

The Rhineland Massacres of Jews in the First Crusade

Memories Medieval and Modern

DAVID NIRENBERG

Nine hundred years ago, crusaders passing through the Rhineland on their way to Jerusalem attacked Jews in towns throughout the region surrounding Heidelberg. Many Jews were killed or converted to Christianity, and many took their own lives in order to avoid baptism. The events themselves occupy a significant place in modern Jewish historiography and are often presented as the first instance of an anti-Semitism that would henceforth never be forgotten and whose climax was the Holocaust. As Arno Mayer put it in his study of the "Final Solution": "The attack on the Jews [in 1096] set a disastrous precedent, depositing a fatal poison in the European psyche and imagination."¹ Moreover, some have seen the texts that a number of Jewish communities produced in the aftermath of the massacres as the vessels of a collective memory that gave Jews strength and allowed them to retain their identity throughout a history of tragedies; a collective memory that, in Alan Mintz's words, "summed up [for modern Jews] the past to be espoused or rejected."² The First

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1 Arno Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken? The "Final Solution" in History* (New York, 1988), 25. The title of the book is itself a quotation from a First Crusade chronicle. Cf. Cecil Roth, *A Short History of the Jewish People* (London, 1969), 185: "Take any realistic description of the position of world Jewry down to the close of the last century; take any indictment drawn up by an anti-Semite in our own times; take any contemporary analysis of the weakness of the Jewish position or the alleged shortcomings of the Jewish character; and in almost every instance it will be possible to trace the origin, if not actually to the crusades, to the currents which they stirred." My thanks to Jeremy Cohen for the latter reference.

2 Haim Hillel Ben Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People* (London, 1976), 414, on martyrdoms as a source of strength; Alan Mintz, *Hurban: Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature* (New York, 1984), x-xi.

Crusade massacres emerge in such scholarship as a focal point in a narrative of Jewish history that asserts the identity of past and present suffering, and that finds its coherence in a teleology of escalating persecution leading to the Holocaust and to Zionist redemption.

In this chapter I challenge both the teleology that binds the Holocaust to the First Crusade and the model of collective memory that underlies it. But my very choice of topic suggests a certain truth in Mintz's claim. I am a student of late medieval Spain (not of Germany or of the Crusades), yet I desire to approach Germany and the themes of this book through such a topic, so far from my own expertise. The reason, I suspect, is that the texts of the First Crusade and the historical narratives of identification they underwrite have so saturated my education (as they have that of many other Jews in the latter half of the twentieth century) that they seem to constitute a personal past as much as they do an object of academic inquiry. Today, for example, as the Neckar runs imperturbably past Heidelberg, where the discussions of memory, violence, and the writing of history that formed the basis of this essay collection first took place, those First Crusade sources that tell of the many Jews who were baptized or killed, or who had committed suicide in the waters of the Rhine and its tributaries come unbidden to my mind. Is an imagination too vivid that still sees the jerking limbs, the blood hurrying to an alien current? Even the landscape, it seems, conspires to blur the boundary between past and present, between history and memory.³

Why have these massacres become so indissolubly bound with modern Jewish identity and memory, and what are the consequences, historiographical and political, of this fusion? These are the questions with which this chapter is concerned. Their examination requires a three-tiered approach. I begin by describing and analyzing some of the texts produced by Jews in response to the massacres of 1096. The goal here is not so much to contribute to our historical understanding of the medieval Hebrew texts themselves (for which my knowledge of the language and the sources is insufficient) as to establish the sites at which the modern finds familiarity in the medieval. What is it about these texts that makes them seem so transparently relevant to the modern Jewish experience? Second, I trace parts of the reception history of the medieval texts in order to show how the peculiar model of memory they represent lost or

3 The question of the relationship between memory and history will be taken up again below. On the significance of river imagery in the First Crusade chronicles, see Israel Yuval, "Christliche Symbolik und jüdische Martyrologie zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge," in Alfred Haverkamp, ed., *Juden und Christen zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge* (Sigmaringen, 1999), 89–91.

found favor with later generations of “rememberers.” The texts, in other words, do not constitute the collective memory of a transhistorical Jewish community but rather were drawn on by specific communities in particular situations.⁴ Finally, I touch specifically on one modern model of memory, Freud’s theory of trauma and the “return of the repressed,” and examine its affinities with the study of the massacres of 1096 in order to suggest that the place of First Crusade texts within modern narratives of Jewish historical experience cannot be understood independently of certain models of memory forged in the anti-Semitic violence of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The analysis of trauma here is meant merely to be representative of a number of modern theorizations of memory and history that emphasize the repetition of the past in the present: models that have been particularly influential in representing Jewish history as a continuous response to violence.

There are a number of reasons for examining such continuities, although I confine myself to two of the most obvious. First, the memorialization of episodes of violence (beginning with the destruction of the First and Second Temples) came to occupy, and still occupies, a central but complex place in Jewish religion and culture, one that in my opinion remains insufficiently understood. Second, and more notorious, the magnitude of modern violence against Jews has lent a *prima facie* validity to even the most extreme invocations of teleology and historical continuity in explanations of violence against Jews. The Middle Ages often appear in these invocations as the origins of collective memories (remembered fantasies on the part of the persecutors, remembered sufferings on the part of the persecuted) through which the medieval becomes virtually continuous with the modern.⁵

4 Perhaps not surprisingly, one unintended result here will be yet another critique of Halbwachs’ too stark distinction between memory and history. This is not the place to belabor the point, but I have profited from Yael Zerubavel, “The Death of Memory and the Memory of Death: Masada and the Holocaust as Historical Metaphors,” *Representations* 45 (1994): 72–100.

5 Norman Cohn’s *Warrant for Genocide*, written in the 1960s, provides a good example: “As I see it, the deadliest kind of antisemitism, the kind that results in massacre and attempted genocide, has little to do with real conflicts of interest between living people, or even with racial prejudice as such. At its heart lies the belief that Jews – all Jews everywhere – form a conspiratorial body set on ruining and then dominating the rest of mankind. And this belief is simply a modernized, secularized version of the popular medieval view” (*Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”* [New York, 1967], 16). A similar passage from the same work is quoted approvingly and expanded by Lionel Rothkrug, “Peasant and Jew: Fears of Pollution and German Collective Perceptions,” *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 10 (1983): 60. The tendency is particularly strong when writing of violence that occurred in any of the lands that would later become Germany. For a recent example, see Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York, 1996). There have always been, of course, historians with the opposite view, e.g., Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Le Juif medieval au miroir de l’art Chretien* (Paris, 1966), 136.

The central question at issue here is far from being a monopoly of medievalists; it lies at the heart of much twentieth-century thought: How can collective myths, optimistically marked for extinction by the Enlightenment, erupt into World War or Holocaust in the modern age?⁶ Already implicit within such a question, however, are certain assumptions about continuity and about the identification of the present with the past. The prevalence of these assumptions testifies to a peculiar truth in Jürgen Habermas's claim that "Auschwitz has changed the basis for the continuity of the conditions of life within history."⁷ The sketchy history of the memories of 1096 that follows constitutes an exploration of a very small aspect of this change, perhaps so small as to remind one of the blind man mistaking the ear for the elephant. Nevertheless, it remains true that sometimes an elephant can be recognized by its ear.

MEDIEVAL MEMORIES OF 1096

The massacres of Jews in 1096 are a subchapter of a narrative well known to medievalists: the progress of the first crusaders toward the Holy Land. The path to Jerusalem took many crusading groups through the Rhineland, where they threatened numerous Jewish communities.⁸ Most of these crusading groups were successfully bribed, passing into the East and into other histories without incident. But some chose to kill the Jews or to convert them by force. At Speyer, ten or eleven Jews died; at Worms, 800; in Mainz, 1,100 or more; other attacks occurred throughout the Moselle valley and further east, in Prague and Ratisbon.

These attacks are documented in Christian and Jewish sources, but the latter are most remarkable. They comprise a set of Hebrew chronicles (the so-called Mainz Anonymous, the chronicle attributed to Solomon bar Samson, and the chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan) and a group of liturgical poems, prayers, and *Memorbücher* (books of memory).⁹ The relation-

6 Halbwachs, Freud, Benjamin, Cassirer, Lévi-Strauss, Blumenberg, Braudel: All worked to some extent on this question, and all stressed, in their own way, the persistence of the past.

7 Jürgen Habermas, *Eine Art Schadensabwicklung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1987), 163.

8 A practice that they may have developed even earlier in their itinerary, e.g., at Rouen. See Guibert of Nogent, *Autobiographie*, ed. and trans. Edmond-René Labande (Paris, 1981) (*Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, 12:240); Mainz Anonymous, trans. in Shlomo Eidelberg, *The Jews and the Crusades: The Hebrew Chronicles of the First and Second Crusades* (Madison, Wis., 1977), 99.

9 The edition of Abraham Meir Habermann, which includes many of the liturgical poems as well as the chronicles, has been utilized here: *Sefer gezerot Ashkenaz ve-tzarfat* (Jerusalem, 1945-6). A German translation by Seligmann Baer accompanies the earlier Adolf Neubauer and Moritz Stern, eds., *Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während der Kreuzzüge* (Berlin, 1892). It should be noted that Baer also edited the standard edition of the prayerbook for German Jews in the later nineteenth century. For ease of reference, all citations to the chronicles in the text are to the

ship between the sources is complex and unclear, their dating controversial: None is exactly contemporaneous with the events, and some clearly were written generations later.¹⁰ The past twenty years have also witnessed a lively and productive debate that has called into question the long-standing consensus (still championed by Robert Chazan) that these texts can provide an accurate description of events or rendition of the ideology of the besieged Jews. Ivan Markus, for example, has emphasized the chronicles' narrative and representational strategies, whereas Jeremy Cohen has presented them as belated responses, influenced by survivor guilt and contact with Christian ideas.¹¹ My own sympathies are with the latter views, but for the purposes of this chapter the question is irrelevant, for we are interested here in understanding the resonance of these texts for later readers, particularly those of the twentieth century, and not in the history of the communities that produced them. That resonance, I argue, derives from the way First Crusade texts seem to relate violence and memory.

