income from *half of the seashore with its toll and the toll of the Jews*, the possession of which was reconfirmed to the bishop by pope Lucius in 1144. By 1065 there was a Jewish *fundus*, which can mean either a Jewish quarter or merely an inn used to store their wares (on the *fundus* see O. R. Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World*, Cambridge 2003).

Tortona (Piedmont, north of Genoa):

Antiquity: *Acta Sanctorum*, April 2, 483–4: a hagiographic account that portrays the 4th century bishop St Innocence inflamed with such religious zeal that *he would not tolerate Jews in his city, had them scattered throughout the land, and their property seized*. As pointed out by modern Catholic historians, this particular piece of 10th century hagiography “is of no historical value”, cf. Stemberger, 1993: 85–6, with references.

Treviso:

Medieval: Linder, 1997: 375–7, 384–5, 387, nos. 602, 606, 607; *Die Urkunden Otto des II.*, 1893: 520, no. 109.

A privilege granted in 905 by king Berengar I of Italy to the local church included amongst others *the toll of that city, from the Christians as well as from the Jews who would wish to exercise there their commerce*. Using those very same words, the charter was renewed by the German emperors Otto III in 991 and Henry II in 1014. In the later 10th century a Jew called *Isaac* had formerly been in possession of a holding in the countryside of Treviso.

Trieste:

Medieval: Milano, 1977: 576; Roth, 1966a: 115; Colorni, 1980: 250–1 and notes 31, 32.

In 949, the bishop of Trieste supposedly handed over to the commune his rights in the town, including a payment by *Daniel son of David Jew of Carinthia*. This document has all the hallmarks of spuriousness. If not a forgery, it most probably belongs into the 13th century, after the formation of a commune, which only took place from the 12th century onwards. Jews in Carinthia are also a feature of the 13th century, not earlier. On the town and its commune see P. Cammarosano, Trieste, in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 8, cols. 1003–1004.

Venice:

Medieval: Goitein, 1967: 54 (doubtful).

In a Genizah document of around 1075 appears a scholar called *the son of the Bunduqi*. According to Shlomo Dov Goitein, doyen of Genizah studies, at that time *Bunduqi* in Arabic could hardly mean anything else than *the one from Venice*. For a dissenting interpretation see Ashtor, 1980: 427, note 99, who suggests *the one of the hazelnuts = seller of hazelnuts*. Yet there were no Jews in Venice at this early date, at least not officially. Some

clues point to Jews passing through in the 10th century. Of short sojourns there is indirect evidence before 1290 and secure evidence for 1329. 1382 is the earliest date for legal residence, which lasted until 1397, and then again from the early sixteenth century onwards (communication, gratefully acknowledged, of David Jacoby. See his *Les Juifs à Venise du XIV^e au milieu du XVI^e siècle*, in: idem, *Studies on the Crusader States and on Venetian Expansion*, Northampton 1989, no. X.)

Verona:

Antiquity: Cracco-Ruggini, 1959: 224 and note 89.

Medieval: Rather of Verona, 1853: 535–7; Colorni, 1980: 262–6.

The evidence is doubtful: a reference to particularities of Jewish ritual in a 4th century ecclesiastical treatise, and a heated polemic of 966 by bishop Rather against his protractors, whom he accuses of favoring the Jews. Further references to Jews in Verona come only from the very end of the 12th century and onwards.

Central and Southern Italy

Amalfi:

Medieval: Hasdai correspondence: Golb & Pritsak, 1982: 87 and note 43; two Genizah letters of the early and mid-11th century that speak of Jews passing through Amalfi or availing themselves of its maritime services: Goitein, 1973: 39–40, 42–5; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 9.

Ascoli Satriano and Candela:

Medieval: Milano, 1977: 597; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 9.

Bari (occupied by Arabs 843 to 871):

Medieval: tombs and epitaphs from the 6th–7th, 7th–8th, and 9th century or later: Noy, 1993: nos. 135, 136; Cassuto, Umberto, 1934.

Medieval: Anon. *Pesiqta Rabbati*, Starr, 1939: 110, no. 42; Bonfil, 2009: 320–2, but see the divergent opinion of Gil, 1997: 548, note 49; Falkenhausen, 1996: 40, note 130; *Codice Diplomatico Barese*: I, 56–58, no. 30; Colafemmina, 1994/5 and 1999; Golb, 1987: 10–2; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 9.

Benevento:

Medieval: Bonfil, 2009: 244, 282, 322; Goitein, 1973: 39; Roth, 1946: 87; *Vie et miracles du Pape S. Léon IX*, quoted by Falkenhausen, 1967: 144 and note 968; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 9.

In this capital of the Lombard principality of the same name, Jews are first mentioned in the 9th century. In July 1051, they are said to have been one of the groups pleading with pope Leo IX to protect them against the Normans. Around 1168 there was a sizeable community of 200 in Benevento.

Bisignano and Rossano:

Medieval: Starr, 1939: 161–2, nos. 105, 106; Milano, 1954: 120–121.

Jews are mentioned in a hagiographic account, written in the 11th century, of the 10th century Saint Nilos. For once, this has the hallmark of authenticity, especially as in Rossano the saint met *a certain Jew, Domnoulos by name, who had enjoyed his acquaintance since his youth, being highly cultured, and a skilled physician*. This can be no other than Sabbatai Donnolo, the philosopher, doctor, and author. Further references to both places come from the legal pronouncements of the Norman rulers, one at the very end of the 11th and one in mid-12th century.

Bova Marina:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 40; Costamagna, 2003.

Brindisi:

Antiquity (?): Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Erubim iv. 1.

Medieval: Colafemmina, 1973; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 9.

This is possibly the one Italian place besides Rome to be mentioned in the Talmud, as *Parendisim the port of departure*. There are three Hebrew tombstones of the 8th–9th century, one of them dated to the year 832. Benjamin of Tudela noted about ten Jews in Brindisi.

Brusciano:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 22.

Capua:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 20.

Medieval: Bonfil, 2009: 310, 324, 348; Codice diplomatico Verginiano, 1979: 180–3, no. 47 (charter of 1041); Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 7.

After a single epitaph of the 2nd-4th century, there is nothing for centuries. The city was totally destroyed in 841 by Saracens and had to be re-founded at a new location some fifteen years later. As the political and military situation stabilized in the later 10th century, organized Jewish life is again in evidence, including R. Ahimaaz, the author of the *Scroll* called by his name, who was born there in 1017. Around 1168 Benjamin of Tudela found 300 Jews in Capua.

Catanzaro:

Medieval: Ferorelli, 1915: 45.

Civitavecchia, Porto, Ostia:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: nos. 11, 16, 17, 18; Rutgers, 1992: 101.

Cosenza:

Medieval (?): Milano, 1954: 121, following Dito, 1916: 63, for the one reference to Jews. Colafemmina, 1999a: 166, however thinks that the critical word *judaeorum* has been emended and should actually read *judiciorum*, thus no Jews.

Fondi:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 19, Colafemmina, *Gli ebrei a Fondi*, in: T. Piscitelli Carpio (ed.), *Fondi tra antichità e medioevo*, Fondi 2002, 307–36, here 307–8. The Jew mentioned in Fondi in Dialogue 3.7 of pope Gregory I, 1979: 278–284, was no resident but passed through on his way to Rome.

Gaeta:

Medieval: Bonfil, 2009: 242; a. 1129: *Codex diplomaticus Cajetanus*: 240–2.

Gravina (between Venosa and Matera):

Medieval: a dedication inscription of 1184/5 in the synagogue: Colafemmina, 1980: 203.

Lanciano:

Medieval: Roth, 1946: 81; Milano, 1977: 586, 626.

The Jews are said to have been driven out in 1156 by a revolt that they had opposed. This appears somewhat stereotypical; however by 1191 as many as eighty families are reported to live there.

Lecce:

Medieval (?): Colafemmina, 1974: 247; Roth, 1946: 81. Roth apparently used, but did not quote G. T. Tanzi, *Gli Statuti della Città di Lecce*, Lecce 1898: 19.

A Venosa epitaph of the year 521 mentions a man *of the Lypineses*, which has been identified as Lecce. In the Norman period the town is said to have had statutes referring to Jews. Neither of these references appears conclusive.

Matera:

Medieval: Colafemmina, 1980: 202; Ascoli, 1880: nos. 34–36.

Melfi:

Medieval: Milano, 1954: 110; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 9.

Monte Cassino or nearby:

Medieval: 1022: In an unknown place not too far from the abbey of Monte Cassino lived some Jews to whom the monastery had previously pawned very valuable parts of its treasure: *Die Chronik des Montecassino*, 1980: 250, ch. II: 43; cf. Citarella & Willard, 1983: 106–7.

Naples:

Antiquity: One epitaph of the 1st and ten of the 5th–6th centuries: Noy, 1993: nos. 26–36; Procopius, I, chs. 8, 10; Gregory I, *Epistles* 6:29, 9:105, Linder, 1997: 429–31, 436–8, nos. 713, 718.

Medieval: A place name in question in the Hasdai correspondence (Mann, 1931: I, 25–26, and Klar, 1974: 50) has convincingly been read as Naples: Golb & Pritsak, 1982: 86, note 39; Bowman, 1993: 282 (*Sefer Yossipon*); Colafemmina, 1980: 225; Goitein, 1973: 39 (Genizah letter, early 11th century); Colafemmina, 2001: 40 (converted Jew near Naples, 1060); Ferorelli, 1915: 40; Milano, 1977: 589; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 8.

Nola:

Medieval: 7th century (?) bronze lamp with Hebrew inscription: Noy, 1993: no. 21.

Oria:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 137.

Medieval: Colafemmina, 1980: 216; Bonfil, 2009: 234, 250–4, 270, 284, 320, 340, 350; Simonsohn, 1997: 16–7, no. 25; De S. Barsanuphio Solitario, *Acta Sanctorum* April II, 26 A-D, quoted by Falkenhausen, 1967: 144 and note 962.

One of the rare communities with an unbroken record from antiquity to the 10th century, but not later. Documented by an epitaph from the 5th to 7th and one from the 8th century, as well as by a 9th century necropolis. It features prominently in the *Scroll of Ahimaaz*, whose author's family claimed from there. It was also the home of the physician and philosopher Sabbatai Donnolo, of the liturgical poet Shefatia Birbi Amittai, and of the important scholar Mahir. In the mid-9th century one of the town's gates was called the "Jewish Gate". Apparently the year 925, when the Berbers sacked Oria and carried away many of its inhabitants as slaves, marks the end of Jewish life there, cf. Colafemmina, 1980: 219.

Otranto:

Antiquity: 3rd–4th century Greek-Hebrew epitaph: Noy, 1993: no 134.

Medieval: references in the Hasdai correspondence and in the *Scroll of Ahimaaz*: Mann, 1931: I, 25–26; Bonfil, 2009: 320; Roth, 1946: 89; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 9–10.

Potenza (roughly halfway between Naples and Bari):

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 117, an epitaph of the 5th-6th century, but nothing medieval.

Reggio:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 139.

Medieval (?): Milano, 1954: 122, who quotes Dito, 1916: 63, who in turn refers to a document written between 1505 and 1511 in the context of a legal struggle between the archbishop and the university of Reggio. There is no contemporary medieval reference, direct or indirect, to Jews in Reggio di Calabria.

Rome:

Antiquity: Solin, 1983: 658–61; Noy, 1995: passim; Noy, 1993: no. 28; Linder, 1997: 203–5, no. 403; Greg. I epist. 8:25 = Linder, 1997: 433–4, no. 716.

Medieval: Güdemann, 1880–1888: II, 48; Mann, 1970: 38, note 36, cf. Bonfil, 1987: 24–25; Zimmels, 1966: 181–4; Somekh, 2002; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 5.

Rossano see Bisignano

Salerno:

Medieval: Codex diplomaticus Cavensis: I, nos. 23, 29, 31, 32, 39, 47, 58, 61, 74, 159; II, nos. 442, 567; IV, no. 651; V, no. 841; VII, no. 1231; Marongiu, 1937: 241; Pergamene Salernitane, 1941: 57–9, no. 12; Taviani, 1994: 274; Cerone, 1926: 60, doc. I; Goitein, 1973: 327–30; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 8. See Kreutz, 1991: 86.

Siponto:

Medieval: Gil, 1993: 48; Grossman, 1988: 253 and note 232, 351 and note 132; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 8.

Taranto:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: nos. 2, 118, 120–133; a somewhat different dating for some of these epitaphs in Colafemmina, 1972.

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: 16–7, no. 25; Starr, 1939: 194, nos. 137, 138; Milano, 1954: 117; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 9.

