Philosemitism in History

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Too often philosemitism – the idealization of Jews and Judaism – has been simplistically misunderstood as merely antisemitism "in sheep's clothing." This book takes a different approach, surveying the phenomenon from antiquity to the present and highlighting its rich complexity and broad impact on Western culture. *Philosemitism in History* includes fourteen essays by specialist historians, anthropologists, literary scholars, and scholars of religion, ranging from medieval philosemitism to such modern and contemporary topics as African American depictions of Jews as ethnic role models, the Zionism of Christian evangelicals, pro-Jewish educational television in West Germany, and the current fashion for Jewish "kitsch" memorabilia in contemporary east central Europe. An extensive introductory chapter offers a thorough and original overview of the topic. The book underscores both the endurance and the malleability of philosemitism, drawing attention to this important but widely neglected facet of Jewish–non-Jewish relations.

Jonathan Karp is Associate Professor in the History and Judaic Studies Departments at Binghamton University, SUNY, and Director of the American Jewish Historical Society. He is the author of *The Politics of Jewish Commerce: Economic Thought and Emancipation, 1638–1848* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), and coeditor, with Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, of *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times* (2007).

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Introduction

A Brief History of Philosemitism

Adam Sutcliffe and Jonathan Karp

Q: Which is preferable – the antisemite or the philosemite?
A: The antisemite. At least he isn't lying.

Is there such a thing as philosemitism? The concept is often met with skepticism, as this characteristically terse Jewish joke exemplifies. The term is certainly an awkward one, and it has an awkward history. Coined in Germany in 1880 as the antonym to another neologism – antisemitism – the word "philosemitism" was invented by avowed antisemites as a sneering term of denunciation for their opponents. Almost all late nineteenth-century opponents of antisemitism strenuously sought to defend themselves from the charge of philosemitism, insisting instead that they regarded the Jews neutrally and were untainted by prejudice either for or against them.[1] This normalization of attitudes toward Jews has remained the aim of almost all liberal engagements in the field of Jewish–non-Jewish relations, both by Jews and by non-Jews, and from this dominant perspective philosemitism is almost always regarded as deeply suspicious, sharing with antisemitism a trafficking in distorted, exaggerated, and exceptionalist views of Jews and Judaism. Taking these distortions as the essential hallmark of antisemitism, it has seemed reasonable to many to regard philosemitism as a counterfeit benevolence, and philosemites, as Daniel Goldhagen has described them, as "antisemites in sheep's clothing."[2]

[1] Wolfram Kinzig, "Philosemitismus Teil I: Zur Geschichte des Begriffs," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 105 (1994): 208–28, esp. 210–17; Lars Fischer, *The Socialist Response to Antisemitism in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 21–36, and his essay in this volume. On the extensive discussion of philosemitism by Wilhelm Marr, the key figure in the popularization of the term "antisemitism," see Moshe Zimmermann, *Wilhelm Marr: The Patriarch of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 118–32.

[2] Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Vintage, 1997), 58.

Yet this negative assessment of philosemitism is itself one-sided and prejudicial. Since the period of antiquity favorable characterizations of the Jewish people have recurrently formed a quiet counterpoint to the more familiar hostile stereotypes. Jews have been idealized not only, in the Christian tradition, as "God's chosen people," but also for such imputed virtues as their superior intelligence, economic acumen, ethnic loyalty, cultural cohesion, or familial commitment. These idealizations have at times had a significant impact on historical events, often directly affecting Jews' status and standing, and for this reason have in some contexts been directly encouraged or even induced by Jews themselves. The vast human cost of antisemitism, and of the Nazi genocide in particular, does not warrant the simple conflation of these idealizations into their negative shadow. Historians must seek to explain not only the expulsions and forced conversions of Jews, but also the numerous times when Jewish settlement has been welcomed and even solicited. Similarly, non-Jewish support for the Zionist idea and for the state of Israel demands explanation and analysis not simply as theological fantasy or political expediency, but as in some cases reflecting genuine sympathy for Jews' historical victimization and admiration of their presumed collective qualities, such as moral refinement, advanced civilization, and will to survive. The normalization of the status of Jews and Judaism in the world, meanwhile, remains an elusive and perhaps unattainable aspiration, and "normality" therefore an unhelpfully simple and ahistorical yardstick for the evaluation of non-Jewish attitudes toward Jews. If we are to understand the meanings and associations with which Jews have long been freighted in Western culture, we must recognize their complexity and approach them from all angles, without a predetermined assessment of their underlying essence as monolithically negative.

The word "philosemitism" remains inevitably tainted by etymological association with its antonym. Why should we continue to echo late nineteenth-century prejudices in associating "Semitism," however it may be prefixed, specifically with Jews? Both "isms" also problematically suggest an underlying fixity in attitudes to Jews. However, although these issues have been widely highlighted and debated by scholars, as has the wider question of the relationship of antisemitism to the broader category of racism, the term "antisemitism" remains firmly entrenched as a category of analysis for ancient and medieval as well as modern history.[3] Language is

[3] See, e.g., Richard Levy and Albert Lindemann, *Antisemitism – a History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Gavin Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), esp. 311–52; Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 197–211. For a recent reflection on the relationship of antisemitism to color-coded forms of racism, see George M. Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 40–7, 156–68.

a messy, hand-me-down artifact: in the main we necessarily use the words already in common circulation. Whatever misgivings we may have about the origins or the imprecision of the word "antisemitism," this concept remains overwhelmingly dominant in transhistorical thinking on relations between Jews and non-Jews, and attempts to broaden approaches to this subject must start from an engagement with this reality. "Philosemitism" is as problematic a term as "antisemitism." However, given that antisemitism is a firm fixture in our lexicon and in our thinking, if we are to stretch the subtlety of this inescapable terminology we must think more carefully about the meaning and nature of philosemitism also. This word is uniquely serviceable as a discursive balancer, drawing attention to those facets of attitudes to Jews that are most egregiously misinterpreted or overlooked within a paradigm that recognizes antisemitism alone.

To speak of philosemitism, then, certainly does not imply an unreserved endorsement of the word. Nor does it entail the claim that philosemitism can be or should be neatly separated from antisemitism. Indeed, an intricate ambivalence, combining elements of admiration and disdain, has arguably been by far the most common feature of non-Jewish constructs of Jews and Judaism, while the philosemitism of many Christians has been motivated by a conversionist desire ultimately to erase Jewish distinctiveness altogether. The use of this term as a transhistorical category also should not suggest a belief that it possesses some unchangingly eternal essence. Analogously, the bracketing together as antisemitic of, say, medieval blood libel accusations, Voltaire's antibiblical tirades, and the Soviet treatment of Jewish refuseniks does not imply the existence of some quasi-genetic connection of these phenomena, though it may open up the possibility of identifying certain echoes or common traits. In similar fashion, it is our hope that this volume will bring to attention various lines of continuity and influence, recurrent patterns, and other disparate echoes that link different instances of the positive valorization of Jews or Judaism. By joining these episodes under the analytically imperfect but functionally illuminating rubric of philosemitism, we are better able to explore the nature and scope of these transhistorical resonances and assess the endurance, development, and historical impact of this significant but understudied phenomenon.

A small scholarly literature on philosemitism does now exist, made up of a handful of synoptic surveys as well as some more detailed case studies.[4] The impact of this work has, however, been almost entirely

[4] For existing overviews of the history of philosemitism, see Salomon Rappaport, *Jew and Gentile: The Philosemitic Aspect* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1980); Alan Edelstein, *An Unacknowledged Harmony: Philo-Semitism and the Survival of European Jewry* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1982); William D. Rubinstein and Hilary Rubinstein, *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support for Jews in the English-Speaking World, 1840–1939* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999). The most notable general articles are Wolfram Kinzig, "Philosemitismus Teil I" and "Philosemitismus Teil II: Zur

drowned out by the vastly greater focus on antisemitism as a keynote in relations between Jews and non-Jews. This fixation was long ago critiqued by Salo W. Baron in his argument against the "lachrymose conception" of Jewish history.[5] In the charged contemporary environment, passionate debates over the existence or otherwise of a "new antisemitism" in Europe intersect with even more passionate controversies over the identification as antisemitic of some strands of anti-Zionist or anti-Israeli politics.[6] Against this backdrop it seems particularly important to highlight the significance of more positive attitudes to Judaism, which have been occluded or distorted when viewed through the dominant historiographical lens of antisemitism.

