

AFTERWORD: A PARADIGM

LOOKING BACK MORE THAN a dozen years since the appearance of *Under Crescent and Cross*, I see, better than I did at the time I wrote the book, that I had constructed a paradigm. The paradigm explains, comparatively, why anti-Jewish hatred and violence were so much less severe in Islam than in Christendom and why Jews in the Islamic world were so thoroughly immersed in the culture of the surrounding society, again, compared with their Ashkenazic brethren in northern Europe. This conceptualization results, heuristically, from studying northern Latin Europe, where anti-Jewish feelings and Christian violence were worst, with the lands of Islam in the early and central Middle Ages (from the rise of Islam to approximately the beginning of the thirteenth century), where Jews fared relatively better and were more embedded in the surrounding society. To be sure, recent trends in scholarship since the appearance of the first edition—a latter-day revival of Salo Baron’s famous battle against the “lachrymose conception of Jewish history”—have attempted to soften this contrast. The revisionists stress that Jews in northern Europe (the Ashkenazic Jews) experienced persecution only intermittently and were also more aware of and intimate with the surrounding Latin Christian culture, even to the point of adapting some Christian theological ideas and social mores—what Ivan Marcus calls “inward acculturation.”¹ I contend, nonetheless, that this cultural phenomenon differed fundamentally from the wholehearted adoption of Arabic and Islamic ideas and literary conventions by Jews in the Muslim world.

The paradigm is complex, based on five interrelated variables: religious exclusivity, the nature of legal status, the extent of economic diversification, the degree of social integration, and the presence or absence of pluralism in the surrounding society. The paradigm claims that anti-Jewish violence in medieval Christendom was related, in the first instance, to the primacy of religious exclusivity. Historically, religious exclusivity characterized both Islam and Christianity. But anti-Jewish violence was more pronounced in Christendom because innate religious antagonism was combined with

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other corrosive forces. The second factor lay in legal status, which in Europe took the form of the evolution of a special law for the Jews and a system of baronial or monarchical possessory rights—though varied in character and uneven in its application in different times and places²—that could be manipulated in an arbitrary manner. The third stemmed from economic circumstances that, in western Europe, for reasons explained in the book, excluded the Jews from the most respected walks of life.

In Christian lands, religious exclusivity, a special, arbitrary legal status, and economic marginalization combined with two other related, adverse factors—social exclusion and the decline of pluralism—to rob the Jews of a place in the hierarchical social order. The gradual replacement of the ethnic pluralism of Germanic society of the early Middle Ages by a medieval type of “nationalism,” paralleling the spread of Catholic religious exclusivity to the masses, also contributed to the enhancement of the Jews’ “otherness” and to their eventual exclusion from western Christendom. This exclusion was accomplished by violence, in the form of economic restrictions, attacks on Jewish books, forced conversion—the last two being major infringements of Jewish religious freedom—by murder, or, most successfully, by expulsion. All of this was accompanied by irrational antisemitism.

The paradigm when applied to the Islamic world explains, more thoroughly than does simplistic deference to the religious tolerance of the People of the Book, why Jews in the realm of Islam lived more securely than in Christendom. In the domain of Islam, a lower level of anti-Jewish violence and the absence of irrational antisemitism correlated with modified religious intolerance as well as a less arbitrary legal status under the protection of religious law, the absence of monarchic possessory rights, widespread Jewish economic differentiation and integration, greater social inclusiveness, and a pervasive ethnic and religious pluralism.

To sharpen the argument I am making, if the paradigm developed in *Under Crescent and Cross* is truly to stand up to scrutiny, Christendom itself should show lower levels of anti-Jewish violence and antisemitism where some or all of the factors discussed above in connection with northern Latin Europe were altered—where they bore greater similarity to the legal, economic, and social circumstances of the Jew in medieval Islamic society. Below, I offer, briefly, some suggestive observations along these lines. In the first two sections, I draw together conclusions scattered in the body of the book. But here I offer a conceptualization—the significance of the paradigm—that was only latent in the book because it was only latent in my mind.

It should be said at the outset that the discussion that follows is meant to stimulate further thinking by specialists in the various regions of Christendom and in the Islamic world. Like any paradigm, mine necessarily obscures some of the hues and nuances that a more thorough study would uncover.

But also like any paradigm, its usefulness lies precisely in its laying out certain common fundamentals of cause and effect that help explain the major trends in Jewish-Gentile relations in the different regions and periods. It is for the specialist to determine how adequately the paradigmatic variables isolated here explain the phenomena described in this book as well as in his or her own field of specialization.

