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Jews and Urban Life: Bonds and Relationships

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Two Vignettes from Different Periods and Areas

In July 1441—one year after the violent overthrow of the existing Signore and the resulting plundering of Spoleto—the aged Jew Elias, son of Angelellus¹ (evidently from Rome), and his sons² presented a request written in Latin to the *priori* of Spoleto. They first reminded the Council that Elias had lived honourably (*honeste*) with his family in Spoleto for a long period—documented since the turn of the fifteenth century—and had been treated kindly by all citizens (*a cunctis civibus benigne pertractatus*). During the plundering of Spoleto, Elias had been robbed of his letter of safe conduct (*condotta*) contracted with the city.³ He had also lost all his other property and had fallen into deep poverty (*maxima paupertate constitutus*) ‘in his pitiable old age’. Elias’s sons and grandchildren—primarily his son Angelellus, who had moved to Trevi in the meantime—begged, in agreement with Elias, to be able to return to Spoleto, to their ‘own home city, where they were born and had grown up’ (*ad dictam civitatem ipsorum propriam patriam, in qua nati sunt et adulti extiterunt*). They wished to live permanently in their home city and operate their money and

¹ On Elias and his family, see Toaff, ed., *Jews in Umbria*, i (1993), nos 258 (1376), 611 (1399), 666 (1406), 722 (1416), 725 (1416), 730 (1416), similarly, nos 735 (1416), 783 (1425), 798 (1427) and 826 (1431); vol. ii (1994), nos 996 (1441) and 1125 (1449).

² Among these was evidently Deodato, son of Elia, banker in Spoleto: *ibid.*, vol. i (1993), no. 809 (1429); cf. no. 828 (1431), vol. ii (1994), no. 1014 (1442), along with Deodato we read the name Isacco, son of Lazzaro (the latter also in no. 1032 from 1443, where a Jewish physician Matassia, also a moneylender, is named).

³ The *condotta* is properly defined here: *capitula et pacta prestandi et banchum prestandi et retinendi*: Toaff, ed., *Jews in Umbria*, ii (1994), no. 995 (1441).



Map 1: Jewish settlements in late medieval Umbria (after Toaff, *Il vino e la carne*).

banking business⁴ ‘with the good will and the love of all the citizens of Spoleto’ (*cum benevolentia et amore omnium civium Spoletanorum*).⁵ The Great Council recommended that this wish be approved by the new governor (*gubernator*) and the *priori* of the city. Incidentally, one of the long-term council members was a baptized Jew, son of a Jewish physician in Spoleto.⁶

This story preserved in notarial documents is only one of many confirmations of the emotional bonds of Jews with their respective home cities and also with the Christians living there, among whom, however, some had been responsible for robbing Elias and other Jews as well.⁷

Despite this disaster, Spoleto, the centre of the duchy of the same name, remained for Elias and his family their *patria*. Jews had lived there probably only since the beginning of the fourteenth century. Among the first settlers were some Jews from Rome who received licenses for their banking business in 1342.⁸ They were legally treated like the Christian citizens (*cives*) and accorded the same ‘privileges, liberties, and immunities of the citizenship’ (*privilegiis, libertatibus et immunitatibus civilitatis*).⁹ Citizen-like legal status existed in other cities in Umbria too (it was much more pronounced in Perugia¹⁰) and was the rule for the Jews in most of the cities of upper and central Italy. In the sources, this status is sometimes scaled into various categories.¹¹

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. i (1993), nos 723 (1416) and 724 (1416).

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. ii (1994), no. 995 (1441).

⁶ *Ibid.* vol. i (1993), no. 721 (1416); Master Battista, son of the doctor Vitale, converted in 1394 (no. 560); *cf.* nos 561 (1394), 562 (1394), 569 (1394), 579 (1395: conflict between the converted Jew and his brother, a physician in Trevi), 726 (1416). A daughter of the same physician converted in 1394 (no. 734 from 1416), afterwards, another sister (no. 775 from 1424).

⁷ *Cf. ibid.*, vol. ii (1994), no. 985 (1441), concerning Ventura, son of Sabato.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. i (1993), no. 152 (1342).

⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 152 (1342), corresponding to no. 539 (1393): *Judei ... ut veri et originarii cives dicte civitatis, tam in iudicio quam extra.*

¹⁰ On civic status in Perugia, see *ibid.*, no. 210 (1361) as well as nos 227 (1367), 240 (1371), 259 (1376), 284 (1379); *cf.* as well nos 597 (1397: *habitatores*) and 649 (1402); on Assisi, no. 297 (1381); *cf.* nos 308 (1382), 310 (1382), 641 (1401), 765 (1421); on Amelia, no. 567 (1394); on Spoleto no. 616 (1399). See also Simonsohn, ‘La condizione giuridica’ (1996), p. 109 (*ius civilitatis*) and 110 (on the status as *servi camere* in Mantua and in southern Italy).

¹¹ Toaff, ‘Judei cives?’ (2000). For Jews in Rome, the city statutes stated in 1310: *Judei sint et esse intelligentur cives Romani*: Toaff, ‘Ebrei a Roma’ (1996), p. 138, note 31; *cf.* p. 140: During the rebellion of Cola di Rienzo against the coalition of nobility under the leadership of the Colonna, a Jew rang ‘the bells of Sant’Angelo in Pescheria to call together his followers’.

Other than in Perugia,¹² the Jewish community in Spoleto was only poorly developed. Thus, their *sinagoga hebreorum*, first documented in 1461,¹³ was in the private hands of a leading Jewish family.¹⁴ The Jewish cemetery in Spoleto as well is documented only late and quite sporadically—again, in contrast to Perugia, where the cemetery served as a burial place for the Jews in the Perugian territory.¹⁵ The few Jewish homes in Spoleto were evidently concentrated in a quarter, the *Vaita Petrenga*¹⁶ near the city centre, but they were by no means isolated. In Perugia, the Jews lived scattered in several city quarters.¹⁷ An attempt to ban the Spoleto Jews, according to canonical law, from living ‘among the Christian citizens’, and to settle them *separatim* from the Christians ‘in a corner of the city’ (*in angulo civitatis*) (namely, in the *Strada dei Felici*) was apparently undertaken for the first time in 1493. This attempt failed, just as did the objective of banning the Jews from the banking business.¹⁸ Nor did the Christian community in Spoleto during Elias’s lifetime attempt to enforce the wearing of distinguishing badges, which was demanded in Perugia in 1432 in strongly anti-Jewish language.¹⁹ An ordinance to this effect was eventually issued in Spoleto in 1451 following—as was often the case—a sermon by a Franciscan, but its enforcement, here as elsewhere, is open to some doubt.²⁰

¹² Cf. Toaff, ed., *Jews in Umbria*, i (1993), p. xvi.

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. ii (1994), no. 1327 (1461), p. 714.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. iii (1994), no. 2301 (1516) in *sinagoga hebreorum, sita in civitate Spoleti in domo heredum Bonajuti Isaac hebrei, juxta viam*; cf. nos 2312 (1518) and 2346 (1523).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. ii (1994), no. 1327 (1461).

¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 1110 (1449), no. 961 (1439), vol. i (1993), no. 784 (1425), 820 (1430); on Master Ventura from Perugia, son of Sabato of Spoleto, see no. 835 (1431); vol. ii (1994), nos 957 (1439), 985 (1441), 1073 (1445), 1074 (1446), 1086. Ventura was related to the Elias family: no. 1125 (1449); in 1430 he bought a house in Spoleto in *Vaita Petrenga*: *ibid.*, vol. i (1993), no. 820 (1430); cf. nos 826 (1431), 835 (1431).

¹⁷ Toaff, *Ebrei a Perugia* (1975); Toaff, *Vino* (1989)

¹⁸ Toaff, ed., *Jews in Umbria*, iii (1994), no. 2009 (1493) and 2010 (1493).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. i (1993), nos 840–1 (1432). Cf. the strict regulations for Todi, vol. ii (1994), no. 910 (1436). However, no. 935 (1438) shows that the badge was not worn because the Jews were exempted from this in their *condotte*. See also no. 1007 (1442) for Norcia.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 1151 (1451); cf. for Assisi nos 1169 (1453: the same Friar Cherubino from Spoleto), 1217 (1456), 1220 (1456) and 1223 (1456), for Foligno no. 1222 (1456: wearing of badges mandatory within the city, laid out in the *condotta*); for Trevi no. 1388 (1464: de facto exception from the obligation); for Terni no. 1666 (1474: exception in the *condotta*); further nos 1680 (Assisi, 1475), 1751 (Norcia, 1478), 1754 (Amelia 1478) and vol. iii (1994), no. 1885 (Città di Castello, 1485: exception).

