

European Jewry around 1400: Disruption, Crisis, and Resilience—Problems and Research Perspectives

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Introduction

Thirty years ago Israel J. Yuval, in his book on *The Religious Leadership of German Jewry in the Late Middle Ages*, has first drawn attention to a passage in the book *Hadrat Qodesh*, composed by an Ashkenazi Jew named Shim'on b. Shmu'el in Regensburg. The main part of the text was completed in March 1400. Looking back over the recent months, Shim'on wrote the following:

Four miracles the Holy One, blessed be He, performed on us this year. The first miracle: This is the fiftieth year after the great persecutions, and it is written in their manners that they murder Jews every fifty years. The second miracle is that a sect of several thousand people arose, all signed with the cross on white garments, and they raised a banner and wanted to kill Jews. The third miracle is that the sect of the *Geiseler* [i.e., of flagellants] emerged; they, too, made a banner for themselves and wanted to kill Jews. The fourth is that the shameful king proceeded against us for some years, and God has delivered us from all this in his mercy and boundless grace.¹

¹ כי ארבע נסים עשה לנו השם יתברך בזה השנה: הנס הראשון, שהייתה שנת נ' אחר גזירות גדולות אשר כתוב נימוסיהם להרוג שונאי ישראל כל נ' שנה. הנס השני, שעמדו כת כמה אלפים, סימנים הייתה לכולם בבגד לבן, ועשו דגל ורצו להרוג שונאי ישראל. הנס השלישי, יצאו גדודי כת גיזלר, וגם עשו דגל, ודעתם להרוג שונאי ישראל. הנס הרביעי, מלך כלימה, אשר עמד עלינו כמה שנים והשם הצילנו מיד[ן] ברחמיו וברוב חסדיו הגדולים ובהעצומים. וכן יצילנו תמיד ברוב רחמיו למען חסדו אמן (Israel J. Yuval, *Scholars in their Time: The Religious Leadership of German Jewry in the Late Middle Ages* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988), pp. 295–96 (in Hebrew); cf. id., 'Magie und Kabbala unter den Juden im Deutschland des ausgehenden Mittelalters', in *Judentum im deutschen Sprachraum*, ed. by Karl E. Grözinger (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1991), pp. 173–89, at p. 182 (with a German translation)). On this

It would seem that these anxieties of a learned Ashkenazi observer writing around 1400 cut right into the themes of the present collection. As Yuval already noted, the cycle of fifty years mentioned by Shim'on was probably an allusion to the cycle of Jubilees celebrated by the Roman Church. The second of these had occurred in 1350, i.e., just after the *gezērot gedolot*, the 'great persecutions' at the time of the Black Death, in which hundreds of Jewish settlements with thousands of Jews had been almost systematically wiped out, in a large geographical span reaching from south-eastern France to the lower Rhine and Low Countries and further to the east—with only few exceptions such as most of Bohemia and Austria as well as the city of Regensburg, where Shim'on lived.² Another fifty years before that, in 1298, one self-styled "King Rintfleisch" and his followers had invaded the Jewries of Franconia, killing between four and five thousand men, women and children.³ Further back, the persecutions of the First and Second Crusades, in 1096 and 1146, also seemed to follow this fifty-year cycle in that they occurred just before the turn or the middle of a century.⁴ According to the colophon, *Sefer Hadrat Qodesh* was com-

work, see Joseph M. Davis, 'Philosophy, Dogma, and Exegesis in Medieval Ashkenazic Judaism: The Evidence of *Sefer Hadrat Qodesh*', *AJS Review*, 18 (1993), 195–222 (with an abridged English translation of the above passage, p. 202, n. 28). On the author cf. *Germania Judaica, Band III, 1350–1519*, ed. by Arye Maimon, Mordechai Breuer and Yacov Guggenheim, 3 vols (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987–2003), II (1995), p. 1199. The passage is also cited in Gerd Mentgen, 'Zur Relevanz von Jahrhundertwenden im Mittelalter', in *Campana pulsante convocati: Festschrift anlässlich der Emeritierung von Prof. Dr. Haverkamp*, ed. by Frank G. Hirschmann and Gerd Mentgen (Trier: Kliomedien, 2005), pp. 325–60, at p. 341, and mentioned in Alfred Haverkamp, 'Juden in Deutschland und Italien während des späten Mittelalters: Bewegungen in kabbalistischen Zusammenhängen', in *Frühneuzeitliche Ghettos in Europa im Vergleich*, ed. by Fritz Backhaus *et al.*, *Frankfurter Kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge*, 15 (Berlin: Trafo, 2012), pp. 81–148, at p. 119.

² Cf. Alfred Haverkamp, 'Die Judenverfolgungen zur Zeit des Schwarzen Todes im Gesellschaftsgefüge deutscher Städte', in *Zur Geschichte der Juden im Deutschland des späten Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Alfred Haverkamp and Alfred Heit, *Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters*, 24 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1981), pp. 27–93; František Graus, *Pest – Geißler – Judenmorde: Das 14. Jahrhundert als Krisenzeit*, 3rd edn (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994). On how the Jews of Regensburg probably evaded the persecution, see also Christoph Cluse, 'Zwischen Vorurteil und Vertrauen: Die Rettung der Regensburger Juden im Jahr 1349', in *Kulturkonflikte – Kulturbegegnungen: Juden, Christen und Muslime in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. by Gisbert J. Gemein, *Schriftenreihe der Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung*, 1062 (Bonn: BpB, 2011), pp. 362–75.

³ Friedrich Lotter, 'Die Judenverfolgung des "König Rintfleisch" in Franken um 1298: Die endgültige Wende in den christlich-jüdischen Beziehungen im Deutschen Reich des Mittelalters', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 4 (1988), 385–422.

⁴ There is a wealth of studies on the First Crusade and the Jews, among which we would like to point out the recent edition of the Hebrew narratives: *Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfol-*

pleted on the new moon of Nisan, [5]160, i.e., Friday 26 March 1400.⁵ At this time, the ‘Bianchi’ movement of peace and penitence that arose in Northern Italy in 1399–1400, had already reached a peak. It was called after the white garments of its followers, which evoked, together with the ‘banners’ they carried, the image of the Crusaders.⁶ For Shim‘on b. Shmu‘el, the flagellants who reappeared in the Low Countries around the same time may have recalled the bloody penitents of the Black Death years.⁷ Both movements can be regarded in part as reactions to a new round of plague outbreaks, not mentioned by Shim‘on, who focused on the Christian religious revivalism at work here.

Finally, Shim‘on described the highest secular authority in the Empire, the Luxembourg king Wenceslas IV, as a ‘shameful’ figure, in just the way in which he was perceived among the leading barons of the Empire at this time, the year of his deposition (on 20 August) by the prince-electors and the accession to the throne of Rupert, Count Palatinate. Wenceslas had signed the two large-scale “cancellations” of debts owed to Jewish moneylenders, in 1385 and 1390/91.⁸ He had also been unable, perhaps even unwilling, to save the Jews of Prague from the Easter pogrom

gungen während des Ersten Kreuzzugs, ed. by Eva Haverkamp, MGH Hebräische Texte, 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 2005), with an extensive introduction. The fifty years’ span between the First and Second Crusade persecutions was noted by R. Ephrayim b. Ya‘acov of Bonn; cf. *Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während der Kreuzzüge*, ed. by Moritz Stern and Adolf Neubauer, trans. by S. Baer, Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, 2 (Berlin: Simion, 1892), pp. 58 (Hebrew), 188 (German translation); cf. also *Hebräische liturgische Poesien zu den Judenverfolgungen während des Ersten Kreuzzugs*, ed. by Avraham Fraenkel and Abraham Gross with Peter Sh. Lehnardt, MGH Hebräische Texte, 3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), p. 55.

⁵ Davis, ‘Philosophy’ (as in n. 1), p. 203.

⁶ Cf. Daniel E. Bornstein, *The Bianchi of 1399: Popular Devotion in Late Medieval Italy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1993), and *Sulle orme dei Bianchi (1399) dalla Liguria all’Italia Centrale*, ed. by Francesco Santucci, (Assisi: Accademia Properziana del Subasio, 2001).

⁷ Christoph Cluse, *Studien zur Geschichte der Juden in den mittelalterlichen Niederlanden*, Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden, A 10 (Hannover: Hahn, 2000), p. 231 with n. 232.

⁸ A new study of these events and their implications would be worthwhile, while Arthur Süßmann, *Die Judenschuldentilgungen unter König Wenzel*, Schriften der Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaft des Judentums, 2 (Berlin: Lamm, 1907), remains indispensable. The theme was taken up again, however, by Karel Hruza, ‘Anno domini 1385 do burden die iuden ... gevangen: Die vorweggenommene Wirkung skandalöser Urkunden König Wenzels (IV.)’, in *Wege zur Urkunde – Wege der Urkunde – Wege der Forschung: Beiträge zur europäischen Diplomatik des Mittelalters*, ed. by Karel Hruza and Paul Herold, Forschungen zur Kaiser- und Papstgeschichte des Mittelalters, 24 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005), pp. 117–67. See also the papers by A. Weber and J. Müller in the present collection.

of 1389.⁹ Ironically, he was also criticized by some Christians who claimed that he was too favourably inclined towards the Jews.¹⁰

The passage in *Hadrat Qodesh* marked a moment of relief, it would seem, in a period of religious and political turmoil. For the Jews of Ashkenaz who had survived the Black Death and the persecutions of that time it had been hard enough to pick up the pieces after 1350, to negotiate for readmission in the cities and territories where they had lived before.¹¹ The centres of learning had shifted from the Rhineland to the eastern regions, where the *yeshivot* of Prague and Vienna rose to prominence. At the same time Jews in Ashkenaz were adopting new religious ideas. As Yuval suggested and as Alfred Haverkamp has recently traced, there was a significant circle of leading figures who developed a keen interest in Kabbalah, which a number of German Jews had come to know in Jerusalem, where they had gone in the wake of the Black Death. The network of these prominent Jews, mostly interrelated by family, marriage, and teacher-student relationships, extended from Cologne on the lower Rhine through Frankfurt and the communities of Speyer and Worms on the Rhine to the *Terraferma* of Venice, and via Candia on the island of Crete to the Holy Land.¹²

The religious ideas these German Jews adopted in the Eastern Mediterranean had originated in medieval Sefarad, that is, on the Iberian Peninsula. The treatise *Hadrat Qodesh* itself was a sign of the growing interest among Ashkenazi rabbis in both Kabbalah and Maimonidean philosophy. Its author, when referring to the many threats his community was facing in 1400, displays some knowledge of what

⁹ Cf. below, p. 7.

¹⁰ Cf. Klaus Schreiner, “Correctio principis”: Gedankliche Begründung und geschichtliche Praxis spätmittelalterlicher Herrscherkritik’, in *Mentalitäten im Mittelalter*, ed. by František Graus, Vorträge und Forschungen, 35 (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1987), pp. 203–56, at pp. 226–27, 229; also Frank Rexroth, ‘Wie man einen König absetzte: um 1399’, in *Die Macht des Königs: Herrschaft in Europa vom Frühmittelalter bis in die Neuzeit*, ed. by Bernhard Jussen (Munich: Beck, 2005), pp. 241–54; Eva Doležalová, ‘Wenceslaus IV as a Protector of the Jews? The Life of Jewish Communities at the Turn of 15th Century’ (unpublished paper given at the 17th World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, 8 August 2017).