Much of the existing work on philosemitism is marred by an analytical reductiveness, commonly assuming one of two diametrically opposed alternatives: either that philosemitism is the exact opposite of antisemitism, or that it is itself a form of antisemitism. The first limits the term to rare cases of disinterested, pure, and sincere admiration for Jews, forgetting that all thought is shaped by interests of one kind or another, and that perfect objectivism in the perception of other ethnic groups is, at the very least, extremely unusual. Scholarship in this vein tends to be commemorative in character, celebrating the achievements of philosemites and sometimes admonishing Jews for their failure to appreciate and remember them.[7] The second approach, however, in viewing philosemitism as merely the reverse side of the antisemitic coin, almost inevitably goes too far in the opposite direction, routinely discounting any possible element of sincerity or authenticity in philosemitic utterances. Frank Stern's study of philosemitism in the very particular environment of postwar West Germany thoughtfully examines the ways in which philosemitic speech was shaped by an unspoken but ubiquitous consciousness of antisemitism – but this does not warrant his interpretation of all instances of apparent philosemitism in this context as

historiographischen Verwendung des Begriffs," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 105 (1994): 360–83; David S. Katz, "The Phenomenon of Philo-Semitism," in *Christianity and Judaism: Papers Read at the 1991 Summer Meeting and the 1992 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 327–61; Jacques Berlinerblau, *On Philo-Semitism* (2007), posted at http://pjc.georgetown.edu/docs/philo-semitic.pdf. Most recently, and appearing too late to be fully considered in this volume, see Irene A. Diekmann and Elke-Vera Kotowski, eds., *Geliebter Feind, gehasster Freund: Antisemitismus und Philosemitismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Berlin: VBB, 2009).

[5] Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1937), 2:32; "Newer Emphases in Jewish History," in his *History and Jewish Historians: Essays and Addresses* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1964), 90–108.

[6] Among many recent publications see Matti Bunzl, *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Hatreds Old and New in Europe* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm, 2007); Jeffrey Herf, ed., *Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Historical Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2007).

[7] See, e.g., Rappaport, *Jew and Gentile*, 134; Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 203.

simply masking an underlying antisemitism.[8] It is also surely unreasonably suspicious and sweeping to follow Phyllis Lassner and Lara Trubowitz, who, echoing the Jewish joke with which we started, characterize philosemitism as a more insidiously dangerous threat than "transparent antisemitism," which at least can be easily recognized.[9] The varying motives and mentalities of apparent philosemites require careful exploration, even when they conceptualize Jewishness in clearly exaggerated, idealized, or reified ways. Our aim should not be to expose "false" or self-interested philosemites, or to identify "true" ones, but rather to comprehend the significance and function of positive perceptions of Jews and Judaism within their broader intellectual frameworks.

The assumption underlying all entrenched attitudes toward Jews, whether admiring or hostile, is that Jews are in some profound sense different from others. The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has very usefully advanced the evaluatively neutral word "allosemitism" – derived from *allos*, the Greek word for "other" – as an apt term for this belief.[10] In both the premodern and modern worlds, Bauman has argued, Jews have characteristically occupied intermediary, analytically incongruous roles, standing out as anomalous in the social order, and, in the eyes of modernity's discontents in particular, the representatives par excellence of the invisible "sliminess" of the forces of change. Allosemitism itself, Bauman recognizes, is attitudinally ambivalent. Jewish difference is not necessarily a negative observation, and nor, indeed, is it necessarily untrue – though the negative casting of the Jews as "ambivalence incarnate" and as a perpetual source of disruption and disorder is, he shows, central to the history and underlying dynamics of antisemitism.[11] Bryan Cheyette's exploration of the "semitic discourse" that pervaded representations of Jews in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English literature is another notable example of the use of analytically neutral critical terminology to draw attention to the ways in which Jewishness can inspire contradictory associations within a given cultural context.[12] But neither the resort to "ambivalence" nor the subsuming of positive prejudices toward Jews in negative ones can account adequately for

[8] Frank Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany* (London: Heinemann, 1991).

[9] Phyllis Lassner and Lara Trubowitz, eds., *Antisemitism and Philosemitism in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 7–8.

[10] Zygmunt Bauman, "Allosemitism: Premodern, Modern, Postmodern," in Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus, eds., *Modernity, Culture and "the Jew"* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 143–56.

[11] Ibid., 151–4; *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989), 37–60; *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), esp. 18–52.

[12] Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of "the Jew" in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations 1875–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 8–12, 268–75.

the singularity and richness of philosemitic themes in Western discourse on Jews. And even in those cases where such approaches are justified, the philosemitic strand, so often neglected or dismissed, requires clear articulation. We can only reach an understanding of ambivalence toward Jews if we patiently pick apart its contrasting and sometimes contradictory component threads.

A key aim of *Philosemitism in History*, then, is to explore the complex interplay of positive and negative attitudes toward Jews, highlighting the often highly problematic character of many currents of idealization of Jews and Judaism while taking seriously the significance of non-Jewish impulses to befriend, defend, support, or learn from Jews. The essays in this volume represent a wide range of views of and approaches to this topic. Rather than striving for unanimity, we have invited our contributors to engage critically with this central concept, with no predetermined consensus or constraint. Drawing on a range of disciplinary traditions as well as of regional and chronological specializations, these essays enter into dialogue with each other and together, we hope, offer a salutary and stimulating range of approaches to the topic. Cumulatively, while certainly not definitively pinning down the nature and scope of philosemitism, they do, we believe, convincingly show that the subject they address is broad, complex, and worthy of attention.

Are there any useful generalities to be observed about philosemitism? Despite its many different guises and metamorphoses over space and time, there are nonetheless a number of recurrent motifs and themes that suggest a strong degree of transhistorical integration. It would clearly be reductive to seek to identify a single underlying cause or theory of philosemitism, but it is surely worthwhile to try to make some analytical sense of its internal continuities and connections. Several scholars have already presented their own rough typologies of philosemitism, in which a similar cluster of classifications generally recur: economic, utilitarian, millenarian, humanistic, romantic, intellectual, liberal, Christian, and Zionist.[13] These categories, which overlap with each other and can be grouped together in a number of meaningful ways, provide a heuristically useful listing of the main currents into which philosemitism in the *longue durée* can be divided.

Typologies, however, are limited by their descriptive character. While it is helpful to break down the complexity of philosemitism into more focused components, this does not in itself advance an understanding of the relationships and reactions between these various elements. As a more promising alternative we will in the following pages organize our introductory exploration of the broad transhistorical contours of philosemitism

[13] Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barock* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1952); Rappaport, *Jew and Gentile*, 2–4; Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 111–85; Kinzig, "Philosemitismus Teil I," 227–8.

under three analytical headings: its underlying roots, intellectual content, and historical impact. Each of these, at least for the purposes of this brief survey, can be divided into two loosely countervailing elements, which we will try in the following paragraphs briefly to characterize and exemplify (with an emphasis on instances not covered in the chapters to follow).

The sine qua non of philosemitism is the notion of the Jews as a resolutely distinct people, with distinctively admirable characteristics. Several ancient Greek and Roman writers subscribed to this belief, and the existence of philosemitism in antiquity demonstrates the independence of the phenomenon from Christianity, but the deep roots of philosemitism must equally be situated in the supercessionist but also dependent structural relationship of Christianity with Judaism. The substantive arguments marshaled by philosemites can be roughly split into "pure" and "applied" approaches. There is a long philosophical tradition, most interestingly exemplified by Friedrich Nietzsche, of admiring Jews as themselves particularly intellectually impressive, while economists and policymakers have in many different contexts attempted to harness the wealth-generating commercial utility of Jews. This flows naturally into our third heading: the uses and impact of philosemitism through history. The central theme here is the invocation of Judaic models of political governance or national identity, particularly but not only in the British imperial world. Collective identification with Jews has been a significant element in the self-understanding of many different nations. A special case, demanding independent scrutiny, is the political role of philosemitism in support of Zionism, through which it has been a significant force in shaping modern Jewish history as well.