Elias himself and his family were engaged in moneylending as well as in trade and business, as were other Jews in Spoleto,²¹ in Umbria, and beyond in central and upper Italy at the time.²² In particular, it appears that Elias traded in high-quality cloth. Besides, he and his family also engaged in crafts. Correspondingly, Elias and his sons named as their activities in Spoleto not only the banking business but also the *ars tegnendi*, that is, the art of dyeing high-quality cloth.²³

After Spoleto and Perugia, our second vignette takes us into another bishop's city, this time to the archiepiscopal see of Mainz. A Jewish community had existed there almost 350 years before the events described in Spoleto, around 1100.

Even at that time, the Jews of Mainz fostered close contacts with their fellow Jews in the neighbouring cathedral cities to the south, Worms and Speyer. As is well known, the triad of the *Shum* communities grew out of this relationship, one which corresponded to the similarly close contacts among the three Christian civic communities.²⁴ In his so-called 'chronicle' of the pogrom at the time of the First Crusade, a Jewish author in Mainz expressed his grief about the disaster visited upon his home community in 1096, using a verse from the biblical Lamentations over the destruction of Jerusalem: 'Gone from Zion are all that were her glory—namely Mainz'; and in another place: 'Alas the strong rod is broken, the lordly staff, the saintly congregation valued as gold, the community of Mainz.' Furthermore, the chronicler closely links the burning of the Mainz synagogue during the persecution of 1096 with the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE. Just as the Jewish community of Mainz was considered a 'daughter of Zion', its synagogue embodied the Temple at Jerusalem.

In the same Hebrew chronicle, the author interprets the Jewry in this, by Christian standards, holy city of Mainz as 'the holy community in Magenza, the shield and buckler for all communities', and as 'our mother city, the place of our fathers, that ancient community, the greatly exalted among all the communities of the realm'. Thus, the holy Jewish community in Mainz took pre-eminence in age. Within the Empire's Jewry, it had the closest immediacy to the salvation accorded by Jerusalem. This position formed the foundation of its protective function for all the Jewish communities. It was the origin, the 'mother city' of Jewish settlement in the Empire and, as the 'place of our fathers', it was also the foremost bearer of continuity. The self-esteem expressed in such a manner by the Jews of Mainz was in no way unique. Other leading Jewish communities in the Christian West as well based their position on the legendary origins of their founding fathers, who had been among those expelled from Jerusalem and Eretz Israel following the destruction of the Temple.

²¹ Vol. Toaff, *Vino* (1989), p. 242 with note 4.

²² *Ibid.*, esp. 241 ff.; cf. Luzzati, 'Banchi e insediamenti ebraichi' (1996).

²³ Cf. for Perugia Toaff, ed., *Jews in Umbria*, ii (1994), no. 938 (1438).

²⁴ Cf. the article by Rainer Barzen in this volume and his forthcoming Trier dissertation; further Kreutz, 'Worms and Speyer' (2000).



Map 2: Jewish settlements at the time of the First Crusade.

Israel Yuval was the first to point out that this estimation of the Mainz Jewish community shows parallels in the self-image of the city’s Christian community, and perhaps even converged with it. The parallels show up in the correspondence between *Moguntina aurea* on the Mainz city seal, first documented in the first half of the twelfth century, and the epithet ‘valued as gold, the community of Mainz’, in the contemporary Hebrew chronicle. The claim of being a ‘holy city’, which coincided with the claim of the Jewish community, was made by numerous cathedral cities (but also by many others), and made manifest in manifold ways, always drawing on the models

of Rome and Jerusalem. Jerusalem was therefore the highest common factor between Jews and Christians but also the centre of their opposing self-images.

The two vignettes seen from very different viewpoints, times, and places signal the wide spectrum of our topic—the relationships of Jews with each other through family and community as well as to their origin, and the relationships between Jews and Christians in their shared home city. We will approach this topic somewhat more systematically in a second step.