¹¹ This matter is taken up in M. Schlachter’s contribution to the present volume. See also Jörg R. Müller, ‘Selbstgestaltung und Fremdbestimmung: Die Reorganisation jüdischer Gemeinden im Westen des Reiches nach den Pestverfolgungen’, in *Von der mittelalterlichen ‘Kuhstadt Speyer’ bis zur Dom-Restaurierung 1957/61*, ed. by Armin Schlechter, Joachim Kemper and Anja Rasche, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stadt Speyer und ihrer Umgebung, 1 (Ubstadt-Weiher: verlag regionalkultur, 2018), pp. 55–85.

¹² See Elchanan Reiner, ‘Ashkenazi Sages in the Land of Israel after the “Black Death”’, *Shalem*, 4 (1984), 27–62 (in Hebrew), and Haverkamp, ‘Juden in Deutschland und Italien’ (as in n. 1). The presence of Ashkenazi Jews in Northern Italy and on Venetian Crete is addressed in the contributions by A. Veronese, L. Raspe, and R. Lauer.

was going on in northern and central Italy, where the movement of the 'Bianchi' had flourished a year before (without signs of anti-Jewish sentiment). At the same time, Shim'on says nothing at all about Sefarad itself.

1 Disruption

Had Shim'on known more about what was going on in Spain, he would have had even stronger reasons to be concerned. Iberian Jews, in contrast to their Ashkenazi brethren, had remained mostly unharmed by the *gezērōt gedōlōt*, the 'great persecutions', of the Black Death years.¹³ However, in 1391, following years of intense agitation notably by the archdeacon of Ecija, Ferrant Martínez, a wave of popular riots broke out. The attacks, which included large-scale plundering of the *juderías*, first broke out in the city of Seville on 4 June and swept through the cities of Castile and the crown of Aragón over the course of the summer.

It is unclear how many Jews were killed in the turmoil.¹⁴ While some of the higher estimates are unwarranted, the riots certainly led to the deaths of hundreds of Jews, probably thousands. Their long-term historical impact, though, is in the large numbers of conversions by Spanish Jews in these circumstances. To be sure, most of these baptisms occurred under the direct impact of the anti-Jewish violence. However, not all of them can clearly be classified as 'forced'. Some had taken place even before 1390, and many were to follow after, with or without violence.

The pressure to adopt Christianity mounted significantly at the time of the forced Disputation of Tortosa, orchestrated by Pope Benedict XIII (Master Pedro de Luna) with the help of King Fernando of Aragón between February 1413 and November 1414.¹⁵ Some of the newly baptized left the country in order to be able

¹³ Cf. David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1998), pp. 231–45.

¹⁴ Cf. Benjamin Gampel, *Anti-Jewish Riots in the Crown of Aragon and the Royal Response, 1391–1392* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016), and the overview articles by Norman Roth, '1391 in the Kingdom of Castile, Attacks on the Jews', and '1391 in Aragón, Catalonia, Valencia and Majorca', in *Las persecuciones de 1391 en las elegias hebreas*, Iberia Judaica, 3 (Alcobendas [Madrid]: Aben Ezra Ediciones, 2011), pp. 19–48 and 49–75. These surveys also provide bibliographies of previous studies.

¹⁵ On Benedict XIII and the Tortosa disputation, see the overview account in Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (13.–20. Jh.)*, Europäische Hochschulschriften, XXIII 497 (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 1994), pp. 434–82 (with further bibliography of earlier studies); also Gemma Escriba, ed., *The Tortosa Disputation: Regesta of Documents from the Archivo de la Corona de Aragon, Fernando I 1412–1416*, Sources for the History of the Jews in Spain, 6 (Jerusalem: CAHJP, 1998), Sina Rauschenbach, *Josef Albo*

to resume practicing Judaism. Many others stayed, including former members of the Jewish élite. From this time on, both the Jews of Spain and the ‘old Christians’ were faced with a new challenge, the existence of numerous ‘new Christians’ whose religious identity was doubtful, given the dubious circumstances of their baptism—the so-called ‘Converso problem’. Some researchers have therefore held that the riots of 1391 were the beginning of the end of Spanish Jewry, expelled from the Peninsula, as is well known, one century later in 1492. This view of a continuous decline from 1391 onwards is, however, too simplistic.

Returning once again to Shim‘on b. Shmu‘el’s account of 1400, it would appear that his Ashkenazi outlook was much more haunted by the ghosts of the past than the Sephardi experience had been prior to 1391. This is not surprising, given the events in the Empire after 1350, where repeated threats interfered with the Jews’ efforts to rebuild the communities. In Alsace, for example, the charge of well poisoning, used to justify the mass murder of the Black Death years, reappeared in 1380 and in 1397.¹⁶ Accusations of host desecration were raised, with disastrous consequences, at Brussels in 1370, at Strasbourg in 1387, at Głogów (Silesia) in 1401, at Salzburg in 1404, and at Séléstat (Alsace) in 1409. The old ritual murder libel made reappearances in Zurich in 1392 and notably at Diessenhofen in 1401, leading to persecutions in the Swiss and Lake Constance regions.¹⁷ In other cases of local riots or persecution, the attackers did not even bother to provide even such flimsy justifications. Thus, on 29 July 1384, ‘the people of Nördlingen stabbed all their Jews to death and seized all their goods’, as one chronicler bluntly reports. In the same year riots are also recorded in the imperial towns of Windsheim and Weisenburg as well as in other places such as Magdeburg, without any apparent connection between these events.¹⁸

(um 1380–1444): *Jüdische Philosophie und christliche Kontroverstheologie in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Studies in European Judaism, 3 (Leiden, Boston, & Cologne: Brill, 2002), and Miguel Ángel Motis Dolander, ‘*Disputacion feyta por los judios devant nuestro Senyor Papa Benedito*: La conferencia de Tortosa y las aljamas judías del reino de Aragón’, in *Miscelánea judaica catalana*, Iberia Judaica, 5 (Alcobendas [Madrid]: Aben Ezra Ediciones, 2013), pp. 15–60.

¹⁶ Gerd Mentgen, *Studien zur Geschichte der Juden im mittelalterlichen Elsaß*, Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden, A 2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1995), pp. 385–402.

¹⁷ Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1999); Michael Toch, ‘Die Verfolgungen des Spätmittelalters (1350–1550)’, in *Germania Judaica III* (as in n. 1), vol. III (2003), pp. 2298–327.

¹⁸ Barbara Dohm, ‘Juden in der spätmittelalterlichen Reichsstadt Nördlingen: Studien und Quellen’ (PhD diss., Universität Trier; microfiche publication, 2012), pp. 60–70; cf. Christian Scholl, ‘Juden und Städtebünde: Annäherungen an ein komplexes Beziehungsgeflecht’, in *Pro multis beneficiis: Festschrift für Friedhelm Burgard*. Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden und des Trierer Raums, ed. by Sigrid Hirbodian et al., Trierer Historische Forschungen, 68 (Trier: Klio-

Many of these events had only local impact, but that impact could be very severe. The community of Prague, for example, which had not been affected by the persecutions of the plague years and therefore became a new centre of Jewish learning in Ashkenaz, was struck by a massive pogrom on Easter day (7 April), 1389. Following rumours that Jews had attacked a priest carrying the sacrament, a mob attacked the Jewish quarter, killing, plundering, and burning. Children were forcibly baptized, the old Jewish cemetery was devastated, gravestones were broken and even corpses dragged from their graves. The morning after the first onslaught, the King's representative had all surviving Jews arrested and their goods confiscated. They were apparently burnt at the stake together with the dead on the third day. According to one chronicler, the King's profits were estimated at five barrels of pure silver.¹⁹

The horror of these events was echoed about thirty years later in Vienna, another Jewish community that had escaped the Black Death persecutions and thrived in the decades after. Following specious allegations of host desecration in 1420, the entire community was annihilated through mass burnings, forced baptisms, and expulsion.²⁰

The effects of these mostly local persecutions were aggravated by the onset of a rising tide of expulsions in Ashkenaz and beyond.²¹ Just weeks after the pogrom in

media, 2012), pp. 111–27. The quote is from the chronicle of Burkhart Zink, in *Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte vom 14. bis ins 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Carl Hegel, vol. V, *Augsburg* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1866), p. 30. See the contribution by A. Weber in the present volume.

¹⁹ See the recent studies by Barbara Newman, 'The Passion of the Jews of Prague: The Pogrom of 1389 and the Lessons of a Medieval Parody', *Church History*, 81 (2012), 1–26, and Evina Steinová, 'Passio Iudeorum Pragensium: Tatsachen und Fiktionen über das Pogrom im Jahr 1389', in *'Avigdor, Benesch, Gitl': Juden in Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien im Mittelalter, Samuel Steiner zum Gedenken*, ed. by Helmut Teufel, Pavel Kocman and Milan Řepa (Essen: Klartext, 2016), pp. 159–85.

²⁰ Samuel Krauss, *Die Wiener Geserah vom Jahre 1421* (Vienna & Leipzig: Braumüller, 1920); Klaus Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik im mittelalterlichen Österreich*, Handbuch zur Geschichte der Juden in Österreich, B 1 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1990), pp. 298–311; id., *Geschichte der Juden in Wien* (Berlin: Philo, 2000) pp. 155–73; also Rubin, *Gentile Tales* (as in n. 17), pp. 116–19. On the fate of the forcibly baptized, cf. Martha Keil, 'What Happened to the "New Christians"? The "Viennese Geserah" of 1420/21 and the Forced Baptism of the Jews', in *Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe: The Historiographical Legacy of Bernhard Blumenkranz*, ed. by Philippe Buc, Martha Keil and John Tolan, *Religion and Law in Medieval Christian and Muslim Societies*, 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), pp. 95–114. See also the contribution by S. Neuberg in the present volume.

²¹ Cf. the survey by Gerd Mentgen, 'Die Judenvertreibungen im mittelalterlichen Reich: Ein Forschungsbericht', *Ashkenas*, 16 (2006), 367–403; and the studies collected in *Judenvertreibungen in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. by Friedhelm Burgard, Alfred Haverkamp and Gerd Mentgen, *Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden*, A 9 (Hannover: Hahn, 1999).