The memories of different groups saturate these texts. Crusaders, victims, even God, are all analyzed in terms of remembering, reenacting,

English translation of Eidelberg (cited in the previous note) unless otherwise indicated. The poems are also described in Avraham Grossman, "The Roots of Martyrdom in Early Ashkenaz" (Hebrew), in Isaiah Gafni and Aviezer Ravitzky, eds., *Sanctity in Life and Martyrdom: Studies in Memory of Amir Yekutiel* (Jerusalem, 1992), 99–130. In addition to the aforementioned, there are a number of collections of poems about persecution. See, e.g., Simon Bernfeld, *Sefer hademot*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1923–6). A number of related prayers and commentaries on prayers were collected in Abraham b. Azriel, *Sefer 'Arugat ha-Bosem*, ed. E. Urbach, 4 vols. (Jerusalem, 1939–63), e.g., 3:293, 323–32. Hebrew texts and English translations of some of the more famous can be found in T. Carmi, ed. and trans., *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* (New York, 1981).

10 I am here summarizing a voluminous literature. See, among others, I. Sonne, "Nouvel examen des trois relations hebraïques sur les persécutions de 1096," *Revue des Études Juives* (hereafter *REJ*) 96 (1933): 137–52; Yitzhak Baer, "The Persecution of 1096" (Hebrew), in M. D. Cassuto, ed., *Sefer Asaf* (Jerusalem, 1953), 126–40; and Anna Sapir Abulafia, "The Interrelationship between the Hebrew Chronicles of the First Crusade," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 27 (1982): 221–39. In addition, see the works of Robert Chazan mentioned in this chapter. We can look forward to the publication of a new edition of the chronicles, together with a stemma based on all the extant manuscripts, by Eva Haverkamp. See now her Ph.D. dissertation, "Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während des Ersten Kreuzzugs," University of Constance, 1998, 2 vols.

11 Jeremy Cohen, "The 'Persecutions of 1096' – From Martyrdom to Martyrology: the Socio-cultural Context of the Hebrew Crusade Chronicles" (Hebrew), *Zion* 59 (1994): 169–208. Ivan Marcus was also skeptical about the chronicles' relationship to the ideology of the martyrs themselves. See his review of Chazan's *European Jewry and the First Crusade* in *Speculum* 64 (1989): 685–8; as well as his "From Politics to Martyrdom: Shifting Paradigms in the Hebrew Narratives of the 1096 Crusade Riots," *Prooftexts* 2 (1982): 40–52; and "History, Story, and Collective Memory: Narrativity in Early Ashkenazic Culture," *Prooftexts* 10 (1990): 365–88. Cf. Chazan's response to Marcus: "The Facticity of Medieval Narrative: A Case Study of the Hebrew First Crusade Narratives," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 16 (1991): 31–56. I am most grateful to Jeremy Cohen for allowing me to read in draft his further contribution to the problem: "A 1096 Complex? Constructing the First Crusade in Jewish Historical Memory, Medieval and Modern."

and (at times) forgetting foundational acts of violence. The crusaders, for example, are presented as having exacted vengeance for a foundational act of violence, the Jews' killing of Christ: "Here, in our very midst, are the Jews – they whose forefathers murdered and crucified him for no reason. Let us first avenge ourselves on them and exterminate them from among the nations so that the name of Israel no longer will be remembered."¹² Even more marked is the symbolic repetition emphasized by Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn in his *Sefer Zekhirah* (Book of Remembrance), written in the wake of the Second Crusade, wherein he describes an attack by French crusaders on the revered Rabbi Jacob ben Meir of Ramerupt (Rabbenu Tam): "They inflicted five wounds on his head, saying: 'You are the leader of the Jews. So we shall take vengeance on you for the crucified one and wound you the way you inflicted the five wounds on our god.'"¹³

It is, however, with Jewish memory that this paper is primarily concerned, and there the massacres seem to have precipitated a massive rupture.¹⁴ The rupture is most apparent in the unprecedented action the Jews took in order to avoid conversion or defilement at the hands of the crusading "sons of impurity": They sacrificed themselves. In the words of one chronicle, "They all cried out as one: 'Let us hasten and offer ourselves as a sacrifice before God. Anyone possessing a knife should examine it to see that it is not defective, and let him then proceed to slaughter us in sanctification of the Unique and Eternal one, then slaying himself.'" (31) The most dramatic of these sacrifices, and the most carefully detailed in the sources, were those of children by parents. The case of "Rachel, daughter of Isaac, son of Asher, and wife of Judah" (35) is one of those presented as exemplary: "'Four children have I. Have no mercy on them either. . . . In my children, too, shall you sanctify the Holy Name of God.' A friend took the boy and slew him. . . . The mother spread her sleeves

12 Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson, 22. Cf. 26, and also Guibert of Nogent, *Autobiographie*, 12:240. See also Shelomo Dov Goitein, "Obadyah, a Norman Proselyte," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 4 (1953): 80–1.

13 Abraham Habermann, ed., *Sefer zekhirah, selihot ve-kinnot*, (Jerusalem, 1970), 121 (trans. Eidelberg, 130). I. Marcus points out that here Ephraim treats Rabbi Jacob as a "Jewish Christ figure": "Jews and Christians Imagining the Other in Medieval Europe," *Prooftexts* 15 (1995): 212. Marcus contrasts Jacob's title of "gedolan shel yisra'el" with Jesus' mock title "King of the Jews." It is ironic that, though in this Ashkenazic text the treatment of Rabbi Jacob serves to illustrate the darkness of the times, in the Sephardic Abraham ibn Daud's *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* (written in the mid-twelfth century, during the Almohade persecutions), Rabbi Jacob is presented as evidence that Jewish learning flourishes in Christian Europe, even if in al-Andalus it is being destroyed. See the edition of Gershon Cohen (Philadelphia, 1967), 66, ll. 322–3 of the Hebrew.

14 I say "seem" because the lack of Hebrew sources preceding the crusade makes the argument one from silence.

to receive the blood, according to the practice in the ancient Temple sacrificial rite." She herself sacrificed her two daughters once they had prepared the knife, and then drew her son Aaron out from under the box where he had hidden himself to avoid her and "slaughtered him before the Exalted and Lofty God" (36).¹⁵

In their narration of these episodes the surviving texts exhibit features that resonate strongly in the twentieth century, especially with responses to the Holocaust. First, they (at times) present the slaughters as an unprecedented shattering of the possibility of human understanding.¹⁶ In the words of our texts, "What can we then say?" Second, they respond to this shock in protective ways. Specifically, they strive to repress devastation through repetition. Because the task of these texts is to find precedent for what is experienced in the present as unprecedented horror, they re-remember the past in such a way as to restore continuity and coherence by making the present seem less terribly new. Repression here is achieved by "return" or repetition in the past, in historical memory, and involves the relinking of present experience to previous traumas in sacred history so that they might once again become continuous with that history. Perhaps paradoxically, these two responses depend on one another. Although it has become customary to stress the confidence with which Rhineland Jews asserted precedent, coherence, and continuity in the face of disaster, the texts they produced are repeatedly marked by the intrusion of (ironic?) doubt about God's attentiveness to the violent sacrifices of his people.¹⁷ This doubt nevertheless does not negate, and is not negated by, the assertion of continuity. Rather, one response draws nourishment from, and is always pregnant with, the other.

The unprecedented and the opaque are never far from the surface of our texts:

15 This version of the story of Rachel, taken from the Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson, is a conflation of the account in the Mainz Anonymous and one contained in a *piyyut* of Kalonymos ben Juda, as I. Sonne pointed out in his "Nouvel examen des trois relations hébraïques sur les persécutions de 1096," 131–4. In "'Persecutions of 1096' – From Martyrdom to Martyrology," Jeremy Cohen suggested that Rachel's holding out her sleeves "in lieu of a chalice" (as the Hebrew has it) deliberately echoed Christian descriptions of Ecclesia standing beneath the cross catching Christ's blood.

16 Marcus, "From Politics to Martyrdom," 45; Mintz, *Hurban*, x–xi.

17 Simha Goldin's is the most recent piece to emphasize (too emphatically, in my opinion), the confidence of Jewish responses to violence in 1096. See his "The Socialization for *kiddush ha-Shem* Among Medieval Jews," *Journal of Medieval History* 23 (1997): 117–38. Others have highlighted passages of the chronicles that display traces of doubt and hesitation in the face of martyrdom. See Ivan Markus, "Une communauté pieuse et le doute: mourir por la Sanctification du Nom (Qiddouch ha-Chem) en Achkenaz (Europe du Nord) et l'histoire de rabbi Amnon de Mayence," *Annales HSS* 49 (1994), 1031–47; Jeremy Cohen, "The Hebrew Crusade Chronicles in their Christian Context," in Haverkamp, ed., *Juden und Christen*, 29.

Let the ears hearing this . . . be seared, for who has heard or seen the likes of it? Inquire and seek: Was there ever such a mass sacrificial offering since the time of Adam? Did it ever occur that there were one thousand and one hundred offerings on one single day – all of them comparable to the sacrifice of Isaac, the son of Abraham? The earth trembled over just one offering that occurred on the myrrh mountain – it is said: “Behold, the valiant ones cry without,” and the heavens are darkened. What have they [the martyrs] done? Why did the heavens not darken and the stars not withhold their radiance, why did not the sun and moon turn dark?¹⁸

Questions here are the symptoms of shattered understanding. “If God suffers . . . anguish for the spilt blood of the wicked, how much more is his mercy aroused for the spilt blood of the righteous?”¹⁹ “No prophet . . . was able to comprehend how the sin of the people . . . was deemed so great as to cause the destruction of so many lives.” (25) “But no! We cannot question the ways. . . . What can we then say?” (133) And yet this unutterable doubt had to be spoken, as Ephraim of Bonn put it in a lament for those massacred at Blois in 1171: “Woe is me if I speak and cast doubt on my Maker; woe is me if I do not speak, venting my sorrow.” In the rhetorical nature of these questions, in the danger that surrounds their utterance, and in the silence of the divine interlocutor even distant observers such as ourselves can sense the gap that suffering has opened in the continuity of history.²⁰

The Rhineland chroniclers and poets attempt to conceal that gap even as they reveal it. One obvious way of doing so is by asserting continuity with the ancient narratives of sacred history.²¹ Such continuities are explicit in allusions to biblical and (relatively few) Talmudic texts. They are explicit as well in the chroniclers’ evocation of ancient ritual practices, particularly those of the Temple cult. In our texts the martyrs speak of themselves as sin offerings, check their knives for ritual imperfections, recite the blessing for ritual slaughter, respond amen, hold out their sleeves to catch the blood, as Rachel did “according to the practice in the ancient

18 Solomon bar Samson, 33. Cf. the Chronicle of Rabbi Eliezer Bar Nathan, 83. The same comparison, and a similar question, were put forth in a threnody by R. Eliezer bar Joel ha-Levi. See Zunz, *Literaturgeschichte*, 327n1; Bernfeld, *Sefer ha-Demot*, 1:209. The reference is to Isaiah 33:7, a verse associated with Isaac in Midrash Genesis Rabbah 56:6. Moses asks the same question of the sun in the Midrash on Lamentations, where the sun replies that he was violently forced to keep shining.