The History of Settlement: The Role of the Cathedral Cities

According to the current state of research, we may assume that during the Middle Ages, at least up to the fifteenth century, the great majority of Jews lived in towns, that is, in relatively large, densely settled localities which played a certain central role and which displayed a sophisticated level of communication among the inhabitants. This means that only a few Jews yet had their lives centered in a villages or an even smaller settlement. Within the German territories, the latter settlement pattern developed furthest in Franconia and northern Swabia since the thirteenth century. In England and in most regions of France, such attempts were expressly prohibited towards the end of the thirteenth century, that is, in the last decades before the expulsions.

The geographical scope of my topic is determined by Catholic Christianity. Thus it extends from the north of the Iberian Peninsula in the west to Lithuania, Poland, and Hungary and a more or less broad strip of land east of the Adriatic in the east. In the north-south direction, Sicily and lower Italy extend beyond my thematic boundaries because of their deep roots in Muslim and/or Byzantine-Orthodox cultures, which of course had an influence on the history of the Jews living there. Hence the *Patrimonium Petri*, which we touched upon with Spoleto and Perugia, forms the southernmost region. We will not consider the lands of the North—Sweden, Norway, and Denmark and further areas north of the Baltic—because, as far as we know, no Jews settled in these regions during the Middle Ages.

I hope it is quite clear from the introductory vignettes why this presentation is based on the history of Jewish settlement and the resulting geographical anchoring of Jews among the Christian majority population. In fact, that rooting was the factor with the greatest long-term consequence for Jewish existence. In general, the conditions of the respective region and place decided where they would initially settle. On the one hand, there had to be a scope for preserving the Jewish ritual community, and that scope might be determined by attitudes among Christians, defined or influenced by Christian religion. On the other hand, a need for the economic or specific occupational services offered by the Jews had to exist. Bound up with these was the Jewish minority's need for protection and their resulting ties to the respective rulers. The wide bandwidth of manifestations of Jewish settlement ensued from the varied interaction of these factors.

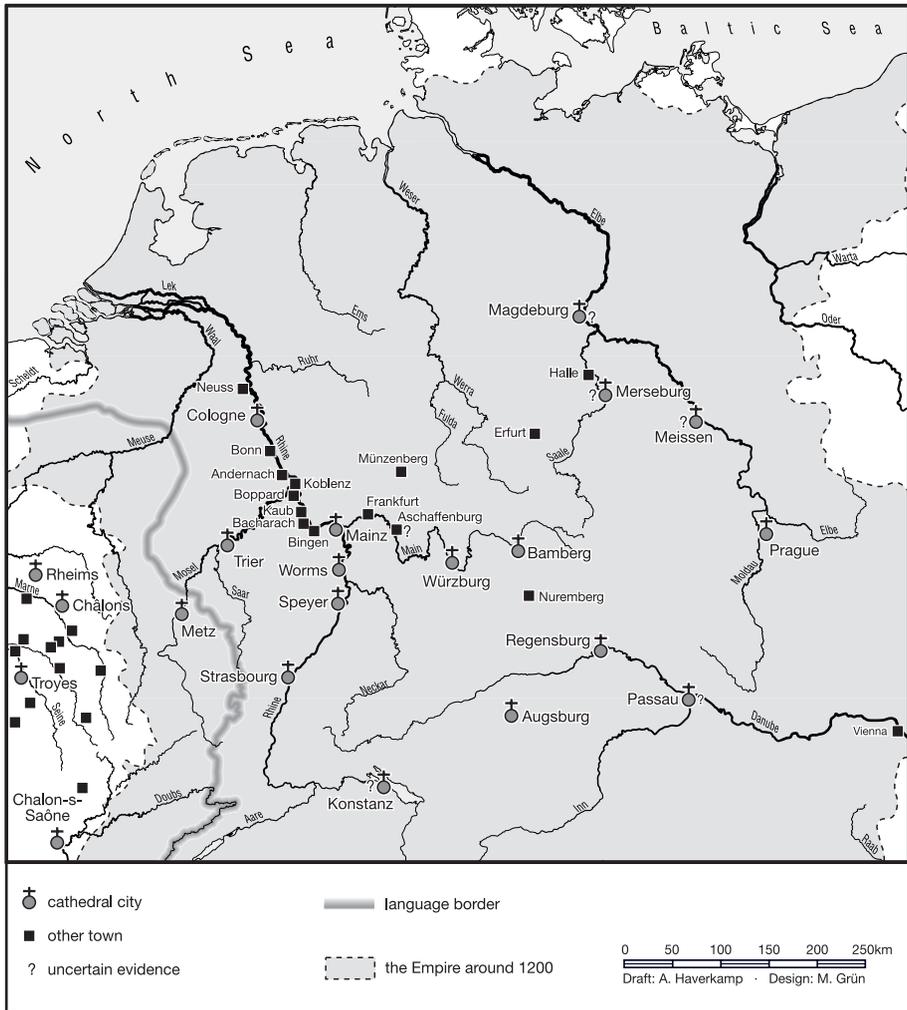
Among the aspects concerning settlement history is the question (which cannot be answered in greater detail here) of why the Jews did not settle in certain regions during this particular period. This applies, for example, to Flanders, a highly urbanized region which had been greatly expanding economically since the twelfth century, for the adjacent coastal region east of Flanders, and for the Scandinavian countries. The question also arises considering the long absence of the Jews in the large urban centres of upper and central Italy or concerning some cities where Jews are documented only for a brief period or not at all during the Middle Ages. Examples include the large city of Metz, where the Jewish settlement was abandoned after the pogrom of 1096, and Besançon, where Jews evidently lived only for a brief period at the end of the fourteenth century.²⁵ Both these episcopal sees venerated St. Stephen as their cathedral's patron saint. The city seal of Metz portrays the stoning of the 'first Christian martyr' by the Jews, an event represented and celebrated liturgically then and now on 26 December. It is still open to examination whether, and if so, under what special circumstances a real causality existed between a fervent cult of Saint Stephen and anti-Jewish sentiment in cities characterized by such cult. In fact the broad topic of liturgy, its signs, symbols, and gestures (including processions) are still by no means well researched, though they must have been of great consequence for the position of the Jews in Christian surroundings. The problems concerning expulsions are equally pertinent, though they can only be mentioned here.²⁶