The close relationship of Christianity to philosemitism raises the question of what role philosemitism may have played in Muslim and Arab cultures. Nineteenth-century Jewish historians, underscoring the history of Christian intolerance by juxtaposing it with the relatively favorable treatment of Jews under Islam, coined the term "the Golden Age of Spain" to highlight the capacity of Jews to thrive in the atmosphere of religious tolerance and cultural integration that had prevailed, they argued, in medieval al-Andalus. There are indeed numerous examples of Muslim rulers welcoming Jews to their lands for the skills and services they could provide. For example, the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II (1491–1512), to whose lands many Sephardim fled after 1492, reportedly ridiculed the Spanish king Ferdinand for expelling such a valuable population. "Can you call such a king wise and intelligent?" remarked Bayezid. "He is impoverishing his country and enriching my kingdom."[14] That this quotation derives from a contemporary Jewish chronicle and not an Islamic source, however, suggests an important point. While prominent Muslim authorities

[14] Quoted in Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry: A History of the Judeo-Spanish Community, 14th–20th Centuries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 7.

sometimes advocated philosemitic policies, they did not necessarily articulate philosemitic viewpoints. This seems to stem from the lesser distinctiveness of Jewish populations living under Muslim as opposed to Christian rule. Jews in Christendom bore a unique theological and sociological status, whereas the Jews of Islam were never the focus of a comparable singularity, being invariably only one among several similarly designated religious minorities (categorized as tolerated *dhimmi*), usually less prominent or problematic than Christians in Spain or Turkey or Zoroastrians in Persia. As Marc Cohen points out, "Islamic law lacked a specific focus on Jews."[15] Nevertheless, a definitive evaluation of Islamic philosemitism requires more thorough investigation, unfortunately not possible here.

Prior to the emergence of Christianity and Islam, the earliest manifestations of philosemitism are to be found in the period of Greco-Roman antiquity, when Judaism became an object of admiration, and even partial allegiance, among a handful of Greek authors and a larger number of pagan "God Fearers." As part of Hellenism's fascination with the East, authors such as Hecataeus of Abdera (fourth century B.C.E.) and Marcus Varro (first century B.C.E.) depicted Jews as particularly philosophically sophisticated, and Judaism as a venerable cult imbued with exemplary customs and a refined monotheism. According to Louis Feldman, Jews were in the third century B.C.E. widely seen as a "philosophical people," admiringly described by Aristotle's successor Theophrastus as "philosophers by birth."[16] Judaism was notably successful in the Hellenistic and Roman periods in winning not only converts but also "sympathizers" – non-Jews who, without converting, adopted certain Jewish practices and whom we might consider as an early type of philosemite. Feldman suggests three reasons for this admiration. The antiquity of the Jews was widely acknowledged, and this was considered an important source of cultural authority in the ancient world. The Jews were also associated, by several writers, with the cardinal virtues of courage, temperance, justice, piety, and (above all) wisdom. Finally, there was a strong ancient tradition of admiration for Moses, who was frequently esteemed, alongside Minos and Lycurgus of Sparta, as one of the greatest leaders and lawgivers.[17]

Praise for the excellence of the Mosaic polity, by authors such as Strabo in his *Geography* (first century C.E.), was widely picked up the early modern era, when this current of political commentary became complicatedly entangled with another idea derived from ancient sources: the ascription

[15] Marc Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 54.

[16] Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 201–3.

[17] Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 177–287, 429–35. See also his "Philo-Semitism among Ancient Intellectuals," *Tradition* 1 (1958–9), 27–38; John Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 73.

of Egyptian origins to the Jews. Strabo and Diodorus Siculus (first century B.C.E.) both put forward this notion, claiming that Moses had been initiated into the Egyptian priesthood.[18] For early modern scholars such as John Spencer and John Toland – to say nothing of Sigmund Freud's adoption of this idea in his *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) – the Egyptianization of Moses took on a complicated and ambivalent significance, serving in part to critique the inaccuracy and hubris of the Jews' own account of their origins.[19] There certainly circulated in the ancient world implicitly or explicitly hostile counternarratives to the Jewish Bible, locating the Jews' origins in places such as Crete or Ethiopia and explaining their migration as due to their unpopularity or disease. The most famous summary of these views, in the fifth book of Tacitus's *Histories* (c. 110 C.E.), has almost exclusively been interpreted by scholars as an antisemitic source text and has often been used as such, though strains of philosemitism have also been identified in it.[20] In ascribing Egyptian roots to the Jews and their religious practices, however, authors such as Strabo and Diodorus did not intend to denigrate them. From their pagan perspective, unconcerned (unlike Christians) with the validity of the biblical narrative, this lineage rather reaffirmed the prestige of the Jews, associating them, and Moses in particular, with a familiar and venerable tradition of Egyptian priestly magic.

Prevailing attitudes toward Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds were complex and variegated, and certainly not unremittingly hostile. Judaism, as John Gager has argued, "provoked among Christians and pagans alike profound internal divisions."[21] The cultural influence of the Jews was also significant: according to Arnaldo Momigliano, it was the Jews, rather than the Greeks, who provided the key model for late antique historians' attempts to write "national" histories.[22] Indeed, the anti-Judaic sentiment that did pervade much Roman literature from the first century C.E. can be interpreted as a conservative reaction to the considerable success of Judaism in attracting admirers and sympathizers, even in the highest echelons of the Roman aristocracy. Jews in the ancient world were structurally distinctive in ways that differ significantly but not unrecognizably from the most characteristic features of their distinctiveness in modern history: they were a relatively tightly defined subgroup, with a particularly textual and aniconic religious life and a detailed and deep sense of

[18] See Gager, *Origins of Anti-Semitism*, 67–73.

[19] On this intellectual tradition see Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[20] Louis H. Feldman, "Pro-Jewish Intimations in Tacitus' Account of Jewish Origins," *Studies in Hellenistic Judaism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 377–407.

[21] Gager, *Origins of Anti-Semitism*, 269.

[22] Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 85.

their cultural origins. It is not, then, surprising that in both eras the Jews inspired both admiration and resentment, and that this dual response was embedded within a wider cultural uncertainty over how to accommodate and value difference within an ostensibly unified and universalist political and social system.

The issue of difference also lies at the heart of the knotty relationship between Christianity and Judaism, formed in the historical separation process of these two religions in the first few centuries of the Christian era. The central concern of Paul, as many scholars have argued, was to reformulate Judaism as a universalistic message, open to all. In interpreting the Jewish law as an allegorical prefiguring of the coming of Christ, which he regarded as having annulled its validity, Paul's underlying concern was with the overcoming of all particularities, of which Jewish particularity stood as emblematic. Paul thus crucially opposed Jewish difference against Christian universalism. In doing so, he was not the originator of antisemitism (as some would have it), but he did reformulate the older Greek antipathy to Jewish distinctiveness, placing the Jews' assimilation within a bold new eschatological schema. Paul indeed retained an intense concern for his Jewish kin and continued to accord the Jews a uniquely meaningful place in history, writing in his Epistle to the Romans that "to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises" (Romans 9:4). His emphasis on the still-favored status of a Jewish "remnant," and on the ultimate restoration of Israel to its former glory (Romans 11:26–32), initiated a current of philosemitic theology that has endured within Christianity ever since.[23]

Medieval Christian attitudes toward Jews and Judaism, most succinctly and influentially captured in the "witness people" doctrine elaborated by Augustine, were shot through with ambivalence and paradox. While interpreting the Jews' dispersal and suffering as God's just punishment for their rejection and crucifixion of Jesus, Augustine regarded Jewish survival as imbued with unique meaning and purpose: the Jews' preservation of their own religious texts and practices provided peripatetic proof of the biblical prophecies that pointed the way to Christianity.[24] This was of course in no sense a philosemitic doctrine, and it coexisted with a sharply anti-Judaic *Adversus Iudaeos* tradition, stridently exemplified by Augustine's fourth-century contemporary John Chrysostom, that demonized medieval Jews as insults to Christianity and emphasized the

[23] For a less universalist interpretation of Paul's relation to Jews and Judaism, see Alan F. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), and especially Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[24] For a succinct and authoritative summary of this doctrine and its influence, see Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), esp. 23–65.

disjunction between them and their scriptural texts.[25] However, the theology of Jewish witness both denigrated and elevated Jews and in particular ways laid the foundations of some of the key strains of Western philosemitism. Most basically, the commitment to Jewish survival – based on the biblical prooftext "Slay them not" (Psalms 59:11), which was taken as an injunction not simply against the killing of Jews, but also against preventing their observance of Judaism – underwrote the continuance of a Jewish presence in medieval Christendom and indirectly made possible their availability to rulers as vulnerable, and therefore all the more valuable, niche economic operators.