Prague, on 1 May 1389, John Margrave of Brandenburg and Duke of Görlitz vowed not to admit Jews in Görlitz in the future; in the western parts of the Empire, such more or less legal measures against the Jewish population began in Strasbourg and in the territory of the Counts Palatine in 1390, just one generation after the first resettlements; in the eastern territories. While some expulsions were violent, such as those from Riquewihr in Alsace and the just-cited example of Vienna (both in 1420), this was by no means universally the case. In the decades around 1400, not all of these expulsions were lasting, as the examples of Mainz (1398 and 1405) and Speyer (1405) may show. In other regions and places, however, such as the archbishopric of Trier (1418/19) and the city of Cologne (1424), it took until the early modern period for Jews to be readmitted.²² It is important to see that the politics of expulsion were also followed in neighbouring France, where a significant Jewish community was affected in 1394²³, and in the Mediterranean trading hub of Venice, in 1397. In some places such as, one year later, the town of Treviso, which formed part of the Venetian *Terraferma*, Jews were able to avert the threat.²⁴ On Venetian Crete, they were for the first time ordered to wear a special badge.²⁵

All these events contributed to a heightened level of instability and migration, which must have severely affected the Jewish possibilities of making a living. While some Jews were lucky enough to have an opportunity of cashing in outstanding loans, many others were not; and while some valuables could possibly be loaded on a cart and taken elsewhere, a stock of customers could not. Most gravely, however, the working capital of Jewish moneylenders was diminished by the two rounds of so-called “debt-cancellations” implemented under the authority of the ‘shameful king’, i.e., Wenceslas IV.²⁶ The first of these was practically a conspiracy between

²² Cf. Franz-Josef Ziwes, ‘Territoriale Judenvertreibungen im Südwesten und Süden Deutschlands im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert’, in *Judenvertreibungen* (as in n. 21), pp. 165–87, and the relevant entries in *Germania Judaica III* (as in n. 1), vols I (1987) and II (1995). For Görlitz, cf. Richard Gelbe, *Herzog Johann von Görlitz* (Görlitz: Dünnhaupt, 1883), pp. 173–74 (I owe this reference to Dr. Maike Lämmerhirt, Heidelberg).

²³ Cf. *L'Expulsion des juifs de France 1394*, ed. by Gilbert Dahan and Élie Nicolas, Nouvelle Gallia Judaica (Paris: Cerf, 2004); also Roger Kohn, *Les juifs de la France du Nord dans la seconde moitié du XIV^e siècle*, Collection de la Revue des Études juives, 5 (Leuven and Paris: Peeters, 1988), pp. 249–57.

²⁴ Angela Möschter, *Juden im venezianischen Treviso (1389–1509)*, Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden, A 19 (Hannover: Hahn, 2008), pp. 148–52.

²⁵ David Jacoby, ‘Jews and Christians in Venetian Crete: Segregation, Interaction and Conflict’, in *“Interstizi”: Culture ebraico-cristiana a Venezia e nei suoi domini dal medioevo all’età moderna*, ed. by Uwe Israel, Robert Jütte and Reinhold C. Mueller, Collana del Centro tedesco di studi veneziani, 5 (Rom: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2010), pp. 243–79, at p. 260.

²⁶ See above, n. 8.

the imperial towns of the German southwest and the king in 1385: All Jews were arrested on a single day and forced to hand over the documents on their outstanding loans, which were then collected, with some reductions granted to the debtors, by the municipal authorities. Five years later, Wenceslas passed similar decrees in favour of the barons and of those towns and cities which had not profited from the first round of “cancellations”. While the policy of writing off debts owed to Jewish lenders was not new (individual cases are in evidence from the early fourteenth century onwards)²⁷, the scale of the measure was unprecedented. In sum, it would seem that for European Jews the decades around 1400 were a time of severe disruption caused by riots and persecutions, forced baptisms, expulsions, and political plunder.

2 Crisis

One or two generations ago, historians would have classified the tableau of events just described as part of the ‘Crisis of the later middle ages’. This ‘crisis’ of theirs had basically three aspects: First, according to Wilhelm Abel’s influential model, there was an agrarian depression following the population losses of the Black Death and later plague epidemics. This led to a breakdown in demand for agricultural produce such as grain, while at the same time the scarcity of available labour gave the workers a better position to negotiate for salaries. A second aspect of perceived crisis, inspired by Johan Huizinga’s best-seller, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, was more concerned with aspects of *mentalité*—a morbid devotion to the suffering Christ and a preoccupation with death, as in the famous ‘danse macabre’, were the hallmarks of this type of analysis. In this context, the religious uncertainties bound up with the papal schism of 1378 to 1415 of course played a great role. The third aspect is more particularly concerned with the numerous clashes over political rule, from the Hundred Years War down to various local feuds and urban riots. František Graus has proposed a rather sophisticated version of this approach in his book on the Black Death years, and defined ‘crisis’ as a conjunction of several convulsive or disruptive events, ‘in as far as they were accompanied by the perception of shock (or fear of loss) concerning certainties (or values) previously taken for granted’.²⁸

²⁷ Eveline Brugger, “So sollen die brief ab und tod sein”: Landesfürstliche Judenschuldentilgungen im Österreich des 14. Jahrhunderts’, *Aschkenas* 20 (2010), 329–41; Alfred Haverkamp, ‘Ebrei in Italia e in Germania nel tardo medioevo. Spunti per un confronto’, in “*Interstizi*” (as in n. 25), pp. 47–100, at p. 89.

²⁸ Graus, *Pest* (as in n. 2), p. 537: ‘Ich schlage daher vor, als “Krise” das Zusammenfallen verschiedenartiger Erschütterungen (sog. Teilkrisen) objektiver Art (qualitative Umbrüche, Trend-

Apart from concepts like ‘crisis’ or ‘partial crisis’, historians have spoken of transformation, revolution, at times even of growth and, very broadly, of change.²⁹ In view of the late medieval economic and social fabric, Friedrich Lütge in 1950 suggested speaking of ‘structural change’, which implies a set of open but interconnected processes.³⁰

Among today’s historians, the ‘later medieval crisis’ has come somewhat out of fashion. They have pointed out, for example, that Abel’s model may look logical but that it is not reflected in the sources, and that indeed economic ups and downs could happen in different sectors and in various regions at the same time. The experience of living in a “waning” age, to name another problem, was by no means confined to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, nor can the frequency, intensity, and experience of war in this period be safely compared to that in earlier times, on which we simply have less information.

Recent advances in historical climatology and microbiology do however suggest that there was something decidedly “wrong” with the later medieval period, and in global terms. Scientists have collected solid evidence that there was a major shift from the favourable climatic conditions of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries (at least in Europe)—the so-called ‘Medieval Climate Anomaly’—to the adverse conditions of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries—known as the ‘Little Ice Age’. The shift began to make itself felt in the late-thirteenth century and probably provided the conditions favorable to the spread of livestock pests and plague, while at the same time human nutrition resources were adversely affected by a cooling climate and by more frequent extreme weather events. It is before this global background that Bruce M. S. Campbell has recently presented a first synthesis of *The Great Transition*, carefully noting that microbes and the weather were not the sole forces driving the fate of human societies and that, indeed, humans were continuously in-

einbrüche, Trendwenden) zu bezeichnen, sofern sie von Erschütterungen (drohenden Verlusten) bisher kaum bestrittener Sicherheiten (Werte) begleitet sind, deren man sich bewußt ist.’

²⁹ Cf. Peter Schuster, ‘Die Krise des Spätmittelalters: Zur Evidenz eines sozial- und wirtschaftsgeschichtlichen Paradigmas in der Geschichtsschreibung des 20. Jahrhunderts’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 269 (1999), 19–55 (we do not share Schuster’s view (p. 55) that the late medieval crisis was just a ‘20th-century imagination’); Werner Rösener, ‘Die Krise des Spätmittelalters in neuer Perspektive’, *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 99 (2012), 189–208. On Graus’s idea of ‘partial crises’ (‘Teilkrisen’) see the preceding note.

³⁰ Friedrich Lütge, ‘Das 14./15. Jahrhundert in der Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte’, *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik*, 162 (1950), 163–213, at pp. 178–79, 183–86; see also Ernst Pitz, ‘Die Wirtschaftskrise des Spätmittelalters’, *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 52 (1965), 347–67, at p. 359; Franz Irsigler, ‘Kölner Wirtschaftsbeziehungen zum Oberrhein vom 14. bis 16. Jahrhundert’, *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, 122 (1974), 1–21, at p. 4.

teracting with their natural environment in ways that had repercussions for the overall system.³¹

Thus, it may be helpful to relate the disruptions that hit Jewish lives in the decades around 1400 to more large-scale events and broader trends affecting European societies (Jews and Christians alike) during this period. Extreme weather events, hunger crises and pandemics, but also violent changes in political power, large-scale military conflict lasting for generations, rural and urban unrest, persecution of deviants and expulsion of religious minorities, and—last but not least—the crisis of the established Church, must all be viewed in conjunction in order to set up a useful analytical framework.

In recent years the idea of a widespread economic deflation caused by monetary problems—the so-called “bullion famine” of the later medieval period—has received renewed attention.³² The effects of monetary deflation and the changing values of silver and gold currencies must not be ignored³³, but they are also hard to calculate into the overall picture modelled on assumptions about population figures and harvest returns. Indeed, many subsystems of the later medieval social fabric actually had their ups and downs, their failures and new beginnings, as historians have not failed to point out.³⁴ Similarly, the presence or absence of war does not seem to offer a clear-cut solution to our problem. In any case, it will take careful analysis of a large sample to arrive at a satisfactory model.

Quite generally, we might say that not much is gained when we classify the calamities that befell the Jewish communities between (roughly) 1380 and 1420 as an

³¹ Bruce M. S. Campbell, *The Great Transition: Climate, Disease and Society in the Late Medieval World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016).

³² John Munro, ‘South German Silver, European Textiles, and Venetian Trade with the Levant and Ottoman Empire c.1370 to c.1720: A Non-mercantilist Approach to the Balance of Payments Problem’ (University of Toronto: Department of Economics, 2006) online at <http://repec.economics.utoronto.ca/repec_show_paper.php?handle=tecipa-224> [18.09.2017]. Philipp R. Rössner, *Deflation, Devaluation, Rebellion: Geld im Zeitalter der Reformation*, Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Beiheft 219 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2012), has recently related the rise of urban and rural unrest in Reformation Germany to problems of bullion and money supply.

³³ For the effects on Christian-Jewish relations see Hans-Jörg Gilomen, ‘Silbermangel und jüdische Geldleihe: Prämerkantilistische Bedenken gegen den lombardischen und jüdischen Geldhandel im Spätmittelalter’, *Aschkenas*, 20 (2010), 281–303.

³⁴ Various new approaches have been taken, for example, in the study of territorial lordship, urban societies, and universities. See Peter Moraw, *Von offener Verfassung zu gestalteter Verdichtung. Das Reich im späten Mittelalter 1250–1450* (Frankfurt a. M.: Propyläen, 1990); Christopher Allmand, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol VII, c.1415–c.1500 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998); Ulf Dirlmeier, Gerhard Fouquet and Bernd Fuhrmann, *Europa im Spätmittelalter*, Oldenbourg Grundriss der Geschichte, 8 (München: Oldenbourg, 2003).

expression of a more general “crisis” or indeed of a global “transition”. More specific approaches are needed. One such approach, for example, might be to place the violence against the Jewish inhabitants of European towns in the history of disturbances and urban riots and to try and find patterns of congruence. Thus, the anti-Jewish violence of 1391 on the Iberian Peninsula occurred during a period of increased urban unrest between c.1380 and c.1420. For Western Europe and Italy the increase can be observed from 1378 to 1383.³⁵ In the Empire and in neighbouring regions, too, many such incidents can be identified. The towns of the Empire appear to follow a different pattern; here the disturbances clustered around 1400.³⁶ In some instances, the general urban unrest affected the Jews, as for example in Paris in 1382³⁷ or Cordoba in 1406.³⁸ It is striking, however, to see in how many cases the local Jewish population seems *not* to have been affected.