19 *Sefer Zekhirah*, 132, citing B. Sanhedrin 49a. Cf. Deut. 21:23.

20 Cf. Marcus, “From Politics to Martyrdom,” 45. Ephraim’s poem is translated in Carmi, *Hebrew Verse*, 384.

21 A strategy Marcus presents as primary: “From Politics to Martyrdom,” 41: “The Jewish narrators are principally concerned with interpreting the meaning of those acts of unprecedented martyrdom in traditionally acceptable modalities.”

Temple sacrificial rite," and even sprinkle the synagogue walls with children's blood.²²

The chroniclers' struggle to find exemplary precedents for the martyrs' deeds represents an assertion of continuity as well, as when they invoke the Talmudic Rabbi Akiva, who preferred to be martyred rather than stop teaching the Torah.²³ Yet, even as they assert these continuities the chroniclers and poets are aware that they mask an incommensurability. Rachel "died together with her four children, just as did that other righteous woman with her seven sons, and about them it is written: 'the mother of the sons rejoices'" (36). But in none of these earlier accounts did the mother herself wield the knife.²⁴ The central biblical precedent of the Akedah is equally unsatisfactory.²⁵ "[A]s Abraham did his son Isaac," they

22 David bar Meshullam, a leader of the Jewish community at Speyer who lived through the events of 1096 (he is recorded as a delegate from the community to the court of Henry IV in 1090), invoked the Temple even more explicitly: "Tender children and women gave/ themselves up to the binding, like/ choice lambs in the Chamber of the/ Hearth. . . . Yearling lambs without blemish were/ slaughtered like whole offerings,/ trapped and burnt like the sacrificial/ portions of shared offerings. They/ said to their mothers: "do not be/ moved by pity. Heaven has summoned/ us to be an offering by fire to the Lord." The translation is from Carmi, *Hebrew Verse*, 374–5. Cf. *Sefer Josippon*, David Flusser, ed., 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1978–80), chap. 92: "There is no better sacrifice to our Lord in the Temple than our own flesh, and there is nothing better to spray in His Sanctuary . . . than our own blood."

23 For Akiva, see Berakhot 61b. Yet it is striking how uninterested the chroniclers are in finding halakhic precedents for the extreme actions they describe, and how few allusions to the Talmud they make. The most apposite precedent, that of the 400 youths who drowned themselves rather than be sexually defiled (B. Gittin, 57b), is never cited by the chroniclers, though it does seem to have influenced them, and is cited, for example, by Rabbi Jacob Tam in support of self-inflicted martyrdom: Tosafot to Avodah Zarah, 18a, s.v. ve-al yeḥabel 'azmo. There were also rabbis who opposed such martyrdoms. See, for example, the Torah commentary in *Tosafot HaShalem*, J. Gellis, ed. (Jerusalem, 1982), 1:262. Modern scholars, on the other hand, have written a great deal about the precedents to these martyrdoms. See Spiegel, *The Last Trial: On the Legends and Lore of the Command to Abraham to Offer Isaac as a Sacrifice: The Akedah*, trans. Judah Goldin (Philadelphia, 1967); Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 116; Jonathan Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance* (Oxford, 1961), 90ff.; Haym Soloveitchik, "Religious Law and Change: The Medieval Ashkenazic Example," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 12 (1987): 205–21; Grossman, "Roots of Martyrdom." Important works on martyrdom in earlier periods include S. Lieberman, "Persecution of the Jewish Religion" (Hebrew), in the Hebrew volume of S. Lieberman, ed., *Salo Wittmayer Baron Jubilee Volume* (New York, 1974), 213–45; S. Lieberman, "The Martyrs of Caesarea," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 7 (1939–44); Flusser, *Josippon*, 165–6.

24 The story is told in 2 Maccabees 7, but Maccabees was not the direct source for this allusion among medieval Jews. See Gershon Cohen, "The Story of Hannah and Her Seven Sons in Hebrew Literature" (Hebrew), in Moshe Davis, ed., *Mordecai M. Kaplan: Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (New York, 1953), 109–22. The chronicle's reference is to B. Gittin 57b, where the mother's comfort is confirmed by a voice from heaven.

25 As it had proved previously in the case of the mother and her seven sons. See B. Gittin 57b and Lamentations Rabbah, where the mother explicitly draws the comparison: "You built one altar and did not offer up your son, but I built seven altars and offered up my sons on them" (*Midrash Rabbah Lamentations*, trans. A. Cohen [London, 1939], xx). Cf. Yalkut, Lamentations, no. 1029: "Abraham, don't let your thoughts grow proud! . . . I on seven altars offered sacrifices!"

“bound their children in sacrifice,” write the chroniclers.²⁶ But unlike the biblical Abraham, their hands were not stayed. Conventional readings of previous catastrophes do not suffice to contain pain within proof text. The Rhineland authors therefore perceive a need to reinterpret the past. In this sense, they have been “hurt” into a new historical consciousness.

This new consciousness demanded a transformation of the past and of the future. The transformation of the past is most evident in the sudden popularity of an obscure alternative reading of the Akedah: Abraham had not stayed his hand. He really had sacrificed Isaac, whom God then revived. The ram was introduced only to prevent Abraham from sacrificing his revived son a second time. This was a reading with ancient roots, but it flowered only now, in the need to find precedent for the unprecedented. I quote from a liturgical poem written by Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn and cited in Shalom Spiegel’s brilliant treatment of this interpretive development:²⁷

[Abraham] made haste, he pinned him down with his knees,
He made his two arms strong.
With steady hands he slaughtered him according to the rite,
Full right was the slaughter.
Down upon him fell the resurrecting dew, and he revived.
[The father] seized him [then] to slaughter him once more.
Scripture, bear witness! Well-grounded is the fact:
“And the Lord called Abraham, even a second time from heaven.”

As Spiegel has shown (although he does not say so), Ephraim and his colleagues here have pieced together shards of a neglected textual heritage in order to produce a new memory of the past.²⁸ Through this rewriting

26 In this case Solomon bar Samson, 32. The verb ‘akdu, “bound,” like the noun ‘akedah, both derive from the root ‘akad, “to bind,” used to describe Abraham’s binding of Isaac in Genesis 22. The allusion recurs frequently, though it is most extreme in the account of the sacrifice of Isaac, son of Meshullam of Worms, the first child to be sacrificed according to the Mainz Anonymous (103–4). See Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, 3–8, 26.

27 Spiegel’s *Last Trial* surveys rabbinic interpretations on this issue. See esp. 28–37, 44–50. The following is translated on 148–9.

28 The extent to which this new memory may have been influenced by the contemporary Christian context has been a focus of polemic since at least the nineteenth century. Most recently, Israel Yuval, Ivan Markus, and Jeremy Cohen have all pointed to important instances of shared symbols and rituals, and all three have suggested (as have others) that the sharpening of Jewish-Christian polemic in the period forced Jews to reorient their traditions in order to confront Christian arguments. On the other hand, it is important to remember that many of the elements of this new memory had entered the Jewish textual tradition in the Second Temple and early rabbinic periods, even if they were more marginal in some periods than in others. On the sacrificial element, for example, see Jon Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: the Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven, Conn., 1993).

Ephraim and his colleagues asserted identity and continuity with past sacrifices and past covenants even as they enacted and memorialized new ones.²⁹

Although the interpretation of present sacrifices as the intensified repetition of ancient ones helped to explain these massacres within a traditional hermeneutic, it also posed some difficult problems of teleology. Where would this model of escalating repetition lead? Would the sacrifices be redemptive or merely an endlessly repeated suffering? The problem became especially acute when the crusaders' conquest of Jerusalem suggested that God had delayed His vengeance against them for their shedding of Jewish blood and when the recurrence of the attacks during the Second Crusade (1146) cast doubt on the redemptive nature of the earlier sacrifices. This doubt inspired Ephraim of Bonn's *Sefer Zekhirah* and is reflected in it:

We cried out to our God, saying: "Alas, Lord, God, not even fifty years, the number of years of a jubilee, have passed since our blood was shed in witness to the Oneness of Your Revered Name on the day of the great slaughter. Will you forsake us eternally, O Lord? Will You extend Your anger to all generations? Do not permit this suffering to recur." (122)³⁰

Two possibilities are analytically distinguishable here, although they are empirically inseparable. The first is redemptive: The sacrifices would help God remember his covenant and the foundational 'Akedah that guaranteed it. The second is cyclical, even nihilistic: God would never remember and the sacrifices would be endlessly repeated.

For, of course, God's memory was very much at issue here. "[T]he verb *zakhar* appears . . . in the Bible no less than one hundred and sixty-nine

29 Spiegel, *Last Trial*, 137, alludes to just such a "rewriting" (my term, not his) in his discussion of the haggadic account of the song attributed to Isaac on the fire. I return to the issue of memorialization below. That the chroniclers thought of the sacrifices of 1096 as in some sense a new covenant is evident from passages such as this one from Solomon bar Samson: "May the blood of His devoted ones stand us in good stead and be an atonement for us and for our posterity after us, and our children's children eternally, like the 'Akedah of our Father Isaac when our Father Abraham bound him on the altar" (p. 49). Cf. the comparison made by Ephraim of Bonn between giving one's blood to the lord at circumcision, and sanctification of his name (p. 129). Again in his "Akedah," Ephraim portrays Isaac's sacrifice as a circumcision writ large, an answer to Ishmael's boast of his adult circumcision, presumably more painful than Isaac's infant one. The reference is to B. Sanhedrin 89b and Targum Jonathan at Gen. 22:1.