More abstractly, the casting of Jews as, in Jeremy Cohen's phrase, "living letters of the law" – the blindly literalist custodians of textual truths, the figurative significance of which they could not see – placed them at the heart of profound hermeneutical controversies that intensified in the late medieval and particularly in the early modern period.[26] The humanist and Renaissance recovery of classical learning sometimes entailed an idealization of nonbiblical but putatively Jewish sources as pristine fonts of wisdom and truth. Christian Hebraists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were generally temperamentally ambivalent, in varying hues, toward their subject matter. More mystically inclined ecumenicists, however, such as northern European followers of Jacob Boehme, or Christian Knorr von Rosenroth and Francis Mercury van Helmont, the compilers of the *Kabbalah Demudata* (1677), which presented the Jewish mystical tradition as the key to uncontaminated and universal philosophical truth, were avowedly philosemitic in their idealization of certain strands of Judaism. The logical conclusion of this strain of Christian philosemitism was actual conversion to Judaism, of which there are a number of documented cases in early modern Europe, isolated but nonetheless revealing, particularly in the long Enlightenment period.[27]

Philosemitism has figured particularly in Christian eschatological thought, in which the conversion of the Jews constitutes a key element in the unfolding of prophecies concerning the end of time. Whereas the teachings of both Paul and Augustine did not encourage missionizing among Jews, whose conversion they believed would occur only at the appropriate

[25] Ora Limor and Guy Stroumsa, eds., *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996).

[26] Cohen, *Living Letters*, esp. 391–400.

[27] Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barock*; Allison P. Coudert and Jeffrey Shoulson, eds., *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Allison P. Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century: The Life and Thought of Francis Mercury von Helmont* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999); Adam Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 23–41, 148–64; Martin Muslow and Richard H. Popkin, *Secret Conversions to Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2004).

time,[28] serious conversionist efforts began in the thirteenth century and have persisted ever since. While the desire to convert Jews is in itself clearly far from philosemitic, Christian conversionism should nonetheless not be hastily conflated with antisemitism, particularly as many chiliastic movements have emphasized beneficence toward Jews as a prerequisite for their successful conversion, and thus for the Second Coming. An ultimate missionary intent, no matter how much it suggests "ulterior motives," should not in itself preclude applying the philosemitic label. Radical Christian millenarians also not infrequently envisaged a religious transformation that would Judaize Christianity at least as much as it would Christianize Jews. In the mid-seventeenth century, in particular, millenarian sentiment among both Jews and Christians led to a heightened expectancy among religious radicals that a reconciliation of Judaism and Christianity was imminent – a belief that played a significant role in the readmission of Jews to England in 1665–6.[29]

Christian philosemitism was also a notable presence in late eighteenth-century political radicalism. The extension of political rights to Jews in the midst of the French Revolution was a decision heavily charged with both secular and religious symbolism: the "regeneration" of Jews envisaged by the revolutionaries transposed into a new idiom the millenarian resonance of Jewish conversion.[30] In Britain the anti-Catholic radical agitator Lord George Gordon actually converted to Judaism in 1787, while in the following decade the prophets Richard Brothers and Joanna Southcott both attracted support for their rival claims to be the imminent leader of the Jews back to their Promised Land.[31] These individuals have often been dismissed as marginal eccentrics, but their distinct brands of popular millenarian radicalism were significant movements feeding into the rise of British socialist movements in the early nineteenth century. Certainly these

[28] Cohen, *Living Letters*, 37; Christopher M. Clark, "The Limits of the Confessional State: Conversions to Judaism 1814–1843," *Past and Present* 147 (1995): 159–79.

[29] Ernestine G. E. van der Wall, "A Philo-Semitic Millenarian on the Reconciliation of Jews and Christians: Henry Jessey and His 'The Glory and Salvation of Jehuda and Israel' (1650)," in *Sceptics, Millenarians and Jews* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), 161–84; Gordon M. Weiner and Richard H. Popkin, eds., *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994); David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England, 1603–1655* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[30] See Ronald Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715–1815* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 150–93, esp. 164–5.

[31] Marsha Keith Schuchard, "Lord George Gordon and Cabalistic Freemasonry: Beating Jacobite Swords into Jacobin Plowshares," in Muslow and Popkin, *Secret Conversions*, 183–232; Eitan Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799–1917* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 46–60; Ian McCalman, "New Jerusalems: Prophecy, Dissent and Radical Culture in England, 1786–1830," in Knud Haakonssen, ed., *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 312–35.

radicals' associations with Jews and Judaism were often fanciful, but their engagements were serious and sustained. They drew in Jewish associates and contributed to the development of a wider early nineteenth-century cultural environment in which a variety of Christian millenarian preoccupations, utopian projections, and conversionist endeavors often cross-fertilized with more politically mainstream campaigns for Jewish material uplift and political emancipation, even if they did not straightforwardly align with them.[32]

Admiration for and fascination with Judaism, then, are present in Greco-Roman intellectual culture and have deep roots within Christianity. Both traditions associated Jews with great antiquity, bookishness, and – most importantly – a determination to preserve a particular identity and set of cultural practices. While the Christian tradition, and especially its ambiguous Pauline heritage, is most often advanced in academic discussions of philosemitism, it is actually the Greek and Hellenistic legacies to which the most vital and variegated expressions of modern philosemitism owe their allegiance. To the extent that Hellenistic philosophy concerned itself with Judaism, it sought to address the relationship between universality and particularism. Philosophers in the modern Western tradition have retained this preoccupation, with Jewishness not infrequently continuing to present itself as a key test case. The late seventeenth-century Huguenot encyclopedist Pierre Bayle, for example, engaged so deeply with Judaism that his twentieth-century editor, Richard Popkin, speculated that he may even have been a "secret Jew," though his fascination was fundamentally philosophical in nature: he regarded Jews, because they were the unique recipients of God's directly revealed commandments, as alone standing outside the otherwise insoluble tension between the incommensurable demands of Christian faith and universal reason.[33] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's famously philosemitic plays *The Jews* (1754) and above all *Nathan the Wise* (1779) self-consciously invert negative Jewish stereotypes, associating their Jewish heroes with Lessing's own Enlightenment values of universalist virtue, humanity, and wisdom.[34] Contrastingly, in some recent postmodern thought Judaism has represented an alluringly communitarian and poetic escape from the cold rationalism of Western philosophy.[35]

[32] Mel Scult, *Millennial Expectations and Jewish Liberties* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 90–142.

[33] Richard H. Popkin, introduction to *Pierre Bayle – Historical and Critical Dictionary: Selections* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), xxvi; Adam Sutcliffe, "Bayle and Judaism," in Wiep van Bunge, ed., *Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), Le Philosophe de Rotterdam: Philosophy, Religion and Reception* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2008), 121–34.

[34] Ritchie Robertson, "'Dies hohe Lied der Duldung'? The Ambiguities of Toleration in Lessing's *Die Juden* and *Nathan der Weise*," *Modern Language Review* 93 (1998): 105–20; Willi Goetschel, *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing and Heine* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 230–50.