The one “crisis” still accepted by a majority of today’s medievalists is the ecclesiastical crisis brought about by the schism of 1378, when disputed elections led to a split of the universal (Latin) Church into two different (and instable) ‘obediencies’.³⁹ Efforts to resolve this impasse at the Council of Pisa in 1409 failed, as instead of two popes there were now three. Eventually, delegates convened at the Council of Constance by various means managed to obtain the abdication of at least two of them and declared the third deposed. A new, widely accepted successor was elected in 1417. On the practical level, the schism was a constant source of quarrels over allegiances and, more pressingly, over ecclesiastical prebends and revenues. Is it possible that the competition between the various popes or anti-popes over ecclesiastical rule would have favoured stricter policies towards the Jewish community? The efforts Benedict XIII spent on the Jews of Spain, for example, and his alliance

³⁵ Samuel K. Cohn, *Lust for Liberty: The Politics of Social Revolt in Medieval Europe, 1200–1425. Italy, France and Flanders* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2008). Significantly, this period includes the year of the English Peasants’ Revolt.

³⁶ Graus, *Pest* (as in n. 2), pp. 401–07; Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller, *Uplop – Seditio: Innerstädtische Unruhen des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts im engeren Reichsgebiet; schematisierte vergleichende Konfliktanalyse*, Studien zur Geschichtsforschung des Mittelalters, 28 (Hamburg: Kovač, 2012); recently, Patrick Lantschner, ‘Revolts and the Political Order of Cities in the Late Middle Ages’, *Past and Present*, 225 (2014), 3–46.

³⁷ Cf. Annie Saunier, ‘Le roi, les émeutiers et la mort de juifs à Paris (1380–1382)’, in *La Mort et ses représentations dans le judaïsme*, ed. by Daniel Tollet, Bibliothèque d’études juives, série histoire, 9/VI (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2000), pp. 77–91.

³⁸ Antonio Jaén, *Historia de la Ciudad de Córdoba*, 4th edn (Madrid: Luque 1971), p. 90.

³⁹ Heribert Müller, *Die kirchliche Krise des Spätmittelalters: Schisma, Konziliarismus und Konzilien*, Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte, 90 (München: Oldenbourg, 2012); *A Companion to the Great Western Schism*, ed. by Joëlle Rollo-Koster and Thomas Izbiki, Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition, 17 (Leiden, etc.: Brill, 2009).

with prominent popular preachers such as Vincent Ferrer, are probably not just a result of the “Converso” question since 1391. Significantly, Benedict’s bull *Etsi doctores* of 1415 had a major impact on later Church policies even though Pedro de Luna was formally deposed by the Council of Constance in 1417.⁴⁰ On the other hand, confirming *Sicut Judaeis* and issuing other protective bulls were among the first moves by the Council’s own pope, Martin V, in 1418 and 1419.⁴¹

Historians have held that the dispute over the highest spiritual authority created a major confidence crisis, and some have seen its expression in the religious sensibilities and devotional trends of European Latin Christians. However, these trends appear in a considerable variety. Mystical and eschatological thinking might well envisage a positive role accorded to the Jews, as in the teaching of the ‘Saxonian prophet’, the Franciscan friar Frederick of Brunswick, who found a refuge in Speyer in 1389 before he was tried for heresy there and imprisoned in 1392.⁴² At about the same time, John of Jenstein, the archbishop of Prague, proposed the idea that the Jews were practising usury in order to finance the impending wars of Antichrist against the Church.⁴³ It is quite unclear, however, whether this idea should be related to the eschatological expectations focused on the year 1400⁴⁴, and generally whether such expectations, which can be traced in a number of places, had any significant impact on Christian attitudes towards the Jews.

The ecclesiastical crisis of authority may well have given rise to a nervous attitude, so to speak, among contemporary Christians, heightening their sensitivity towards presumed acts of irreverence, such as at Prague in 1389 and at Seville in 1391, where Jews were said to have treated the sacrament with contempt. Seen in this perspective, the question of how to deal with the continued presence of Jews in

⁴⁰ Schreckenberg, *Adversus-Judaeos-Texte* (as in n. 15), pp. 438–44. Cf. Christian Jörg, ‘Christen und Juden zur Zeit der Konzilien von Konstanz und Basel: Traditionen und Inhalte der Reformdiskussionen um Kontakte, Verbindungen und Ausgrenzungen während des hohen und späten Mittelalters’ (unpublished habilitation thesis, Universität Trier, 2011).

⁴¹ Schreckenberg, *Adversus-Judaeos-Texte* (as in n. 15), pp. 486–88.

⁴² Haverkamp, ‘Deutschland und Italien’ (as in n. 1), pp. 136–37; Robert E. Lerner, *The Feast of Saint Abraham: Medieval Millenarians and the Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 89–100.

⁴³ Newman, ‘Passion’ (as in n. 19), p. 3, and Rubin, *Gentile Tales* (as in n. 17), p. 137. On this motif see also Christoph Cluse, *Darf ein Bischof Juden zulassen?: Die Gutachten des Siffridus Piscator OP (gest. 1473) zur Auseinandersetzung um die Vertreibung der Juden aus Mainz*, Arye Maimon-Institut für Geschichte der Juden: Studien und Texte, 7 (Trier: Kliomedia, 2013), at pp. 76, 79–80, and Johannes Heil, ‘Gottesfeinde’ – ‘Menschenfeinde’: *Die Vorstellung von jüdischer Weltverschwörung (13. bis 16. Jahrhundert)*, Antisemitismus, 3 (Essen: Klartext, 2006), pp. 455–59, 515–21.

⁴⁴ Cf. Mentgen, ‘Relevanz von Jahrhundertwenden’ (as in n. 1), pp. 340–50.

Latin Christendom was, to use the language of the period, part and parcel of the *causa fidei*. In this context, let us mention one more factor that should not be neglected—the universities and intellectuals. It is evident that the papal schism favoured the foundation of new universities, especially in the area of the Empire. It is interesting to note, for example, that the new University of Heidelberg, founded in 1386, received houses and other real estate belonging to the Jews following the expulsion of 1390.⁴⁵ Similar windfall profits were made by the universities of Vienna in the wake of the *Gezera*,⁴⁶ and by that of Tübingen at the end of the fifteenth century following the expulsion of the Jews from the duchy of Württemberg.⁴⁷

On the ideological plain, some late-fourteenth century university masters can be identified as driving forces behind local anti-Jewish measures, for example in Cologne and Vienna. Michael Shank in his study on the important figure of Henry of Langenstein (*ob.* 1397) has argued that the Great Schism had shaken the confidence in Aristotelian logic and academic disputations as suitable tools for overcoming serious issues of faith and authority. In addition, Langenstein's experience of a persistent, strong Jewish presence in Vienna led him to regard with scepticism the idea of convincing Jews by rational means of Christian tenets of faith such as the Trinity. He therefore performed a turn towards a more "realist" position (in the medieval sense of the word), by which he argued that 'unless you believe, you shall not understand'.⁴⁸ This approach found expression in his 'sermons to convert the

⁴⁵ Cf. Franz-Josef Ziwes, 'Territoriale Judenvertreibungen' (as in n. 22), p. 170; Mentgen, 'Judenvertreibungen' (as in n. 21), p. 368; Jürgen Miethke, 'The University of Heidelberg and the Jews: Founding and Financing the Needs of a New University', in *Crossing Boundaries at Medieval Universities*, ed. by Spencer E. Young, Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, 36 (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 317–40.

⁴⁶ Klaus Wolf, *Hof – Universität – Laien: Literatur- und sprachgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum deutschen Schrifttum der Wiener Schule des Spätmittelalters*, Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter, 45 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2006), at pp. 118–24.

⁴⁷ Stefan Lang, 'Die Ausweisung der Juden aus Tübingen und Württemberg 1477 bis 1498', in *Tübingen: Impulse zur Stadt- und Universitätsgeschichte. Festschrift für Wilfried Setzler zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Sönke Lorenz, Tübinger Bausteine zur Landesgeschichte, 10 (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2008), pp. 11–32. The University of Mainz, founded in 1476/77, later owned grounds that were formerly part of the Jewish cemetery of that city. The historical connection is as yet unclear. See Karl A. Schaab, *Diplomatische Geschichte der Juden zu Mainz und dessen Umgebung, mit Berücksichtigung ihres Rechtszustandes in den verschiedenen Epochen* (Mainz: Victor von Zabern, 1855), pp. 37–38 (finds of human remains on the 'Universitätsacker'). It is as yet unclear how far these rights date back.

⁴⁸ Michael H. Shank, *'Unless You Believe, You Shall Not Understand': Logic, University and Society in Late Medieval Vienna* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1988), pp. 139–69. Langenstein also held strong views on Jewish moneylending and even denied the Jews' claim that they were rightful descendants of Abraham; see his 'Tractatus bipartitus de contractibus' of c.1392/93,

Jews' (*Sermones Wiennenses ad Iudeos convertendos*)⁴⁹ and was further developed by his student, Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl. In Nicholas's view, it was okay to accept baptism first and only later develop a fuller understanding of what it implied. Hierarchy and power relations thus took precedence over rational argument in what we may call a "political" theology. Dinkelsbühl had been a participant of the ecumenical Council of Constance, where Jean Gerson and others had developed this emphasis on tradition and hierarchy in their struggle with Hussite biblicism.⁵⁰

It is striking to observe the link between Jews and Hussites made by ecclesiastical and secular authorities around 1420, and especially in connection with the 'Gezera of Vienna'. In the decades around 1400 a considerable number of new "heretics" were identified all over Europe, and it is probably no coincidence that this was also the period of the first witchcraft trials. In Michael Shank's view, 'by 1420, the mood in Vienna was one of pervasive suspicion that bordered on collective paranoia'.⁵¹

3 Resilience

Resilience has become a buzzword of sorts, and some justification may be needed for using it in the present context. Until recently, historians have rarely taken up the concept. In Postcolonial Studies the concept of 'cultural resilience' is used to describe the resistance of social groups to changes imposed from outside.⁵² In a few cases circular models have been employed as an analytical tool. Here 'resilience' is understood as a phase in the historical process. Both ways of using the resilience concept may be of interest when we deal with the history of the Jewish minority in late medieval Europe.

The concept was first developed in Psychology, especially the psychology of the individual. In this context, studies on Holocaust survivors have played a significant

transcribed by Ch. Cluse from the 1484 print, online at <https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost14/HenricusHassia/hen_to00.html> [29.11.2017], especially part 1, ch. 26.

⁴⁹ Fritz P. Knapp, 'Heinrich von Langenstein: *Sermones Wiennenses ad Iudaeos convertendos*', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 109 (2001), 105–17.

⁵⁰ Shank, 'Unless You Believe' (as in n. 48), pp. 178–98.

⁵¹ See the recent study by Kathrin Utz Tremp, *Von der Häresie zur Hexerei: 'Wirkliche' und imaginäre Sekten im Spätmittelalter*, MGH Schriften, 59 (Hannover: Hahn, 2008), as well as Andreas Blauert, *Frühe Hexenverfolgungen: Ketzer-, Zauberei- und Hexenprozesse des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Sozialgeschichtliche Bibliothek, 1 (Hamburg: Junius, 1989). Cf. Shank, 'Unless You Believe' (as in n. 48), p. 191. See also above, n. 42.