Telese Terme:

Antiquity: the *Telesinus* in an epistle of pope Gelasius has been understood by Linder as a proper name and by Simonsohn and Ferorelli as “a man of Telesia”: Linder, 1997: 416–7, no. 701; Simonsohn: 1, no. 1; Ferorelli, 1915: 12.

Terlizzi:

Medieval: 1138 to 1160 *Abimelech, master Jacob and Sabbatai of the city of Spalato* (modern Split, Croatia, due north across the Adriatic) were buying and selling agricultural property: Codice diplomatico Barese: III, nos. 49, 53, 87, quoted by Milano, 1954: 115.

Terracina:

Antiquity: two letters of pope Gregory I: Linder, 1997: 417–9, 421–3, nos. 702, 706.

Trani:

Medieval: Milano, 1954: 115; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 9.

Venafrò:

Antiquity: Linder, 1997: 416, no. 700 (epistle of pope Gelasius, 492–496) and 419–20, no. 704 (Gregory I, Epistle 1:66 of 591); 5th–6th cents. Naples epitaph of the son of a man hailing from Venafrò: Noy, 1993: no. 27.

Venosa and Lavello:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: nos. 42–116; Rutgers, 2006: 499–502.

Medieval: Starr, 1939: nos. 24, 26, 27, 29–37, 40, 41, 43, 46, 46; Cassuto, 1934a, 1954; Colafemmina, 1977, 1984, 1986, 1987, 1993, 2000; Lacerenza, 1989; Bonfil, 2009: 256–8. For Lavello see Cassuto, 1998, and Bonfil, 2009: 222.

Sicily

Antiquity: the epistles of Pope Gregory I the Great in chronological order: 1:69 = Linder, 1997: 420–1, no. 705; 1:71 = Patrologia Latina vol. 77: col. 526A–B; 2:38 = Linder, 1997: 423–4, no. 707; 3:37 = Linder, 1997: 424–5, no. 708; 5:7 = Linder, 1997: 428–9, no. 712; 6:30 = MGH Epistola vol. 1: 408; 7:41 = MGH Epist. vol. 1: 489; 8:21 = MGH Epist. vol. 2: 22–3; 8:23 = Linder, 1997: 432–3, no. 715; 8:25 = Linder, 1997: 433–4, no. 716; 9:38 = Linder, 1997: 434–5, no. 717.

Acireale:

Antiquity: Noy, no. 144, dated to the 4th–6th centuries by Bucaria, 1996: 25.

Agrigento:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 160; Rutgers, 1992: 113; Colafemmina, 1995a: 305–8.

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: XXIII, XXXV.

Castrogiovanni (Enna):

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: XXIII.

Catania:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: nos. 145–150, and see also the 3rd century hagiographic legend of St Agatha set there: Gebbia, 1996: 66–7.

Medieval: Life of Saint Leo II: Starr, 1939: 95–96, no. 17; Simonsohn, 1997: XXXV, 395–6, 421–2, nos. 173, 187.

Chiaramonte Gulfi (Acrilla):

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 155.

Comiso:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 156.

Lentini:

Antiquity: Rutgers, 1992: 113; Rutgers, 1997: 255, and see also a 3rd century hagiographic legend set in Lintini, in: Gebbia, 1996: 66.

Lipari, the largest of the Aeolian Islands, off the northern shore of Sicily:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 162.

Medieval: Lipari might be connected to an enigmatic 10th century manuscript reference. In the Hasdai correspondence there is mention of an island linked in some way to the copying of the *Book of Yossipon*, and Benjamin of Tudela refers to an arm of the sea designated by the same Hebrew letters *LWBR*. Norman Golb has read both as the same place, the island of Lipari, an identification that other scholars disagree with: Mann, 1931: I, 26; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 78 (= p. 70 Hebrew pagination); Golb, 1973: 115–6 and note 47; Golb & Pritsak, 1982: 87–8 and note 44. Dissenting voices are Colafemmina, 1999: 252, note 22, and Simonsohn, 2003: 35: “the LOWAR of Benjamin of Tudela is not Lipari, and the LOWAR talked about by Samuel two centuries before rests a mystery”. Indeed, had there been a significant Jewish settlement on the island, the Norman rulers would have no cause in 1093, 1095 and 1107 to augment a monastery on Lipari with income raised from Jews of three different places on the adjacent Sicilian coast: Simonsohn, 1997: XXXVII; 390 no. 169; 391 no. 170. The second gift was made up of 30 villains in various localities and one Jew and his children living in a castle, a telling indication of the very different tax value attributed to the two categories of persons.

Marsala:

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: XXXV.

Mazara del Vallo:

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: XXIII.

Mazarino:

Antiquity: Rutgers, 1992: 113.

Messina:

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: XXIII.

Naso:

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: XXXV.

Noto Vecchio:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 154; Colafemmina, 1995a: 312–15.

Palermo:

Antiquity: Linder, 1997: 433–4, no. 716, 434–5, no. 717.

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: XXIII, XXXV.

Patti:

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: XXXV.

Ragusa:

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: XXIII.

Sciacca:

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: XXIII.

Sofiana:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: nos. 157–159.

Syracuse:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: nos. 151, 152; Rutgers, 1992: 112–3; Colafemmina, 1995a: 308–12.

Medieval: Life of Zosimus, redacted not before the end of the 7th century and preserved solely in a Latin translation of the 17th century: Simonsohn, 1997: 14–15, no. 22; Simonsohn, 1997: XXIII, XXXV.

Taormina:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993: no. 143.

Termini Imerese:

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: XXXV.

Trapani:

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: XXIII, XXXV.

Valdemone:

Medieval: Simonsohn, 1997: XXIII.

Sardinia and Malta:

Antiquity:

Capoterra, Porto Torres and Cagliari (Sardinia): Noy, 1993: nos. 170–176;
pope Gregory I, epistles 4:9 and 9:196: Linder, 1997: 425–6, 438–40,
nos. 709, 719.

Macomer, Sardinia:

Medieval: Noy, 1993: no. 196.

Rabat on Malta:

Antiquity: Noy, 1993, nos. 164–168.

APPENDIX THREE

PLACES OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN FRANCE AND GERMANY (MAPS 2–4)

Aachen:

Medieval: Linder, 1997: 348, no. 587

An administrative order of ca 820 refers to some Christian and Jewish merchants housed in vicinity of the Imperial palace. It is doubtful whether this amounts to a settled community. The next mention is from the 13th century.

Arles:

Late Antiquity: Jews attend the funerals of ecclesiastics: Hilarius of Arles, *Sermo de vita Honoranti*, ch. 14, in: *Vita sanctorum patrum Honoranti et Hilarii*, ed. S. Cavallin, Lund 1952, 58; Ravennio, *Vita s. Hilarii Arelatensis*, ch. 22, PL 50, col. 1242D–1243; *Vita Rusticulae*, 1902: 350; *Vitae Caesarii episcopi Arelatensis libri duo*, 1896: 500–501. They defend the city: *ibid.* 467–469; Pope Gregory the Great: Linder, 1997: 418–9, no. 703, epistle 1:45.

Medieval: 4 Hebrew epitaphs of the 8th to 9th centuries: Noy, 1993: 281–2, no. 198; 282–3, no. 199; Schwab, 1900: 921. Tax privilege of Emperor Louis the Blind: Linder, 1997: 369–71, no. 598. Landed property: *Cartulaire . . . Saint-Victor*, 1857: I, 209, no. 179; 221, no. 194; 215, no. 187, cf. Blumenkranz, 1960: 25. Talmudic scholars: Agus, 1965, nos. XCV, CCI; Golb, 1998: 553. Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 4.

Auch:

Medieval: 7th–8th century Latin-Hebrew inscription with Jewish iconography: Noy, 1993, I: 267–70, no. 191; mid-11th century proprietary rights in land and mills: *Cartulaires . . . Auch*, 1899: 95, no. 89; 44, no. 46.

Augsburg (Roman garrison town *Augusta Vindelicum*, capital of *Raetia secunda*):

Late Antiquity: Berger, 2005: 126–7: terracotta lamp with menorah, dated to the 4th/5th century.

Medieval (?): *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi*, I, 1882: 410, no. 24. By one opinion (Bachrach, 1977a: 123), Jews appear in Augsburg in a

letter by bishop Solomon of Constance of 878/9: all esteem the bishop of Augsburg, *strangers and needy, secular and clergy, monks and virgins, widows and orphans, counts and rulers, slaves and free, married and chaste, the middling and the great, Jews and pagans*. However, this is but a formulaic phrase to suggest the usual image of all-inclusive episcopal rule. Actual Jews are missing from this, and so are real-life ones in Augsburg well into the mid-13th century.

Auxerre:

Medieval: Responsa of the Tosaphists, 1954: no. 1, cf. Agus, 1952, and Soloveitchik, 1990: 77–86; Grossman, 1995: 211.

Avallon:

Medieval: Rashi, Responsa, 1943: no. 247, cf. Soloveitchik, 1990: 120–1.

Banyuls-les-Aspres (dépt. Pyrénées-Orientales):

Medieval: Linder, 1997: 365–7, no. 549, cf. Blumenkranz, 1960: 348.

Béziers:

Medieval: Histoire générale de Languedoc: V, 314, 317, 447; III, 635, 813; Saige, 1881: 12; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 3.

Blois:

Medieval: Haberman, 1945: 11–5, cf. Chazan, 1970.

Bordeaux:

Late Antiquity: Gregory of Tours, 1885: III:50, p. 644; similar in Gregory of Tours, 2000: I, 292, II, 8, chs. V:6, VI:5; finger-ring: Noy, 1993: 270–2, no. 192.

Medieval: The Annals of Saint-Bertin, 1991: 65–6.

Here the presence of Jews has been claimed on strength of three pieces of evidence. The earliest comes from Gregory of Tours' celebration of the miracles worked by Saint Martin, here a healing performed on the saint's festival on July 4, 586 on a priest Lupus in Bordeaux. *At daybreak he [Lupus] rushed to the saint's church. As he was hurrying, he met a Jew who asked where he was going. Lupus replied: "I am suffering from a quartan fever, and now I am rushing to the saint's church so that his power might save me from illness". The Jew said: "Martin will be of no use to you, because the dirt pressing down [on him in his tomb] has made him into dirt. In vain do you go to his shrine; a dead man will not be able to provide medicine for*

the living." But *Lupus* ignored these words of the old serpent and went where he intended. . . . and soon recovered his health. But the Jew was afflicted with illness and disturbed for a year; yet his wicked mind was never able to be converted through these torments. The function of the Jew's skepticism is "to highlight Gregory's opinion on the tomb and its relic, that is: a locus where earth and heaven met in the person of the dead, made plain by some manifestation of supernatural power—some virtue—of some miracle, some wonderful happening" (Brown, 1982: 225). The next testimony is a finger ring found in the grounds of the Roman castle of Bordeaux. Incised with Latin letters and a menorah, it has been dated to roughly the same period, the 6th century. This has been understood to point to the existence of a Jewish quarter within the walls of late antique Bordeaux, and thus of an organized community (Berger 2005: 89–91). A single Jew sojourning at some point in Bordeaux is at least as likely. The last piece of evidence comes from a 9th century chronicle that charges the Jews of Bordeaux with treason, having turned over in 848 the town to Viking raiders who then proceeded to ravage and burn it. This is the only meeting of Jews and Vikings recorded for the entire Middle Ages, wholly unlikely as other instances of imputed betrayal. The next time Jews are mentioned at Bordeaux is in the years around 1320 (Gross, 1969: 111). For the motif of Jewish treason in early medieval sources see Toch, 2001a: 474–8. For an in-depth analysis in the medieval and early modern periods see Heil, 2006.

Bourges:

Late Antiquity and Medieval: Venanti Fortunati *vita sancti Germani*, 1885: 24, ch. 62; the same story in shortened form by an unknown author of the late 9th century: *De vita et miraculis et de translatione sancti Germani*, 1899: 140; Gregory of Tours, 2000: I, 292, ch. V,6; *Vita Sulpicii episcopi Biturgi*, 1902: 374–5.