[35] See Gillian Rose, *Judaism and Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

Philosophical philosemitism can be most fruitfully explored, however, through the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, whose legacy with regard to Judaism continues to generate much controversy and confusion and, for this reason, merits particularly close attention.[36] The young Nietzsche certainly casually imbibed and expressed antisemitism. However, the anti-antisemitism of his mature work was a key feature of his philosophical opposition to the politics of the herd. The vengeful and bitter popular sentiment of *ressentiment* was, he repeatedly noted, most frequently and crudely directed against Jews, both in the foundational era of early Christianity and in the nationalist demagoguery of his own era.[37] Jews were, however, in Nietzsche's eyes centrally responsible for the introduction of *ressentiment* into Western culture, as a consequence of the "slave rebellion in morals" that they initiated with their prophets' valorization of meekness and poverty over nobility and strength.[38] Nietzsche expressed admiration both for preprophetic Judaism, with its ennobling emphasis on the divine strength of Yahweh, and for modern Judaism. His critiques focused on the prophets and their priestly successors, whom he viewed as paving the way for Christianity, which he reviled. He nonetheless regarded the life-denying *ressentiment* morality as in essence profoundly un-Judaic, explaining in his late work that in the era of Isaiah the Jews turned to this negation of their natural values as a final, tough-minded act of "self-preservation" in the face of impossible circumstances.[39] There is thus a backbone of intense, awed admiration of the vital spirit of the Jewish people even – indeed particularly – in Nietzsche's ascription to them of this most profoundly negative development in the history of civilization.

Nietzsche's attitudes to Judaism and Jews are elusive and complicated, and – in keeping with his general intellectual style – expressed in mobile and at times inconsistent fashion. However, the characterization of his stance as fundamentally ambivalent is misleading.[40] Nietzsche regarded

[36] See Steven E. Aschheim, "Thinking the Nietzsche Legacy Today," in his *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 13–23; *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890–1990* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

[37] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ* (1888), trans. R. J. Hollingdale, §40; *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), trans. Walter Kaufmann, §2:11, 3:14.

[38] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), trans. Walter Kaufmann, §195; *Genealogy of Morals*, §1:7.

[39] Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*, §24. For a helpful analysis see Michael F. Duffy and Willard Mittelman, "Nietzsche's Attitudes toward the Jews," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49 (1988): 301–17; Weaver Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); "A Post-Holocaust Re-Examination of Nietzsche and the Jews," in Jacob Golumb, ed., *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture* (London: Routledge, 1997), 21–54.

[40] For this characterization see Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Dark Riddle: Hegel, Nietzsche, and the Jews* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), esp. 177–9; "Nietzsche and the Jews: The Structure of an Ambivalence," in Golumb, ed, *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture*, 117–34.

the Jews in superlative terms, as a uniquely resilient, intellectually energetic, and historically significant people, closely aligned with his positive moral values, whereas his German contemporaries in the main stood against them. Antisemitism appalled him, but it would be wrong to regard him simply as an anti-antisemite, neglecting his pointedly affirmative evaluations of Jews. His admiration for the Jews was most fundamentally intellectual, based on a characterization of their core values as strong and life affirming. He also admired the Jews as a sociopolitical collectivity of supreme cohesion and fortitude, celebrating their particularity (in anticipation of later postmodern responses). There was in addition a concretely political aspect to his admiration: although he was not at all interested in the Jews as an economic asset, he cast them, in quasi-millenarian fashion, as potentially the crucial agents of a future revivification of Europe.[41]

Philosemitism has had a significant historical impact in the realm of politics as well as philosophy. Christian Hebraist scholarship in early modern Europe exerted a considerable influence on the legal and constitutional thought of the period, with Moses commanding widespread admiration as a supreme lawgiver. The importance of "political Hebraism," however, which can be discerned in almost all major early modern political thinkers, has only recently begun to receive close scholarly attention.[42] The deployment of Hebraic themes has also often served to advance political arguments. John Milton, for example, strongly identified the prophetic tradition in Judaism, which he used in support of his antiepiscopalian politics, and juxtaposed against the Jewish priesthood, which he associated with his Laudian opponents. Milton's split view of Judaism, widely shared in the mid-seventeenth century, is thus clearly ambivalent – but this does not diminish the strikingly Hebraic idiom of his positive political thought.[43] Milton's contemporary, the scholar and parliamentary leader John Selden, viewed the Mishnaic tradition (which postdated Christ) as a model of religious toleration within an enlightened polity.[44]

[41] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §251; *Human, All Too Human* (1878), trans. R. Hollingdale, §1I:475.

[42] See Lea Campos Boralevi, "Classical Foundation Myths of European Republicanism: The Jewish Commonwealth," in Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, vol. 1, *Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 247–62; also the new journal *Hebraic Political Studies*, published in Jerusalem since 2006.

[43] See Douglas A. Brooks, ed., *Milton and the Jews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), esp. the essays by Nicholas von Maltzahn, "Making Use of the Jews: Milton and Philo-Semitism," 57–82, and Achsah Guibbory, "England, Israel and the Jews in Milton's Prose, 1649–1660," 13–34; Jeffrey S. Shoulson, *Milton and the Rabbis: Hebraism, Hellenism and Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

[44] See Jason Rosenblatt, *Renaissance England's Chief Rabbi: John Selden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 141–65.

Politics more broadly construed encompasses a view of Jews as testing the limits of eligibility for citizenship, both in themselves and by providing a model for the further extension of the franchise to other, even more marginal groups. One thinks, for instance, of the mutual impact of efforts to grant Jews and Catholics citizenship in nineteenth-century Britain, or the troubled relationship of a legally privileged Jewish population to French colonial Algeria under the 1870 Crémieux Decree, or the political incorporation of Hungarian Jews to provide the ruling Magyars with electoral majorities in the face of peasant Romanian and Slavic opposition. In a different vein, one might also cite the curious case of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, whose accounts of central European Jewish ghetto life provide a particularly striking example of the potential political resonance of a gendered philosemitism. Sacher-Masoch, an acute observer of the Hasidic world to which he was exposed during his youth in mid nineteenth-century Galicia, was fascinated by Jewish women, whom he portrayed as alluring, strong, and sensuous. His interest in the humanization and emancipation of Jews, and above all Jewesses, was both fetishistically eroticized and connected to his broader support for the emancipation of women, and of the erotic imagination in general.[45]

The malleability of Jewishness in the Western political imagination is such that the Jews have served to exemplify both the primacy of the nation as well as its cosmopolitan transcendence. Perceptions of Jews as particularly culturally cohesive or loyal have offered grist not only for attacks on their particularist exclusivity but also for admiring ruminations on their powerful sense of collective identity and belonging. In the early modern Protestant polities of northwest Europe, where both economic prosperity and political Hebraism were most heavily concentrated, emergent ideals of nationhood were closely modeled on the Hebraic biblical exemplar. Theorists of modern nationalism have emphasized the importance of the "biblical prototype" in the development of a covenantal, sacral notion of nationhood, first articulated in post-Reformation England, and not long afterward in Dutch and German Pietist ideals of national or linguistic community.[46] In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries this idiom of collective political imagination was exported around the world. Afrikaner nationalists, for example, strongly identified with the Jews, whom they imagined as a similarly small, isolated, and pious nation, while in the mid-Victorian period many Maori converts to Christianity enthusiastically adopted the

[45] David Biale, "Masochism and Philosemitism: The Strange Case of Leopold von Sader-Masoch," *Journal of Contemporary History* 17 (1982): 305–23; Irving Massey, *Philo-Semitism in Nineteenth-Century German Literature* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000), 17–60, 165–9.