30 The passage describes a war of memories. The past incites the crusaders ("Avenge the crucified one") to leave "no remnant or vestige . . . of Israel," to erase its memory, but God hears the Jews' commemorative appeal to jubilee and sends St. Bernard to save them. Bernard does so by insisting that Jews serve Christians as a mnemonic, "for in the Book of Psalms it is written of them: 'Slay them not, lest my people forget.'" Cf. Eliezer bar Nathan, 86, 90.

times, usually with either Israel or God as the subject, for memory is incumbent upon both" (cf. Psalm 44).³¹ This divine memory was associated early on with human sacrifice, as when, in Tanḥuma vayyērā³ 23, the rabbis write: "Whenever the children of Isaac sin and as a result come into distress, let there be remembered to their credit the Akedah of Isaac."³² Elsewhere, God Himself acknowledges his debt: "The Holy One (blessed be He) said to Moses, 'I can be trusted to pay out the reward of Isaac, son of Abraham, who gave a quarter of [a lōg of] blood upon the altar.'³³ Contemporaries such as Ephraim of Bonn (in his "Akedah") invoke this tradition quite explicitly:

Thus prayed the binder and the bound,
That when their descendants commit a wrong
This act be recalled to save them from disaster . . .
O Righteous One, do us this grace! . . .
Recall to our credit the many Akedahs,
The saints, men and women, slain for Thy sake.

Recall. Remember. Credit: Nietzsche called this "a main clause of the oldest (unhappily also the most enduring) psychology on Earth" – that of sacrifice as stimulus to memory.³⁴ Here violence becomes a mnemonic for the divine.³⁵ What we should not forget, however, is that behind the human invocation of this mnemonic lies anxiety about God's memory. As David bar Meshullam put it in one of the earliest First Crusade poems, "O God, do not hush up the shedding of my blood": "Once, long ago,

31 Yosef H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle, 1982), 5.

32 A number of rabbinic commentaries on Leviticus 26:39–42 ("they will make amends for their sin. Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember") are of particular interest here. See Spiegel, *Last Trial*, 41–2.

33 Mekhitta de Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, in D. Hoffmann, *Mekhilta de Rabbi Simon b. Yochai* (Frankfurt am Main, 1905), 4. The passage is cited by Jon Levenson, *Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son*, 193. It continues with an invocation of Psalm 79:10–11: "Let the nations not say, 'Where is their God?' Before our eyes let it be known among the nations that You avenge the spilled blood of Your servant," a Psalm frequently cited in Jewish texts responding to violence.

34 *Genealogy of Morals* II.3.

35 For an ancient example, see Exodus 12:23, "and when He sees the blood upon the lintel." Cf. I Chron. 21:15, "And when He was about to destroy, the Lord beheld." Rabbinic interpretations conjoined these passages with the 'Akedah and represented Isaac's blood as God's reminder. See, e.g., the *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, Bo, Pishā' 7 and 12. Cf. Seder Eliyahu R., 7, ed. Friedmann, 36; Lev. R. 2. Cf. B. Rosh ha-Shanah 16a, which associates the use of a ram's horn on Rosh ha-Shanah with God's remembering of the 'Akedah, so that He might "account it to your credit"; and Pessikta R. 171b. (But contrast J. Rosh ha-Shanah, 59a.) These and other examples in Spiegel, *Last Trial*, 90–5, passim. To these add Targum Neofiti to Lev. 22:27; Leviticus rabbah 2:11; B. Berakot 16b. This Jewish anthropomorphizing of divine memory was noted by Muslim polemicists. See L. Strauss, "The Ways of Muslim Polemics," *Memorial Volume of the Rabbinical Seminary of Vienna* (Jerusalem, 1946), 188, no. 24.

we could rely upon the/ merit of Abraham's sacrifice at Mount/ Moriah, that it would safeguard us . . . / . . . / But now,/ one sacrifice follows another, they no longer can be counted."³⁶ Doubt about God's memory is everywhere marked in the sources, although rarely noted in modern commentaries. Hence, the gentle reminder from Isaiah, scattered like a refrain throughout the chronicles: "Wilt thou restrain Thyself for these things, O Lord?"³⁷ Less gentle the prodding vengeance in the Ashkenazic sabbath prayer:

May the Merciful Father . . . remember . . . the sacred communities that sacrificed themselves. . . . May He avenge the blood of his servants. . . . Why should the nations say: "where is their God?" Before our eyes let it be known among the nations that you avenge the spilled blood of your servants. (Psalm 79:10)³⁸

The possibility that God has forgotten His people, that the massacres mark a break in God's memory, that human sacrifice cannot bring about divine recollection: This is the shattering possibility that our texts seek to repress even as they mark its intrusion.³⁹

There are a number of ways to achieve repression and contain this doubt. One of these, the one most frequently stressed in modern scholarship, is simply to deny the novelty of the situation by resorting to conventional explanations about sin, punishment, atonement, and redemption.⁴⁰ Certain uses of allegory also constitute denial. When in Solomon bar Samson's chronicle Rabbi Moses ha-cohen exhorts his listeners to make the journey to a heavenly Jerusalem, he does so in evocative language: "Let us rise up and ascend to the house of the Lord" (*nakumah ve-n'aleh*). Through this reference to Genesis 35:3 (*ve-nakumah ve-n'aleh*), where Jacob commands his followers to ascend to Beth El to

36 The translation is from Carmi, *Hebrew Verse*, 374–5. Cf. the edition in Habermann, 71. The problem was accentuated by the explicit insistence, previously noted, that the First Crusade sacrifices took even greater courage than that of Isaac. Again, in the words of David bar Meshullam: "Bound on Mt. Moriah, his father bound him/ . . . /we, without being bound, are slaughtered for the sake of His love."

37 E.g., in that of Solomon Bar Samson, 33, 53. See Isaiah 64:11.

38 The prayer was known to Ephraim of Bonn. See Chazan, *European Jewry*, 145, citing R. Abraham ben Azriel, *Sefer 'Arugat ha-Bosem*, IV:49; *Seder 'Avodat Yisra'el*, ed. Seligmann Baer (Rödelheim, 1868), 233.

39 Modern commentators tend to ignore the role of doubt in First Crusade texts, preferring to stress the firm faith of the Rhineland Jews. In addition to Baer, Spiegel, and Goldin, whose views are cited elsewhere in this chapter, see Gershon Cohen, "Messianic Postures of Ashkenazim and Sephardim," *Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture* 9 (1976): 37.

40 E.g., Solomon bar Samson, 49; Eliezer bar Nathan, 82. The chronicles all close with a prayer for the redemption. Contemporary observers are presented as believing in the redemptive potential of the martyrdoms. Thus, Rabbi Meshullam assured the Jews of Speyer: "Now you need not fear, for his death [that of Meir Cohen] outweighs and atones for our transgressions" (see Solomon bar Samson, 71).

build the altar, and to the messianism of Jeremiah 31:5 ("Let us rise up and ascend to Zion, to the Lord our God"), his listeners are assured that the Jewish martyrs ascended to the true holy city despite the fact that the earthly one had fallen to the crusaders.⁴¹

More interesting for my purposes, however, is a form of repression and return that involves the simultaneous construction of the two related responses, redemptive and cyclical, that I referred to earlier. The first of these, redemptive teleology, creates a narrative that presents the shattering events themselves as signs that "values and wishes" are indeed being realized.⁴² Some Rhineland authors, for example, present the mass suicides as atonement by the righteous for ancient collective guilt. According to this view it was the burden of every generation to atone for the ancient sins of Israel in proportion to its greatness; hence the old transgressions return with greatest force among the most pious.⁴³ The repetition and memorialization of sacrifices becomes crucial in such a model, and history becomes an account book chronicling the ongoing repayment of an ancient debt. Hence, in part, the renewed interest in memory evident in many of our Rhineland sources. The chronicles, of course, are all books of remembrance, even if only Ephraim's carries that name. The later *Memorbücher*, which commemorate Jewish martyrs, generally begin with the holy ones of 1096.⁴⁴ The liturgy too became a vehicle for memorialization as liturgical poems and prayers commemorating the Rhineland martyrs were incorporated into it. The circulation of these poems was often limited and local, but traces remain today in the dirges recited on

41 See Robert Chazan's "Jerusalem as Christian Symbol during the First Crusade: Jewish Awareness and Response," which he kindly allowed me to see in draft. See also the sensitive analysis in Marcus, "From Politics to Martyrdom," 49–51, where Mainz becomes the Temple in Jerusalem. For a sustained exploration of the theme, with important implications for an understanding of how Rhineland Jews transposed their topography into a sacral key, see now Israel Yuval, "Heilige Städte, heilige Gemeinden—Mainz als das Jerusalem Deutschlands," in Robert Jütte and Abraham Kustermann, eds., *Jüdische Gemeinden und Organisationsformen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, (Wiesbaden, 1998), 91–101.

42 I am paraphrasing here from Dominick La Capra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1994), 190–4. The analogy is deliberate, for, as I will suggest below, modern scholars often view the First Crusade material through the lens of (loosely) Freudian trauma.

43 See Solomon bar Samson, 22 (A. Habermann, *Sefer Gezerot*, 25). See also the penitential poem of Eliezer bar Nathan, "The Covenant and the Oath," in Habermann, 108; R. Joel bar Isaac ha-Levi's "Akedah," 111–12; R. Baruch of Mainz, in Habermann, *Yediot ha-Makon le-Heker ha-Shirah VI* (Jerusalem, 1945), 121. For proof texts, see inter alia Psalm 11:5; Genesis Rabbah 32:3, 34:2.

44 E.g., see Siegmund Salfeld, *Das Martyrologium des Nürnberger Memorbuches*, Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland 3 (Berlin, 1898). Others are listed in the introduction, xvi–xxxix. See also Moritz Steinschneider, *Die Geschichtsliteratur der Juden* (Berlin, 1905), no. 24; Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 46; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 148.

the Ninth of Av and in the aforementioned remembrance of martyrs in the Ashkenazic Sabbath service.⁴⁵ These memorializations had multiple purposes: They were meant to preserve examples of appropriate heroism for communities constantly in need of them. They also were meant to inscribe the martyrs' sacrifices in a cycle of tragedies (such as those of the Ninth of Av, a date on which a number of disasters, including the fall of the Temple in Jerusalem, were thought to have occurred) and reiterate them liturgically each year, thus making present violence resonate with violence past and eternal. Perhaps most important, they were meant to remind God of the devotion of His people, to ensure that their payments of the ancient debts were duly noted, and even to prod God into a recollection of His covenant.