NORTHERN EUROPE IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

As the paradigm predicts, Jews in northern Europe in the *early* Middle Ages experienced relatively little anti-Jewish violence. Although identified largely with international trade, Jews displayed a certain amount of economic differentiation, in crafts and even in agriculture. The legal status accorded the Jews strongly emphasized monarchical protection, rather than, as was to develop later on, monarchical possession. Royal jurisdiction over the Jews manifested not arbitrariness, but consistent favoritism—directly related to the utility Jewish long-distance merchants offered to secular princes and their courts. Furthermore, law in the ethnically pluralistic Germanic society of the early Middle Ages was based on the principle of personality rather than territoriality. Jews represented just another ethnic group with its own “tribal” laws. They were also socially more included in northern Europe in the early Middle Ages than they were later on. Indeed, adumbrating Church objections to such favorable Jewish status that would help erode it later on, Agobard, the bishop of Lyons, railed against the liberties of social intercourse encouraged by the privileges granted Jewish merchants by the Carolingian rulers in the ninth century.

Religious exclusivity was not yet established in northern Europe during the early Middle Ages. Much of society still clung to its pre-Christian, Germanic (pagan) religious ways. Massacres of the Jews and other types of persecution reared their ugly heads only in the eleventh century, and especially beginning with the First Crusade. As the paradigm suggests, this shift of attitude and treatment of the Jews corresponded with several important changes: the penetration of Christian exclusivity to the lower classes; the rise of Christian commerce, forcing Jews out of the commercial marketplace and into despised moneylending; the growth of constraining possessory rights; and the decline of ethnic pluralism.

The absence of monarchic possessory rights correlates with another important factor that was not fully articulated in the first edition of this book, namely, a characteristic feature of “royal” politics that set European monarchy off from its Muslim counterpart. The contrast is suggested by an article by the historian William Jordan published shortly after the appearance of the first edition of *Under Crescent and Cross*. Jordan presents an argument, drawing on psychological assumptions, that seems quite novel. He claims

that in the Christian world—the case at hand being Capetian France—kings often expressed their “princely identity” at the expense of the Jews.³ King Philip Augustus attacked the Jews in 1179–80, the year of his accession to the throne, and then expelled them in 1182, repudiating his father’s notorious leniency as regarded Jewish status and expressing his own power. Later, in 1219, he issued a “*constitutio*” regulating relations between Jews and Christians at a time when the papacy was employing its own imperious terminology to claim jurisdiction over Jewish affairs. Other Capetian monarchs in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries similarly used harsh anti-Jewish policy to assert their power and identity as supreme rulers, the example of Philip IV the Fair’s expulsion order of 1306, enforcing his sovereignty over vassals of the crown who were forced to obey his order, being emblematic. Demonstration of Christian piety was a motivation of Capetian rulers in this regard. This was true of Louis IX and later of Philip IV’s son Louis X, who readmitted the Jews in 1314, in what Jordan sees as a rebuff to his father’s expulsion decree and in an effort to assert his own princely identity—so that the political phenomenon could also (though rarely and arbitrarily) work in favor of the Jews.

In revealing contrast, “royalty” in Islam (the caliph) seldom used *dhimmī* policy in the same way, to demonstrate its power or, in Jordan’s words, its princely identity. When caliphs “cracked down” on non-Muslim subjects, it was usually because clerics (*ulamā*) complained about *dhimmīs*’ flaunting of the Pact of ‘Umar with the tacit approval of the caliph or sultan; or because heterodox rulers before them had tended toward leniency in regard to the *dhimmīs*; or because external factors—Islam’s being under attack from the Crusaders or the Mongols, for instance—triggered the oppression. Furthermore, unlike in Europe, absent the hue and cry of the religious establishment about Jewish usury, Muslim royalty did not care very much about Jewish moneylending. Jews were not forced into moneylending as they were in parts of Europe—credit was vital and appreciated in the monetary commercial economy of medieval Islam—nor was moneylending considered a venal profession, as in Christianity. Furthermore, caliphs and sultans did not depend on Jewish income from moneylending as a regular source of funds for the royal treasury, again differing from European monarchs. Of great importance, too—a fact that was emphasized in the original edition of this book and which applies not just to France—unlike Christian kings and the Holy Roman Emperor in the Germanic lands, the caliph did not have the status of a power separated from the “church” and often arrayed against it, to the detriment of the Jews caught in between. This happened, for instance, when the papacy exerted its own “ownership” of the Jews, under the cover of the old church doctrine of the “perpetual servitude of the Jews” and in competition with secular rulers, who asserted that the Jews were “serfs of the royal chamber.”