[46] Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), esp. 44–65; Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 35–65; Colin Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 9–33.

theory – first suggested by British missionaries and linguists – that they were of Jewish descent.[47]

Hebraic identification also influenced the perspective from the British imperial metropole. The British Israelite movement, which claimed that the British were the descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel, reached its peak of influence during Britain's late Victorian imperial zenith. Loosely derived from Richard Brothers's prophetic claims in the 1790s, the British Israelites not only asserted Hebraic authenticity for their own Saxon lineage but denied the legitimacy of contemporary Jews, whom they derided as mongrel impostors. Although they attracted significant support, the British Israelites were always a marginal group, widely ridiculed by mainstream Anglicans and others, and their theology was a particularly confused mix of self-declared philosemitism and racialized antisemitism. Nonetheless, their claims fitted well with the expansionist agenda of British imperialism. The British Israelites agitated vocally for British colonial involvement in Palestine, and, as Eitan Bar-Yosef has argued, their Hebraic identitarianism was eccentric only as a literalist expression of the widespread Victorian conviction that the British had in some sense inherited from the Jews the mantle of providential election.[48]

In the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, while predominantly American "Christian Identity" movements have fashioned British Israelite theology into a virulently racist and antisemitic fringe credo, the rhetoric of national chosenness in mainstream political discourse in the United States has, as in nineteenth-century Britain, often intertwined with an identification with Israel, since 1948 concretized as the state of Israel.[49] Other currents of philosemitism in twentieth-century Europe arose, developed, and endure in relation to particular local political polarities. Liberalism in Spain from its nineteenth-century inception tended to espouse an element of philosemitism as a marker of contrast to the dominance of Catholic conservatism, and in the early twentieth century a small but not insignficant

[47] Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 77–85; Rappaport, *Jew and Gentile*, 135–41; Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 58–62, 164–7.

[48] Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, 199–202; "Christian Zionism and Victorian Culture," *Israel Studies* 8 (2003): 18–44; Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 203–14; Tudor Parfitt, *The Lost Tribes of Israel: The History of a Myth* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2002), 52–65; David S. Katz and Richard H. Popkin, *Messianic Revolution: Radical Religious Politics to the End of the Second Millennium* (London: Penguin, 1999), 170–89.

[49] Kidd, *Forging of Races*, 218–26; Katz and Popkin, *Messianic Revolution*, 189–204. On the highly ambivalent representation of Jews in the avowedly Zionist and philosemitic Left Behind Christian novel series by Timothy LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, leading best sellers in the United States since 1995, see Jonathan Freedman, "Antisemitism without Jews: *Left Behind* in the American Heartland," in Lassner and Trubowitz, eds., *Antisemitism and Philosemitism*, 154–74.

filosefardismo movement emerged, arguing that the Spanish race and economy would be regenerated by the return of Sephardim to the country. In 1931 the progressive government of the new Second Republic swiftly moved to promote this return, in response to which, in part, the preoccupation of the Spanish Right with Judeo-Masonic-Bolshevik conspiracy was consolidated.[50]

While some anti-Jewish nationalists insisted that the Jews' tribal cohesiveness corroded that of non-Jewish peoples, cosmopolitan liberals and socialists also occasionally praised Jews (or specific currents within Jewish life) for defying all forms of national chauvinism. Well before Isaac Deutscher – scion of Polish rabbis – had coined the term "the non-Jewish Jew," V. I. Lenin and Maxim Gorky celebrated the "great, universally progressive traits in Jewish culture."[51] The overrepresentation of Jews in various liberal and socialist causes was to be explained, Lenin insisted, by the "internationalism" of Jewish culture and "its responsiveness to the advanced movements of the age."[52] Gorky went further, locating the sources of Jewish universalism not in a nebulous "Jewish culture," but in a transposed idealism rooted in the biblical prophets. The Jews, Gorky asserted, "disturb the peace of the satiated and self-satisfied and shed a ray of light on the dark sides of life. With their energy and enthusiasm, they have given people the gift of fire and the tireless pursuit of truth. They have been rousing nations, not letting them rest, and finally – and this is the main thing! – this idealism has given birth to the scourge of the powerful; the religion of the masses, socialism."[53]

The Jews' contribution to commerce and capitalism, rather than to socialism, has also possessed its philosemitic dimension. While medieval antisemitism owed much to the growing identification of Jews and usury, the Jews' very presence in northern Europe was significantly premised on their assumed (and often indeed proven) economic utility. The idea that Jews were reputed to generate economic benefits does not sit well with the standard notion that during the Middle Ages they were deliberately forced into commercial and moneylending occupations as a way of excluding them from the landholding elite or from membership in urban guilds.

[50] Michael Alpert, "Dr Angel Pulido and Philo-Sephardism in Spain," *Jewish Historical Studies* 40 (2005): 105–21; Isabelle Rohr, *The Spanish Right and the Jews, 1898–1945* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2007), 14–49. For an analysis of much earlier Spanish philosemitism in terms of a broadly similar political antagonism see David L. Graizbord, "Philosemitism in Late Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Iberia: Refracted Judaeophobia?" *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 38 (2007): 657–82.

[51] Isaac Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).

[52] Hyman Lumer, ed., *Lenin on the Jewish Question* (New York: International Press, 1974), 107.

[53] See Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 163–4.

While some Jews did own land well into the medieval period, most were invited to settle precisely because they were understood to be commercial or financial specialists. The very shift from commerce to finance and moneylending, occurring in western Europe between the eleventh and late twelfth centuries, was not necessarily the result of the Jews' exclusion from more mainstream occupations, but rather of the fact that the medieval commercial revolution made financial occupations especially attractive to those with the capital and skills to undertake them: that is, among others, to Jews.[54] Few of the numerous medieval privileges granted to Jews overtly sing their praises (the famous one issued by Bishop Rudiger of Speyer in 1084 is exceptional in this regard), but the favorable terms often specified in these documents suggest a very high valuation of Jewish presence indeed.[55]

In early modern Europe this favorable regard for Jewish commercial utility sometimes found expression in the emerging literature of political economy, a phenomenon that some historians have labeled "mercantilist philosemitism." The application of mercantilist principles to Jewish settlement was often inspired by arguments found in contemporary Jewish apologetic works, such as those of Simone Luzzatto and Menasseh ben Israel, which offer a clear indication that Jews themselves often sought to induce philosemitic beliefs as a matter of self-interested pragmatic policy. Such notable figures as Josiah Child, John Toland, Joseph Addison, and Josiah Tucker in Britain, and Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Montesquieu, Ange Goudar, and Jean-Baptiste Say in France enumerated the benefits of Jewish commerce. Naturally, in doing so they were concerned to combat the more prevalent attitude of hostility toward Jewish "usury" and "middleman activity"; nevertheless, their voices were often influential, creating an enduring if tense symbiosis between economic liberalism and Jewish emancipation.[56]

The most contentious but arguably the most materially significant realm in which philosemitism has played a prominent role is the history of modern Zionism. From the 1830s onward, evangelical Christians in England, especially those associated with the Clapham sect and the followers of the leading evangelical social reformer Lord Shaftesbury, sustained a strong interest in the "restoration" of the Jews to the Holy Land.[57] In the late 1870s, immediately after the publication of George Eliot's explicitly

[54] Michael Toch, "Economic Activities of the Jews in the Middle Ages," in Michael Toch and Elizabeth Müller-Luckner, eds., *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der mittelalterlichen Juden: Fragen und Einschätzungen* (Munich: Oldenberg Verlag, 2009), 187–8.

[55] For a sampling, see Robert Chazan, ed., *Church, State, and Jew in the Middle Ages* (New York: Behrman House, 1980), 57–94.

[56] See Jonathan Karp, *The Politics of Jewish Commerce: Economic Thought and Emancipation in Europe 1638–1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), esp. 91–3.

[57] Donald M. Lewis, *The Origins of Christian Zionism: Lord Shaftesbury and Evangelical Support for a Jewish Homeland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Zionist novel *Daniel Deronda* (1876), millenarian Victorians saw the crisis in the Turkish Empire known as the "Eastern Question" as an opportunity to promote British intervention in Palestine. This restorationist agenda, however, intersected with attacks on Prime Minister Disraeli's insufficient response to massacres of Bulgarian Christians by Turkish militia, spearheaded by Disraeli's adversary, Gladstone, and tinged with antisemitism. At this stage Jews in Britain and beyond were focused on the civil rights and safety of their brethren in southeast Europe, and not on Palestine, and thus stood politically at odds with Christian Zionists.[58] With the emergence of the Jewish Zionist movement, however, this began to change.