Redemptive teleology depended on anamnesis, on God's recollection, and many of the First Crusade texts were created in order to achieve such a recollection. Implicit in that task, however, was the possibility of its obverse, of God's amnesia. In the case of the Rhineland Jews, this took the form of the construction of history as a compulsory repetition of suffering wherein hope for redemption is illusory because God has indeed forgotten. The linkage between nihilism and forgetting already is present in the most foundational texts, as in the Deuteronomic injunction to memory: "Then beware lest you forget the Lord who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. . . . If you indeed forget the Lord your God . . . you shall utterly perish" (6:10-12, 8:11-19). This potential for oblivion provides an anxious background to many Jewish questions about God's silence in the face of catastrophe. Talmudic responses to the destruction of the Second Temple flirted with it. Referring to the Emperor Titus, destroyer of Jerusalem, Abba Hanan (in B. Gittin 56b) alluded to Psalm 89:9: "'Who is like You, mighty in self-restraint?' You heard the blasphemy and insults of that wicked man, but You kept silent!" A student of Rabbi Ishmael's sharpened the sting of the allusion by playing on Exodus 15:11 ("Who is like You among the gods?"): Replacing *elim* (gods) with *illemim* (mute), he wrote, "Who is like You, O Lord, among the dumb?" In his poetic response to the Second Crusade, Isaac bar Shalom invokes these past reactions to catastrophe to raise the nihilistic stakes. He states that the Jews have kept their part of the bargain of memory and asks explicitly what it would take to jar God back into language and recollection:

45 Chazan, *European Jewry*, 145.

There is none like You among the dumb,
 Keeping silent and being still in the face of those who aggrieve us.
 Our foes are many; they rise up against us,
 As they take council together to revile us.
 "Where is your King?" they taunt us.
 But we have not forgotten You nor deceived You.
 Do not keep silent!⁴⁶

This second response, like the first, emphasizes continuity and precedent. Again like the first, it treats the repetition of massacre and of commemoration as the building blocks of a coherent history. But here there is a hint of sacred parody, an "ironizing appropriation of the consecrated past or of constitutive texts that still manages to preserve their normative valence" but allows a hint of doubt about the telos, an undermining of the hope that suffering can bring about God's remembrance of His people and His promises.⁴⁷ Hence, these texts are pregnant with the possibility that massacre would eternally recur, that sacrifice would not bring about God's recollection. In the words of one Rhineland penitential prayer: "All exiles come to an end, only mine increases; all questions are answered, but my question returns ever to the place from which it came."⁴⁸

THE MASSACRES IN PRE-HOLOCAUST MEMORY

This swaddling of the unthinkable in twin narratives of hope and despair (a process often referred to somewhat reductively in terms of art as "theodicy"), of course, is not unique to the First Crusade texts: Think, for example, of the much earlier reactions to the destruction of the Temples of Jerusalem. It is, however, this struggle to express and understand extreme suffering without shattering the traditional symbolic system that makes these sources resonate so strongly with twentieth-century sensibil-

46 Text and translation in Jakob Petuchowski, *Theology and Poetry: Studies in the Medieval Piyyut* (London, 1978), 71–83. The poem is anthologized in David Roskies, ed., *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe* (Philadelphia, 1989), 83–5. Cf. David bar Meshullam's "Oh God, do not hush up the shedding of my blood," ed. Habermann, 71. Cf. Also Mekilta, 42b (on Exod. 15:11).

47 Cf. Spiegel, *Last Trial*, 26, who claims that there is "not a hint," "not a whisper," that Rhineland Jews saw their experience as incommensurable with Abraham's, as Hannah had so vocally done before them. "You will never find that they protest." This is a strange claim, given much of the evidence already reviewed. Should this totalizing rejection of doubt by Spiegel itself be seen as part of the modern Jewish response to trauma discussed below? Spiegel's work was first published in 1950. The quote is from Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, as cited without further reference in an unpublished comment by Gabrielle Spiegel. I have not been able to localize the precise reference.

48 Cited by Baer, *Galut*, 26.

ities. For the pious Jew, this struggle has always meant engaging the “unprecedented” through tradition in such a way as to preserve both its incomprehensibility and the possibility of a covenantal relationship with God. For the twentieth-century critic the problem is a related but slightly different one, of finding language with which to approach the Holocaust, an event so extreme that it calls into question the possibility of representation itself. It is this homology, I would argue, that has turned these chronicles from the early days of medieval German Jewish experience into “a site for the acting out of tensions generated by our own (essentially second generation) experience of the Holocaust.”⁴⁹

Before we take the affinity between such texts and modern responses to the Holocaust as evidence of a continuous Jewish attitude toward suffering and remembrance in the Diaspora, however, we should admit both that the First Crusade chronicles themselves have often been forgotten and that their attitude toward suffering has not always seemed so relevant or congenial. This should not be surprising, for no event, no matter how grave, commands its own future. The later massacres that devastated Iberian Jewry in 1391, for example, were larger by orders of magnitude than those of 1096 and had (arguably) a greater impact on the communities they devastated than those of the Rhineland. Whereas the events of 1096 had relatively little effect on the social and economic development of Ashkenazic Jewry, those of 1391 transformed the possibilities of Jewish existence in Iberia, leading directly to the expansion of the Inquisition’s involvement in the *converso* question and to the expulsions of 1492. Yet thousands of pages are dedicated to 1096, whereas 1391 goes virtually unstudied.⁵⁰

Granted, medieval Jews certainly did not engage in such a comparative calculus. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume that these Ashkenazic chronicles and poetic texts that we are told “have provided the source material for the [modern] history of the persecution of the Jews” were always at the forefront of whatever we mean by Jewish collective memory. In fact, the chronicles we have discussed were both unusual and unpopular, judging from manuscript evidence. The Chronicle of bar Samson and the Mainz Anonymous each exist in only one

49 The quote is from a text delivered by Gabrielle Spiegel in her capacity as commentator on a panel comprised of Chazan, Cohen, and Markus. I am very grateful to her for providing me with a copy of these remarkable pages. On post-Holocaust questions of representation, see especially the essays in Saul Friedländer, ed., *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the “Final Solution”* (Cambridge, 1992), as well as the works cited below.

50 Except as a negative foil to 1096, as in Gershon Cohen, “Messianic Postures,” 35–42.

manuscript (fifteenth and sixteenth century, respectively), that of Eliezer bar Nathan in a handful, only one of which is medieval (fourteenth century). Some of the poems and prayers achieved broad circulation and had an important impact on the piety of European Jews. Many other poems, however, were “recited only in those communities whose troubles they related,” and the fast days introduced into local liturgical calendars to commemorate violence and sacrifice “were not widely observed or long preserved, any more than were the fasts undertaken by individual ascetics.”⁵¹

There were, however, certain moments when the models of sacrifice and memory contained in First Crusade texts, and more specifically in the chronicles, came to seem relevant or useful to later generations. It is important to study these moments if we are to historicize Jewish memories of violence, but we should be careful not to conflate the reappearance of such texts in specific (and generally historical) textual traditions with their reemergence into something called “collective memory.” Instead we might ask when, why, and for whom do the First Crusade chronicles become recognizable as a textual memory shared with the past?

Such questions are difficult to answer, first because they demand a very wide angle of historical vision across nearly a millennium, and second because they assume countless judgments about homology. For example, some later massacres, such as that at Blois in 1171 or at Troyes in 1288, did trigger the production of a commemorative literature, particularly in poetic form.⁵² But this poetry is quite different in content from those memorializing the earlier events. The sanctifying martyrdom stressed in much of this later poetry consists not so much of ritual suicide but rather of suffering death at the hands of Christians.⁵³ Furthermore, the literature seems uninfluenced by the First Crusade chronicle tradition. More importantly, the literary responses to these later episodes tend not to treat

51 The three quotes are from Ismar Elbogen's *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, first published in German in 1913. I cite from the English translation by Raymond Scheindlin (Philadelphia, 1993), 180, 260. Clearly I am not convinced by Goldin's claim that “from the beginning of the twelfth century, the educational and socialization processes utilize these sources as a basis for internalizing . . . and creating a uniform, normative Jewish behavior of committing suicide” (“The Socialization for *kiddush ha-Shem*,” 121). See also Joseph Dan, “The Problem of Qiddush ha-Shem in the Speculative Teaching of the German Hassidim” (Hebrew), in *Milhemet Kodesh u-Martiologiah* (Jerusalem, 1968), 121–9.

52 I am grateful to Susan Einbinder for allowing me to read in draft her essay “Medieval representations of martyrdom in prose and verse.”

53 There are later examples of suicide for the sanctification of God's name (*qiddush ha-Shem*), but these are rare, and their positive valence is never so strong as the 1096 cases. See, for example, the apologetic tone of the responsum of Meir ben Baruch of Rothenburg, in his *Teshuvot, Pesakim, u-Minhagim*, I. Z. Cahana, ed. 3 vols. (Jerusalem, 1957–62), II, 54.

the violence they describe as unprecedented, unspeakable, or necessitating a struggle to reorder the relationship of the present with the past. For such a response, one must wait until the expulsions of Jews from Spain in 1492.

The expulsion of all Jews from the territories of Ferdinand and Isabella was seen as a blow of unprecedented proportions and seems to have prompted a turn to history, to the search for origins and for endings. As Tam Ibn Yahia put it in his introduction to a new (1510) edition of the Jewish historical classic *Yosippon*: "I, in the midst of exile, wallowing in the blood of the upheavals that are overtaking my people and nation, was roused to . . . print this book, . . . that has laid bare the source of the misfortunes of the House of Judah."⁵⁴ The result was a sixteenth-century Jewish "lachrymose school" of historiography, a school that had explicit affinities with the twelfth-century martyrographical movement. It too turned to past violence in order to create a narrative of cyclical, escalating tragedy ending in redemption. For the lachrymose school, Jewish history was a valley of tears, an itinerary marked by escalating sorrows whose end would be a tragedy so great that it would bring about redemption and return from exile. That the First Crusade chronicles were considered an outstanding monument in this valley is evident from Joseph ha-Kohen's extensive quotation from them in his history, titled "Valley of Tears" (*Emeq ha-Bakha*). Their influence is detectable as well in his description of later events, such as the Iberian massacres of 1391. Joseph, a descendant of Sephardic exiles, underscored incidents of *qiddush ha-Shem* (sanctification of the divine name through suicide), claiming, for example, that many Jews killed their children during the massacres of 1391 or that a mother drowned herself and her daughters to avoid sexual intercourse with a Christian ship captain during the emigrations of 1492. Furthermore, he invoked these sacrifices as a supplement to divine memory, as when he wrote of the events of 1492: "We have not forgotten you nor betrayed your covenant. Now, Lord, do you not distance yourself. Make haste to save us. . . . For the love of your name!" Still, such influences should not be overemphasized. In his treatment of the events of 1096 the Sephardic chronicler Solomon Ibn Verga stresses the heroic *resistance* of the Rhineland Jews and mentions suicide only once; nor does he find "sanctification of the Name" in Iberia in 1391. Even under the black sun of double exile not all sixteenth-century Jewish historians found the First Crusade texts good to think with.⁵⁵

54 In Hayim Hominer, ed., *Sefer Yosippon* (Jerusalem, 1965), 41, and quoted in Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 35. Sonne published a sixteenth-century Yiddish fragment of Solomon bar Samson in his "Nouvel examen des trois relations hebraïques sur les persécutions de 1096."