For Bourges, archbishopric and capital of the Berry, there are three accounts, set between the later 6th and early 7th century and penned almost contemporarily. The first is by Venantius Fortunatus (died ca. 600), bishop of Poitiers, poet, friend and collaborator of Gregory of Tours. He was a prolific author of Saints' Lives, amongst them of Germanus bishop of Paris, who died in 576. When in Bourges for the ordination of a new bishop, this Germanus is said to have baptized a Jew, whose wife Mammona however remained steadfast in her refusal to accept Christianity. Eventually, the devil possessing the woman was exorcised and left through her nostrils under fire and smoke. This performance persuaded numerous others of the Jews of Bourges to convert. The name *Mammona* appears first in

the male form in the New Testament, in Matthew and Luke, a personification of ill-begotten riches. Its employment in the present tale is of course anything but fortuitous. The second story, by Gregory of Tours, concerns an arch-dean of Bourges, who suffered from cataracts, went on a pilgrimage to Saint Martin's tomb in Tours, had his eye sight partially restored, went home where he consulted a Jew, upon which his vision immediately worsened, returned to Tours but was not healed. He *would have retained his health, if he had not sought the help of a Jew after he had received God's grace*. "The presence of the Jew in the story is a device to magnify the insult to Saint Martin whose patronage was discarded in favour of recourse to an individual outside the Christian kin" (Keely, 1997: 114). The last hagiographic tale concerns archbishop Sulpicius (died ca. 644/47), one more spiritual shepherd who *would not suffer in his town a heretic, pagan or Jew . . . So he preached to the Jews and beseeched the Lord's mercy day and night for their conversion until they acceded to him and assembled for their baptism in church, first a few and then all*. The three pious stories, driven as they are by quite obvious designs and uncorroborated by any other type of evidence, are difficult to accept as valid proof for the presence of Jews in late 6th and early 7th century Bourges. Real Jews are attested in town only from the late 12th century onwards (Gross, 1969: 110–1).

Burgaltendorf (now part of Essen, Germany, seventy five km into *Germania* beyond the Roman border on the Rhine):

Late Antiquity: Berger, 2005: 101–103: a stray find of the year 1992 in a place that might have served for some time as an outpost of the Roman army. This is a piece of a shallow bronze bowl or dish and has on its underside a fragmentary scratching that reads *IUDAEA*, understood to mean "of (belonging to) . . . (name) *the Jewess*". It has been surmised that the vessel might have come as plunder or trade article from the Jewish community of Roman Cologne (some 70 km due south, see below), or that the owner might have been the wife, freedwoman or slave of a Jewish trader going about his business beyond the frontier of Roman civilization.

Burghöfe (40 km north of Augsburg, Germany):

Late Antiquity: Berger, 2005: 83–84: in or around this Roman frontier fort on the Danube, an amateur wielding a metal detector in the 1970's turned up a lead seal with menorah that was dated to the 4th/5th century.

Carcassonne:

Medieval: Gross, 1969: 614; Saige, 1881: 130–1, 78, 133–4, 17.

Chalon-sur-Saône:

Medieval landholding: *Chartularium* . . . Paredo, 1891: 7, no. 6; *Recueil* . . . Cluny, 1876: vol. 1, 168, no. 178; vol. 2, 61, no. 963; 528–9, no. 1474; vol. 3, 14–5, no. 1747; 469, no. 2364; 642, no. 2587. Community: Rashi, *Responsa*, 1943: no. 70, cf. Gross, 1969: 591.

Châlons-sur-Marne (Châlons-en-Champagne):

Medieval: *Responsa* of the Tosaphists, 1954: no. 1, and compare Soloveitchik, 1990: 77–86.

Clermont (Clermont-Ferrand):

Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages: *Acta Sanctorum*, 1. November, Paris 1887, 23–73, cf. Stemberger, 1993: 84–85; Sidonius Apollinaris, 1887: 43, 57, 100–1, 144; council of 535: Linder, 1997: 469–70, nos. 815, 816; Gregory of Tours, 1985: 58; Gregory of Tours, 2000: I, 210, ch. IV,12; I, 242, ch. IV,35; conversion of 576: Venanti Fortunati *opera poetica*, 1881: 107–12; Gregory of Tours, 2000: 294–8, ch. V,11.

In 312 bishop Austremonius attempted to baptize the numerous Jews in town, succeeding however only with a boy, who was promptly killed by his irate father. In his wrath, the man then proceeded to whip the bishop to death, thus affording him the martyrdom that the Roman Empire had just ceased offering to the Christian devotee. This comes from the earliest extant version of the Life of the bishop, which by one opinion stems from the 7th century, by another more probable one from the mid-9th century. Further versions written until the 11th century add on more fanciful details. The whole story is clearly a late invention and no indication for the existence of a Jewish community in the early 4th century. Over one hundred and fifty years later, Sidonius Apollinaris, bishop of Clermont and before that an important political player in Rome, knew personally a number of Jews. One of them appears to be connected to Narbonne, while two further ones served as letters bearers to other places (Tournai, Nantes). Clermont was also the venue for a church council assembled in 535, which as earlier and later such meetings legislated against too close relations between Christians and Jews, as well as against Jews appointed as judges over Christian populace. All this is not yet evidence for actual Jews living in Clermont.

Within twenty five years, between 551 and 576, Jews are referred to in Clermont four different times by Gregory of Tours, a contemporary who was born there and knew the town very well. The last reference is also corroborated by Venantius Fortunatus. This is a singular accumulation of

evidence for Gaul, but it is worthwhile to take a closer look. In 551, at the death of Gregory's uncle bishop Gallus of Clermont, the Jews participated in the funerary procession. The bewailing of the departed bishop by *even the Jews* is a motif much used by ecclesiastical writers of the period. It has been convincingly tied to the function of "bearing witness to Christian truth", which ecclesiastical writing assigned to Jews. It is also a rhetorical device for swelling a crowd. In order to create an image of inclusiveness, Gallic hagiographers tended to gather together in one throng contrasting opposites: men and woman, unjust and just, the young and the old, and, always at the peak of the sequence, Christians or Romans with *even the Jews* (cf. Blumenkranz, 1949; Brennan, 1985: 324. For more instances of this motif in late antique Gaul and, interestingly, 11th century Germany, see Toch, 2001a: 469–74). Gregory also commented on two men succeeding his uncle as bishop of Clermont, both of them customers of the Jews and little appreciated by the author. This brings us to the high point of 576, when between Easter, Ascension Day and Pentecost bishop Avitus and a violent crowd put such pressure on the Jews of Clermont that *over five hundred* converted. A further unspecified number fled to Marseille. Using information supplied by Gregory, the affair was first described by Venantius Fortunatus in a rhymed account written upon Gregory's request shortly after the event. A second and slightly diverging account was penned years later by Gregory in his *Histories*. Conversion stories belong to the bread and butter of Christian hagiography, in this period and later. Given the widespread Augustinian notion of the Jews as the proverbial unbelievers but eventual witnesses to Christian truth, making them see the light is indeed a feat worthy of a holy bishop and proof for his saintliness. In addition, such performance heals dissent and re-establishes harmony within the city, yet another rhetorical task of hagiography pointed out by recent scholarship (cf. Geary, 1988: 136–7). All these elements are present in the accounts of 576, and so is some hyperbole to be discounted. Still, the proximity of the two authors to the event suggests that the baptism of 576 was historical fact rather than a pious invention. This in turn lends credibility to the previous references, which by themselves would appear suspect. Ultimately, it is the accumulation of evidence within a short span of time that tilts the balance. Even so, this dramatic event was to be the end of the Jewish presence in town until the late 13th century (Gross, 1969: 589). A number of scholars have commented extensively upon the conversion affair: Blumenkranz, 1960: passim; Rouche, 1979a; Brennan, 1985; Goffart, 1989; Stemberger, 1993: 92–4; Keely, 1997: 111–3; Lotter, 1986, 1999, 2001, 2004–2006.

Cologne:

The claim for a late antique synagogue in Cologne and its continuous use by a Jewish community throughout the entire Middle Ages has gone public with the project of an “Archaeological Zone Cologne” (*Archäologische Zone Köln*). Despite persistent criticism of the scientific and civic aspects of the venture, local and state authorities were persuaded to put up a Jewish Museum on the spot, intended to cement the argument that the “roots of Ashkenazic Jewry lie in Cologne” (Schütte & Gechter, 2011: 68). At a conference in Brandenburg in January 2011, the scientific merits of this assertion were again critically discussed. To yet another colloquium organized by the initiators’ of the project amidst great media attention in early July 2011 in Cologne, no one of dissenting opinion was invited. For the management of the project’s public image see the discussion page of the Wikipedia entry for *Archäologische Zone Köln* (http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diskussion:Arch%C3%A4ologische_Zone_K%C3%B6ln#POV).

I take the opportunity to re-examine and make precise my position taken in Toch, 2001, esp. notes 23–27, which has fueled a controversy with Friedrich Lotter, 2001–2006, as well as with Sven Schütte. It also echoes throughout the book of Berger, 2005, as well as in Baltrusch, 2002: notes 1, 6, and 22.

Late Antiquity: Community: Codex Theodosianus 16,8,3: Linder, 1987: 121–2, no. 7. Codex Theodosianus 16,8,4 = Linder, 1987: 132–8 and note 12, no. 9. Law of 335: Linder, 1987: 138–44, no. 10. Recent analysis in Baltrusch, 2002, and Berger, 2005: 61–3, 152. Synagogue: Doppelfeld, 1959; Schütte & Gechter, 2000; Schütte, 2004, esp. 77–88, 111; Schütte & Gechter, 2011.

A tremendous amount of energy has been invested to suggest a significant Jewish presence in late antique *Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium*, capital of the province *Germania inferior*. Its discussion starts with a law of Emperor Constantine the Great of the year 321, which did away with the previous exemption of Jews from the onerous duties of membership in the municipal councils (*curiae*) of self-governing cities. One of the earliest steps in a broad empire-wide legislative campaign to secure the functioning of urban governments, this is explicitly a general law destined for the whole of Constantine’s domain. However, it made its way into the *Theodosian Code*, from where we know about it, by a single conduit, through a copy sent to Cologne. There follows the critical question: is this evidence for the existence of a Jewish community in early 4th century Cologne, which must have been a substantial one, if some its members were seen fit to fill the demanding task, in time, effort, and money outlays for taxes, of urban government? Or, is it rather a routine copy sent to

Cologne as one of many centers of Roman administration, without regard to the presence or absence of Jews there? A supporting piece of evidence, yet another law of the same Emperor of 330 (Codex Theodosianus 16,8,4), has been thought to pertain to Cologne too, wrongly so as has now been convincingly demonstrated. In a similar vein, a further general law on Jewish matters by the same Emperor (of 335) has been preserved only in a single copy issued to one particular diocese.

If this was indeed a substantial group of late antique Jews as implied by some of their number's inclusion in the urban elite, it stands to reason that they possessed a synagogue. This is the position insistently taken by Sven Schütte in his re-interpretation of the evidence uncovered by Otto Doppelfeld in the 1950's. Working from the clearly recognized 12th century synagogue back in time, earlier architectural elements beneath are asserted to have been in continuous use as three different synagogues, of which the bottom one is a late antique building of the 4th century. This has been designated as the earliest synagogue of Cologne and indeed of the whole of Europe north of the Alps. The identification as synagogues rests on the continuity of construction on the plot, and in the case of the late antique one on the apparent similarity of the surmised ground plan to the Samaritan synagogue of Khirbet el Samara near Nablus in the Holy Land, thought to be of the 4th century. Jewish inscriptions, ornaments, iconography, Hebrew letters, remains of the Torah-shrine or of the reading pulpit, and the like, have yet to be found. As for the ground plan, it might do well to remember that unlike Christian churches "no two (late antique) synagogues were identical in either shape, size or design, no matter how close they were to one another geographically or chronologically" (Levine, 2000: 297).

Medieval: Aronius, 1902: 68–69, nos. 163–165. Fairs: Gershom ben Jehudah, 1955: no. 29; for 1096: *Hebräische Berichte*, 2005: 429, 400–407, 406–465.

Medieval Cologne was the largest and economically most vibrant of the towns of Germany and a Jewish community of considerable size, comparable to Mainz. The first medieval sources are of the mid- and later 11th century. Somewhat earlier are hints to visits of Jewish merchants to the three annual fairs of Cologne. In 1096, the Jews of Cologne suffered heavy losses in life and property. The chronology posed by the written evidence implies a hiatus of six to seven centuries between a suggested antique presence of Jews and their clearly established medieval one. Archaeology has indicated that this gap might be somewhat smaller. Otto Doppelfeld identified below the synagogue built anew after the destruction of 1096

(Synagogue II) an earlier one (Synagogue I), datable by pottery shards to the 9th to 11th century (Doppelfeld, 1959: 71–2, 120–2). However, Sven Schütte in his re-interpretation of Doppelfeld's findings poses yet another synagogue of the early Carolingian period (ca. 780/800), destroyed or heavily damaged by an earthquake around 880/90 and beneath that the late antique one mentioned above (Schütte & Gechter, 2000; Schütte, 2004; Schütte & Gechter, 2011: 71–81). The earliest texts (mid-11th century) do not rule out an arrival of Jews decades or even up to a century earlier, as suggested by Doppelfeld's dating. The main question is how much earlier is reasonable in the absence of explicit information. Schütte's identification of an early Carolingian synagogue is based neither on Jewish iconography nor on other motifs in the archeological record. Neither have such items turned up in his excavation of the plot in the last years. Rather, this early medieval synagogue and the postulated Jewish presence since Late Antiquity rest on the assumption of a building continuity of the plot, on the backdating of Doppelfeld's chronology of the pottery and of other findings, and on the presumed necessity for a new building because of earthquake damage. Exactly the same method serves to date the ritual bath, the *Mikveh*, where Schütte sees three building stages: 1) the oldest edifice (before 780), 2) renovated after 780/800, and 3) a 10th century building (Schütte, 2004: 108–10). Phases one and two are dated on strength of structural damage surmised to have been the result of an earthquake of 780/90, phase two also by pottery of the later 9th century, the same pottery dated by Doppelfeld with a much larger margin to the 9th to 11th century. Here too the claim is possible but not conclusive.