The Balfour Declaration of November 1917, affirming British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, has largely been interpreted under the sign of antisemitism, focusing on the British elite's stereotypical fantasies of the extreme power of Jews, both as American bankers and as Russian socialists, who they hoped might swing the support of their respective countries behind the Entente side in World War I.[59] These stereotypes, however, were ambivalent, encompassing notes of admiration at least as much as hostility. While primarily shaped by strategic realpolitik, the Balfour Declaration was imaginable in no small measure due to the British tradition of Bible-based identification with the Jews. As David Lloyd George himself stated, explaining the roots of the declaration in an address to the Jewish Historical Society of England in 1925: "It was undoubtedly inspired by natural sympathy, admiration, and also by the fact that, as you must remember, we had been trained even more in Hebrew history than in the history of our own country."[60] British policy toward Zionism in the early twentieth century should certainly be seen in the context of the ethnically oriented thinking that dominated among diplomatic elites in this period, which culminated in the redrawing of the map of Europe in 1918.[61] The Jews, however, were not simply one small nation among many others: their unique cultural and political significance in the eyes of the British enabled the Zionist leadership to command an unrivaled degree of high-level attention. The Balfour Declaration was not, as some would have it, an instance of "pure" philosemitism, shaped by an altruistic concern for the welfare of Jews.[62] The predominant mind-set of its framers

[58] David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840–1914* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 94–105; Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, 202–25.

[59] David Vital, *A People Apart: A Political History of the Jews in Europe, 1789–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 687–702, esp. 698–9; Mark Levene, "The Balfour Declaration: A Case of Mistaken Identity," *English Historical Review* 107 (1992): 54–77; James Renton, "The Historiography of the Balfour Declaration: Toward a Multi-Causal Framework," *Journal of Israeli History* 19 (1998): 109–28.

[60] Cited in Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, 182.

[61] James Renton, *The Zionist Masquerade: The Birth of the Anglo-Zionist Alliance, 1914–1918* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 11–42.

[62] Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 149–70.

and their cultural world was nonetheless in the final analysis largely positive toward Jews, and it was by recognizing and appealing to this that Chaim Weizmann and the Zionist leadership were able to secure what they wanted.

Philosemitism thus played an important role in this key diplomatic event in modern Jewish history, and it continues to be a factor in the global politics of the Middle East conflict, though precisely how and to what extent remains a hotly contested issue. How has the broader history of Zionism and Israel related to the philosemitic dynamic? The intertwinement of the political, cultural, and religious strands of philosemitism discussed here, and their penetration into Jewish life, are perhaps most powerfully highlighted by the absorption into Jewish Zionism, as Gabriel Piterberg has recently argued, of the theologically charged colonialist arguments of Protestant restorationist philosemitism. An apt emblem of this is the encounter in November 1895 between Theodor Herzl and Colonel Albert Goldsmid, an Anglo-Jew who had been raised as a Christian by his baptized parents but had returned to Judaism in early adulthood, which Herzl records in his diary as having been deeply moving for both men. Goldsmit, Herzl notes, enthusiastically embraced his Zionist vision as "the idea of my life," proudly declaring to him, "I am Daniel Deronda."[63]

This brief overview of trends and themes in the history of philosemitism complements and foreshadows the essays presented in this volume, which proceed in broad chronological order. The first three chapters offer synoptic overviews of philosemitism in the medieval and early modern periods. Robert Chazan's opening essay shows how the New Testament and the patristic legacy outlined a protected space for Jews within a Christian order, which remained doctrinally operative through much of the Middle Ages, despite intensifying persecution and expulsions. Chazan demonstrates that medieval Christendom provided the basic framework of papal protections, intellectual engagement, and economic utilization, which, however "episodic and specific," would grow into a more variegated and full-fledged philosemitism in postmedieval Europe. Abraham Melamed describes how Renaissance humanism restored the West's connection to the Greek and Hellenistic strain of ancient philosemitism, focusing specifically on the notion, prevalent in the sixteenth century, that ancient Judaism was the original font of all worldly and spiritual wisdom. Melamed is careful to insist that such attributions of Jewish priority were often deployed for distinctly non-philosemitic ends (supercessionist, missionary, polemical, etc.), yet he conjectures that the long-term effect of the Renaissance preoccupation with Jewish sources fed the impulse toward political accommodation

[63] Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* (London: Verso, 2008), 244–57; John M. Picker, "George Eliot and the Sequel Question," *New Literary History* 37 (2006): 361–88, esp. 382.

with Jews. In similar fashion, Adam Sutcliffe questions the extent to which even at its mid-seventeenth-century peak early modern philosemitism had much to do with positive attitudes toward contemporary Jews. Focusing on Holland and England, Sutcliffe emphasizes the importance of the philosemitic phenomenon for the articulation of philosophical and especially political doctrines connected with republican theory and contemporary nationalism and patriotism.

Following these introductory overviews a trio of portrait essays focuses on the philosemitism of several individual thinkers: William Whiston in England (1667–1752), the abbé Grégoire in France (1750–1831), and Mór Jókai in Hungary (1825–1904). Adam Shear describes Whiston, a Newtonian theologian and the English translator of Josephus, as a "Judeocentric" Christian who affirmed the legitimacy of Jewish law to primitive Christianity and viewed the restoration of Jews to Palestine, the reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and the full practice of Mosaic law as essential features of the millennium. Grégoire, in Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall's account, is an especially ambiguous case of philosemitism. A leading champion of Jewish emancipation during the French Revolution, he jealously guarded his reputation as a friend of the Jews and indeed was lionized by the Franco-Jewish community itself. However, despite praising certain Jewish mores (such as marital fidelity, parental devotion, and charity), Grégoire disparaged the Jewish religion and represented Jews as a degenerate population in need of moral and physical regeneration. No such debunking exercise is involved in Howard Lupovitch's exposition of the philosemitism of the Magyar novelist Jókai. As Lupovitch sees it, Jókai's attitude to Jews was unusual in two respects. It was the product of a conversion, so to speak – a painful and self-conscious effort to expunge the anti-Jewish attitudes he had absorbed in his youth – and it was characterized by a resistance to viewing Jews as positive symbols and a commitment instead to depicting them as flesh and blood human beings, albeit almost always virtuous ones.

The next three essays take a more broadly analytical approach to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European philosemitism. Nadia Valman explores the rise to prominence in Victorian England of the figure of the beautiful, virtuous, and self-sacrificing Jewess. Through a close and striking reading of two key novels of the 1870s – Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* and George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* – Valman shows how representations of Jewish women in both narratives are indebted to a long-standing Christian evangelical fascination with the Jewess as a figure of exceptional spirituality and significance. The essays by Lars Fischer and Alan T. Levenson engage in an at times contentious conversation with each other on philosemitism in late imperial Germany. Arguing against treatments that accept the philosemitism of German Social Democrats at face value, Fischer makes the point that since in contemporary political

parlance "antisemitism" was a far-ranging rightist program, socialist opposition to it should not necessarily be confused with a defense of Jews. On the contrary, according to Fischer, both antisemites and their opponents concurred on the point that the label "philosemite" was a taint. Levenson, in contrast, rejects this characterization as too extreme (after all, there was even a journal named *Der Philosemit*). While acknowledging philosemitism's many weaknesses (its admixtures of prejudice and overemphasis on assimilation), he regards it as a genuine tendency often reflecting sincerely held beliefs, the existence of which ought to warn us against assuming pervasive anti-Jewish attitudes in imperial German culture.