SOUTHERN FRANCE AND ITALY

Turning our attention now (as I did in the book) to southern France—the Midi—the paradigm again proves its heuristic value. Mediterranean Latin Christendom, most agree, offered a more hospitable environment to Jews than the northern reaches of Europe. There is no hard evidence for persecution of the Jews in the south of France during the First Crusade, and Gavin Langmuir has pointed to the absence of the antisemitic ritual murder libel in southern France, particularly Languedoc. In general, Jewish communities of the South lived in a more placid, integrated fashion in their surroundings than their northern European brethren. They were less segregated from Christians, and their economic activities varied, from moneylending to small- and large-scale trade, including long-distance commerce. Jews also worked as toll gatherers, in association with Christians, and in land-transfer brokerage. In Languedoc, Jews also engaged in many other occupations, such as agriculture (either as landowners or as tenant farmers), artisanship, commerce (butchery, cereals), peddling, brokerage, medicine, and public offices. And they owned immovable property, whether in the form of agricultural land, houses, or artisan or commercial establishments. Though moneylending was the dominant Jewish profession, it seems to have had less dire consequences for Christian-Jewish relations in the Midi than in the North.

If heterogeneity in Jewish economic life was a crucial agent tempering anti-Jewish feeling, so were other features peculiar to southern Europe, and here Italy may also be included. In southern Europe, the continuity with the Roman past and the sharper memory of Roman legal traditions as well as the perseverance of Roman legal procedures contributed to the relative security of the Jews as compared with their status in the northern communities, where Roman law was virtually forgotten in the early Middle Ages. Similarly, the antiquity of Jewish settlement in the South—bordering on indigenous habitation and resembling the native status of Jewry in Arab lands—contributed to a more tolerant atmosphere.

To this should be added the general attitude toward urban life. In the North, urban autonomy, revived after centuries of decay, ran counter to feudal preferences. In the Mediterranean lands, by way of contrast, urban society of the Roman era never quite died out. Moreover, unlike its counterpart in northern countries, the nobility in southern Europe was not cut off from city life. Continuity of urban life, absence of rigid social boundaries between city and countryside, and an aristocracy receptive to town habits correlate with a greater openness toward the urbanized Jew in the South. As in the Islamic world, urbanism fit more organically into the social order of Mediterranean Christendom than in the North, where the town repre-

mented a considerable disruption in the traditional pattern of social life and organization.

Rooted in the South since Roman antiquity, Jews comprised a more organic part of the urban landscape, as they did in the Islamic world. In the cities of Languedoc during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, for example, as in the Islamic world, residential segregation was minimal. Such freedom of habitation existed as well in the northern Italian city-states, where Jews were invited to settle in the later Middle Ages, mainly to provide badly needed credit to the merchant class as well as to the poor. This social integration ended there when social pressures, combined with Catholic clerical discomfort with the Jewish presence in the age of the Counter-Reformation, led to the establishment of the first compulsory ghettos. Jewish communities in the Midi, and until the Counter-Reformation, the Jews of Italy, reaped more of the benefits and experienced fewer of the liabilities of corporate status and its potential for collective punishment than did the Jewish communities of England and royal France. We may also point to the absence of regional political unification in the South, which, as it developed elsewhere, was accompanied by intensified degradation of the Jew-as-alien. As the paradigm predicts, all these contrasts with the situation of the Jews in northern Europe served to temper anti-Jewish violence in the South. It was only after the conquest of southern France by the French monarchy that some of the anti-Jewish oppression characteristic of northern European Christendom began to appear in these annexed lands.

RECONQUISTA SPAIN

The omission of medieval Christian Spain from the book may seem strange, especially since the history of the Jews in Spain dominates discussions of the cultural and political achievements of Arabic-speaking Jewry in the Middle Ages. Spain lies, furthermore, at the center of the “myth of the interfaith utopia” discussed in Chapter 1, which becomes transposed as the so-called *convivencia* of the Catholic Iberian Restoration. But this omission does not mean that Spanish Christendom belies the paradigm. Quite the contrary. Particularly during the period of the Reconquista, a time when conditions for the Jews were deteriorating in the northern European heartland, Jewish-Christian relations in Spain were relatively tolerable. In accordance with the paradigm, Jews displayed considerable economic differentiation. Yitzhak Baer’s gleanings from Spanish archival documents in *Die Juden im christlichen Spanien*,⁴ a book that underlies his still fundamental *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*,⁵ confirm that Jews held a wide variety of occupations, in commerce, agriculture, handicrafts, medicine, as well as in service to the Spanish courts. The legal status of the Jews, though similar in principle to the “Jewish serfdom” in France, Germany, and England, was less inju-

rious in practice, at least during the early period of the Reconquista. While this improved juridical situation certainly owed something to the example of the less-oppressive *dhimma* system in the regions of Andalusia annexed by the Catholic conquerors, it also had something to do with the utility Jews provided the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile in the administration and taxation of the conquered and repopulated Muslim territories. In many of the *fueros*, the town charters specifying immunities or exemptions granted by the king or lord, Jews were accorded a large measure of equality with Christians and Muslims, especially during the early period of the Reconquista. Christian Spain, too, exhibited pluralism in the mixture of Catholics, Jews, and Muslims that composed its society and influenced its culture, appropriately labeled the culture of “*convivencia*.”