A further argument concerns the bones of St Severin (the third bishop of Cologne, died around 500), which were re-buried in a wooden shrine in 948. When this casket was opened in 1999, the bones were found wrapped in several textiles, some of them expensive fabrics clearly imported from Central Asia. The innermost one was dated by accelerator mass spectrometry to the years 690 to 890, measures a hefty 274 by 134 cm, is of silk woven in geometrical patterns of red, yellow and black on beige background. It has two short Hebrew inscriptions applied by two different writers in black ink at the upper edge of the backside. The short groups of words are heavily damaged by mice, with a single decipherable word *beraha* (greeting or blessing) in one text and the word *Joseph*, apparently a name, in the other. Schütte thinks this textile “most probably” belongs to the time around 700; that it “might” have served as a prayer shawl (*talit gadol*); that it had “almost certainly” been in use as such by local Jews in Cologne; and that it “might” have reached the church as a

gift of reverence to the archbishop, by the Jewish community or by individuals. Together, this string of suggestions is offered as further evidence for an “early Jewish presence north of the Alps and specially in Cologne” (Schütte, 2004: 112–4). There is absolutely no need to go to the earliest possible dating of the silk’s production faraway to the East in order to infer from it a Jewish presence in Merovingian Cologne around the year 700. If Jews must perforce have been involved in the silk’s transfer, this could as well have taken place at a later date, for instance sometime before 948, when the wooden casket was produced according to dendrochronology. This dating lies within the limits of the hitherto accepted chronology of a Jewish presence at Cologne, and one can easily imagine older valuable textiles available in Cologne being used at the re-burial in 948. The size of the silk is the standard one of a piece of merchandise, definitely not of a prayer shawl (which nowadays measures around 152–198 by 61 cm, half the textile’s actual size). The paleography of the Hebrew inscription is clearly Oriental and most likely part of the address of a merchandise assignment. The Jew or Jews involved in one or more stages of the transport of the piece could have lived in any of many places between Central Asia and Central Europe. I have had opportunity in January 2007 to view the textiles in the company of Dr. Sabine Schrenk and Dr. Joachim Oepen of Cologne. Their and their colleagues’ painstakingly thorough study of all conceivable aspects of the textiles has found nothing to verify Schütte’s speculations (Oepen, Schrenk, et alia, 2011: 286–95, esp. 294, and in note 176 more on the image management of the project).

Thus the claim for a pre-10th century habitation of Jews in Cologne is extremely unlikely. One had wished that this single-minded pursuit of Jewish continuity had heeded what an English archaeologist had to say about such ventures in his own country: “For two decades urban archaeologists have doggedly searched for traces of seventh-to ninth-century occupation above Roman levels... Thwarted by the absence of early medieval deposits, there is a constant temptation to attribute tenth-century layers to the ninth century and so to recover at least something in the bid to prove urban continuity”: Hodges & Whitehouse, 1983: 84.

Conques (dépt. Aveyron):

Medieval (?): Cartulaire... Conques, 1879: 275, no. 358.

Durtal (dépt. Maine et Loire):

Medieval: Responsen... Frankreich und Lotharingen, 1881: no. 62 = Agus, 1965: I, no. XLVIII.

Europe:

Antiquity: Berger, 2005: 133–42 and the distribution map on 243.

Coins struck in Palestine in the 1st and 2nd centuries, but not after, have turned up in numerous places across Europe, from Hungary to eastern Austria, Switzerland, Western Germany, Belgium, France, and Britain. They cluster along the Roman frontier, with a north-most location at a fort guarding Hadrian's Wall (*Carrawburgh-Brocolitia* in Northumberland). Different explanations have been offered for this distribution, most likely the movements of Roman military units returning from the Judean wars. None would suggest that such early coins might indicate the settled presence of Jewish Diaspora communities in Late Antiquity, two to three hundred years later.

Joigny:

Medieval: Grossman, 1995: 44, 82, 108.

Kaiseraugst (20 km east of Basle, Switzerland, on the Danube):

Late Antiquity: Berger, 2005: 21–57, 173–203: In 2001 a small finger ring was retrieved in the excavations of Roman *Augusta Raurica*. Beautifully incised with a menorah and the ethrog and lulav, symbols of the Feast of Tabernacles, it is clearly Jewish. The ring has been dated to the 4th century by typology and the meticulously excavated archaeological context.

La Fleche (dépt. Sarthe):

Medieval: Responsen . . . Frankreich und Lotharingien, 1881: no. 62 = Agus, 1965: I, no. XLVIII.

Le Mans:

Medieval: Haberman, 1945: 11–15, cf. Chazan, 1970; Grossman, 1988: 44, 82, 88, 108, but see Heil, 1998a: 7, who doubts the identification of the Hebrew place name as Le Mans and suggests Limoges.

Limoges:

Medieval: Ademari Cabannensis chronicon, 1999: 166, ch. III.47; Cartulaire . . . Limoges, 1922: 114, no. 95; Haberman, 1945: 11. The latter might possibly be read as meaning Limoges rather than Le Mans.

Lodève:

Medieval: Saige, 1881: 12.

Lunel:

Medieval: Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 3.

Lyon:

Medieval: charter of Emperor Louis: Linder, 1997: 336–8, no. 573; Agobardi Lugdunensis Opera Omnia, 1981: 115–7, 191–5, 199–221, 231–4, nos. 4, 7, 8, 9; Amulo, col. 172B, cf. Albert, 1996: 140–2, for the dating. Landholding: Cartulaire . . . Savigny, 1853: II, 601–2, no. 65; 555–6, no. 7. Of the large literature on Agobard and the Jews, cf. Boshof, 1969: 102–138; Blumenkranz, 1977a; Bonfil, 1994; Albert, 1996; Heil, 1998.

Between 822 and 827 a charter of Emperor Louis the Pious points to this important new place of settlement, where a large Jewish family group had received extensive privileges. Little later, Lyonese Jews are widely discussed in the writings of their inveterate enemies, archbishops Agobard and Amulo. Even discounting some hyperbole, Lyon must have had a significant Jewish community in the beginning of the 9th century, and probably somewhat earlier.

Mâcon:

Medieval landholding: Cartulaire . . . Mâcon, 1864: 37, no. 46; 66, no. 84; 67, no. 86; 106, no. 153; 91–2, no. 122; 99, no. 140; 100–1, no. 142; 103, no. 147; 104, no. 148; 106, no. 153; 113, no. 167; 152, no. 249; 162, no. 270; 163, no. 271; 164, no. 273; 165, no. 276; 166–7, no. 278; 169, no. 284; 180, nos. 307, 308; 223, no. 389; 282, no. 487; 311, no. 529; 323–4, no. 549; Recueil . . . Cluny, 1876: vol. 1, 706–7, nos. 749, 750; vol. 2, 471, no. 1414; 675, no. 1640; vol. 3, 655, no. 2603; 725, no. 2699; 783–4, no. 2762.

Magdeburg:

Medieval: Linder, 1997: 377–83, nos. 603–605; Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon, 1935: 362, liber VI, ch. 73.

The town underwent rapid development in the later 10th century, when the German Emperors endeavored to make it into an ecclesiastical, political and commercial center on the border with the Slavs. In 965, 973 and 979, Emperors Otto I and Otto II granted its ecclesiastical ruler charters of privileges, amongst others subordinating *the Jews and other merchants living there* to the archiepiscopal church. The latest charter of 979 speaks in the future sense of *the inhabitants of its suburb, or the merchants that would inhabit it in future, or the Jews and other inhabitants*. It is quite possible that these were measures planned for the future, and do not yet speak of Jews (or merchants) actually living there. The great Slav revolt

of 982 undid most of the German colonization of the region. Jews are not mentioned any more until the 13th century, except for one text of 1012, yet one more instance of the literary trope of Jews attending the funeral of an archbishop.

Mainz:

Medieval: ca. 917 Kalonymos' family immigration from Lucca to Mainz: Grossman, 1975: 182. Inquiry of 937: Linder, 1997: 447–50, no. 728, 622–33, nos. 1140–1144, cf. Lotter, 1975, Schieffer, 1998. Talmudic scholars: Grossman, 1988: 79–210.

Marseille:

Late Antiquity: Venanti Fortunati opera poetica, 1881: 107–12; Gregory of Tours, 2000: I, 294–8, ch. V,11; 591, II, 34, ch. VI.17; Gregory of Tours, 1988a, ch. 95; Pope Gregory the Great: Linder, 1997: 418–9, no. 703, epistle 1:45. Medieval: Cartulaire . . . Saint-Victor, 1857: I, 29, no. 23 ; I, 62, no. 40; I, 106, no. 77; I, 221, no. 194, cf. Blumenkranz, 1960: 30; Benjamin of Tudela: 4–5.

Merseburg:

Medieval: Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon, 1935: 98, liber III, ch. 1, 294, liber VI, ch. 16.

Merseburg was raised to the rank of bishopric by Emperor Otto I in the sixties of the 10th century as part of the upgrading of the north-eastern frontier region. In his Chronicle written between 1012 and 1018, Merseburg's well informed bishop Thietmar mentions for the year 974 the transfer of rights to his predecessor, including *everything the wall of the town of Merseburg contains, with the Jews and the merchants and the mint*. In 1004 this conveyance was renewed by Emperor Henry II. This is the last reference to Jews until the 13th century.

Metz:

Medieval: Linder, 1997: 552–3, no. 873; Aronius, 1902: no. 126; Grossman, 1988: 115; Vita Adalberonis II. Mettensis, 1841: 661, cap. 9.

In 893, the local bishop presented an indictment against the Jews at a church council convened in town. A few decades later there are references to landed property, to Metz as the place of origin of the greatest sage of early Ashkenaz, Gershom "Light of the Exile", and to yet another bishop bewailed by the Jews.

Monieux (dépt. Vaucluse):

Medieval (?): In this village a community of the 11th century has been made out by Golb, 1966. However, this identification has been cast in doubt by a new reading of the Hebrew manuscript source in question, which would locate the site in rural northern Spain—Muño—rather than in France (Yahalom, 1998–1999).

Montpellier:

Medieval: *Histoire générale de Languedoc*: III, 578, 801; Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 3.

Nantes:

Late Antiquity: Sidonius Apollinaris, 1887: 144.

Medieval: Hincmar: *Patrologia Latina* vol. 126, col. 221A.

A letter by Sidonius Apollinaris, written after 470, is addressed to the bishop of Nantes and recommends a recently converted Jew. There is little more to this than the fact that Sidonius had made the acquaintance of the man somewhere on his journeys. On strength of this source, Jews have been postulated in Nantes by Rouche, 1979: 265, there still with the reservation «peut-être» that vanishes in Rouche, 1993: 407. Neither can a letter of Hincmar of Rheims of the early 9th century be taken as evidence for a Jewish presence. There the Jews merely serve as a rhetorical device for the inclusive range of episcopal responsibility over *clerics, lay folk, nobles and ignobles and rustic laborers and even Jews*.

Narbonne:

Late Antiquity: Sidonius Apollinaris, 1887: 43; church council of 589: Linder, 1997: 476–7, nos. 827–829; pope Gregory the Great in 597: Linder, 1997: 431–3, no. 715, epistle 7:21.