As the introductory scenes point out, the role of Jewish settlements in the cathedral cities deserves special attention. In other respects as well, including the economic, these regional centres of Christianity normally possessed an outstanding urban quality over long periods. In many older areas of Latin Christendom, these cities were the homes of the largest Jewish settlements and communities, as illustrated on Map 3 for the *regnum Teutonicum* and the period around 1200. The map extends west beyond the Romance-German language boundary and the border of the Empire into the French area, with its particular concentration of Jewish settlement in Champagne. Here too, the cathedral cities had an almost unchallenged dominance in the Jewish network of settlements.

Thus, Christianity and Judaism had their oldest and, for a long period, their largest centres in the same places. Jews and Christians lived at very close quarters and knew a great deal about each other. They also had similar structures serving the same functions. For the Christians in the cathedral cities, the cathedral church and square (in other urban centres, the respective main churches and churchyards) served as the focal point of religious and public life in general. For it was these churches and their nearest surroundings that also served as seats of judgment and as places of communal assembly and decision. In like manner, perhaps more strongly so, the synagogues and their courtyards served Jewish communal life.

²⁵ Holtmann, *Juden in der Grafschaft Burgund* (2003), pp. 104–8.

²⁶ Burgard, Haverkamp and Mentgen, eds, *Judenvertreibungen* (1999).



Map 3: Jewish settlements around 1200.

Within the cathedral cities, which thus became significant places of encounter for Jews and Christians, the bishops with their entourage and the large numbers of ecclesiastical institutions concentrated in such cities had great importance not only for Christians but also for the Jews. To what extent and how long the Jews were personally tied to the bishops as a result, depended on the range of the respective bishop’s rights of lordship and other positions of power. In this regard, there were great differences within the Latin-Christian diaspora. We need only recall their different manifestations under the three *regna* of the Empire: the Roman-German Empire, the

regnum Burgundie and the *regnum Italicum*. Even within the individual kingdoms, considerable differences existed. The same applies to France and can be observed even within a single region such as Champagne, with Rheims and Châlons on the one hand and the episcopal see of Troyes, ruled by a count, on the other. From the thirteenth century, English observers often pointed out the stark differences between the English and German episcopacies, which also had an effect on the diverse positions of bishops within their cathedral cities. In the Roman-German *regnum*, profound differences existed between the bishops in the older regions in the West as far as the Elbe, Saale, and Bohemian Forest, still influenced by the Ottonian/Salian system of exerting royal authority through imperial churches, and those beyond this border in the so-called lands of new settlement.