⁵² See, for example, Khaled J. Bloom, 'An American Tragedy of the Commons: Land and Labor in the Cherokee Nation 1870–1900', *Agricultural History*, 76,3 (2002), 497–523.

role. Later it was elaborated in numerous multi-disciplinary studies, especially in Ecology, including Human Ecology.⁵³ Its counter-concept is vulnerability, i.e., the risk a social unit is facing from existential disruption and the likelihood of its dissolution, failure, or destruction from such disruption. According to the *Stockholm Resilience Centre*, resilience is the overall capacity to develop adequate social, cultural, and political options of action.⁵⁴ Accordingly, ‘social resilience’ is defined as ‘the ability of human communities to withstand and recover from stresses, such as environmental change or social, economic or political upheaval.’ It is the ability of such units to react in creative and innovative ways to the challenges posed in their environment.⁵⁵ By this capacity a social system may react to changes that manifest themselves in accelerating pressures or in abrupt change. In analysing the overall capacity of such reaction, we can identify, and distinguish between, potentials of coping, of adaptation, and of transformation. Coping potentials manifest themselves in options of short-term action aimed at preserving a certain state of affairs or returning to the conditions that applied prior to a disruptive shock; adaptive potentials subsume instances of learning from past experience, thus allowing for some change in order to preserve the existence of a social unit in a mid- or longer-term perspective. Transformative potentials can have even broader consequences, in that the resilient unit or social system will show significantly different features after re-stabilizing from a disruptive event than before that event.

In theorizing resilience, it is important to understand where these potentials and capacities are at work. Recent studies have underlined that while resilience may be understood as an inherent feature (or dimension) of resilience processes, it is not a property or quality of the social unit. This anti-essentialist view has strengthened models of the ‘adaptive cycle’ as they are used in Human Ecology.⁵⁶ Adaptive cycles

⁵³ Cf. Martin Endreß and Benjamin Rampp, ‘Resilienz als Perspektive auf gesellschaftliche Prozesse’, in *Resilienz im Sozialen*, ed. by Martin Endreß and Andrea Maurer (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2015), pp. 33–55; Sabine Blum *et al.*, ‘Soziologische Perspektiven’, in *Multidisziplinäre Perspektiven der Resilienzforschung*, ed. by Rüdiger Wink (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2015), pp. 151–178. See also the introduction to A. Weber’s contribution, below, p. 55.

⁵⁴ ‘Resilience is the capacity of a system to continually change and adapt yet remain within critical thresholds.’ See <<http://www.stockholmresilience.org/21/research/what-is-resilience.html>> [04.07.2016].

⁵⁵ Stockholm Resilience Centre, ‘Resilience Dictionary’, online at <<http://www.stockholmresilience.org/21/research/what-is-resilience/resilience-dictionary.html>> [12.05.2014].

⁵⁶ Cf. Crawford S. Holling and Lance H. Gunderson, ‘Resilience and Adaptive Change’, in *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems*, ed. by Lance H. Gunderson and Crawford S. Holling (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2002), pp. 25–62; Brian D. Fath, Carly A. Dean and Harald Katzmair, ‘Navigating the Adaptive Cycle: an Approach to Managing the Resilience of Social Systems’, *Ecology and Society*, 20,2 (2015), no. 24.

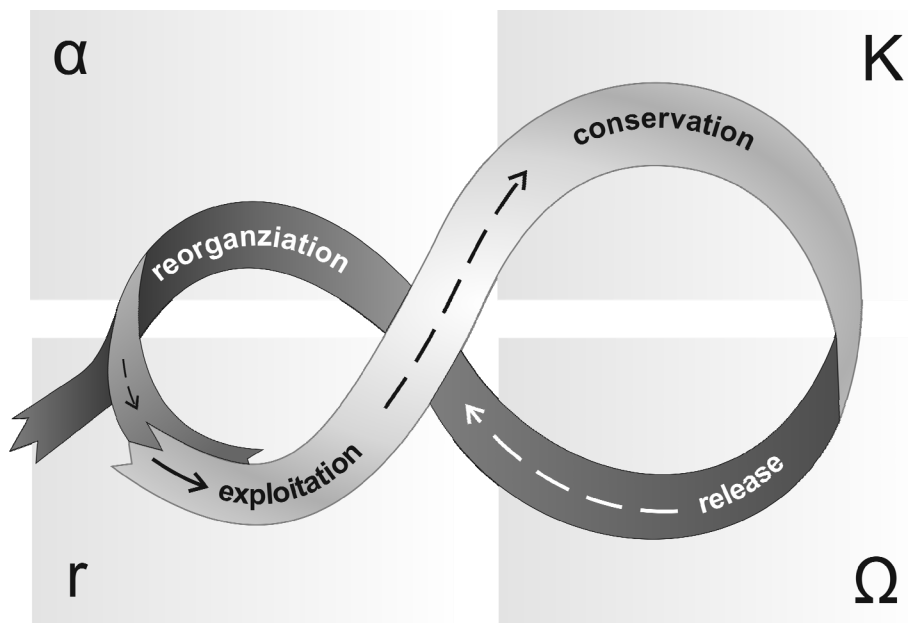


fig. 1: The 'adaptive cycle', according to Gunderson & Holling, 'In Quest of a Theory of Adaptive Change', in *Panarchy* (as in n. 56), pp. 63–102.

are characterized by a sequence of phases from 'growth' (new beginning) through 'equilibrium' (conservation) to 'collapse' (including a release of potential) and again, 'reorientation' (reorganization, innovation). The reorientation phase includes processes of stabilization and change that are of particular interest to resilience research. Adaptive cycle processes can occur in different speeds and intensities and on various levels or scales at the same time. The adaptive cycle concept assumes that following a collapse an adaptive system will never return to quite the same state as it was in before.⁵⁷ Rather it reacts, and this may include a transformation into a new state, which may require a new description or even definition of the system, but it may also imply its disintegration and collapse (fig. 1).

⁵⁷ Campbell, *Great Transition* (as in n. 31, p. 20, stated that 'the Great Transition brought no return to the socio-ecological status quo ante' and therefore 'represents a transition and not a cycle'. This corresponds to his more restrictive use of the term 'resilience', for which see, for example, *ibid.*, p. 13 ('resilience to harvest failure') or p. 23 ('... return to the status quo ante. In this respect, societies at this time were resilient'). According to the model presented below, Campbell relates to 'coping' capacities, disregarding capacities of 'adaptation' and 'transformation'. The cycle metaphor—a legacy of traditional models of ecology—needs rethinking.

The DFG research group FOR2539 ‘Resilience: Phases of Societal Upheaval in Dialogue between Medieval Studies and Sociology’ at Trier University is currently working on a toolkit for describing and analysing historical processes in terms of ‘resilience’, combining empirical research on the later medieval period with sociological theory-building. We are mainly interested in procedural manifestations of resilience and distinguish between strategies, dispositions, and resources.

In order to identify *processes* of resilience, we investigate manifestations of coping, adaptation, and transformation potentials allowing groups of agents or social units to stabilize across critical disruptive events. Put simply, we are trying to reveal what happens after breakdowns and on the way towards new states of stability.

With the concept of resilience *strategies*, the goals, motivations, and ways come into view by which agents try to defend and preserve social units when challenged with (perceived) disruptive events.

Resilience strategies are to be distinguished from resilience *dispositions*. The latter can draw on incorporated experience generated in reaction to (previous) existential disruption. This kind of knowledge is typically framed by cultural traditions and may be activated by means of transfer or translation.

Finally, we look out for the social, political, economic, and cultural resilience *resources*, including knowledge and power but also norms and values which may be helpful in coping with critical disruptive events.

By adopting this terminology we hope to be able to arrive at precise descriptions of constellations in social space and patterns of action; also, we expect that it will make a comparative analysis easier in that it helps to typify according to potentials and processes of coping, adaptation, and transformation. These potentials and processes react to shock-like, abrupt changes but also to accelerating pressures that become apparent, or are being identified, at so-called tipping points.⁵⁸ At the same time, we have to be aware of the unintended side effects produced in resilience processes.⁵⁹ These considerations tie in with recent work in the humanities, including medieval studies, which has highlighted the importance of *contingency* as an analytical category.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Ann P. Kinzig *et al.*, ‘Resilience and Regime Shifts: Assessing Cascading Effects’, *Ecology and Society*, 11,1 (2006), no. 20.

⁵⁹ Benjamin Steiner, *Nebenfolgen in der Geschichte. Eine historische Soziologie reflexiver Modernisierung*, mit einem Begleitwort von Ulrich Beck, *Historische Zeitschrift*, Beiheft 65 (Berlin, Munich & Boston: De Gruyter, 2015).

⁶⁰ See, for example, Gerhard Fouquet, ‘Familie, Haus und Armut in spätmittelalterlichen Städten – Das Beispiel des Augsburger Ehepaars Elisabeth Störkler und Burkard Zink’, in *Inklusion/Exklusion. Studien zu Fremdheit und Armut von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Andreas Gestrich and Lutz Raphael, *Inklusion/Exklusion*, 5 (Frankfurt a. M. etc.: Lang, 2004), pp. 283–307; Martin Kintzinger, ‘*Successio*. Strategien der Thronfolge in der Zeit des Hundert-

This means that we will have to look for practices of resistance, adaptation, and innovation as well as for ways in which cultural and religious patterns were preserved and changed.

In the context of medieval Jewish studies, ‘resilience’ can be read in different ways. From the point of view of Jewish-Christian relations, it is useful to ask for disrupting forces and stabilizing potentials at work in a given period and in their chronological sequence. Such analysis may help in overcoming the common image of a constant decline over the course of the medieval period.⁶¹ From a more ‘internal’, Jewish point of view, religious and social changes can be read as processes of cultural resilience. The areas in which resilience resources can be observed may include *political and diplomatic activity*, in which relations with the Christian communities and authorities were used to find a new balance for the possibilities of Jewish life; old and new or adapting networks that helped overcome the effects of expulsion, persecution and migration; and religious change. What new currents of thought and devotion, what new ways of interpreting religious law can be regarded as responses to outward threats, as ways of coping and adapting?

Coping with the 1096 Crusade persecutions in the Rhineland provides a case in point. Various scholars have read the Hebrew narratives composed in the wake of these events in light of the fact that they reflect the attitudes of the survivors, many of whom would have undergone forced baptism in order to evade death. Consequently, they extolled the acts of martyrdom of those who had resisted the challenge of the crusaders and were slain—even those who had committed suicide or even killed their families and children ‘in sanctification of the divine name’ (*al-qiddush ha-Shem*).⁶² Hanna Liss has recently also traced the repercussions of these events in a new emphasis on ritual purity.⁶³

jährigen Krieges’, in *Erbinungen und Erbverbrüderungen in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit. Generationenübergreifende Verträge und Strategien im europäischen Vergleich*, ed. by Mario Müller, Karl-Heinz Spieß and Uwe Tresp, Studien zur brandenburgischen und vergleichenden Landesgeschichte, 17 (Berlin: Lukas, 2014), pp. 227–51.

⁶¹ See, for example, Roger Louis Martinez-Davila, ‘Jews, Catholics, and Converts: Reassessing the Resilience of Convivencia in Fifteenth-Century Plasencia, Spain’, *Journal of Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian Crypto Jews*, 1 (2009), 95–119.