Medieval: Latin-Hebrew burial inscription of 688/9 with menorah: Noy, 1993: 263–6, no. 189, cf. Chalon, 1974. The conquest of the town from the Saracens by king Pepin the Short in 759 has given rise, much later, to a number of legends on a “King of the Jews” (Régéné, 1912: 13–27, cf. Graboïs, 1973, 1997; Cohen, Jeremy, 1977, both responding to the thesis of Zuckerman, 1972). By the later 8th century and continuously since the late 9th century, proprietary rights in land and industrial enterprises are mentioned in and around Narbonne (Linder, 1997: 444, no. 724; 371–2, no. 599; 374, no. 601; 372–4, no. 600; Saige, 1881: 129–30; *Histoire générale de Languedoc*: V, col. 283–4, 232–4, 454–6; Régéné, 1912: 179, cf. Part II, ch. 7a). Hebrew references penned by Talmudic scholars become available at the turn from the 10th to the 11th century

(Responsa of the Early Geonim, 1848: 37b, no. 140). By the later 11th century the tax on the Jews is a regular feature in public finances (*Histoire générale de Languedoc*: III, 434). The Jews of Narbonne even figure in an Arabic adventure tale set in mid-11th century Barcelona and Tortosa (Lévi Provençal, 1938: 54). Benjamin of Tudela found 300 Jews in this *city pre-eminent for learning; thence the Torah goes forth to all countries. Sages, and great and illustrious men abide here* (Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 2–3).

Nîmes:

Medieval: *Historia Wambae regis auctore Iuliano episcopo Toletano*, 1910: 504, ch. 5, cf. Bronisch, 2005: 89–95; Gross, 1969: 396; Blumenkranz, 1960: 30; *Cartulaire . . . Nîmes*, 1874: 231, no. 144, 277, no. 171.

The local count revolted in 672 against the Visigoth king Wamba and is said to have given refuge to numerous Jews persecuted in Visigoth Spain. While the first part—the revolt—comes indeed from a contemporary source, Julian of Toledo, the second part is a 13th century addition to that text by the Spanish polemicist Lucas of Tuy, clearly designed to smear the king's adversaries, amongst others by association with Jewish perfidy. This affair has led a modern scholar to postulate, without source references, yet another Jewish community at Le Perthus, on the pass and highway leading from Perpignan to Gerona: Rouche, 1979: 252 and 1993: 402. Unambiguous evidence on Jews in Nîmes becomes available only by the early 11th century.

Orléans:

Medieval: Gregory of Tours, 2000: 160, ch. VIII,1; *Cartulaire Sainte-Croix*, 1906: 521, no. 376; 82, no. 39; rabbinic scholars: Grossman, 1995: 44, 82, 108; Gross, 1969: 32–33.

Gregory of Tours reports the king's festive entry in the year 585, greeted by an immense crowd including Jews. Discounting some hyperbole, in this particular case Gregory's tale can be accepted as an eyewitness-account—he was present at the scene—that goes into considerable circumstantial detail on the king's visit, beyond the encounter with the Jews. This does not mean, however, that a Jewish presence at Orléans can be assumed from then on. An extended hiatus is much more probable, for the next Jews, actually two solitary converts to Christianity, appear only in the later 10th century. These might not necessarily have been locals, as the phenomenon of apostates having to seek a new domicile is well known. By the mid-11th century there is no doubt to the presence of a settled community, including rabbinic scholars.

Paris:

Medieval: Gregory of Tours, 2000: 34–6, ch. VI, 17; *Gesta Dagoberti I. regis*, 1888: 413, ch. 33, cf. Ganshof, 1957: 111.

The one Jew referred to by Gregory of Tours (ca. 538–594) in Paris rings true. This was Priscus, a merchant of the king's entourage with whom Gregory had had a previous confrontation in the king's presence and who twice had the audacity to withstand the royal command to convert. Priscus was murdered in Paris slightly later, on a Sabbath of the year 582, when he was unarmed and on his way to pray in a secluded place. He was however not an inhabitant, but sojourned in Paris. It has been proposed that his prayer place was a secret synagogue, which in turn might suggest the existence of a congregation. This is unlikely, in light of the wording of the source and the location of the murder near the church of St. Julien le Pauvre, which in late Roman and Merovingian time stood in the midst of an ancient cemetery, one of several discovered on the Left Bank. The area and address, 1 Rue Saint-Julien le Pauvre, was yet far removed from the bustling Quartier Latin it was later to become (Synagogue in the midst of town and perhaps a community: Lotter, 2001: 223. For the graveyard: Périn, 1985: 126, note 4, and 133–5). Some fifty years later, another merchant active in Paris, amongst others in charge of the collection of a toll, went by the name of Salomon. On strength of this name he has long been thought to have been Jewish. A random search turned up medieval bishops named Salomon in Cordoba, Genoa, Bretagne, Oslo, and three in Konstanz, Germany, making it clear that more than one Christian bore such name. Besides, the source has been discovered to be a product of the 9th century. Actual resident Jews appear in Paris only in the High Middle Ages.

Poitiers:

Late Antiquity: Venanti Fortunati *vita s. Hilarii*, 1885: 2.

Venantius Fortunatus penned in the late 6th century a *Life* of his remote predecessor bishop Hilarius (died in 367). From the distance of almost a hundred and fifty years, Hilarius is praised for his aversion to Jews and heretics, to the degree that he avoided not only common meals but also their greetings in the street. Is this evidence for the 4th or for the 6th/early 7th century, for close co-habitation of Christians and Jews in either period, or for the opposite? The next mention of Jews in Poitiers derives from the 13th century (Gross, 1969: 452).

Posquières (today's Vauvert):

Medieval: Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 4.

Regensburg:

Medieval: Die Urkunden Otto des II., 1893: 279, no. 247; Aronius, 1902: 64, no. 150; Grossman, 1975a: 196 and note 92; Hebräische Berichte, 2005: 480–1.

Evidence for Jews opens with a reference to an agricultural holding outside town that had been Jewish property before 981. In the first decades of the 11th century, the *dwelling places* of the Jews are mentioned, and so is an individual involved in shady business. Here too the Jews were attacked in 1096, though with less disastrous results than on the Rhine. All told, Jews apparently settled in Regensburg in the course of the 10th century.

Reims:

Medieval: Golb, 1998: 550; Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium, 1846: 452–3; Responsa of the Tosaphists, 1954: no. 1, cf. Soloveitchik, 1990: 77–86.

Rouen:

Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages (pre-12th century): Golb, 1998: 137–545.

There is no evidence at all, by Jews or by non-Jews, archeological or textual, for the presence of Jews in Normandy until the 11th century. For that time and onwards, Norman Golb has demonstrated beyond doubt a hitherto unacknowledged flowering of Jewish life and learning. He has also made a sustained case that such bloom must have had “a lengthy prehistory of Jewish settlement and legal rights . . . apparently beginning during the period of Roman colonization of Gaul” (Golb, 1998: 33). At the heart of this bold claim lies his reading of the topography of the Jewish quarter of Rouen. Although documented not before the 12th century, its location near and in the Roman centre of town is taken to suggest an establishment already in Antiquity. This is also applied to the Jewish cemetery of Rouen, documented only in the later Middle Ages, on strength of its location near a Roman road. Similar claims are made for other places in Normandy, where numerous rural and urban locations called in late medieval, early modern or modern sources *rue aux Juifs* or *rue des Juifs* are declared to be traces of a network of antique and early medieval Jewish *latifundiae*. This is a speculative extrapolation from sources one to one and a half millennia later. Jewish quarters established in the High Middle Ages right in the centers of town are a common feature and in many places coincide naturally with a much earlier Roman town center. A “lengthy prehistory” is also unnecessary to explain what happened in Rouen and possibly some other places in Normandy during the High Middle Ages. Not a few Jewish communities achieved rapid demographic growth and

astonishing cultural bloom within short spans of time, less than a century and even a few decades. A detailed critique in my reviews of Golb's book in *Deutsches Archiv* 55 (1999): 845–6, and *Zion* 65 (2000): 255–9 (Hebrew). For Roman town-plans and medieval settlement in a non-Jewish context see Ward-Perkins, 1995.

Sens (dépt. Yonne):

Medieval (?): Odorannus de Sens, 1972: 92, cf. Devroey & Brouwer, 2001: 352, note 44; Raoul Glaber, 1886: 69 (III:6); *Responsa of the Tosaphists*, 1954: no. 1, cf. Agus, 1952, and Soloveitchik, 1990: 77–86.

There is a flimsy account from the 11th century, by which a strange combination of Jews and nuns was expelled from the city in the year 883. Equally undecided is a slur aimed at count Raymond II of Sens (1012–1055), who was accused by a hostile monastic chronicler to favor the Jews to the degree that he was called “King of the Jews”. A *Responsum* of the mid-11th century reporting on the Jewish community of the region mentions only Jews *living around Sens*. A Jewish presence in town is thus unlikely.

Soissons:

Medieval: Flodoardi *historia Remensis ecclesiae*, 1881: 493, ch. 13; Chazan, 1969: 63.

The Jew to whom the bishop of Soissons had supposedly sold valuable church property in the mid-9th century could either have been a literary device in an account hostile to the pontiff, or otherwise a visitor to the region. The next time Jews are mentioned in Soissons is in the year 1190.

Speyer:

Medieval: Privilege of 1084: Linder 1997: 400–2, no. 611; gravestone of 1085: Kober, 1944: 191–2; Talmudic scholars: Grossman, 1988: 397–9. The exact location of the early Jewish quarter of Worms has now definitely been established by Monika Porsche, 2003.

St. Gilles:

Medieval: Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 4.

Toulouse:

Medieval: Hebrew text, dated to mid-10th century or slightly later (Mann, 1931: 28–9, cf. Golb & Pritsak, 1982: 90–3, and Cohen, 1977: 68–9); 1018: Ademari Cabannensis *chronicon*, 1999: 171, ch. III.52, cf. Saige, 1881: 134–6; Vita S. Theodardi, *Acta Sanctorum*, Maii 1 (vol. 160, 1866), col.

142–144, according to the editor “cannot but be fiction, to be judged a pure figment”; landed property: Cartulaire . . . Saint-Sernin de Toulouse, 1887: 241, no. 335; Saige, 1881: 134–5, 135–6.

Tournai:

Late Antiquity: Sidonius Apollinaris, 1887: 100. No Jewish community can be constructed in Tournai from this letter sent by Sidonius Apollinaris to the local bishop, to be *delivered by a Jew*.

Tours:

Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages: Venanti Fortunati *vita sancti Germani*, 1919: 411, ch. 64; Gregory of Tours, 2000: 118–20, ch. VII, 23.

Venantius Fortunatus in his *Life of Germanus Bishop of Paris* is the source by which Jews were first made out in Tours. The saint, while making his way in the surroundings of the town, met a slave led about in chains by some Jews. This afforded him the opportunity to perform the highly popular act of miraculously breaking the captive’s shackles. This hagiographic topos (cf. Graus, 1961, and Part II, ch. 6 of this book) is not information on Jews in or near Tours, who are also absent from the copious oeuvre of Gregory of Tours. In his own home town, the bishop of Tours saw fit to forego his otherwise frequent use of Jew as “agents of differentiation” from Christian sanctity and commonality. There is one Jew safely to be deemed real, a man who in 584 came to Tours to do business, only to be murdered there by his debtors. His relatives, seeking justice, too made their way to Tours, to no avail. This can clearly not count as information on a Jew resident in town, let alone a community. Unambiguous evidence becomes available only in the late 11th and early 12th century.

Trier:

Late Antiquity: archaeology: Kann, 1996; Berger, 2005: 99–100, 82–6, 126, 128–30, 121. Synagogue: Berger, 2005: 209, following Solin, 1983: 753. Codex Theodosianus 7,8,2: Linder, 1987: 161–3, no. 14.

Antique Trier served as capital of the province *Belgica*, then of the Praetorian Prefecture of Gaul, then of the Western Empire at large, and again of the Gallic Prefecture till its relocation to Arles in 395/407 and the subsequent collapse of the Rhine frontier. The earliest finds are three small weights, two of bronze and one of lead, tentatively dated to the 1st century or slightly later, and identified as Jewish by Hebrew inscription and/or the fact that they approximate the notional weight of the Biblical shekel (11.40 gram). Such cheap objects were used for weighing goods and the

likely implication is that they were lost by Jewish merchants or artisans going about their business. A similar purpose attaches to small lead seals (roughly 14 by 13 mm) that serve to fasten together the threads or cords used for packing all manner of goods. Huge numbers of such objects have come to light in many Roman towns. In Trier four pieces, dated to the 4th/5th centuries, bear the typical Jewish symbol of the menorah. Greek letters on one of them might indicate an eastern-Mediterranean origin, but then Greek was used by Jews and others throughout Southern Italy and Sicily. Another clearly Jewish object is a clay lamp with menorah, also dated to the 4th/5th century and found in the immediate vicinity of the medieval Jewish quarter of the city. This location has given rise to speculation on Jewish habitation in the same area already by Late Antiquity (Berger, 2005: 69). A last item is a fragmentary slab of marble showing a tripod base that might or might not have been the pedestal of a menorah. The singular accumulation of finds in Trier—altogether 8, possibly 9 pieces—indeed points to the presence of more than a solitary Jew. The city's function as capital goes far to explain its attraction. This might translate into the existence of a synagogue community in the Late Roman period, as possibly suggested by an edict (368–373) of Emperor Valentinian I, which forbade the quartering of troops in synagogues and was indeed issued from his residence in Trier.