Things began to deteriorate, first, with the conclusion of the early phase of the Reconquista, as Baer argues, then with fiscal and political pressures developing as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries wore on. Finally, beginning with the pogroms of 1391, Jews in Christian Spain began to weather anti-Jewish violence akin to that experienced by their brethren in northern Latin lands. Mass conversions to Catholicism produced the well-known Marrano problem. Former Jews and their descendants now entered precincts of Catholic power previously closed to them, including the Church, causing anxiety in the burgher and ruling classes.⁶

Among the many recent studies seeking to reevaluate the experience of the Jews of medieval Christian Iberia, David Nirenberg’s work can be adduced to shed light on the paradigm latent in *Under Crescent and Cross*. He situates the increased antipathy toward professing Jews and *conversos* in the early years following the pogroms of 1391 not in the continuity of age-old, religiously based antisemitism, but in a new crisis of Christian identity. This resulted from the disruption of the essential binary opposition of Jew-Christian, brought on by the mass conversions and the insinuation of former Jews into Catholic society. This anxiety led to a drive to segregate “new Christians”—sexually and in their habitation—from confessing Jews.⁷

Applied to the Muslim case, Nirenberg’s thesis supports and is reciprocally supported by the comparative paradigm developed here. It suggests that the weakening of an existing pluralism—in this case resulting from the decline in the number of professing Jews—could negatively impact Jewish-Gentile relations. In most parts of the Islamic world (Morocco is an exception, as discussed below), such a break with pluralism did not occur, even in the later Middle Ages. Further, the relative absence in the Muslim world of the essentiality of a binary opposition of Jew-Muslim to shore up the identity of the ruling religion—as argued by Nirenberg for the Spanish case—tempered Muslim-Jewish friction.

Nirenberg’s thesis also explains, negatively, how lack of anxiety about Jewish converts entering Muslim society and Muslim government during

and after the Almohad persecutions in Andalusia guaranteed these neophytes relative security.⁸ After the Almohad persecutions ended, under the succeeding regime of the Marinides (mid-thirteenth to end of the fifteenth century), professing Jews again returned to occupying important positions in Muslim courts.⁹ Finally, the relatively little concern, at least in the dominant Sunni branch of Islam, over Jewish pollution of Muslims through sexual contact (Muslim men could legally marry Jewish women, for instance) lessened the need for physical segregation. This also helps explain how a certain amount of sociability between Jews and Muslims could be sustained during most of the Islamic period, when Jews, despite their lowly rank in society, did not experience the progressive and systematic expulsions that afflicted their brethren living in Christian lands.

It needs to be remembered, too, that the “purity of blood” laws that emerged in the 1440s in Christian Iberia, invoking racial criteria for distinguishing old Christians from Christians who were originally Jews—a distant mirror of modern racial antisemitism—find no parallel in the Muslim world in the Middle Ages. At the end of the fifteenth century, antisemitism of this type in Spain led to the establishment of the fierce Spanish Inquisition, which, though charged with prosecuting Catholic heresy in the form of *converso* Judaizing, undermined the security of unconverted Jews as well. Capping off the paradigm, this religious exclusivity, accompanying the national unification of Aragon and Castile under the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, quashed whatever remained of Spanish pluralism once and for all, culminating in the dual expulsion in 1492 of the two main groups of infidel “others”—professing Jews and professing Muslims.

BYZANTIUM

Like the Jews in Mediterranean France, on the one hand, and in Christian Spain during the Reconquista, on the other, Jews in the Byzantine domains (which for several centuries following Justinian’s successful imperial expansion in the mid-sixth century included southern Italy and Sicily) experienced less violence in the Middle Ages than in the Latin West, especially during the period before the Fourth Crusade in 1204.¹⁰ And, not surprisingly, the Jews’ economic, legal, and social positions conformed to characteristics expected according to the paradigm.

Byzantium was the locus of early Christian-Roman Jewry law, in the Theodosian and Justinianic codes. Despite the theological disparagement of Judaism and attendant social animosity that crept in, these corpora clung tenaciously to the tolerationist features inherited from pagan Roman legislation. This benefited the Jews even more than in northern Europe, for Roman law had a continuous life in the late-antique Eastern Empire and its

medieval Byzantine successor.¹¹ Moreover, the Latin Christian model of “Jewish serfdom,” with its monarchical rights over the Jews and attendant arbitrariness, did not make significant inroads into the eastern Roman Empire. In addition, the evidence portrays a Jewish population with a differentiated economic profile, even in the later period.¹²

Ethnic and religious pluralism characterized the Byzantine Empire, in some places until its very end in the fifteenth century. Armenians, Catholic and Greek Orthodox Christians, Jews (both Rabbanite and Karaite), and in some parts of the empire also Muslims (e.g., Sicily and Anatolia) occupied the same social space in the Byzantine domains, and this diffused the natural hostility towards the “other,” to the advantage of the Jews.