⁶² See, for example, Haym Soloveitchik, ‘Religious Law and Change: The Medieval Ashkenazic Example’, *AJS Review*, 12 (1987), 205–21, recently reprinted in id., *Collected Essays*, vol. 1 (Oxford & Portland: Littman, 2013), pp. 239–57; Ivan G. Marcus, ‘A Pious Community and Doubt: *Qiddush ha-Shem* in Ashkenaz and the Story of Rabbi Amnon of Mainz’, in *Studien zur jüdischen Geschichte und Soziologie: Festschrift Julius Carlebach* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1992), pp. 97–113, and *Hebräische Berichte*, ed. Haverkamp (as in n. 4), pp. 14–20.

⁶³ Hanna Liss, ‘Einführungsvortrag’, in *Kollektive Traumaerfahrung und kulturelle Resilienz: Rekonstruktion rituallydynamischer Prozesse in Kulturen der Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, ed. by

The project which we are currently running at the Arye Maimon Institute for Jewish History is focused on the options for agency and the strategies available to, and adopted by members of the Jewish minority in the German Kingdom and in the neighbouring areas where German-speaking Jews settled, in the face of manifold and often radical changes. If we try to identify the major cycles of adaptation in Ashkenazi-Jewish history of the period from around the mid-fourteenth century, there were a number of supra-regional disruptive events (fig. 2). Jews reacted in various ways, adopting different resilience strategies using cultural dispositions and material resources on a familial as well as community-wide scale. First there were the grave persecutions at the time of the Black Death 1348–50, then the so-called “cancellations” of debts owed to Jews between 1385 and 1391, before a background of recurrent persecution in the decennia before and after 1400; finally, the expulsions with long-term effects which set in around 1390 (in the Palatinate) and accelerated from 1418/19 (the Archbishopric of Trier, to continue on until the early sixteenth century with, perhaps the most significant event, the end of the Jewish community in Regensburg in 1519.

In a way, figure 2 may remind us of the cyclical model that Shim'on b. Shmu'el of Regensburg had proposed around 1400 to make sense of the events during his lifetime, in the passage we quoted at the outset of this paper. For Shim'on, the reason for the recurrent persecution of his community was beyond that group's influence—it was ‘written in the manners’ of the Christians—and he felt the same way when it came to its deliverance from these perils, which he attributed to God's intervention. Leaving aside the issue of non-existing Christian ‘books of manners’ that allegedly demanded killing Jews every fifty years, today's historians (even those who consider themselves religious) will hardly be satisfied with an explanation that draws on a series of miracles in order to resolve a threatening situation.

In other words, it is important not to see cycles where there aren't any. We must keep in mind that the ‘adaptive cycle’ model, here adopted to conceptualize Jewish resilience in later medieval Europe, implies that the dynamics of history are self-generating and systemic. After all, the model has its origins in the scientific analysis of processes observed in ecosystems. Great caution is therefore needed when it is applied in the analysis of historical processes. The latter involve agents, who can act in unpredictable ways according to motivations that remain inaccessible to any observer. On a more general level, the evidence that has come down to us from medieval times is so fragmentary that any attempt at reconstructing the systemic

Hanna Liss <http://www.hfjs.eu/md/hfjs/multimedia/trauma/08072011tt_hlo1.swf> [19.09.2017]; cf. also Johannes Heil, ‘Trauma und Strategien der Traumabewältigung – Die Funktion und Verortung von Memorialtexten zu den Pogromen von 1096’, *ibid.*, <http://www.hfjs.eu/md/hfjs/multimedia/trauma/08072011tt_jh02.swf> [19.09.2017].

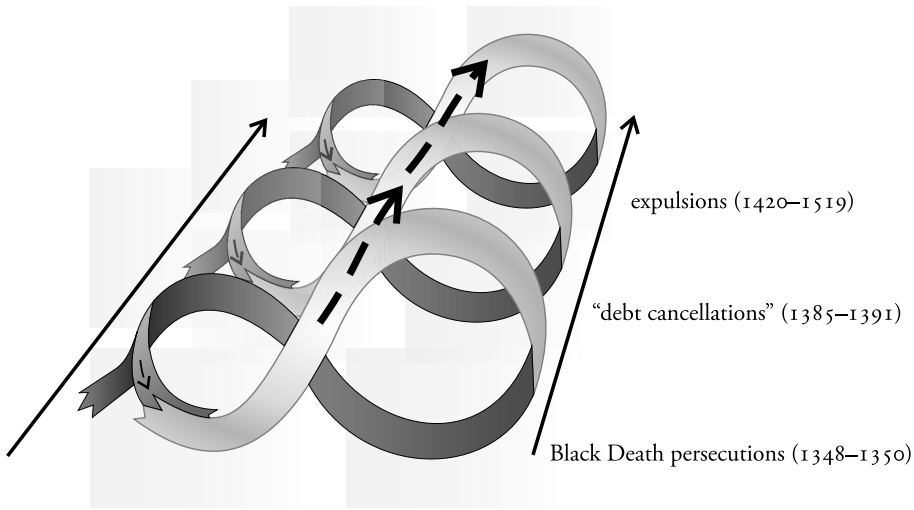


fig. 2: Jewish experience in later medieval Germany, viewed as a series of adaptive cycles.

dynamics of historical and cultural processes is conjectural at best. There is thus a constant risk of identifying a cause-and-effect logic in surface phenomena where ‘contingency’ would in fact provide a better mode of description.⁶⁴

Notwithstanding these risks, the ‘adaptive cycle’ model may offer a great *heuristic* potential towards describing post-disruption dynamics, including those at work in the later medieval period. In particular, it highlights the options and agency on the part of those Jews who had survived disruptive events. The model itself points out

⁶⁴ Frances Westley *et al.*, ‘Why Systems of People and Nature Are Not Just Social and Ecological Systems’, in *Panarchy* (as in n. 56), pp. 103–19, have addressed the problem as one of ‘disciplinary disunity’ between ecologists and social scientists: ‘In ecosystems, the key dimensions are space and time. For social systems, we need to add a third dimension, which is symbolic construction or meaning’ (p. 119). From the vantage point of historians dealing with pre-modern societies, precise descriptions of ‘social systems’ according to the standards of social science largely remain beyond reach. Evidence of the ‘symbolic construction or meaning’, too, is by definition fragmentary (and its analysis therefore hard to control). The category of contingency is therefore needed not because we tend to think of human history as distinct from natural systems (as J. G. Droysen did) but for strictly methodological reasons: In this sense, ‘contingency’ may be just another word for ‘we simply don’t know why’. This does of course not preclude hypothesis and reasoned argument—in fact, it keeps them alive. For a different, fruitful analytical take on contingency cf. the studies cited above, n. 60.

the rigidity (and vulnerability) of pre-collapse ‘connectedness’ and addresses disruption as a ‘release’ of potentials that are to some extent open to re-organization.

The model can thus direct our attention towards the potentials, options, and moves in phases following disruptions of Jewish life in later medieval Europe. In fact, some Jewish agents can be observed negotiating for the frame conditions of resettlement, forming new communities, and re-organizing or re-orienting their business transactions. Some of these agents were members of the old elites—well-connected to the Christian authorities and possessing significant social capital. Others may be newcomers whose chances rested on the bare fact that they had survived. Moreover, we may observe adaptations and transfers that entailed long-term shifts into new regions of Jewish settlement.

The structural conditions, the constellations of agents, and the precise actions needed to secure acceptable conditions for the mid- and long-term continuation of Jewish life in a Christian environment, have not yet been extensively researched. It is plausible that the conditions worsened in the long run, that is, between the mid-fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In the course of this period new decisions had to be taken with every disruptive tipping point.

It should be kept in mind that the ‘resilient unit’ under threat in these times was not simply *the lives of Jews* as a physical group but rather *Jewish life* in the sense of a collective praxis in families, households, and communities. This focus on Judaism as a way of life is justified by the fact that the vulnerability of a religious group lies not only in the physical threat to its members but also in the possibility of ‘opting out’, that is, of converting to the majority group. Research has suggested that medieval Sefardi and Ashkenazi Jews have reacted differently to the challenge. This comparative glance reveals the importance of resilience dispositions.⁶⁵

4 Some Lines of Inquiry

The purpose of this collection is to provide a comparative tableau of historical experience and to identify connections between the events affecting the Jewish communities of Europe and the broader trends in European societies at the time, in order to gain a more general picture of the effects these events had. At the outset, we would like to highlight three lines of inquiry.

First, many attacks on European Jews were clearly aimed at their Jewish identity. This is evident in the high pressure to convert, observable in many events we have named, from the Spanish riots in 1391 through the Tortosa Disputation to the Viennese *Gezera* of 1420. According to some sources, the expulsion from France,

⁶⁵ See below, p. 29.

too, had resulted from quarrels over the identity of a baptized Jew.⁶⁶ In Ashkenaz the so-called “relapses” of baptized Jews as well as Christian conversions to Judaism, as rare as they may have been, sparked highly nervous reactions. In Speyer in 1404, for example, the authorities, on the news that a Christian maidservant had adopted the Jewish faith, incarcerated all the local Jews.⁶⁷ It is agreed that the rise of a community of ‘Conversos’ in Spain had more far-reaching effects, some of which will be addressed in Maurice Kriegel’s contribution to the present volume.

Secondly, there was a distinctively economic side to the disruptive anti-Jewish violence of these decades. Many of the urban riots, for example, happened in response to difficulties on the grain market, rising prices and, at the same time, heavy or non-customary taxation. Monetary problems (the ‘bullion famine’) may have aggravated the effects. Perhaps due to declining populations and public debt, the fiscal pressure on everyone was mounting. It certainly hit the Jews in particular ways. There were irregular tallages, often imposed by the local authorities, on the Jews of Augsburg (1381, 1384), Regensburg (1384), Strasbourg (1386), Dinkelsbühl, Rothenburg ob der Tauber (1401), Kreuznach (1404), Rappoltsweiler (1404), Dresden, Freiberg and Naumburg (1411), Magdeburg and Überlingen (1415), Vienna (1417), Erfurt (1418), Breslau (1418), and so on.⁶⁸ In 1382 the wealthiest Jew of Vienna, David Steuss, was imprisoned and forced to write off no less than 50,000 florins, mostly in outstanding loans.⁶⁹ This exaction was followed (and surpassed) by the large-scale debt “cancellations” under King Wenceslas mentioned above. The city council of Regensburg imprisoned all the local Jews twice (in 1374 and 1384) for allegedly trying to leave the city. A similar incident occurred in Goslar in 1414. Tax demands and a reduced tax base induced territorial rulers, too, to tighten their grip on the Jews. In the archbishopric of Trier, this found expression in the idea of ‘hereditary servitude’ (*Erbeigenschaft*); here and elsewhere, Jews were punished for attempting to leave the country without permission.⁷⁰

Thirdly, this collection is important in that it provides the chance of assessing the compounded effect of the various events affecting the Jews in various localities and over the years. In an unpublished paper for a previous conference, Yacov Gug-

⁶⁶ Roger S. Kohn, ‘Les Juifs en France du Nord dans la seconde moitié du XIV^e siècle: Un état de la question’, in *L’Expulsion des juifs* (as in n. 23), pp. 13–29, at pp. 25–26.

⁶⁷ *Germania Judaica III* (as in n. 1), vol. II (1995), p. 1390.

⁶⁸ Cf. the relevant entries in *Germania Judaica III* (as in n. 1), vols I (1987) and II (1995); also Isenmann, ‘Steuern und Abgaben’, in *ibid.*, vol. III (2003), pp. 2263–66.