55 Joseph Ha-Cohen, *Emeq ha-Bakha*, ed. Meir Letteris and Samuel Luzzatto (Cracow, 1895).

My point here is a simple, even an obvious one that does not require a deeper or more exhaustive survey of the reception history of First Crusade texts. There were clearly periods when the events of 1096 and the texts that commemorated them received little attention, while at other times these texts came to seem useful and relevant, that is, good to think with.⁵⁶ When First Crusade texts did seem important, there were still distinctions of genre: The poetic and liturgical texts seem to have had much more resonance than the chronicles and histories. And finally, even during these latter moments there were always many who, like Solomon Ibn Verga, preferred a different optic and would have sharply disagreed with Ben-Sasson's claim that these were the vessels of Jewish collective memory.

Such disagreement did not end with the birth of positivistic Jewish historiography in the nineteenth century. The practitioners of the new *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Jewish Studies) were writing in the wake of Jewish "enlightenment" (*Haskalah*), emancipation, and assimilation. On the one hand, the First Crusade chronicles provided these authors with a rare historical source that could be fit between ancient and modern narratives in order to establish continuity between them. As Simon Schwarzfuchs put it, "these stories became history. . . . They also testified to the antiquity of Jewish settlement in Europe and transformed the Jews of the Rhine valley into Europeans. Overnight, the tragedy of the crusades became one of the high points in the entirety of Jewish history."⁵⁷ On the other hand, for many Enlightenment historians this was a history that had been, or should have been, left behind. Moritz Güdemann was typical in believing the memory of the First Crusade sacrifices to have been central to the survival of the Jewish people but pernicious in its influence on Judaism:

Everything that we now see and encounter among our people – the flight from the world, dejection of spirit, anxiety, petty-mindedness in matters of religion, superstition, and esotericisms – all these are products of that terrible time, which,

This is not the place to enter into a discussion of Sefardic responses to the persecutions of 1391, 1412–15, 1492, etc., though such an exploration is obviously of importance to my project.

56 There were other periods in which the First Crusade texts, particularly the piyyutim, became central, e.g., following the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648–49 in Poland. A fuller analysis would need to encompass these events and Jewish responses to them.

57 "The Place of the Crusades in Jewish History" (Hebrew), in Menahem Ben-Sasson et al., eds., *Culture and Society in Medieval Jewry: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson* (Jerusalem, 1989), 266–7. I owe the quote to Jeremy Cohen's unpublished "A 1096 Complex?" 6–7. Cohen provides an overview of nineteenth-century historical attitudes toward the chronicles.

with repeated, periodic recurrences, has become deeply ensconced in their memory, never to be forgotten.⁵⁸

It is in this context that we should understand Abraham Geiger's rather strained argument that the notion of merit accruing from human sacrifice so apparent in the First Crusade texts was an abomination that had entered Judaism only late and under the influence of Christianity. There was no collective, transhistorical guilt in Judaism, he claimed, no mediation of the individual's relationship with God and hence no notion that one person could be a "sin offering" for other people or other generations. In a liberal age confident of its progress, the Rhineland martyrs and their notions of sacrificial memory seemed at best a relic to be historicized.

THE HOLOCAUST AND THE FIRST CRUSADE

The events of the first half of the twentieth century, beginning with the Russian pogroms and the mounting German anti-Semitism that followed World War I and culminating in the Holocaust, shattered that confidence and transformed the First Crusade texts from vestigial archaism into living memory. Habermann's edition of the First Crusade texts, printed in Jerusalem in 1945–1946, clearly marks this transformation as it collapses the boundaries between the Middle Ages and the present, between prophecy and history, and adopts the language of its sources. In its opening words:

Our fathers were praised "because they cherished [times of] woe," and R. Simon ben Gamliel said: "we too cherish [times of] woe, but what are we to do, when we came to write them down we were not able" (Shabbat 13b). Israel's woes repeated over and over throughout the generations, and the later woes made them forget the earlier ones. Made them forget? That is unthinkable! Rather, they made them forget the need to record them or copy them down for the [later] generations, for surely there is nothing in this persecution but what was in the one before it, and one merely supplements the other. Indeed, it was a just decree from heaven, for those who were afflicted in those days, that weakened their will to write about purely historical things, and also dimmed their sense for historiography. (ix)

The historiographic effects of this transformation can be easily traced in the career of Fritz/Yitzhak Baer, a student of Heinrich Finke and

58 Moritz Güdeman, *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Cultur der abendländischen Juden während des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit*, 3 vols. (Warsaw, 1880–88; reprint, Amsterdam, 1966), 1:127–8. I again owe the quote to Jeremy Cohen, "A 1096 Complex?" 8.

Friedrich Meinecke at Freiburg and a founder of what is sometimes known as the “Jerusalem school” of Jewish history.⁵⁹ In his early work Baer set out to recover the Middle Ages as a formative period of Judaism. “There is nothing in our history,” Baer wrote in 1930, “if we erase from its record one or two thousand years” [that is, the Middle Ages]. Baer adopted Leopold von Ranke’s dictum that “every epoch is immediate to God” and applied it to a contextualized history of Judaism. In particular, Baer sought to reintegrate the history of Jews in medieval Christian Spain into a vibrant history of Judaism. Thus, in his early work on the Jews in medieval Spain, he argued against Heinrich Graetz’s canonical view that this period was one of “increasing immiseration and decline” (*gesteigerten Elends und Verfalles*) for Jews. As he put it again in 1930, “We have been redeemed from the depths of collecting lists of authors and of persecutions and suffering.”⁶⁰

The late 1930s saw a sharp reversal. In a 1938 review of Salo Baron’s antilachrymose *Social and Religious History of the Jews* Baer insisted, contra Baron, that “Jewish history in the Middle Ages was a relentless series of persecutions.” But it is in *Galut* (exile), his somber meditation first published in National Socialist Berlin (1936), that we can clearly see the extent to which the focal points of Baer’s historical consciousness have been realigned.⁶¹ Baer’s sense of rupture is evident from the title page, where for the first time there appeared his Hebrew name, Yitzhak, rather than the German Fritz. It is apparent, too, in his juxtapositioning of Spanish and German Jewry. The Spanish Jewish communities on which Baer had lavished his career and which he had previously upheld as exemplars of the vibrancy of medieval Judaism now represented a transhistorical example of the assimilationist betrayal of the Jewish spirit. It was their rationalist philosophical outlook and their materialism, Baer argued, that destroyed “the consciousness of Jewish unity.” Baer’s new heroes were the Rhineland martyrs of the First Crusade and their pietist successors, for in

59 The appearance of David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (Oxford, 1995), has enabled me to amplify the reading of Baer I proposed in “Violence and the Persecution of Minorities in the Crown of Aragon: Jews, Lepers and Muslims before the Black Death,” Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1992. See esp. 116–21 of Myers’s study, on which I rely for many of the sources cited in this paragraph and the next.

60 For the quotes from Baer’s 1930 Jerusalem lectures, see *Ikarim be-hakirat toldot Yisra’el: mavo litekufat yeme ha-benayim* (Jerusalem, 1930–31), 7, 15. His critique of Graetz is in *Die Juden im christlichen Spanien* (Berlin, 1936; reprint, London, 1970), 2:xxiv. ■

61 *Galut* (Berlin, 1936). I cite here from the English translation (New York, 1947; reprint, Lanham, Md., 1988).

their simple faith, he claimed, the essence of Judaism survived.⁶² Finally, rupture is evident in Baer's shift from historical contextualization to redemptive teleology: "There is a power that lifts the Jewish people out of the realm of causal history." He commented again on this teleology in his *Israel Among the Nations*, this time with an emphasis on symbolic repetition and cyclicity: "Every episode in the long history of our people, every significant point in our historical existence, contains within it the secret of all previous and subsequent generations."⁶³

For Baer (as for Habermann and many others), the First Crusade had become the significant past, "a momentous, catastrophic event" that presaged and helped to make sense of the present. Indeed, it is not too much of an exaggeration to say that these scholars saw themselves as fulfilling a role similar to that of Solomon bar Samson or Ephraim of Bonn. Responding in 1947 to a review of his book in the Catholic journal *Commonweal* that accused him of being anti-Christian, Baer replied (at the prompting of Hannah Arendt): "I wrote the book . . . out of the need to send . . . a word of comfort and emotional encouragement to my brethren, who saw before their eyes a terrifying death."⁶⁴ The book itself replicates tensions inherent in the First Crusade texts. For example, the chapter on "The Age of Crusades" closes with the penitential prayer I quoted earlier ("my question returns ever to the place from which it came"). The last chapter ("From the Ancient Faith to a new Historical Consciousness") echoes the prayer's nihilism: "The Galut [exile] has returned to its starting point." But then, like the Rhineland Jews, he confronts the unprecedented by marrying this cyclical nihilism to a redemptive narrative:

If we today can read each coming day's events in the ancient and dusty chronological tables, as though history were the ceaseless unrolling of a process

62 This was in some sense a reversal of nineteenth-century liberal assimilationist historiography, for whom the "Spanish period" was a model. See Maurice Kriegel, *Les Juifs à la fin du moyen age dans l'Europe méditerranéenne* (Paris, 1979), 9. For the elaboration of Baer's views on the First Crusade massacres and the Rhineland pietists, see his "The Religious and Social Tendency of *Sefer Hasidim*" (Hebrew), *Zion* 3 (1938): 1–50; "The Persecution of 1096" (Hebrew), in M. D. Cassuto et al., eds., *Sefer Asaf* (Jerusalem, 1953), 126–40. For a lapidary statement of his view of Iberia as an assimilationist paradigm for which the sacrifice of the simple was the only antidote, see the last page of his *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*.

63 *Galut*, 120. *Yisra'el ba-'amim* (Jerusalem, 1955), 117. The latter formulation echoes Benjamin and Scholem, and may be Kabbalistic in origin. How curious that Baer never noted the Laplacean determinism inherent in the image, which seems to insist on causality rather than exclude it.