As in southern France, urban centers were never eradicated in the Byzantine Mediterranean. They presented relatively comfortable places for Jews to inhabit, and for the same reasons. Moreover, Jews had lived in Byzantium from pre-Christian Roman times and constituted a more indigenous and embedded element in society than the tiny, alien, immigrant communities from both shores of the Mediterranean that forged the virgin Jewish settlements in northern Europe during the early Middle Ages.

MEDIEVAL POLAND

Medieval Poland also exhibits the applicability of the paradigm. In the thirteenth century, Polish kings invited German townsmen from the West to settle in their land in order to revive urban and commercial life there. Favorable legal conditions were offered to Christians in the form of the liberal law code of the city of Magdeburg and to Jews in the form of protective royal charters. The least restrictive version of the German charters for Jews was chosen as the model, and the language of “Jewish serfdom” was omitted, as Polish kings sidestepped the harsh policies against the Jews then insinuating themselves in the West under the pressure of the above-mentioned papal doctrine of “perpetual servitude of the Jews.”¹³ In Poland, Jews found expansive economic opportunities during the period of initial settlement that liberated them from exclusive reliance on moneylending and its untoward consequences in Christian animosity. Economic diversification, reaching a high degree with the stepped-up immigration of western Jews in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to the adjacent and gradually merging kingdom of Poland and duchy of Lithuania (formally united in 1569), made the Jews seem less “other” and further helped attenuate anti-Jewish violence.¹⁴ The Polish Commonwealth, especially in its geographically expanded form, represented a large, multiethnic kingdom of Lithuanians, Poles, Armenians, Ukrainians (Orthodox Christians in distinction to the Catholic Poles), Tatars, and Jews. Pluralism, as the paradigm asserts, constituted an advantage for the Jews, as it did elsewhere in the Middle Ages.¹⁵

THE PARADIGM APPLIED TO LATE MEDIEVAL ISLAM

The paradigm proves its usefulness not only when applied to “other Christendoms,” but also in regard to Islam in the late Middle Ages. In this period, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, and in some places beginning as early as the twelfth, forces that had moderated Islamic intolerance in the earlier period weakened, and Jews experienced greater oppression. In Morocco, Jews emerged from the catastrophe of the twelfth-century Almohad persecutions as the *only* non-Muslim religious minority group (Christian converts to Islam did not revert to their former religion). Thus, in Morocco at least, the pluralism of the earlier period, when Jews, Christians, and Muslims occupied the same physical space and anti-*dhimmī* hostility was diffused among the two non-Muslim groups, ended. It is not surprising that the first “ghetto” in the Islamic world—a restricted area called the *mellah*, to which Jewish habitation was officially limited—appeared in Fez in the first half of the fifteenth century.

Economically, a general decline afflicted most of the Islamic world in these centuries, and this, too, had an adverse effect on Jewish well-being. With the growth of an Islamic form of “feudalism,” better, statism, in the Mamluk empire of Egypt and Syria-Palestine (1250–1517), tighter economic controls meant diminished economic freedom for the merchant and artisan classes, in general, and, as a minority group, the Jews necessarily fared worse than their Muslim neighbors. Intergroup tensions also intensified.

The principal factors eroding the security of the Jews in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries affected the Christians as well, indeed even more seriously. Political developments were decisive here. The invasion and occupation of the Levant by the Crusaders beginning at the end of the eleventh century and of Muslim Spain by Reconquista Crusaders in the West, as well as the Mongol conquests in the thirteenth century in the eastern Islamic world, threatened Islam from without. Non-Muslims living in the “Domain of Islam” were suspected of collusion with the enemy, or at least of tacit support, and this raised Muslim anxieties, with ensuing harsh treatment.

It should be noted that fear of non-Muslim treachery had some rational basis. Many Oriental Christians favored, or could be rationally suspected of favoring, the Christian Crusaders—even though the Europeans considered them to be heretics from Roman Catholicism—while both Jews and Christians logically might have supported the Mongols, who, as pagans, at first lightened the discriminatory burdens of the non-Muslims and elevated some to high posts in their court.¹⁶ (This ended when the Mongols converted to Islam after settling down in Islamic territory.) In the Latin West, applying the paradigm in reverse, Jews were *irrationally* suspected of treachery despite the fact that they were powerless in their dispersion and lacked loyalty to an external enemy state, though, as Jeremy Cohen has argued,

there was a tendency in Christian thought in the West, increasingly from the twelfth century on, to consider Jewish infidels a threat to Christendom in “alliance” with Muslim infidels.¹⁷ The Jews in northern Europe became *imagined* enemies of Christendom, allies of the devil, and inveterate, recidivist Christ-killers, allegedly murdering Christian children and also desecrating the host, poisoning wells, and wreaking other atrocities against Christians and Christianity. These were the hallmarks of Christian antisemitism.