⁶⁹ *Germania Judaica III* (as in n. 1), vol. II (1995), p. 1606.

⁷⁰ Cf. Haverkamp, ‘Trier, Erzstift’, in *Germania Judaica III* (as in n. 1), vol. III (2003), p. 2039 and n. 23. The Regensburg incidents have recently been analysed in detail by Andreas Lehnertz, ‘Jüdensiegel im spätmittelalterlichen Reichsgebiet: Beglaubigungstätigkeit und Selbstrepräsentation von Jüdinnen und Juden’ (Ph.D. dissertation, Universität Trier, 2017), vol. I, pp. 197–257.

genheim has sketched a possible pan-European network connecting a handful of Jewish families who formed the financial élite of their communities in the 1370s and 1380s, with connections reaching as far as from Strasbourg to Barcelona and from Venice to Cologne. This network, Guggenheim argued, was largely destroyed during the 1390s by expulsions and through barely legalized plunder.⁷¹ Following a similar line of inquiry, Juliette Sibon in her contribution to the present volume takes a look at the effects of the events in Spain and Languedoc on the Jews of Marseille. Another way to look at this issue is to look at the changes in patterns of migration, with new links, for example, between the Empire and the Mediterranean. These will be addressed by Alessandra Veronese, Lucia Raspe, and Rena Lauer in their contributions to the present volume.⁷²

Finally, any understanding of the systemic nature of resilience processes at work in Jewish-Christian relations demands a closer look at the internal life of the Jewish communities, their ways of organizing cohesion and resistance as well as their rifts and divisions. Scholars have long established that the external pressures were transmitted into the dynamics of the Jewish communities.⁷³ It is, however, equally important to see how clashes of interest within the collective could open up and expose it to outside intervention, placing it at risk from anti-Jewish sentiment and action. This issue will be addressed in Claude Denjean's contribution to the present volume.⁷⁴

The perspectives just outlined and the theory of resilience provide the basic framework for investigating the ways in which late medieval Jews sought to over-

⁷¹ Yacov Guggenheim, 'Gab es in der zweiten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts eine international vernetzte jüdische Hochfinanz?' (unpublished paper, presented to the international workshop 'Translokale und interregionale Beziehungen der aschkenasischen Juden während des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit in vergleichender Perspektive', Trier, 27 July 2006). We wish to express our thanks to Yacov Guggenheim for sending us the draft of this paper, which has regrettably remained unpublished.

⁷² Below, pp. 157–71 (Veronese), 173–93 (Raspe), 195–219 (Lauer), and 259–71 (Sibon). See also Haverkamp, 'Juden in Deutschland und Italien' (as in n. 1).

⁷³ Eric Zimmer, *Harmony and Discord: An Analysis of the Decline of Jewish Self-Government in 15th Century Central Europe* (New York: Yeshiva UP, 1970).

⁷⁴ In 1384 a Jew of Zurich charged one of his co-religionists with having placed a dead child in the synagogue (situated in his house); cf. Florence Guggenheim-Grünberg, *Judenschicksale und 'Judenschuol' im mittelalterlichen Zürich*, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Volkskunde der Juden in der Schweiz, 8 (Zurich: Jüdische Buch-Gemeinde, 1967), pp. 43–44; Susanna Burghartz, 'Juden – eine Minderheit vor Gericht (Zürich 1378–1436)', in *Spannungen und Widersprüche: Gedenkschrift für František Graus*, ed. by Susanna Burghartz et al. (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1992), pp. 229–44, at pp. 236–39. On a similar accusation, see the contribution by C. Denjean below, p. 221.

come the disruptions affecting their communities and families as well as their individual assets and options. Families, as 'mid-sized' units of investigation, particularly offer themselves to such research: What resilience resources could they draw on? What strategies did they adopt (marriage strategies, sharing of capital and risk, old and new networks)? One main research method is thus prosopography.

In this connection we can analyse long-term, lasting moves of migration and the choice of the place of emigration as strategies of resilience. They entailed transfers of capital, of knowledge and norms, but did not necessarily exclude continuing contacts between emigrés and those they left behind in the former communities. This was the case when prominent Jewish families moved to Northern Italy, especially to the Venetian territory, starting in the late-fourteenth century. Under the protection of the *Serenissima*, a regional organization of Jews in the Venetian *Terraferma* emerged, whose members mainly came from the German Kingdom, fewer from France, from Venetian Crete, and from the regions of central Italy.⁷⁵ It is no coincidence that Northern Italy became a new centre of Jewish literary activity with at times 'wildly successful' results, as Lucia Raspe points out in her contribution to the present volume.⁷⁶

Recent research has also shown that the re-structuring of Jewish settlement in the regions of the German South-West, characterized by small-scale territories under fragmented political rule, also set in during the fifteenth century. It entailed processes of 'atomization' as well as consolidation. The latter was a drawn-out process, but it resulted in a network of rural and small-town Jewish settlements whose main protagonists were now more frequently active in small and petty credit as well as in horsedealing and the meat business. These new conditions become more visible during the early modern period, and they show significant differences from the late-medieval urban communities dominated by the families of wealthy moneylenders. Speaking in terms of resilience processes, we may say that the changes reveal major potentials of transformation.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Möschter, *Treviso* (as in n. 24); ead., 'Die Juden in der venetianischen Terraferma und ihre Einbindung in regionale und überregionale Netzwerke', in *Beziehungsnetze aschkenasischer Juden während des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Jörg R. Müller, *Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden*, A 20 (Hannover: Hahn, 2008), pp. 177–95; Alfred Haverkamp, 'Ebrei in Italia' (as in n. 27); id., 'Juden in Deutschland und Italien' (as in n. 1).

⁷⁶ Below, p. 192.

⁷⁷ Torben Stretz, *Juden in Franken zwischen Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit. Die Grafschaften Castell und Wertheim im regionalen Kontext*, *Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden*, A 26 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016); *Juden und ländliche Gesellschaft in Europa zwischen Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit (15.–17. Jahrhundert): Kontinuität und Krise, Inklusion und Exklusion in einer Zeit des Übergangs*, ed. by Sigrid Hirbodan and Torben Stretz, *Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden*, A 24 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016).

Once we start looking out for potentials and strategies of Jewish resilience, many sources long known among specialists will appear in a new light. Thus, we observe Jewish spokesmen and community leaders negotiating their needs in difficult circumstances. Some of them appear as agents with strong resources, like the “locators” portrayed by Michael Schlachter in this volume, who negotiated the conditions of Jewish resettlement after the Black Death with the Christian powers. Others responded to violence and the decrees imposed by the non-Jewish authorities. Their diplomatic initiatives were directed at the urban councils and territorial rulers, including the imperial courts of justice and the King or Emperor himself. Andreas Weber highlights such initiatives in the mid-1380s in his contribution to our collection. Before a background of rising tensions, individual Jews would have taken their security into their own hands, as described by Jörg Müller in his detailed study of how Kaufmann the Jew took over a castle in the hinterland of Speyer in 1384.⁷⁸ Before the same background we may reconsider the emergence and appointment of ‘imperial rabbis’ in the late-fourteenth century, who endeavoured to represent Jewish interests before the imperial crown.⁷⁹ From 1381, we hear of assemblies by rabbis and community leaders (sometimes called rabbinical “synods”) on a regional and imperial scale, who dealt with religious issues and coordinated a joined course of action in relations with the Christian authorities. Anxieties focused on the Roman jubilee year of 1400 and on the Hussite Wars in the 1420s also led to intensified communication among the Jewish communities.⁸⁰

Meanwhile in Northern Italy, Ashkenazi Jews, arriving in significant numbers from the 1380s, not only changed the patterns of Jewish settlement in this region, as described below by Alessandra Veronese.⁸¹ They also endeavoured to salvage the literary and cultural heritage of their ancestors in Germany. Apart from bringing

⁷⁸ Cf. below, pp. 31–53 (Schlachter), 55–72 (Weber), and 73–117 (Müller).

⁷⁹ Yacov Guggenheim, ‘*A suis paribus et non aliis iudicentur*: Jüdische Gerichtsbarkeit, ihre Kontrolle durch die christliche Herrschaft und die obersten *rabi gemeiner Judenschafft im heiligen Reich*’, in *Jüdische Gemeinden und ihr christlicher Kontext in kulturräumlich vergleichender Betrachtung: Von der Spätantike bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Christoph Cluse, Alfred Haverkamp and Israel J. Yuval, *Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden*, A 13 (Hannover: Hahn, 2003), pp. 405–39.

⁸⁰ Eric Zimmer, *Jewish Synods in Germany during the Late Middle Ages (1286–1603)* (New York: Yeshiva UP, 1978), pp. 21–31; Israel J. Yuval, ‘Juden, Hussiten und Deutsche: Nach einer hebräischen Chronik’, in *Juden in der christlichen Umwelt während des späten Mittelalters*, ed. by Alfred Haverkamp and Franz-Josef Ziwe, *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, Beiheft 13 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1992), pp. 59–102; Martha Keil, ‘Erfurt als Zentrum rabbinischer Netzwerke’, in *Die jüdische Gemeinde von Erfurt und die SchUM-Gemeinden. Kulturelles Erbe und Vernetzung*, *Erfurter Schriften zur jüdischen Geschichte*, 1 (Quedlinburg: Bussert & Stadel, 2012), pp. 118–26.

⁸¹ Below, pp. 157–71.

with them manuscripts, which have come down to us, more or less indirectly, through collectors and libraries in Italy and southern Germany, these Jews began saving and codifying the narratives and customs of their former communities. What had been living traditions, often rather local in outlook, now became, sometimes for the first time, written down and codified. The rise of Jewish printing in Northern Italy contributed to the broad reception, and indeed to a 're-exporting' of these codifications back north. Lucia Raspe, whose ongoing research is about telling this story, offers a detailed case study these long-term developments in her contribution to the present volume.⁸²

Following decades of recovery marked by a low literary output, rabbinic sources reappear in more significant numbers in Ashkenaz in the early fifteenth century. By that time, however, a significant change in the self-awareness of Ashkenazi scholars had occurred. As Israel Yuval has suggested in a seminal article published in Hebrew in 1992, these scholars felt that a new period in the development of religious law (*halakha*) had begun—a distinct period following upon those of the Mishna, of the Talmud, and of the tenth- to fourteenth-century Tosafists. Just as a scholar of the Tosafist period was allowed to revise the ruling of an earlier member of that same period but not the halakha of a Talmudic sage, a rabbi of the later medieval period could no longer revise the halakha of a Tosafist. The principle that halakha follows the later ones (הלכה כבחראי) because they knew of the previous decisions and might bring to bear additional points of view on them—this rule only applied within one and the same period. In the late medieval rabbis' self-image it was superseded by the feeling that they, the *rishonim* (ראשונים, 'moderni'), were one degree removed from the wisdom of the *aharonim* (אחרונים, 'antiqui').⁸³

Notwithstanding their self-image as a generation removed from the wisdom of their ancestors, the Ashkenazi scholars of the later middle ages showed a significant variety of interests, from halakha and custom to mysticism, magic and kabbalah as well as philosophy. Shim'on b. Shmu'el's *Sefer Hadrat Qodesh* is a case in point, as it quotes frequently from philosophical and kabbalistic works.⁸⁴ These intellectual trends may have been more pronounced in one center (such as Prague) than in the

⁸² Below, pp. 189–91, with further bibliography.