Hans-Joachim Kann of Trier has kindly shown to the participants of a 1999 symposium at Trier some of the objects mentioned above and the places of their discovery. Mention should also be made of his archaeological sleuth novel featuring an American-Jewish exchange student who solves the mystery of a Jew murdered in late medieval Trier: Hans-Joachim Kann, *Der dritte Arm von rechts*, Trier 1988.

Medieval: Regino of Prüm: Linder, 1997: 618–21, nos. 1130–1139, cf. Schieffer, 1998: 73–6. *Gesta Treverorum*, 1848: 182, ch. 8; *Hebräische Berichte*, 2005: 470–9.

Clauses concerning Jews in the canonical compilation of Regino of Prüm (active 892–915) have been tentatively connected to Trier, where the author had spent the later years of his life. This is however not convincing proof for a Jewish presence, as Regino had gathered his clauses from a number of sources, not necessarily from personal encounters in town. Jews reappear in the record before the mid-11th century. The beginnings of the community should thus be placed in the earlier 11th or late 10th century.

Troyes:

Medieval: Gershom ben Jehudah, 1955: no. 5; Responsa of the Tosaphists, 1954: no. 1. Cf. Baron, 1941, Eidelberg, 1954, Schwarzfuchs, 1993.

Uzès:

Medieval: Vita beati Ferreoli episcopi et confessoris Christi, Lect. II, in: Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum Latinorum antiquorum qui asserv. in biblioth. Nat. Parisiensi, t. 2, Bruxelles 1890, p. 101–102, as quoted by Blumenkranz, 1963: 131–2; Dhuoda: Patrologia Latina vol. 106, col. 117.

One further place with an alleged Jewish presence that does not stand scrutiny. The source in question is the *Life of Bishop Ferreolus*, written in the early 8th rather than in the 6th century when the hero was purported to have lived. In this conversion tale, the bishop frequented the Jews' houses and ate and drank with them, in order to persuade them to receive baptism. Accused before the king for possibly treacherous relations with Jews and Saracens (!), he was sent into exile. After three years, divine intervention caused the bishop to be returned to Uzès, where he assembled all the Jews in the church and preached a sermon outlining their choices—baptism or expulsion—upon which some converted and the *incredulous were ejected*. Saracens in the 6th century are of course a stark anachronism. This and other inconsistencies are good grounds to reject the historical value of this account (cf. Stemberger, 1993: 92, who quotes P. Viard, *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* V, Roma 1964, 651: “of uncertain date, but surely later and lacking historical value”). A further reference comes from the manual written between 841 and 843 in Uzès by Dhuoda, wife of Bernard, duke of *Septimania* and count of Barcelona. She admonishes her son to retribute all the goods that she has received from Christians and Jews. This might or might not refer also to Jews in Uzès, which was but one station of this much-traveled lady. Based on these two sources, a Jewish presence in Uzès is barely likely.

Vienne:

Medieval: epitaph of the 10th century: Noy, 1993: 283, no. 200. Landholding: Cartulaire . . . Vienne, 1869: 212, no. 2*; 214, no. 4*; 6–7, no. 5; 43, no. 49; 52–3, nos. 63, 64; 68–9, no. 91; 74–5, nos. 99, 100; 77, no. 105; 92–3, no. 129; 105, no. 141; 252, no. 42*; Recueil . . . des rois de Provence, 1920: 100, no. 54, 124, no. 70.

Vitry:

Medieval: Grossman, 1988: 271.

Worms:

Medieval: Gershom ben Jehudah, 1955: no. 29. Synagogue inscription of 1034: Aronius, 1902: 65, no. 153. Talmudic scholars: Grossman, 1988: 265–296.

APPENDIX FOUR

PLACES OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN IBERIA (MAPS 5–6)

(Note: for most of the communities in Muslim Spain see now the Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World, executive editor Norman A. Stillman, Leiden 2011. Brill Online)

Adra (some 50 km west of Almeria on the southern Mediterranean coast):

Late Antiquity: 3rd century (?) Latin epitaph of *Annia Salomonula*, aged 1 year 4 months 1 day, *Jewess*: Noy, 1993: 240, no. 179.

Alagón:

Medieval: Lacarra, 1982–85: I, 266, no. 264; 285, no. 286.

Alava (bishopric, today Basque province):

Medieval: Baer, 1929–1936: II, 4, no. 9.

Alba de Tormes:

Muslim period (?): EJ, 2007: vol. 1, 581.

Alcalá de Henares:

Muslim period: EJ, 2007: vol. 1, 598.

Algeciras (opposite the rock of Gibraltar):

Muslim period: Ashtor, 1964: 68–71, no. VI.

Almeria:

Muslim period: Genizah documents mainly from the 11th and the early 12th century: Gil, 1997: III, 651, no. 494; Gil & Fleischer, 2001: 281, no. 4; 310, no. 13; 359, no. 26; 362, no. 27; 369–71, nos. 29, 30; Goitein, 1973: 260–9, 51–6.

Astorga:

Medieval: Rodríguez Fernández, 1976: 431, 344, 346–50, nos. 1, 2, 4, 10–14.

Ávila:

Muslim period: EJ, 2007: vol. 2, 735–6.

Badajoz:

Muslim period: a series of Genizah letters: Díaz Esteban, 1996: 126–8, 132–5, nos. 1, 2, 5; Goitein, 1961.

Balaguer:

Muslim period: Baer, 1929–1936: I, 6–7, no. 10.

Barbastro:

Medieval: Coleccion diplomatica . . . Huesca: I, 136–7, no. 112.

Barcelona:

Medieval:

- 1) The Annals of St-Bertin, a monastic chronicle close to the Carolingian court, imparts for the year 852 (which should really be 856) that *the Moors took Barcelona because the Jews betrayed it to them*. The chronicler Prudentius had a penchant for assigning blame of this sort; a few years earlier he had the Jews hand over Bordeaux to the Danes. There too no corroborating evidence exists and both episodes should most likely be discounted as yet more instances of a habitual Visigothic obsession with Jewish treason, in this case of a chronicler of Spanish origin, probably the son of refugee parents who had moved north of the Pyrenees in the earlier 9th century: The Annals of Saint-Bertin, 1991: 74, 65, and 7 for the chronicler Prudentius.
- 2) In 876, the Frankish emperor Charles II the Bald sent a letter and a gift of silver to his subjects of Barcelona, using the good services of *Judas the Hebrew our faithful who informed us at length about your fealty*. Judas is also called by the diminutive *Judacot*, a Romance appellation possibly hinting to a Catalan origin: Linder, 1997: 367–8, no. 596, cf. Bachrach, 1977b. Romano, 1993: 263, dates the letter to 855–857.
- 3) The earliest extant property deeds: a. 963: Romano, 1991: 328, no. 1; a. 973: Miret & Schwab, 1915: 230. On the cemetery at Montjuïc see Maese i Fidalgo & Casanovas i Miró, 2002–2003.
- 4) List of 1079: Fita Colomé, 1903; Baer, 1929–1936: vol. I, 5–6, no. 9.
- 5) Landed property in the suburbs of the city, clockwise from south-west: Montjuïc, Trullols, Mogoria, Cubells, Santa Eulàlia de Provençana, Sant Pau del Camp, Sarrià, Monterols, Agudells, Cogoll, Sant Andreu, Merdansa, Torturola, Santa Maria del Mar.

The references: Montjuïc: Romano, 1991: 328, no. 1; Miret & Schwab, 1916: nos. 6, 7, 8, 10; Baer, 1929–1936: vol. I, 2, no. 4.

Trullols: Miret & Schwab, 1916: 8; Miret & Schwab, 1914: 64, no. VI, 70–1, no. X.

Mogoria: Miret & Schwab, 1916: 5; Romano, 1991: 330, nos. 13, 14; Baer, 1929–1936: vol. I, 1006–7, no. 607; Miret & Schwab, 1914: 57, no. I bis, 64, no. VI; Gottheil, 1904: 703–4, no. I, 705–6, no. 3; Riera & Udina, 1978: 24, no. 1; Miret & Schwab, 1916: 10.

Cubells: Miret & Schwab, 1915: 230.

Bederrida: Miret & Schwab, 1916: 7.

Santa Eulàlia de Provençana: Romano, 1991: 330, no. 10; Miret & Schwab, 1916: 6–7; Miret & Schwab, 1914: 54–5, no. I.

Sant Pau del Camp: Baer, 1929–1936: vol. I, 1012–3, no. 615.

Sarrià: Miret & Schwab, 1916: 8, 10.

Monterols: Romano, 1991: 329, no. 7; Miret & Schwab, 1916: 7, 9–10.

Agudells: Romano, 1991: 323.

Cogoll: Romano, 1991: 330, no. 11; Miret & Schwab, 1916: 16, no. IV; Gottheil, 1904: 704–5, no. 2.

Sant Andreu: Miret & Schwab, 1916: 10.

Moronta: Miret & Schwab, 1914: 70; Baer, 1929–1936: vol. I, 1008–9, no. 609.

Merdansà: Miret & Schwab, 1916: 6.

Torturola: Miret & Schwab, 1916: 7, 9, 10; Klein, 2004: 21–2.

Santa Maria del Mar: Miret & Schwab, 1916: 6, 10.

I have been unable to localize three further places: Sagina (Miret & Schwab, 1915: 233), Pociolos (Miret & Schwab, 1916: 10), Cidrano (Miret & Schwab, 1914: 74).

Barrio de Muñó:

Medieval: Yahalom, 1998–1999: 29.

Baza:

Muslim period: Ashtor, 1992: II, 150–2.

Béja (Portugal):

Muslim period: EJ, 2007: vol. 3, 272.

Belorado:

Medieval: Ashtor, 1992: II, 32; Baer, 1929–1936: II, 8, no. 17; Cadiñanos Bardeci, 1994.

Besalú (north of Gerona):

Medieval: Hebrew gravestone of 1089 of *Rachel daughter of Joseph who died in the month Adar of the year* [4]858: Cantera & Millás, 1956: 264, no. 195.

Burgos:

Medieval: Baer, II: 3, no. 5; 5, no. 13.

Calahorra:

Medieval: EJ, 2007: vol. 4, 349.

Calatayud (southwest of Saragossa):

Muslim period: Cantera & Millás, 1956: 286–7, no. 205: Hebrew tombstone of the year 919 of *Shmuel son of Shelomo, may his soul rest in the bond of life together with the sleepers of Hebron*.

Calsena (considered by some scholars to be identical with Pechina):

Muslim period: Sefer ha-Qabbalah, 1967: 79 (English part), 59 (Hebrew part); cf. Gil, 2004: 195–6 and note 129 for the earlier literature.

Carmona:

Muslim period: A dedicatory Hebrew synagogue inscription of the year 1000: *these are the feasts of the lord that you shall proclaim in their seasons* (Leviticus 23: 2) *in the town of Carmona in the year 4760*, followed by the names of the benefactors: Schwab, 1907: 247.

Carrión de los Condes:

Medieval: Rodríguez Fernández, 1976: 350–1, no. 15.

Castillo de Milana (north of Cáceres in southwestern Spain):

Late antiquity: *Passion of Saint Mantius*: Díaz y Díaz, 1982: 334–9; Guerreiro, 1993: 544–6.

Castrojeriz:

Medieval: Baer, 1929–1936: II, 1, no. 2.

Cea:

Medieval: Rodríguez Fernández, 1976: 350–1, no. 15; 344–6, nos. 5–9.

Coimbra (Portugal):

Muslim period (?): a single reference of 900 or 950, possibly untrustworthy, about the sale of landed property *acquired from the Jews*: Baer, 1929–1936: vol. II, 1.

Córdoba:

Muslim period:

- 1) Fragmentary funerary inscription tentatively dated to the 7th to 10th century: Díaz Esteban, 1977.
- 2) Mid-9th century Responsum of Natroni bar Hilai Gaon, head of the Babylonian academy of Sura: *Córdoba the place of royalty where Ishmael are plenty and Israel are few*: Responsa of Rav Natroni, 1994: I, 279, no. 155. One manuscript has *Israel are plenty and Ishmael are few*. It stands to reason that a medieval copyist might turn around a sentence he felt to be an error inconsistent with Jewish honor.
- 3) A report by the 10th century historian Ibn al-Qutaybiyya, himself a denizen of Córdoba, on a Muslim scholar taking refuge in the house of a Jew at the time of the insurrection in 818: Roth, 1994: 76.
- 4) After 928 letter of Saadia Gaon: Sefer ha-Qabbalah, 1967: 79 (English part), 59 (Hebrew part); cf. Gil, Moshe, 2004: 195–6 and note 129 for the earlier literature.
- 5) Two further early allusions to Córdoba appear unconvincing. Collins, 1983: 205, refers to “a letter of 764 rebuking Cordoban Christians who wished to fast jointly with the Jews on the Day of Atonement”. The text, though, refers solely to Judaizing tendencies in computing feast days according to the moon circle: Gil, Juan, ed., 1973: 58. Beinart, Córdoba, in EJ, 2007: V, 218, sees “the first references to Jewish settlement in Córdoba as dating from 840, in a polemical exchange between the Jewish proselyte Bodo-Eleazar and Paul Alvarus”. The fact that Alvarus was indeed of Córdoba does not necessarily mean that the exchange took place there.