Pursuing the paradigm further, the Islamic world experienced a political and economic upswing in the sixteenth century, following the Ottoman conquests in the Levant, Egypt, and North Africa. This conveniently occurred just about the time of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain (in 1492), and those Jews benefited from the great expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century. Many thousands of the Iberian exiles resettled in the Arab and Turkish lands of the Muslim world, where they were welcomed by the Ottoman rulers because of their commercial skills and international contacts and because of their ingrained enmity toward the Ottomans’ own foreign Christian foes in the Catholic Habsburg Empire, which then included Spain. They thus contributed significantly to the renewed florescence of a monetary, commercial economy on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. This buoyed up a hitherto languishing Jewish economy.

Even though certain factors changed in the late Islamic Middle Ages—and the paradigm helps explain how this impacted adversely on Jewish life—things did not reach the low point they did in northern Christendom or in Christian Iberia. Pluralism, which never completely died out in the Islamic world the way it did in Latin and Spanish Christendom, assured a certain amount of protection to the Jews in the Ottoman period and even later, especially in places where Christians and Jews continued to coexist. The most characteristic causes of Christian anti-Jewish violence in the West, as described in this book, did not occur in the Islamic world, even in this later period. Nor did irrational antisemitism emerge. The Ottoman cases of ritual murder accusation, a handful in the early modern period and a proliferation in the period of Ottoman stagnation in the nineteenth century, were almost without exception incited by Christians, and the Ottoman government steadfastly rejected them.¹⁸ Jews did not come to be identified with the devil, nor with heresy, for neither the devil nor heresy had the same salience in Islam as in Christianity. Conversions to Islam, especially by Christians, increased in the late Middle Ages, and often the neophytes were suspected of opportunism, although the claim that there was a kind of Muslim “inquisition” is highly doubtful.¹⁹ But professing Christians and Jews continued to hold positions of power in Muslim governments, even during the period of decline, and despite the vigorous complaints of Muslim clerics.

The humiliating provisions of the Pact of ‘Umar intensified in application as the well-being of the Muslim masses in general declined in the late Middle Ages. But pressures here and there to cancel the protection granted non-Muslims by the *dhimma* system to the contrary notwithstanding, the Pact of ‘Umar stood fast within the Islamic *shari‘a* to safeguard Jews from the kinds of violent antisemitic excesses that struck them in Christian lands. Mass murder did not plague the minority communities in Islam as it did the Jews in Latin Europe. Occasional zeal to destroy non-Muslim houses of worship was often held in check by the application of due process of Islamic law.²⁰ Even in the later Middle Ages, with little exception (one temporary episode in Yemen in the seventeenth century), Islamic rulers did not employ the strategy of expulsion to rid themselves of Jews and other religious minorities.

Life was more difficult and more oppressive for Jews and Christians in the later Islamic Middle Ages, to be sure, and the paradigm helps explain why. But Jews continued to hold their place in the social order of Islamic society. It was a lowly rank, a marginal position, to be sure, and it was accompanied by considerable humiliation. But it was nonetheless a recognized rank. Unlike Christendom, which solved its Jewish problem in the later Middle Ages by antisemitic excesses of murder, forced conversion, or expulsion, none of these violent “solutions” to the “Jewish problem” were employed in the Islamic world. Islam continued to accept the Jews as an embedded and organic element of society even as the general climate of well-being and security of the earlier period waned. Abraham Marcus’s case study of Aleppo in the eighteenth century shows how these continuities worked to uphold the Jewish (and Christian) place within Islamic society right down to the eve of modernity in the Middle East.²¹ The feelings of embeddedness in the surrounding society expressed by many Jews from Muslim lands as late as the twentieth century ended, for all intents and purposes, with anti-Jewish hatred accompanying the rise of Zionism, the odious influence of Nazi fascism, and Arab/Muslim objections to the establishment of the State of Israel.