64 "Momentous catastrophic event" is from "The Persecution of 1096," 126. The 1947 response is discussed in Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, 119–20.

proclaimed once and for all in the Bible, then every Jew in every part of the Diaspora may recognize that there is a power that lifts the Jewish people out of the realm of all causal history. (120)

Galut is unusual in that at times it goes so far as to adopt the responses of the Rhineland Jews to the tragedies that beset them as its own. But it has distinguished company in discerning an affinity between Jewish responses to violence in the First Crusade and in the modern age. Shalom Spiegel's *The Last Trial*, a "commentary" on Ephraim of Bonn's "Akedah," was published to wide acclaim in Hebrew in 1950 and resonates strongly not only with the First Crusade texts but also with Freud's slightly earlier reconstruction of Jewish history in *Moses and Monotheism*.⁶⁵ It reconstructs Jewish responses to catastrophe by harkening back to ancient covenantal violences, in this case child sacrifices and their symbolic derivatives (castration, animal substitutes, etc.). It sees the memory of these violent events repressed but preserved as a type of archaic heritage: "[T]races . . . , age-old beliefs continued to nest in the thickets of the soul." And it sees the return of this repressed past in the midst of the massacres of the crusades, so that in a "fear-ridden" Ephraim of Bonn "there rose to the surface, from the hidden recesses of his soul," that dramatic reinterpretation of sacred history: "[The father] seized him [then] to slaughter him once more. Scripture, bear witness! Well-grounded is the fact."⁶⁶

Spiegel's work differs from that of Baer, Dinur, Ben-Sasson and others in one important respect: He did not suggest an equivalence between First Crusade memories of violence and modern ones, nor did he ever valorize the responses he described or present them as crucial to the survival of Judaism in exile.⁶⁷ This has proved an unfashionable restraint. Most recent commentators tend to treat the First Crusade texts as representative of therapeutic, if not redemptive, transhistorical responses to trauma. Thus,

65 Spiegel's work first appeared as "The Legends of the Binding of Isaac: A Dirge on the Slaughter of Isaac and His Resurrection by R. Ephraim of Bonn," in *Alexander Marks Jubilee Volume* (New York, 1950), 471-547.

66 Although Spiegel never cites Freud, I am indirectly stressing the analogies between his work and Freud's (on which see below) in part because the parallels sharpen Freud's parapraxis about Abraham, as analyzed by Leonard Shengold, "A parapraxis of Freud in relation to Karl Abraham," *American Imago* 29 (1972): 123-59. The first quotation is on 77 (cf. 129), the second, from 138. Note that Spiegel, like Freud, attributes an important role to Christianity in stimulating this repression. See 82ff., 117.

67 See, for but one example from among many of the contrary approach, Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson's opinion in his contribution to the collaborative *A History of the Jewish People* (which he also edited): "martyrdom strengthened Jewry from within, enriched it spiritually, crystallized the concepts of 'honor' and 'heroism' among the Jews and gave them the strength to face later trials" (emphasis added). The work was first published in 1969. The quotation is on 414 of the English translation (London, 1976).

David Roskies argues that "Jewish collective memory has remained a vital resource, even in the modern era. Through their literature of destruction, Jews perceive the cyclical nature of violence and find some measure of comfort in the repeatability of the unprecedented."⁶⁸ Alan Mintz also sees in traumatic catastrophe the seeds of Jewish survival. For him, catastrophe is interesting not as destruction but as construction, the "reconstruction of [shattered] paradigms through interpretation" that he sees as "crucial to creative survival." The survival he has in mind is, of course, that of modern Jews, and for him the most useful paradigm for reconstruction is that of the Rhineland suicides: "From the retrospective vantage point of modern Hebrew literature, it was the vivid images of martyrdom on the Ashkenazic model which summed up the past to be espoused or rejected."⁶⁹ For Mintz and Roskies, as for Baer and many others, the assertion of a similarity between the First Crusade and the Holocaust is a prelude to a program of providing historical therapy for modern trauma; hence the emphasis on continuity of persecution and of experience, on what Roskies, surely aware of the psychoanalytic implications behind the paradox, calls "the repeatability of the unprecedented."⁷⁰

TRAUMA, HISTORICAL MEMORY, AND THE
IDENTITY OF THE PAST

The horrors of the early twentieth century transformed the relationship of Jewish historians to their past in such a way as to reveal to them a new identity between previous and present sufferings, an identity that turned the First Crusade texts into vital and therapeutic monuments of a collective Jewish historical memory. The theorizations of history and memory through which this identity was perceived, however, were themselves the product of the same transformations. One of the most influential of these theorizations, the Freudian concept of trauma, provides an important example because although medieval historians seldom turn explicitly to Freudian analysis, the vocabulary of trauma permeates, in a more-or-less technical sense, much modern commentary on Jewish responses to cata-

68 *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe* (Philadelphia, 1988), 4. Note that the equation of literature with collective memory is unexamined.

69 *Hurban*, x-xi. The First Crusade martyrdoms remain a flash point for debate. Witness the controversy stimulated by Israel Yuval, "Vengeance and Damnation, Blood and Defamation: From Jewish Martyrdom to Blood Libel Accusations" (Hebrew), *Zion* 58 (1993): 33-90. For a sample of the responses to this thesis, see the essays collected in *Zion* 59 (1994).

70 Cf. David Roskies, "Sholem Aleichem and Others: Laughing off the Trauma of History," *Proof-texts* 2 (1982): 53-77.

strophe and has been of tremendous importance in historical work on the Holocaust.⁷¹ Violence is implicit in Freud's definition of traumas: "excitations from outside that are powerful enough to break through the protective shield [*Reizschutz*]." Traumatic events "provoke a disturbance . . . and . . . set in motion every possible defense."⁷² These defenses seek to ensure the survival of the subject (whether an individual or a community) by restructuring an otherwise intolerable memory. The most basic defense is repression, a suppression of memory, but the repressed memory persists and manifests itself belatedly as repetitive intrusions into consciousness: the "return of the repressed."⁷³ This "return" is the most essential aspect of trauma: the repetition of the past in the present. The "return of the repressed" can be triggered by a "real repetition of the event," a retraumatization, but most often it takes the form of a "fixation," a "compulsion to repeat."⁷⁴ If these repetitions bring about recollection of the original suffering and heal memory of its traumatic excision, the process of repetition is called "working through." If, however, the repetition remains at the level of unconscious neuroses, it is called "acting out."⁷⁵ The role of the analyst is, of course, to encourage the more therapeutic route.⁷⁶

71 The application of the concept of "trauma" in the historiography of modern Germany is extensive. For first hints, see Adorno's essay "Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit" (1959), trans. and reprinted in Geoffrey H. Hartman, ed., *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective* (Bloomington, Ind., 1986), 114–30. For an influential psychohistorical study, Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn: Principles of Collective Behavior* (New York, 1975). There is an explosion of recent literature. See, e.g., Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 66, 139, 160–72; Saul Friedländer, *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe* (Bloomington, Ind., 1993), 117–37; Dominick La Capra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1994). For Holocaust survivor studies, see also Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven, Conn., 1991). The approach has also been applied to film studies, most notably in Eric Santner, *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory, and Film in Postwar Germany* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1990). For its application to the film *Shoah*, see Koch, "Angel of Forgetfulness." See also Dominick La Capra, "Lanzmann's *Shoah*: 'Here There Is No Why,'" an unpublished paper presented at Rice University (1996) that inspired my approach in this chapter.

72 Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in James Strachey, ed., *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* (London, 1953–74), 18:29. See also "Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis (1916–17)," in *ibid.*, 16:275. Trauma as a term has, however, been defined in a number of ways throughout the history of psychoanalysis. See Charles Figley, ed., *Trauma and Its Wake 2 vols.* (New York, 1985–6).

73 In *Moses and Monotheism* Freud gave the example of an accident victim, apparently unharmed, who after a period of "latency" develops "psychical" or "motor" symptoms, which Freud terms a "traumatic neurosis" (Strachey, ed., *Standard Edition*, 23:67–8).

74 *Moses and Monotheism*, 75, 95, 101.

75 *Ibid.*, 89. See especially Freud's "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through," *Standard Edition*, 12:150–54. This term has been frequently invoked in relation to the trauma of the Holocaust. An early example is Theodor Adorno, "Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit" (1959). Most recently the distinction has become critical for Dominick La Capra and Saul Friedländer. References to their works are cited subsequently.

76 Thus, we might distinguish two levels of "survival." The repression and repetition of trauma is one; the reestablishment of a unity between this repetition and the originary event another,

In historical writing the concept of trauma has most often been applied to questions of violence against Jews. Freud himself did so most famously in his late work *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), where he applied the paradigm to a transhistorical collective, "the Jewish people." Freud located the foundational Jewish trauma in the slaying of the first Moses, itself a repetition of a prior trauma (the slaying of the founding father of *Totem and Taboo*) and a precursor of later ones, namely the slaying of Christ (in myth if not in reality) and the Christian hatred of Jews for their repression and denial of this triple deicide/parricide. Indeed, like Baer, Ben-Sasson, Roskies et al., Freud claimed that it was repeated trauma that "enabled the people of Israel to survive all the blows of fate" into their own day.⁷⁷ Freud's model of collective memory won few adherents, but the underlying analogy proved influential.⁷⁸ Just as a psychoanalyst uses the repetitive intrusions of the repressed into the conscious to work back to a trauma in a patient's past, so the psychohistorian looks for patterns of repetition in order to discover a foundational trauma or rupture. History becomes etiology, a search for the origins and progress of disease.⁷⁹

Yet we should not forget the obvious: Freud's concerns, and in particular his model of the relationship between memory and violence (both in general and insofar as it applied to Jewish history), were very much the products of a particular time and place. Although the "Jewishness" of psychoanalysis has been a point of polemic since its inception, there is broad agreement (perhaps because Freud stated it explicitly) that Freud's view of Jewish history as the repeated return of a foundational trauma

"higher" one. This hierarchy is based on one of Freud's most problematic assumptions: that remembering the horrific is healthier than repressing it.

77 I say "in myth" because Freud himself did not believe that the Jews had killed Christ (*Moses and Monotheism*, p. 101). On Christian hatred of Jews being due to their repression of the deicide, see p. 90. It is almost too obvious to note that violence, and particularly family violence (the sacrifice, castration, or circumcision of sons by fathers, and the murder of fathers by sons), was intimately connected to foundational trauma in Freud's historical psychology. For the claim about survival, see 50–1.