Daroca:

Medieval: Baer, 1929–1936: I, 13, no. 22.

Denia:

Muslim period: Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 132; Ashtor, 1964, 76–9, nos. VIII, IX; Goitein, 1967: I, 69, 407.

Elche (east coast of Spain near Alicante):

Late Antiquity: Noy, 1993: 241–7, nos. 180–182: A rectangular hall with mosaic floor, the symbol of Solomon's knot and three fragments of Greek inscriptions, tentatively identified as a 4th century synagogue.

Elvira (Roman *Illiberis*, very near Granada if not actually identical with it):

Late Antiquity: Synod of 306: Linder, 1997: 482–4, nos. 835–838.

Muslim period: Sefer ha-Qabbalah, 1967: 79 (English part), 59 (Hebrew part); cf. Gil, Moshe, 2004: 195–6 and note 129 for the earlier literature.

Escalona:

Muslim period: EJ, 2007: vol. 6, 488.

Estella:

Medieval: Navarra Judaica 2, 1995: 703, addenda no. 341; 25, no. 1.

Funes:

Medieval: Carrasco Pérez, 2003: 222; Baer, 1929–1936: I, 935–7, no. 579.

Gerona:

Medieval: In 963 the house of the *Jewess Doucerella* is mentioned within the town walls, in 988 a *synagogue of the Jews*, followed by further rich documentation into the 11th century: Marquès Casanovas, 1988: 410–21, 424–5, 423.

Granada:

Muslim period: Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: nos. 151, 228; Ashtor, 1964, 60–2, no. IV.

Guadalajara:

Muslim period: Ashtor, 1963: 42; EJ, 2007: vol. 8, 115–6.

Guadix (Arabic Wadi Ash):

Muslim period: *Sulaiman ben Saul the Andalusian of Wadi Ash*, a silk merchant active between 1040 and 1060 in Sicily and Tunisia: Gil, 1997: Index under this name. See also Ashtor, 1992: II, 150–2.

Huesca:

Muslim and Christian periods: Ashtor, 1963: 45–6; Ashtor, 1992: II, 271, 272; Coleccion diplomatica . . . Huesca: I, 102, no. 73.

Jaca:

Medieval: Baer, 1978: I, 384 note 12; 3, no. 6, where the dating of 1062 should be corrected to 1076/7 according to Nelson, 1978: 694.

Jaén (north of Granada and east of Córdoba):

Muslim period:

- 1) late 9th century: mentioned as place of origin of the father of Hasdai ibn Shaprut: Ashtor, 1992: I, 159;
- 2) 11th century: Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 120, 217;
- 3) A note or amulet in Hebrew from the Cairo Genizah: Ashtor, 1964: 59, no. III.

La Coruña:

Medieval: Cantera & Millás, 1956: 31–5, nos. 12–14.

León:

Medieval: Cantera, 1943: 331; Baer, 1929–1936: II: 2, no. 4; Loeb, 1882: 227–9, no. I. Epitaph: Cantera & Millás, 1956: 7, no. 1. On the archaeology of the cemetery see Herrero & Castro, 1974.

Lérida:

Muslim period: Baer, 1929–1936: I, 15, no. 26.

Lisbon (Portugal):

Muslim period: EJ, 2007: vol. 13, 78.

Lucena:

Al-Yussana and *Alyusena* of the Arabic and Hebrew sources is definitely Lucena in Andalusia, see Máillo Salgado, 1993. The identification is further strengthened by the unearthing in 2006/2007 of a Hebrew inscription commemorating the deceased *Rabi Lactosus* and of human remains dated by Carbon-14 to 1000–1050, in what emerges to have been a Jewish necropolis of at least 347 excavated burials at Ronda Sur, Lucena (Botella Ortega & Casanovas Miró, 2009). All this effectively discounts the notion that Lucena could have been *Ausona* in Christian Catalonia (Vic, a thousand km to the north-east), as suggested by Zuckerman, 1972: 318–20, and Bachrach, 1977a: 69, both with sweeping conclusions to the participation of Jews in the establishment of Carolingian military power in Catalonia.

Muslim period:

- 1) In 853–858 Natroni bar Hilai Gaon, head of the Babylonian academy of Sura, wrote: *Lucena is a place of Israel and Israel there are plenty*: Responsa of Rav Natroni, 1994: I, 279, no. 155; Responsen . . . des Ostens, 1888: no. 25.
- 2) Sefer ha-Qabbalah, 1967: 79 (English part), 59 (Hebrew part); cf. Gil, Moshe, 2004: 195–6 and note 129 for the earlier literature.
- 3) An Arabic author of the 10th century tells of the appointment in 974 of a Jewish official over some affairs of *his people, the Jews of Lucena*. Quoted by Roth, 1994: 77, 265 note 20, with reference to al-Razi (10th century), and by Máillo Salgado, 1993: 152, with reference to Ibn-Hayyan (987–1076), who depended heavily on al-Razi. Both modern authors differ considerably as to the meaning of the authority conferred upon this Jewish official.
- 4) Bills and Contracts from Lucena, 1994.
- 5) Cantera y Burgos, 1959.

Madrid:

Muslim period: Arabic Genizah letter of 1053 from Jerusalem, mentioning *the people of Madrid*: Assaf, 1946: 108–13.

Mahón (Menorca):

Late Antiquity: Severus of Minorca, 1996: 80–125 for the text, and 1–77 for the textual transmission, previous debates and authenticity. Further insightful interpretations by Ginzburg, 1996, and Boyarin, 2004.

Málaga:

Muslim period:

- 1) A mid-9th century bishop was accused in a polemical source of heresy, amongst others for having Jews and Muslims participate in a church council in Córdoba: Samson of Córdoba, Apologeticus, 1973: 553–4. Beinart, Málaga, in EJ, 2007: vol. 13, 424, saw these participants as “specialists in the principles of Christianity”. Ashtor, 1992: I, 92–93, noted the fine irony of “Jews deciding what the correct tenets of Christianity were and what was needed for the welfare of the church”. The source itself says nothing of this sort and one is once more hard put to accept an internal ecclesiastical smear campaign as plain evidence for an early presence of Jews.
- 2) Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: no. 214; Goitein, 1974: 334.

Mansilla de las Mulas (southeast of León):

Medieval (?): It is doubtful whether the agricultural holding mentioned in the early 10th century really belonged to Jews: Rodríguez Fernández, 1976: 183.

Mérida, capital of the Roman province of Lusitania:

Late Antiquity:

- 1) Archaeology: Latin epitaph *I Jacob son of rebbi Senior* (here follow funerary phrases) *have lived 63 years replete with the insight that furthers the art of craft. I Simeon son of rebbi Jacob have built* (this monument): De Navascués, 1959. For datings ranging from the 1st to the 10th century, see Bowers, 1975. A date before the end of the 4th century appears most acceptable: Beinart, 1962/1998: 33. Contrary to an earlier view, a further 6th to 7th century Latin epitaph is not considered anymore to be of a Jew: Noy, 1993: 300–1, no. 223, and Niquet, 2004: 164, *contra* Cantera & Millás, 1956: 410–2, no. 287.
- 2) Hagiography: *Vitas sanctorum patrum emeritensium* (*The Lives of the Holy Fathers of Mérida*), 1992: 49–50, ch. V, 2–3. For the textual transmission and a winning portrait of the town according to the text see Arce, 1999.

Muslim period: Sefer ha-Qabbalah, 1967: 79 (English part), 59 (Hebrew part); cf. Gil, Moshe, 2004: 195–6 and note 129 for the earlier literature.

Mértola (Baixo Alentejo, north of Faro in south-eastern Portugal):

Late Antiquity: Latin inscription with menorah, recently read anew to date from the year 482: Niquet, 2004: 173.

Miranda de Ebro:

Medieval: Baer, II: 8, no. 15.

Monzón de Campos (village 12 km north of Palencia):

Medieval: Cantera & Millás, 1956: 25–6, nos. 9, 10. It is heartening to see that the official website of the municipality features these two tombstones of 1097, now on exhibit in the Transito Synagogue and Sephardic Museum in Toledo: <http://www.monzondecampos.com>.

Morillo de Montclús:

Medieval: Baer, 1929–1936: I, 7, no. 12; Ashtor, 1992: II, 251.

Nájera:

Medieval: From 1024 Jews and their property in the countryside feature extensively in the evidence of a local monastery: *Cartulario de San Millan*, 171–2, no. 178; Fita Colomé, 1895. The community is also mentioned in a Genizah document of the 11th century as coming to the aid of a proselyte whose husband had been murdered: Ashtor, 1964: 45–6, no. 1. Further corroboration for this affair in Yahalom, 1998–1999.

Niebla:

Muslim period: Ashtor, 1992: II, 203; Gil & Fleischer, 2001: 291, no. 7.

Orense:

Medieval: EJ, 2007: vol. 15, 465.

Palencia:

Medieval: EJ, 2007: vol. 15, 576–577.

Pamplona:

Medieval: EJ, 2007: vol. 15, 609; Carrasco Pérez, 2003: 220–1.

Pancorbo:

Medieval: Baer, 1929–1936: II, 2–3, no. 5; 5, no. 13; *Cartulario de San Millan*, 1976: no. 287.

Pechina (on the southern Mediterranean coast):

Muslim period: *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, 1967: 79 (English part), 59 (Hebrew part); cf. Gil, Moshe, 2004: 195–6 and note 129 for the earlier literature.

Peralda (near the Costa Brava and some 55 km northwest of Gerona):

Medieval: in 982 a rural estate *villa Judaica*: *Catalunya carolíngia*, vol. 2, 1926–1950: 243, no. IV.

Ruesta:

Medieval: Baer, 1929–1936: I, 7, no. 11; Lacarra, 1982–85: I, 59, no. 45.

Sahagún:

Medieval: It is doubtful whether the agricultural holding mentioned in the early 10th century belonged to Jews: Rodríguez Fernández, 1976: 246–7. Unequivocal evidence for a Jewish presence becomes available only in the mid-12th century: Carrera de la Red, 1993: 49.

Saldaña:

Medieval: Rodríguez Fernández, 1976: 350–1, no. 15.

Sangüesa:

Medieval: Carrasco Pérez, 2003: 219; Carrasco Pérez, 2006.

Santa María del Camí (near Palma de Mallorca):

Late Antiquity: Noy, 1993, no. 177: Three lead sheets dated to the 4th–5th century but perhaps much later, all three bearing the same Hebrew name *Shmuel bar Haggai*. They were found on an agricultural property in a grave or cavity close to burial remains oriented towards the east.

Santarém (Portugal):

Muslim period: EJ, 2007: vol. 18, 28–9.

Saragossa:

In the Muslim period the main town of the Ebro basin and capital of the Andalusian “Upper March” bordering on the Christian realms.

- 1) PL vol. 88, col. 719–722: The earliest reference has been thought to be the epistle written by an abbot Evantius *against those* (Christians) *at Saragossa who in the manner of the Jews say that the blood of animals is unclean*. This can perhaps be taken as evidence for real or imagined Judaizing tendencies in Saragossa, but hardly for the presence of Jews. Beinart, Saragossa, in: EJ, 2007: vol. 18, 41, has seen this as evidence that “the community was apparently influential”. The author has tenuously been identified as an abbot Evantius who appears in the early 7th century near Albi in southern Gaul, alternatively as an archdean of the church of Toledo who died in 737, cf. Mathisen, 1997: 523, and PL 88, col. 719A. On “Judaizing” see Dagron, 1991.
- 2) More significant are two references of the 9th century, both set within a few years from each other in the milieu of the Carolingian court. Around 825, the Frankish Emperor Louis the Pious received into his protection and service *this Hebrew named Abraham, inhabitant of the city of Saragossa* (Linder, 1997: 342–3, no. 575). In 839 a scandal shook the Frankish court and its ecclesiastical advisers, when the deacon Bodo took himself to Muslim Spain, apparently to Saragossa, in order to convert to Judaism (The Annals of Saint-Bertin, 1991: 4142).