ISLAMIC/ARAB ANTISEMITISM TODAY

It is only when competing nationalisms in the nineteenth and, especially, twentieth centuries entered the scene; when colonialism disrupted the equilibrium of Muslim societies; and when extremist Islamic movements emerged in response to the birth pangs of modernization imposed by Europeans, that feelings of enmity toward the Jews became so inflamed that we can apply the term *antisemitism* to the Islamic world. Understood as a religiously based complex of irrational, mythical, and stereotypical beliefs about the diabolical, malevolent, and all-powerful Jew, infused in its modern, secu-

lar form with racism and a belief in a Jewish conspiracy against mankind, antisemitism is not an indigenous or inherent phenomenon in Islam.²² First encountered by Muslims with the Ottoman expansion into Europe,²³ this Christian antisemitism became firmly implanted in the Muslim Middle East in the nineteenth century, thanks mainly to European missionaries. In the mid-twentieth century, this antisemitism was given a new boost thanks to Nazi propaganda in the Middle East, seeking to win friends as part of its strategy of world conquest and the destruction of the Jews,²⁴ and ultimately by Arab objections to the establishment of the State of Israel.

Muslim antisemitism has also provoked a reverse phenomenon, an Israeli and diaspora-Jewish prejudice that looks down upon Arabs in invidious, stereotypical, and even irrational ways. This is accompanied by amnesia on the part of many Jews from Arab countries, who no longer remember the era of coexistence in the Middle Ages and the friendships with Muslims that many Arab Jews enjoyed in the “old country.” They recall, in a new “collective memory,” instances of persecution of their ancestors in Arab lands in the Middle Ages and more recent times, but they no longer remember the substantial exemption from Muslim violence that the Jews of the Islamic world enjoyed in most places until the events of the twentieth century. And they have forgotten that until the twentieth century, in some cases right up until the 1940s, many in the Arabic-speaking Jewish middle class were deeply embedded in Arab society and culture, much like their ancestors in the medieval world, who wholeheartedly embraced Arabic and the Islamic culture of philosophy, science, medicine, scriptural study, and poetry in what was, if not an interfaith utopia, an era of coexistence that can stand as a distant mirror of what might yet be possible in our own time.²⁵

One can only hope that once a just political settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is achieved; once Arabs and Jews each have their own state, living side by side peacefully, that Jews and Muslims will have reason to remember those times in the past when they lived together with relatively little violence between them, when Judaism had a profound influence on early Islam, and when, in reverse, Islam and Arabic culture exercised a profound influence on Judaism and Jews.²⁶

NOTES

1. Ivan G. Marcus, “A Jewish-Christian Symbiosis—The Culture of Early Ashkenaz,” in *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, ed. David Biale (New York, 2002), 449–516. Other studies in the “neo-antilachrymose school,” if I may coin a term, include Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman (Berkeley, 2006) from the Hebrew original of 2000; Johannes Heil, “‘Deep Enmity’ and/or ‘Close Ties’? Jews and Christians before 1096: Sources, Hermeneutics, and

Writing History in 1996,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 9 (2002), 259–306; Elisheva Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe* (Princeton, N.J., 2004); and Jonathan Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart: Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J., 2007).

2. A good statement of the variations in the status commonly called “Jewish serfdom” can be found in Simha Goldin, *Ha-yihud ve-ha-Yahad* [Uniqueness and Togetherness: The Enigma of the Survival of the Jews in the Middle Ages] (Tel Aviv, 1997), 14–30.

3. William Chester Jordan, “Princely Identity and the Jews in Medieval France,” in *From Witness to Witchcraft*, ed. Jeremy Cohen (Wiesbaden, 1996), 256–73.

4. *Erster Teil: Urkunden und Regesten*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1929–1936; reprinted Westmead, 1970).

5. Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1961).

6. Baer’s thesis, generally accepted in the grand narrative of medieval Spanish-Jewish history, has been challenged recently in an “antilachrymose” vein by Mark D. Meyerson, *A Jewish Renaissance in Fifteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, N.J., 2004). Meyerson’s fine study, based on one community in the Kingdom of Aragon that belies the grand narrative of steady deterioration in the fifteenth century, does not substantially change the overall picture of a deteriorating situation in the later years of the Reconquista and especially after the watershed pogroms of 1391. A more sober analysis of the fate of Jewry in Christian Spain, seeking a nuanced understanding of both the positive and negative sides of the Spanish *convivencia*, is argued, with reference to northern Castile in the period before 1391, by Maya Soifer in “The Jews of the ‘Milky Way’: Jewish-Christian Relations and Royal Power in Northern Castile-Leon (c. 1050–1371)” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2007).

7. David Nirenberg, “Enmity and Assimilation: Jews, Christians, and Converts in Medieval Spain,” *Common Knowledge* 9 (2003), 137–55.

8. Anxiety about insincere and opportunistic Oriental Christian converts to Islam who continued to serve in Muslim bureaucracy, a well-known phenomenon from a later period, in Mamluk Egypt, does not seem to have affected Jewish neophytes in Muslim Spain and North Africa the same way.