The bishops in these eastern territories obtained only a weak secular position in relation to the secular princes, a factor decisive for the Jews even in the cathedral cities of these regions. Yet even here no unilateral dependence on the secular princes was the result. Again, it was rather the Christian communities that frequently became the most important point of reference in the everyday lives of the Jews from the late thirteenth century, as might be demonstrated concerning the Margraviate of Brandenburg.

In most of the cathedral cities in western and southern Germany, the function of the bishops as determining rulers was closely linked to the Crown. This created ramifications into the late Middle Ages. However, both bishops and kings had been weakened by the generally increasing leverage of the civic communities since the twelfth century, a tendency which began much earlier in Imperial Italy. On the whole, then, the Jews found themselves in a trilateral relationship with the bishops, kings, and ever more intensively with the civic communities. Still, the legal positions of the bishops remained of great consequence for the Jews even in a large city like Cologne or in a middle-sized one such as Worms.

The Jews themselves were interested in maintaining a set of protective ties to the rulers who affected them in various ways. Even the itinerant kings of the Holy Roman Empire, who seldom remained in one residence, kept their importance as guarantors of the Jews' legal position. The bishops as well as other princes and powerful nobility were necessary for Jewish business activities, especially for moneylending. Close collaboration frequently resulted from these, and some Jews became entangled in territorial politics since the end of the thirteenth century. The civic communities were of fundamental significance for Jewish life in the towns and cities. At the same time, the communes and in particular their leading circles were closely connected with the political powers beyond the city walls and were mostly very unstable in their structure. In Worms, this complex interplay of greatly different, if not opposing interests was a main reason why the city's Jews were never expelled.

The earliest Jewish cemeteries were located in the immediate surroundings of cathedral cities. These burial places are also the most revealing indicator of a Jewish

community's supra-local significance. The cemeteries determined to a great extent the network of Jewish regional organization. The resting places of the dead most firmly withstood the changes in the course of time. As places of remembrance they were the strongest element of continuity for Jewish existence: a '*stabilitas loci*', as it were, of the dead that tied the living to the local generations of the faithful. It was near these cemeteries that Jews preferred to resettle even after dreadful catastrophes, as after the pogroms at the time of the Black Death.

Jewish Quarters and Other Neighbourhoods

The centres of the living and of their everyday connections are best approached by looking at the settings of their lives, their living quarters. Broadly speaking, two types can be distinguished, although flux existed between them. In the Latin-Roman diaspora, the Jews normally lived together, usually in the immediate vicinity of their synagogues. The other Jewish communal institutions were also located here, such as the communal hall (*domus communitatis*), in the German-speaking area often called 'house of dancing' or 'of entertainment' (*Tanzhaus, Spielhaus*). There might be a hospice and, if the existing water supply met the requirements, a mikveh. Such Jewish courts, lanes, or even quarters did not necessarily exclude Christian neighbours. As a rule, they offered the Jews better protection, strengthened during times of danger from anti-Jewish sentiment and pogroms by means of 'enclosures', sometimes built at the request of the Jews. Except for this specific need for protection, the larger Jewish quarters resembled the urban Christian parishes in many respects.

The second type, the distribution of Jewish homes throughout the town, was probably limited (in those areas considered here) to the settlements of Jews, primarily in a number of larger cities in upper and central Italy, that began late, i.e., not until well into the thirteenth century. In many cases, these cities had already reached a peak in the number of inhabitants by the second half of the thirteenth century, and space opened up with the heavy population losses from the mid-fourteenth century. As far as I know, the question remains open as to what extent living dispersed offered the Jews greater opportunities for a wider range of occupations or, *vice versa*, whether the occupational diversification among the Jews promoted these living conditions.

In any case, living scattered bound the Jews less to one another, it interfered with their communal life. Lesser communal cohesion could be substituted by placing greater value on the Jewish family and by more fully developing its potential. Living closer to Christians also favoured individual willingness to maintain closer contacts with Christian neighbours. Such living conditions presupposed effective protection guarantees for the Jews on the part of the Christian commune or *signoria* or at least relations so good that the Jews were able to feel secure.

North of the Alps, this type of Jewish settlement in the town or city was extremely rare. I know of only one example: Salzburg, tellingly after the severe pogrom of

1404.²⁷ Concentrated living conditions in lanes or quarters were rather the norm in the northern regions. This form was fostered by the fact that, in most cases, the Jewish settlement came *before* the growth peak of the respective urban centres.