Although the next trio of chapters shift the locale from Europe to North America, they maintain a significant thematic continuity with the previous essays. Jonathan Karp's contribution focuses on the philosemitism of three major figures in early and mid-twentieth century African American life: the educator Booker T. Washington, who depicted Jews as a model of economic self-help that blacks should emulate; the writer Zora Neale Hurston, who was steeped in the tradition of political Hebraism exemplified by Machiavelli, Toland, and others; and the singer and activist Paul Robeson, whose identification of Jews as a source of both Negro folk music and black spirituality recalls the Renaissance doctrine on the Jewish origins of worldly and sacred knowledge. The transfiguration of these older motifs to suit African American ideologies underscores both the extreme malleability and the enduring continuity of many philosemitic themes. Yet while much philosemitism seems impervious to the actual doings of contemporary Jews, this was certainly not the case in the post–World War II America examined by Julian Levinson. Here the rise of Jewish American writers such as Saul Bellow, Delmore Schwartz, and Alfred Kazin (to name but a few) was greeted by some non-Jewish artists as a source of fresh vitality within American culture, marking a new sensibility that exalted marginality, nonconformity, and victimhood in combination with intellectual intensity and depth. Levinson traces these themes in the writings of non-Jews like the poets Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, and John Berryman, all of whom in one form or another epitomized the artist as symbolically or archetypically a Jew. Philosemitic continuity is still more apparent in Yaakov Ariel's study of the relationship between late twentieth-century Christian millenarianism and the state of Israel. Although Ariel traces the long historical trajectory of evangelical pro-Zionist views, his study focuses mainly on developments among American millenarians from William Blackstone in the late nineteenth century to the present. American evangelical activism for Israel since the 1967 Six Day War, although contradictory and problematic, has produced a degree of religious-based support for Jews that Ariel sees as unprecedented in the history of Jewish-Christian relations.

The final two essays examine the nature of philosemitic popular and mass culture in post–World War II European consciousness. Wulf Kansteiner

treats the delicate topic of self-consciously philosemitic television programming in West Germany from the 1960s to the 1980s. While noting the extreme awkwardness of many of the televisual efforts to present Jews in an exclusively positive light, Kansteiner argues that it was the media's growing awareness of these "faux pas" that ironically helped nudge German public consciousness toward a more normalized view of Jews. Ruth Ellen Gruber adopts a similar approach in surveying the flourishing industry of Jewish kitsch souvenirs and tourist sites in Eastern Europe. These objects include wooden figurines of Hasidic Jews with stereotypical Jewish features and even images baked of marzipan. Gruber argues that despite their grotesque aspect, these statues possess a talismanic aura for many of their purchasers, whose outlook on Jews she judges to be a peculiar combination of sentimentality, fashionableness, bemusement, and devotion. The "Jewish" tourism industry in places like Kazimierz, Poland, has grown enormously in recent years, even where Jews themselves compose only a small percentage of those in attendance. Yet here too Gruber shows that the temptation to ridicule should be resisted: not only are Jews themselves prominent among the promoters and entrepreneurs driving this market, but their material success has often led to a revival of Jewish settlement in locales from which they had been eradicated during the Holocaust. Jews' simultaneous discomfort with and interest in promoting philosemitism thus remain as potent as ever.

The essays in this volume together offer, we hope, a broad and varied range of philosemitic case studies, illuminating both continuities and contrasts in the ways in which this phenomenon has manifested itself in different times and places. They certainly do not constititute a comprehensive overview. The positive attitudes toward Judaism of several prominent thinkers touched upon in this introduction, such as Gottfried Lessing, George Eliot, or Friedrich Nietzsche, might each have been the subject of a chapter of their own.[64] Much more might have been said about the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century roots of the particularly intense American tradition of philosemitism, in relation to both religion and politics.[65] We have also not found room to discuss instances of literary philosemitism in Russia, for example in the work of Maxim Gorky, briefly discussed earlier, or Vladimir Nabokov.[66] Finally, with the important exception of Ruth Ellen Gruber's essay on Jewish "kitsch" philosemitism in contemporary

[64] Most recently on Eliot see Alan T. Levenson, "Writing the Philosemitic Novel: *Daniel Deronda* Revisited," *Prooftexts* 28 (2008): 129–56.

[65] See Eran Shalev, "'A Perfect Republic': The Mosaic Constitution in Revolutionary New England, 1775–1788," *New England Quarterly* 82 (2009): 235–63; Robert K. Whalen, "'Christians Love the Jews!': The Development of Christian Philosemitism, 1790–1860," *Religion and American Culture* 6 (1996): 225–59.

[66] Shalom Goldman, "'Nabokov's Minyan': A Study in Philo-Semitism," *Modern Judaism* 25 (2005): 1–22.

Europe, this volume does not address the philosemitic phenomenon within Western popular culture, from radio and television shows like *The Goldbergs* to the "Jewish" identification of such soccer clubs as England's Tottenham Hotspur and Holland's Ajax.[67] Indeed, a truly exhaustive study of philosemitism in history would necessarily be voluminous, underscoring – if further evidence were needed – that the topic is neither a minor nor a marginal one. This volume's aspiration, though, is to be stimulating and suggestive rather than encyclopedic. If nothing else, we hope that we have assembled a convincing case that philosemitism, far from being a mythical or empty category, does indeed have a deep, complex, and significant history, and one that is worthy of serious scholarly attention.

In the contemporary world the significance of philosemitism shows no sign of abating. Admiring popular histories, such as Thomas Cahill's best-selling *The Gifts of the Jews* (1998) or Steven L. Pease's *The Golden Age of Jewish Achievement* (2009), reach a wide readership.[68] From within academic Jewish history, meanwhile, some recent prominent studies have put forward controversially bold claims for the centrality of Jews in the emergence and development of modernity. Yuri Slezkine, in his analysis of twentieth-century history focused on the experience of Russian Jewry, has declared that, as Jews have been the key entrepreneurial, mobile, and urban minority in European history, "modernization … is about everybody becoming Jewish"; for Yirmiyahu Yovel, meanwhile, the roots of modern subjectivity are to be found in the split identity of the Iberian Marranos.[69] While these rhetorically dispassionate scholarly studies should not be considered in themselves straightforwardly philosemitic, they share with philosemitism a strong emphasis on the positive historical importance of Jews and reflect the recent development of the "Jewish contribution to civilization" tradition of Jewish scholarship from assimilatory apologetics to intellectually ambitious assertiveness.[70] In a very different context, there has in the past decade been a notable rise of philosemitic rhetoric on the European Far Right. From Norway to Romania and from the United Kingdom to Latvia Far Right political parties have been distancing themselves from

[67] See Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization* (New York: Harper, 2010), 77–88.

[68] Thomas Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews: How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels* (New York: Random House, 1998); Steven L. Pease, *The Golden Age of Jewish Achievement: The Compendium of a Culture, a People and Their Stunning Performance* (Sonoma, CA: Deucalion, 2009). In this genre see also Ernest Van den Haag, *The Jewish Mystique* (New York: Stein and Day, 1969); Paul Johnson, *The History of the Jews*, 2nd ed. (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2001).

[69] Slezkine, *Jewish Century*, 1; Yirmiyahu Yovel, *The Other Within: The Marranos: Split Identity and Emerging Modernity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[70] On this tradition, see Jeremy Cohen and Richard I. Cohen, eds., *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization: Reassessing an Idea* (London: Littman, 2008).

their antisemitic pasts and adopting assertively pro-Israeli policies, often also placing Jewish members in positions of prominence and positioning themselves as the strongest advocates for the security of Jews in the face of perceived threats from both Middle Eastern and European Muslims.[71] This development is a striking reminder of the precariousness and the malleability of the relationship between philosemitism and antisemitism, and of the intensely political context in which these terms find their meaning.

The geopolitical sensitivity of the unresolved conflict in the Middle East ensures that the history of relations between Jews and non-Jews will remain for the foreseeable future a charged and controversial subject, inescapably colored by differing perceptions of the interrelationships between such distinct but overlapping categories as Jews, Judaism, Zionism, and Israel. Consequently, this volume, written in a spirit of dispassionate scholarly rigor by leading period specialists, must necessarily engage not only with historical but also with contemporary debates. The fourteen essays that follow offer a diverse and in places conflicting range of perspectives on the phenomenon of philosemitism. Collectively, however, they clearly underscore the inadequacy of interpreting Jewish–non-Jewish relations only through the prism of an all-pervasive antisemitism. The multifaceted and intricate history of laudatory responses to Jews and Judaism is indubitably a real and significant subject. Without a clear-sighted analysis of this philosemitic tradition we are liable to fall into a distorted understanding not only of the past but also of the present.

[71] See Yves Patrick Pallade, "Proisraelismus und Philosemitismus in rechtspopulistischen und rechtsextremen europäischen Parteien der Gegenwart," in Diekmann and Kotowski, eds., *Geliebter Feind*, 409–36.