9. On Jews serving in positions of power in Marinide Morocco, see David Corcos, “The Jews of Morocco under the Marinides,” reprinted in his *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco* (Jerusalem, 1976), 33–34, 45–57.

10. On the earlier period, during which Jews of the Byzantine Empire experienced only four episodes of outright state persecution, see Joshua Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire, 641–1204* (Athens, 1939) and Andrew Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade* (New York, 1971); and on the later period, Steven Bowman, *The Jews of Byzantium, 1204–1453* (University, Ala., 1985).

11. Bowman, *Jews of Byzantium*, 98–99.

12. *Ibid.*, 117–21.

13. Bernard Dov Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland: A Social and Economic History of the Jewish Community in Poland from 1100 to 1800* (Philadelphia, 1973), 35–50.

14. Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2d ed., vol. 16 (Philadelphia, 1976), chap. 70: “Socioeconomic Re-stratification.”

15. Gershon Hundert, "An Advantage to Peculiarity? The Case of the Polish Commonwealth," *AJS Review* 6 (1981), 21–38.

16. On Jews in the Mongol court, see Walter Fischel, *Jews in the Economic and Political Life of Mediaeval Islam* (London, 1937; reprinted New York, 1969), chapter C, and on suspicions of non-Muslim collusion with the Mongols, see Moshe Perlman, "Notes on Anti-Christian Propaganda in the Mamlūk Empire," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10 (1940–1942), 850.

17. The idea of the Jews as allies of the Muslims (explaining antisemitism as merely anti-Muslimism, not as irrational Christian hatred of the Jews per se) was first suggested by Allen and Helen Cutler, *The Jew as Ally of the Muslim: Medieval Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Notre Dame, 1986). This thesis has been put on firmer footing with greater nuance and better evidence, and without claiming exclusivity for this factor, by Jeremy Cohen, "The Muslim Connection, or On the Changing Role of the Jew in High Medieval Theology" in *From Witness to Witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian Thought*, ed. Jeremy Cohen (Wiesbaden, 1996), 141–62.

18. Uriel Heyd, "Ritual Murder Accusations in 15th- and 16th-Century Turkey" (Hebrew), *Sefunot* 5 (1961), 135–50; Jacob Landau, "Ritual Murder Accusations and Persecutions of Jews in 19th-Century Egypt" (Hebrew), *ibid.*, 417–60; Jacob Barnai, "'Blood Libels' in the Ottoman Empire of the Fifteenth to Nineteenth Centuries," in *Antisemitism Through the Ages*, ed. Shmuel Almog, trans. Nathan H. Reisner (Oxford, 1988), 189–94.

19. E. Strauss (Ashtor), "L'inquisition dans l'état mamlouk," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 25 (1950), 11–26. On Coptic conversion in the Mamluk period, see most recently Tamer El-Leithy, "Coptic Culture and Conversion in Medieval Cairo, 1293–1524 A.D." (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2005).

20. Mark R. Cohen, "Jews in the Mamlūk Environment: The Crisis of 1442 (A Geniza Study)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 47 (1984), 425–48.

21. Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1989).

22. For a recent, trenchant discussion of contemporary Islamic antisemitism in context, see the thematic issue on antisemitism in the Muslim world guest edited by Gudrun Kraemer in *Die Welt des Islams* 46 (2006), especially Kraemer's introductory essay, "Anti-Semitism in the Muslim World: A Critical Review," and Michael Kiefer's "Islamischer, Islamistischer oder Islamisierter Antisemitismus."

23. Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites: An Inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice*, 2d ed. with a new foreword (New York, 1999), 132.

24. This aspect has been thoroughly studied in a 2002 German book by Matthias Küntzel, now translated into English as *Jihad and Jew-Hatred: Islamism, Nazism and the Roots of 9/11*, trans. Colin Meade (New York, 2007).

25. An excellent collection of articles on the problem of the new antisemitism and reciprocal attitudes of Jews toward Muslims is *Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism*, ed. Hillel Schenker and Ziad Abu Zayyad (published in cooperation with the *Palestine-Israel Journal*, Princeton, N.J., 2006).

26. A ray of light in this dark time of mutual hatred is the nostalgic memoir literature by Jews from Arab lands living in Israel and in other countries that has ap-

peared in recent years. This nostalgia is also expressed dramatically in the interviews with Iraqi Jewish–Israeli writers, immigrants to Israel, featured in the documentary *Forget Baghdad* by the Iraqi Muslim filmmaker from Zurich, Samir. Noteworthy among the literature of nostalgia are the recent memoirs of the Iraqi-born Israeli scholar of modern Arabic literature Sasson Somekh, published in Hebrew (2004) and recently in English as *Baghdad, Yesterday: The Making of an Arab Jew* (Jerusalem, 2007).