Other than in central and upper Italy, the Jews had made their homes in many towns or cities in southern France significantly before the thrust of urbanization in the High Middle Ages. Some of these Jewish settlements may even date back into antiquity. In northern France (*Zarfat*) too, Jewish settlements arose before the tenth century. In the *regnum Teutonicum*, the decisive Jewish settlements, which were initially concentrated in the cities within the Roman *limes*, primarily on the west side of the Rhine, also date from the tenth century. In England, Jewish settlement certainly did not occur until the twelfth century. This rather late arrival of the Jews, together with the strong influence of royal administration, caused the centres of Jewish settlement to be established on the periphery of urban areas in some of the larger English towns and cities.

In contrast, Jewish settlement in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, especially in the Kingdom of Navarre—as Juan Carrasco has recently pointed out—had come about since the eleventh century in close connection with colonization and intensified territorial development. The most likely analogue is with the Jewish settlement that was part of the so-called German ‘*Ostsiedlung*’. In the areas of Eastern Europe the Jews, along with Christians, were most often among the earliest inhabitants of the newly developing towns. Correspondingly, their homes were centrally located.

Locations both separate and peripheral were extremely rare for medieval Jewish quarters, at least until the second half of the fifteenth century. Only then did this change in central Europe, and only in a few places. In many cases, as in Frankfurt am Main in 1462, such separation was a substitute for expulsion. In upper and central Italy such isolated Jewish settlement concentrations were usually established only after interim expulsions on the occasion of readmittance, despite earlier attempts such as the Spoleto case of 1493 mentioned above. Thus in Perugia in 1587, almost two decades after the expulsion of the Jews by Pope Pius V, a very small group of Jews from the Roman ghetto arrived, bought back the cemetery, and were settled in streets on the edge of the city.²⁸ Thus until the end of the medieval period, Jews either lived scattered throughout the town or city in the neighbourhood of Christians, or concentrated in lanes or quarters.

To conclude, we may say that Jewish existence played an essential role in medieval urban life. The spectrum of its history has many shadings, ranging from the greatest proximity between Christians and Jews, with demonstrations of mutual honesty, goodwill, even love—*amor*, as Elias of Spoleto expressed it in 1441—, to isolation,

²⁷ Haverkamp, ‘Jewish Quarters’ (1995), p. 21.

²⁸ Toaff, *Jews in Umbria*, i (1993), p. xxxvii, with reference to Ariodante Fabretti, *Sulla condizione degli ebrei Perugia dal XIII al XVII secolo* (Turin, 1891), pp. 81 ff.

coldness, and contempt, and even to the extremes of inhuman crimes committed on the Jews by Christians.

My necessarily fragmentary comments on the bonds and relationships of Jews in medieval towns and cities within the Latin-Christian diaspora were prompted by the search for the *patria* of the Jews, the 'place of our Fathers'. The two quite different vignettes from far removed times and places give us perhaps an idea of the dimensions of such emotions experienced by the Jews and their resulting religious attitudes. And I was able only to hint at the manifold ties between the Jewish and Christian communities. An additional approach, one on firmer ground and rather better borne out by the sources, would be, I think, to investigate the various topographical settings and the resulting social (which also means, economic) and political ties of the Jews. I hope to have indicated that this approach opens insights into the basic substance of Jewish existence amidst the Christian world and into the complexity of the ties so vital to the Jewish minority.

trans.: F.S.K.

FURTHER READING

Burgard, Haverkamp and Mentgen, eds, *Judenvertreibungen* (1999). – Cluse, Haverkamp and Yuval, eds, *Jüdische Gemeinden* (2003). – Haverkamp, “‘Concivilitas’” (1996). – Haverkamp, ‘Jewish Quarters’ (1995). – Haverkamp, *Gemeinden* (2002). – Haverkamp, ed., *Geschichte der Juden im Mittelalter* (2002). – Simonsohn, ‘La condizione giuridica’ (1996). – Toaff, ‘Gli ebrei a Roma’ (1996). – Toaff, *Vino* (1989) = *Love, Work and Death* (1996). – Toaff, ed., *The Jews in Umbria*, 3 vols (1993–1994). – Yuval, ‘Heilige Städte—Heilige Gemeinden’ (1996).