Senés (village 70 km north of Almeria):

Muslim period: a Hebrew graffito found within a larger group of Arabic graffiti carved on rocks at the wayside near a medieval mill. It is definitely Hebrew but barely readable and has been tentatively dated to the 12th century: Cano, 1995.

Seville:

Visigothic period:

- 1) An anthropological study has put forward a claim for a "Jewish necropolis dated to the 5th to 9th century": Bernis et alia, 1986. In this case, the anthropologists must have misunderstood the archaeologists. According to the excavation report by Fernández Gómez & De la Hoz Gandara, 1986, and a detailed expose communicated by Jordi Casanovas i Miró (of 21 December 2007 and gratefully acknowledged), the excavated section of 8 by 21 meters contained one late Roman burial, 32 Muslim ones of the 9th to 11th centuries, and one that might or might not have been Jewish.
- 2) I find it difficult to weigh the relative merits of the arguments for the existence or non-existence of a synagogue in Sevilla in the year 716. The arguments against: Ashtor, 1992: I, 440, note 31. The arguments in favor: Roth, 1994: 140, 228 note 14.

Muslim period: 1) Sefer ha-Qabbalah, 1967: 79 (English part), 59 (Hebrew part); cf. Gil, Moshe, 2004: 195–6 and note 129 for the earlier literature; Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: nos. 214, 215, 279; Goitein, 1967: I, 60.

Sigüenza:

Muslim period: EJ, 2007: vol. 18, 570–1.

Sobrado dos Monxes (monastery about 50 km east of Santiago de Compostela):

Medieval: a legal contest waged 1044 to 1047 over a raid committed by a robber baron against the Jews of another nobleman. The latter had *kept his Jews, who carried out his commerce, in his house* in the mountainous countryside near the monastery: Baer, 1929–1936: II: 3, no. 6; Fita Colomé, 1893.

Soria:

Medieval: EJ, 2007: vol. 19, 28. In 1047 a lord was accused of having murdered two Jews on the mountain road between Albelda and Viguera, south of Logrono. Their home might have been Soria: Baer, 1929–1936: II: 3, no. 7.

Talavera de la Reina:

Muslim period: Ashtor, 1963: 41, and a wealth of 12th century documents in Leon Tello, 1979.

Tarazona:

Muslim period: Ashtor, 1963: 44.

Medieval: Baer, 1929–1936: I, 9, no. 16.

Tarragona:

Late Antiquity:

- 1) A Latin epitaph of the 4th to 6th century from Pallaresos, slightly north of Tarragona, adorned with Jewish symbols: Noy, 1993: 259–61, no. 187.
- 2) A Hebrew-Latin-Greek inscription on a marble trough, again with Jewish symbols and dated to the 5th–6th century: Noy, 1993: 254–5, no. 185. Found on the site of the medieval Jewish quarter of the town, its purpose might have been a basin for ritual washing, an ossuary, or a sarcophagus for a baby.
- 3) A further epigraph in Latin and Greek, again of the 5th–6th century: Noy, 1993: 256–9, no. 186. It was long thought to have been of a Rabbi, but was recently re-interpreted to read in Latin *In the name of God, here lies Rabla, born in Cyzicos, mother-in-law of the archisynagogos Sias. She lies in peace*: Curbera, 2003. The Greek part reads: *Here lies Rabla, mother-in-law of the blessed and most righteous archisynagogos Sias. Her homeland was Cyzicus. Let the memory of the righteous one be for a blessing. She lived without offense (-) years. Lord, bless the dead*. No Rabbi then, but still the elder of the synagogue, a mostly honorific function much in evidence in the Latin-Greek speaking diaspora, cf. Rajak & Noy, 1993, and Cohen, Shaye D., 1981. Cyzicus, on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara, was visited by an earthquake in 533 and then by a plague, possibly causing Rabla to move all across the Mediterranean to Spain.

- 4) Two stones, one with the name *Samuel* in Latin and the other with a menorah, recently recovered together from the late Roman necropolis at Tarragona: Niquet, 2004: 169–72.
- 5) The record of a fragmentary Hebrew and Latin inscription of uncertain date, never deciphered and now lost, from Vinebre to the west of Tarragona and the north of Tortosa: Noy, 1993: 253–4, no. 184.

Visigothic period (?): a claim has been made that in Tarragona “Coins with Hebrew inscriptions also testify to the existence of a Jewish settlement under the Visigoths”: Beinart, Tarragona, in: EJ (2007, originally 1971): vol. 19, 520, no reference given. The source was in all probability the entry “Tarragona” by Richard Gottheil and Meyer Kayserling in Jewish Encyclopedia, eds. C. Adler et alia, NY-London, 1906: vol. 12, 64: “Jewish coins discovered in the course of excavations there some decades ago”. The source quoted there is A. Helfferich, *Der Westgothische Arianismus*, Berlin 1860: 68, who mentioned “several Jewish coins excavated in Tarragona, property of D. Buenaventura Hernandez”. Don Buenaventura Hernandez y Sanahuja (1810–1891) was the founder and first director of the Tarragona Archaeological Museum. His was a fascinating scholarly career: “In the teeth of modern critics, who envy our glories and the priority of Iberian civilization in Europe”, he fabricated a “Hercules Sarcophagus” ostensibly belonging to the chief who had brought Egyptians colonists to Spain (Josep Padró i Parcerisa, *Egyptian-type documents: from the Mediterranean littoral of the Iberian Peninsula before the Roman Conquest*, I, Leiden 1980: 18–22). However minor in comparison to this undertaking, I strongly suspect his “Hebrew coins” to be yet another fake or misinterpretation. In any case, Hernandez’s coins have not met with much interest outside Jewish encyclopedias and their modern spin-off, popular historical net sites, and they have never actually been seen by competent scholars.

This seems the appropriate place to pay homage to a satire on archaeological forgery written by my maternal grandfather Paul Wengraf, himself an art dealer, under the pseudonym Paul Harrison, *Garantiert echt! Eine Geschichte von Bildern und Antiquitäten*, Vienna 1935.

Muslim period: Cantera & Millás, 1956: 188–190, nos. 105, 106: two Hebrew epitaphs, one of 1044, the other incised on the backside of a 2nd century Latin inscription, undated but datable by the Arabic form of the name David (*Daud*) to after the conquest.

Toledo:

Visigothic period:

- 1) Jews are first made to appear in Visigothic Toledo during the pontificate of Aurasius (603–615) in a non-event which has been elevated by degrees into an affair steeped in significance. This is a short letter of excommunication directed by this bishop against a count Froga for the latter's alleged Judaizing tendencies and derision of the Church, to which he had given voice *in the presence of the elders, the whole palace, the Catholic people and also the Jews* (Epistolae Merovingici et Karolini aevi I, 1892: 689–690). To this episode Julian, an otherwise unknown priest of mid-12th century Toledo, appended an explanatory comment: the 7th century pontiff had *converted to the faith by his unceasing exhortations Ioseph, Rabbi Isaac, Nephtalim and others highly placed. Levi Samuel, archisynagogus of the synagogue of Toledo, complained to Frogo, count and prefect of Toledo*, who protected them against the bishop, for which the count was then excommunicated: Gundlach, 1891: 46–7. This comes from the first printing of 1640 of the text, which however lacks any identifying reference to a manuscript source: Luitprandi, subdiaconi toletani, . . . opera quae extant. R. Hieronimi de la Higuera societatis Jesu presbiteri et D. Laurenti Ramirez de Prado consiliarii regii notis illustrata, Antwerpen 1640: 524. The story was further improved upon by a modern historian to read: “In Toledo, where Bishop Aurasius actually carried out forced baptisms, Froga, the count of the city, opposed him. This opposition led to violence, and the bishop's letter excommunicating the count still survives”: Bachrach, 1977a: 10. The earliest version has Jews solely in a passive capacity as part of the public setting, once more by inclusion of opposites. The more concrete details and active stance, including such central component as baptism, are embellishments of the 12th, 17th and 20th centuries. Of the four emblematic names Joseph, Isaac, Naphtali and Levi, the two latter make their first appearance in Spain only in the 11th century.
- 2) Legislation: Linder, 1997: 494–500, no. 851; 278–81, no. 541; 311–7, no. 557.

Muslim period:

- 1) Undated Hebrew epitaph, thought to be the oldest known find of Toledo and one of the oldest of Spain, see Cantera & Millás, 1956: 40–4, no. 15.

- 2) Arabic Genizah letter of 1053 from Jerusalem, addressed to a family in Toledo: Assaf, 1946: 108–13.

Christian period: landholding around Toledo: Azucaica: Baer, 1929–1936: II, 16, no. 33; León Tello, 1979: 15, no. 40. Zalencas: León Tello, 1979: 3, no. 3; 9, no. 18. Magán: León Tello, 1979: 14, nos. 37, 38. Oliolas la Pequeña: León Tello, 1979: 17, no. 49. Alaitic and Monturque: León Tello, 1979: 11, no. 25. Olias del Rey: León Tello, 1979: 16, no. 44; 18–9, nos. 52–59. Aceltuna: Palencia, I, 40, no. 59; 110, no. 151, cf. Baer, Tarbiz 5 (1934), 228–36. Peña Ventosa: León Tello, 1979: 9, no. 19. Daraletut: León Tello, 8, no. 15. The latter is apparently one of three villages or hamlets beginning with the syllable Daral, none of which is still in existence.

Azaña and Ciruelos: León Tello, 1979: 6, no. 10; 8, no. 17; 13, no. 35. The former, 34 km north-east of Toledo, is today called *Numancia de la Sagra*. I have had great difficulties in identifying it, until a newspaper article in *El País* of 8/2/1980 solved the riddle: the Franco regime, riled by this village bearing the same name as Manuel Azaña, president of the Spanish Republic from 1936 to 1939, simply renamed it after the regiment that had occupied the place during the Civil War. *Ciruelos* is a village 43 km to the east of Toledo. On Toledo and its rich source material of the 12th century see Roth, Norman, 1986.

Tortosa (71 km south-west of Tarragona, near the Mediterranean coast): Late Antiquity: Noy, 1993, 247–54, nos. 183, 184: A trilingual epigraph in Hebrew, Latin and Greek, of the 5th–6th century (?). Decorated with the Jewish symbols of star, pentagram and menorah, it recalls *the all-remembered Meliosa, daughter of Juda and Lady Maria. She lived twenty-four years, in peace. Amen.* From a Greek phrase in the text the possibility of a Byzantine—not merely Greek-speaking—contingent among eastern Iberian Jewry has been suggested: Holo, 1999.

Muslim period: In 10th century Tortosa lived the poet and lexicographer Menahem b. Jacob ibn Saruq, as well as the geographer Ibrahim b. Yaqub the Tortosian, who traveled and surveyed Western and Central Europe (Ashtor, 1992: I, 344–9, 448–9 with note 172). See also a very early Responsum, apparently by Moshe ben Hanokh, mentioning the community of Tortosa: Assaf, 1927: 46–7, no. 23.

Tudela:

Muslim and Christian period: EJ, 2007: vol. 20, 171–172.

Uclés:

Muslim period: Arabic Genizah letter of 1053 from Jerusalem, mentioning a relative in Uclés: Assaf, 1946: 108–13.

Uncastillo:

Medieval: before 1079 according to the epitaph of *Meir son of Jacob who died in the year [4]839 in the month of Nissan*: Casanovas i Miró, 2004: 364.

Valencia:

Muslim period: Isaac Alfasi, 1954/2004: nos. 132, 215; Ashtor, 1964: 73–4, no. VII.

Villacidayo (near the monastery San Pedro of Eslonza, some 32 km east of León):

Medieval: landed properties recorded in 1119: Baer, 1929–1936: II: 2, no. 4.

Villamesias (Caceres province, some 60 km north-east of Mérida):

Late Antiquity: Latin epitaph of a Jewish freedman of the 1st to 3rd century: Noy, 1993, 261–2, no. 188. See Niquet, 2004: 160, for a slightly different reading and reservations.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EI	Encyclopaedia of Islam
EJ	Encyclopaedia Judaica
IJO	Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
PL	Patrologia Latina

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INDEX

Not included in the index are the appendices and some frequently mentioned regions and countries (such as Byzantium, Italy, Gaul, France, Germany, Iberia, Spain, Muslim Spain, Ashkenaz, Sepharad). The same holds for the concepts loans, merchant, partnership, commerce, landholding, landed property and possessions. In most entries, the word Jews, Jew, have been omitted, as for instance in “agriculturists”. Here as in all similar entries, the full wording would be “agriculturists, Jews as”. The modern equivalents for the ancient place names (in *Italics*) in the index can be found in the appendices.

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