⁸³ Israel J. Yuval, 'Rishonim and Aharonim, Antiqui et Moderni (Periodization and Self-Awareness in Ashkenaz)', *Zion*, 57 (1992), 369–94 (in Hebrew).

⁸⁴ Israel J. Yuval, 'Kabbalisten, Ketzer und Polemiker: Das kulturelle Umfeld des *Sefer ha-Nizachon*', in *Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism*, ed. by Karl Erich Grözinger and Joseph Dan, *Studia Judaica*, 13 (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1995), pp. 155–71; Davis, 'Philosophy' (as in n. 1), pp. 206, 222. In recent years Ephraim Kanarfogel has much refined our image of the 'typical' Ashkenazi scholar of the previous, Tosafist period, whose interests often extended far beyond the realms of halakha. See, in particular, Kanarfogel, *The Intellectual History and Rabbinic Culture of Medieval Ashkenaz* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2013).

other, yet they indicate that Ashkenazi Judaism was not a closed world but affected by processes of cultural transfer from the Sefardic and Mediterranean Jewish cultures, and possibly also from the surrounding Christian societies, as Milan Žonca suggests in his contribution to the present collection.⁸⁵

Scholars still have to ascertain to what degree these new cultural resources were used in the rabbis' efforts towards 'internal' stabilization of their communities in the face of external threat. The first impression is rather that their measures leaned towards a renewed emphasis on ritual purity and religious practice. For example, the perilous advent of the anti-Hussite Crusaders prompted R. Yom Ṭov Lipman Mühlhausen of Erfurt to call for a proper *shofar* to be used in all German communities—one made from a ram's horn, not from that of a goat. The Maharil himself (R. Yacov b. Moshe ha-Levi Molin in Mainz), leading rabbi of his generation, took up this issue in one of his sermons.⁸⁶ Unlike Maharil, however, whose profile is more or less that of a traditional halakhist, Lipman was a scholar of wide-ranging philosophical and theological interests. As Žonca demonstrates, Lipman's *Sefer Niz-zahon* is much more than a mere collection of arguments to be used in disputations with Christian adversaries. It is consistently aimed at a Jewish audience and engages in a discussion sparked by conflicting views and divergent trends in Jewish thought and practice during his own days, in an effort to realign them according to his understanding.

Another open question is the extent to which the traditions reflecting earlier persecutions and how previous generations had coped with them may have assumed renewed significance in view of new threats.⁸⁷ It is possible that they formed an incorporated knowledge shaping current resilience dispositions. The most pervasive of these dispositions was that the option of accepting baptism, as a way of evading the constant outside pressure, rarely seems to have occurred to German Jews in the later medieval period. To be sure, there were quite a few apostates in Ashkenaz, but we hear of no concerted effort to deal with the threat posed by 'opting out' of the beleaguered Jewish community. Nor was the issue openly addressed in theological

⁸⁵ Below, pp. 119–43.

⁸⁶ Keil, 'Erfurt als Zentrum' (as in n. 80), pp. 122–23.

⁸⁷ Lucia Raspe, 'The Black Death in Jewish Sources: A Second Look at *Mayse Nissim*', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 94 (2004), 471–83; Tamás Visi, 'Plague, Persecution, and Philosophy: Avigdor Kara and the Consequences of the Black Death', in *Intricate Interfaith Networks in the Middle Ages: Quotidian Jewish-Christian Contacts*, ed. by Ephraim Shoham-Steiner, Studies in the History of Daily Life, 5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), pp. 85–117. See also the forthcoming paper by Julia Itin, 'Fractured History: Jewish Sources and Narratives of Plague and of the Black Death Persecutions', to be published in the proceedings of the International Conference, *Strategies, Dispositions and Resources of Social Resilience. A Dialogue between Medieval History and Sociology*, held at Trier in 2018.

writing, the rabbis seem to have been content with treating it as a halakhic one. In Sefarad, by contrast, the phenomenon of conversion took on such dimensions in the wake of the 1391 riots as to prompt explicit responses on the part of the rabbinical elite. Given the fact that even some of their esteemed colleagues had apostasized and were even ready to justify their move publicly, theological apologetics were needed as much as a historical reflection on the role the ‘Conversos’ may play in God’s divine plan of human history and salvation—a topic taken up by Maurice Kriegel in his contribution to the present collection.

To be sure, it would be simplistic to say that 1391 marked the beginning of the end for Sefardi Jewry. As Mark Meyerson has observed, the situation in fact re-stabilized around the mid-fifteenth century. Javier Castaño recently demonstrated in a detailed study that Jewish migration, including cross-frontier movements, may have contributed towards the resilience of Sefardi Jewish society more than it destabilized it.⁸⁸ Similarly, after the crisis of the 1430s the Jews of the German Kingdom apparently lived through a certain period of respite during the long reign of King Frederick III (1440–93, Holy Roman Emperor from 1452). In the 1470s, however, a new cycle of disruptive events undermined the resilience of the network of remaining urban Jewries.⁸⁹ By the later fifteenth century the community of Regensburg, where Shim‘on b. Shmu‘el, with whom we started our survey, had lived around 1400, was an isolated urban Jewry surrounded by large stretches of lands with no viable Jewish settlement. The infamous ritual murder trial of 1476–80 may have marked the beginning of the end for this old community, which had been largely left unscathed by persecution since 1096.⁹⁰ In 1519, the citizens of Regensburg seized the opportunity of Emperor Maximilian’s death and expelled their Jewish neighbours, destroying their synagogue and uprooting their cemetery in the hope that they might never come back.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Mark D. Meyerson: *A Jewish Renaissance in Fifteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2004); Javier Castaño, ‘The Peninsula as a Borderless Space: Towards a Mobility “Turn” in the Study of Fifteenth-Century Iberian Jewries’, in *Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe* (as in n. 20), pp. 315–32, esp. p. 332.

⁸⁹ Cf. the brief sketch in Cluse, *Darfein Bischof* (as in n. 43), pp. 64–68.

⁹⁰ This story has now been significantly revised in the forthcoming book by Veronika Nickel, *Widerstand durch Recht: Der Weg der Regensburger Juden bis zu ihrer Vertreibung (1519)*, *Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden*, A 28 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018). The ritual murder trial of Regensburg is currently the focus of Sophia Schmitt’s Ph.D. dissertation at the Ludwig Maximilian Universität München.

⁹¹ Cf. Alfred Haverkamp, ‘Jüdische Friedhöfe in Aschkenas’, in id., *Neue Forschungen zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte (2000–2011): Festgabe zum 75. Geburtstag des Verfassers*, ed. by Christoph Cluse and Jörg R. Müller (Hannover: Hahn, 2012), pp. 103–14.

Zusammenfassung

Europas Juden um 1400: Disruption – Krise – Resilienz Probleme und Perspektiven

Ausgehend von der zeitgenössischen Wahrnehmung eines um 1400 schreibenden jüdischen Beobachters in Regensburg präsentiert die Einführung zunächst einen Überblick zu den Disruptionserfahrungen europäischer und speziell der aschenasischen Juden zwischen ca. 1380 und ca. 1420. Sie wendet sich dann dem historiografischen Konzept der „Krise des Spätmittelalters“ zu und fragt danach, ob und wie die jüdischen Erfahrungen im Kontext älterer und neuerer „Krisen“-Konzeptionen gedeutet werden können. Hierfür scheinen sowohl religiöse Zusammenhänge (die Krise der Amtskirche) als auch ökonomische Faktoren (Depression, Steuerdruck, Münzprobleme) von Bedeutung. Allerdings erweist sich das Krisenkonzept in sofern als defizitär, als es die Potenziale, Optionen und Handlungen auf seiten der betroffenen jüdischen Individuen, Familien und Gemeinden weitgehend ausblendet.

Wir schlagen daher vor, die Kategorie der „Resilienz“ für Analysen der jüdischen Geschichte nutzbar zu machen. Dabei geht es nicht um eine unterstellte Eigenschaft von Juden oder des Judentums, sondern um beobachtbare Prozesse, wofür wir das Konzept der Anpassungszyklen (*adaptive cycles*) nach Gunderson & Holling aufgreifen. In der Betrachtung historischer Zusammenhänge kann das in der sozialökologischen Forschung entwickelte Konzept nur als heuristische Kategorie benutzt werden.

Hier erweist es sich jedoch als produktiv, denn es lenkt die Aufmerksamkeit auf bislang oft vernachlässigte Potenziale, Akteure und Strategien, die in den Beiträgen des vorliegenden Sammelbandes weiter entfaltet werden. Auf diese Weise geraten etwa jene Juden in den Blick, die nach der Katastrophe zur Zeit des „Schwarzen Todes“ (1348–51) die Wiederansiedlung und den Neuaufbau jüdischer Gemeinden organisierten oder die angesichts neuer Bedrohungen, besonders im Vorfeld und unter dem Eindruck der „Judenschuldentilgungen“ König Wenzels (1385, 1390) bei den christlichen Herrschaftsträgern intervenierten. Migrationsbewegungen erscheinen unter der Perspektive von Resilienz in einem neuen Licht, ebenso wie Orte und Zeiten der Restabilisierung und Bestandsaufnahme, diskursive Deutungen des Geschehens, religiöse Debatten und Neuorientierungen sowie nicht zuletzt auch innergemeindliche Auseinandersetzungen. Am Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts sahen sich die europäischen Juden einer neuen Welle von Angriffen und Vertreibungen ausgesetzt, die in drastischer Weise die Begrenztheit der ihnen verbliebenen Resilienzpotenziale aufzeigt.

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Disruption, Crisis, and Resilience

Edited by
Lukas Clemens and Christoph Cluse

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Contents

European Jewry around 1400: Disruption, Crisis, and Resilience – Problems and Research Perspectives Lukas Clemens and Christoph Cluse	1
<i>Iudei ... reversi sunt</i> : Zur Reorganisation jüdischen Lebens in Aschkenas nach 1350 Michael Schlachter	31
Life and Livelihood at Risk: Strategies of Ashkenazi Jews Facing the Threats of the 1380s and 1390s Andreas Weber	55
Kaufmann von Speyer und die Burg Spangenberg: Ein Fall individueller Resilienz im späten 14. Jahrhundert Jörg R. Müller	73
The ‘Imagined Communities’ of Yom Ṭov Lipman Mühlhausen: Heresy and Communal Boundaries in <i>Sefer Nizzahon</i> Milan Žonca	119
Die jiddischen Texte über die Wiener Gesera von 1420/21 Simon Neuberg	145
Ashkenazi Immigrants in Northern Italy and their Relations with the Italian Jewish Population, c.1380–1420 Alessandra Veronese	157

VI

The Migration of German Jews into Italy and the Emergence of Local Rites of <i>Selihot</i> Recitation Lucia Raspe	173
German Jews and Ashkenazi Ideas in Venetian Crete Rena Lauer	195
Crise de 1300 ? Crise de 1400 ? Les juifs et la <i>mauvaise réputation</i> dans les conflits sociaux autour de 1400 Claude Denjean	221
Paul de Burgos et Profiat Duran déchiffrent 1391 Maurice Kriegel	235
The Jews of Marseilles around 1400: Crisis of Decline or Crisis of Adjustments? Juliette Sibon	259
Index of personal names and place-names	273