RESUMEN

En julio de 1441, un año después de que la ciudad de Spoleto fuera saqueada, el anciano judío Elías, junto con sus hijos, presentó una petición a los *priores* del concejo urbano. Los judíos expresaban el ferviente deseo de ser permitidos retornar a Spoleto, « su propia patria, en donde habían nacido y crecido », con objeto de conducir sus negocios con la « benevolencia y amor de todos los ciudadanos de Spoleto ». Esta narración es una de las muchas piezas de evidencia de la conexión enfática de los judíos con sus respectivas villas de acogida, y con los cristianos que vivían allí.

En una « crónica » sobre las persecuciones de la primera Cruzada, un autor judío de Maguncia expresaba su lamentación por la catástrofe que había acaecido a su propia comunidad local en 1096. Con un versículo tomado del libro bíblico de Lamentaciones, alude a la destrucción de Jerusalén: « Se han ido de Sión todos los que fueron su gloria – es decir, Maguncia », y en otro pasaje dice: « He aquí que la fuerte verga se ha roto, la vara del Señor, la santa congregación valiosa como el oro, la comunidad de Maguncia ». El incendio de la sinagoga de Maguncia se asocia aquí a la destrucción del Segundo Templo. La « santa comunidad de Maguncia » está estrechamente ligada a Jerusalén en términos de historia de la salvación. Ha sido Israel Yuval el primero en mostrar que la imagen propia de la comunidad de Mainz tiene paralelos en la imagen que de sí misma tiene la comunidad cristiana de esta ciudad. La inscripción en su sello (siglo XII), *MOGUNTIA AUREA*, corresponde a la imagen « valiosa como el oro » en la crónica hebrea coetánea.

Podemos asumir que la gran mayoría de judíos vivieron, durante el periodo medieval, al menos hasta el siglo XV, en villas y ciudades, es decir, asentamientos relativamente grandes y densos, manteniendo comunicaciones intensas con el resto de la población. La instalación en este espacio va a ser uno de los factores más persistentes en la configuración de su propia existencia. Su situación concreta está condicionada usualmente por el estado de la región o lugar en donde se asientan en un primer momento.

En general, el papel de los asentamientos judíos en las ciudades catedralicias merece una atención especial. Estos centros religiosos cristianos tenían, también en muchos otros aspectos, inmejorables cualidades urbanas. En muchas de las regiones tradicionales de la Cristiandad occidental, esas ciudades eran el hogar de los mayores asentamientos y comunidades judías. Así, cristianismo y judaísmo tuvieron sus más antiguos, y durante mucho tiempo mayores, centros en los mismos lugares. Los obispos y sus *familiae* así como muchas de las congregaciones religiosas tenían una gran importancia no sólo para los cristianos sino también para los judíos. La extensión y persistencia de los lazos señoriales entre judíos y obispos dependían de la variedad de los derechos señoriales y de otras posiciones de

autoridad que los prelados poseían. A este respecto, existió una gran variedad dentro de la diáspora occidental.

Junto a las ciudades catedralicias encontramos los cementerios judíos más tempranos. Son el símbolo más característico de la importancia supra-local de las comunidades judías. Estos lugares tienen una influencia de largo alcance en las redes regionales de organización judía. Eran sitios de perseverancia ahí donde todo cambia. En la diáspora latina, el tipo de asentamiento judío concentrado alrededor de la sinagoga es el más común. Encontramos aquí otras instituciones comunales: La *domus comunitatis* (*Tanzhaus*, *Spielhaus*), a menudo un « hospital » y un *miqvé*. Tales barrios, adarves o calles de los judíos incluían con frecuencia algunos vecinos cristianos.

El segundo tipo, el de dispersión de hogares judías en la ciudad, se restringe a asentamientos que se desarrollan tardíamente, no antes del siglo XIII, como en varias grandes ciudades del Centro y Norte de Italia. Un análisis comparativo puede mostrar la relación entre el periodo de asentamiento judío y su situación en la topografía urbana.

La historia de los judíos durante el periodo medieval fue un factor significativo en la vida urbana. La variedad de relaciones entre judíos y cristianos en este contexto muestra una amplia variedad, desde la estrecha proximidad y mutuo respeto, benevolencia, incluso amor, como Elías de Spoleto señala en 1441, hasta la separación, la distancia y la aversión desembocando en crímenes perpetrados contra los judíos.