78 Indeed, the model was outdated before it appeared. Freud seems to have formulated his "archaic heritage" (*Moses and Monotheism*, 98–102) in ignorance of Maurice Halbwach, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925). Freud also seems to have adhered to a Lamarckian view of psychological inheritance. See Sigmund Freud, *A Phylogenetic Fantasy: Overview of the Transference Neuroses*, ed. Ilse Grubrich-Simitis (Cambridge, Mass., 1987). To be fair, Freud himself never published the latter text, and in *Moses and Monotheism* he never claimed to be offering more than an analogy (70–2). See Yosef H. Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (New Haven, Conn., 1991), 30. But cf. Sander L. Gilman's discussion of Freud's biological borrowings in *Freud, Race, and Gender* (Princeton, N.J., 1993).

79 The parallel importance of time, memory, and the past in history and psychoanalysis is often noted. Cf. Saul Friedländer, *History and Psychoanalysis: An Inquiry into the Possibilities and Limits of Psychohistory* (New York, 1978), 11.

was at least in part a response to mounting anti-Semitism and to the exile he himself experienced.⁸⁰

Furthermore, the theory of trauma bears a strong family resemblance to a number of influential secular marriages of cyclicality and redemption put forward by other German-Jewish intellectuals living through the same events. Franz Rosenzweig's rejection of historicism, his turn to the idea of perpetual creation, revelation, and redemption, was one such cycle.⁸¹ Walter Benjamin's theses on the philosophy of history, his dialectical messianism, and his distillation of history into focal points was another.⁸² As a final example, this time drawn from an historian, consider Gershom Scholem's turn toward Lurianic Kabbalah. Lurianic Kabbalah was itself a "response by the Jews, albeit belated, to the series of traumatic events [surrounding] . . . their expulsion from Spain." It saw Jewish exile as an enacting of a trauma within the Godhead itself. In a sense it provided a mystical psychohistory, "a *biography* of God, recounting a catastrophe in the life of the Godhead and the slow, almost automatic overcoming of that catastrophe" through self-alienation.⁸³ This was the biography that Scholem rediscovered and rewrote in the middle decades of our century. Although for Freud the repressed returned only into the future, we might say that historians like Scholem and Baer (and Freud in the historical mode of *Moses and Monotheism*) were react-

80 On *Moses and Monotheism* as Freud's own response to trauma, see esp. Cathy Caruth, "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History," *Yale French Studies* 79 (1991): 188ff. Of course Freud applied the return of the repressed to Christian as well as to Jewish history, as in his analysis of German antisemitism (*Moses and Monotheism*, 54, 91-2), which he sees as a displaced "acting out" of the trauma of coerced baptism. Psychoanalysis was early on criticized as "Jewish science," as descriptive only of Jewish mentalities, and as a product of Jewish experience. There is a vast literature on the problem. See Gilman, *Freud, Race, and Gender*, 201-4, and his discussion of *Moses and Monotheism* on 181-5. An interesting but rarely quoted example of this "judaizing" critique is that of Sartre's draft script for John Huston's film "Freud" in *Le scénario Freud* (Paris, 1984). There Sartre expands Freud's self-analysis in "The Interpretation of Dreams" (Strachey, ed., *Standard Edition*, 4-5:197) in order to claim that the Oedipus complex stems from Freud's reaction to a violent antisemitic incident involving his father. Cf. G. Koch, "The Angel of Forgetfulness and the Black Box of Facticity: Trauma and Memory in Claude Lanzmann's Film *Shoah*," *History and Memory* 3 (1991): 119-34.

81 See *Der Stern der Erlösung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1921; reprint, The Hague, 1976). See also the commentary of Amos Funkenstein, "An Escape from History: Rosenzweig on the Destiny of Judaism," *History and Memory* 2 (1990): 117-35.

82 See esp. thesis no. 7, in *Illuminations*, where Benjamin brings together what he sees as a form of memory enjoined in the Torah with his dialectical messianism. Amos Funkenstein groups together Rosenzweig, Benjamin, and Scholem in "Gershom Scholem: Charisma, *Kairos*, and the Messianic Dialectic," *History and Memory* 4 (1992): 123-40. See, e.g., 135-6, where he talks of "three modes of messianism - that-which-has-always-been-eternally present (Rosenzweig), that-which-has-become-eternally-impossible (Benjamin), and that-which-has-now-become-possible (Scholem)."

83 Funkenstein, "Gershom Scholem," 131.

ing to the trauma of twentieth-century anti-Semitism by repeating it into the past.⁸⁴

From this point of view it is easier to see why the First Crusade texts provide such an attractive site for the acting out of modern Jewish identities. To say this is not to imply either that Jews in the eleventh and twelfth centuries experienced catastrophe as Freudian trauma or that modern readers of medieval texts are suffering from it. My point is only that the explicit juxtaposition of First Crusade texts with the modern concepts and theorizations that condition their interpretation can help us to understand why these texts have become focal points for a historiography that asserts continuity in the experience of catastrophe. Such a juxtaposition can also help clarify certain aspects of a teleological tendency whose extreme form is a phylogenetic fantasy in which Jewish history becomes a search for the roots of Auschwitz: "For religion is linked with anti-Semitism, Genesis with genocide."⁸⁵ Finally, such a juxtaposition may tell us something about the modern concepts themselves, for as I suggested above, these sometimes reveal, in a secularized form, the influence of earlier ways of thinking about persecution and redemption.

One such concept that cannot be left unmentioned is, of course, Zionism. We have already seen how a scholar like Yitzhak Baer articulated his nationalist vision of a return to Zion through the exilic voice of the First Crusade texts. Baer and other historians argued for Zionism and against nonnationalist alternatives (which also had their historians) by emplotting Diaspora Jewish history as a cycle of repeated violence and persecution that was destined to be ended only by a redemptive return to a physical Jerusalem. Their vision of history as teleological process approached a form of secularized messianism, one that drew heavily on traditional theodicies and that often (as in the case of Baer) sought explicitly to transpose the sacrificial vocabulary of the Rhineland martyrologies into a nationalist key. In this sense, the identification of medieval and modern violences served to undergird a Zionist apologetic history, one whose academic power is still evident, for example, both in the neglect of medieval Sephardic history and in the extreme response of Israeli academics like Ezra Fleischer to Israel Yuval's revisionist article on the First Crusade martyrdoms.⁸⁶

84 Of course these Jewish thinkers were heavily dependent on contemporary German philosophical thinking about, for example, eternal return. Nevertheless, it is their work that put the question of repetition, return, and continuity at the heart of the historiography we are interested in here.

85 Gavin Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Antisemitism* (Berkeley, Calif., 1990), viii.

86 Fleischer was responding to Yuval's 1993 article previously mentioned. He and others have accused Yuval, not only of faulty methodology, but also of promoting anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist slander.

But the consequences of this identification of past with present extend far beyond the bloodless realms of medieval historiography and into the world of political ideology. It facilitates, for example, the nationalization and secularization of religious models of martyrdom so as to promote, in the critical words of Yehuda Amichai, the sacrifice of the soldier/citizen "on the altar of the state."⁸⁷ Further, insofar as this model of history affirms the eternal status of the Diaspora Jew as victim, it can be used to arrogate moral impunity to the redeemed Jewish state.⁸⁸ It is no accident that, as Sidra Ezrahi points out, Israeli protest poetry in the wake of the Lebanese war ironically echoed martyrological literature. Her example is that of the poem "Yizkor," by Tzvi Atzmon, in which the Jewish nation, "exiled . . . persecuted . . . murdered . . . stoned . . . poisoned . . . burned . . . slaughtered . . . buried alive . . . gets up one morning, sees/ children shot while the sun was shining . . . Arab children."⁸⁹

The mere possibility of such consequences reinforces the need for a genealogical understanding of violence and its memorialization that takes the difference between the past and present as seriously as it takes their kinship. This does not mean that we should abandon the study of sacrificial violence such as that of 1096. On the contrary, the simultaneous insistence on identity and difference inherent in sacrifice makes it a good parable for history and memory, for there is a continuum of identity and difference inherent in sacrifice just as there is in history itself.⁹⁰ At one

See his "Christian-Jewish Relations in the Middle Ages Distorted" (Hebrew), *Zion* 59 (1994): 267–316. Yuval's response is in the same volume: "'The Lord will take Vengeance, Vengeance for His Temple': Historia sine ira et studio," 351–414.

87 *Pinkas patuah* (An Open Notebook) (Tel Aviv, 1979), 11: "al mizbeah hamedinah."

88 This does not mean that a critique of the teleological model of history necessarily constitutes an indictment of Zionism. Thus, while I agree with aspects of Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin's argument in "Exile within sovereignty: Toward a Critique of the 'Negation of Exile' in Israeli Culture" (Hebrew), *Teoriyah u-Vikoret* 4 (1993): 23–55, I also agree with Anita Shapira that such historiographic critiques do not tell us much about the moral valence of specific Zionist actions in the establishment of the state of Israel. See her "Politics and Collective Memory: The Debate over the 'New Historians' in Israel," *History and Memory* 7 (1995): 9–40.

89 "Revisioning the Past: the Changing Legacy of the Holocaust in Hebrew Literature," *Salmagundi* 68–9 (1985–6): 267. I have also benefited greatly from her *By Words Alone: The Holocaust in Literature* (Chicago, 1980), particularly chapter 5 on the legacy of Lamentations and chapter 6 on the covenantal context of Hebrew responses to the Holocaust.

90 At least this is the lesson I draw from Kierkegaard, whose historical distinction (made in *Repetition*) between premodern recollection and modern repetition ("recollection is the ethnical view of life, repetition the modern") should, I think, be linked to his meditation on the Akedah in *Fear and Trembling*. In the latter, he considered the repeatability of the Akedah. In the former, he posited a novel emphasis on repetition (which he opposed to hope and recollection) as a founding condition of modern metaphysics. The treatises were written concurrently and published simultaneously on October 16, 1843. The quote is from *Fear and Trembling/Repetition*, Howard and Edna Hong, ed. and trans., *Kierkegaard's Writings* (Princeton, N.J., 1983), 6:149; cf. 131–2.

extreme is the complete identification of sacrificer with sacrificed, an identification asserted by some of the martyrs of 1096 when they took their own lives. In the biblical Akedah, of course, it is a different principle that is proposed: that of substitutional identity. In place of himself, Abraham offers up what is most precious to him. The appearance of the ram takes substitution a step further. The ram can die for Isaac because the ram *is* Isaac, so much so that God swears to the equivalence.⁹¹ And yet the ram is irreducibly *not* Isaac: In that miraculous and essential difference lies both Abraham's relief and ours.

91 In the words of Ephraim of Bonn: "I have accepted the sacrifice of your son; this is the word of the Lord – by My own self I swear it!" Translation from Carmi, *Hebrew Verse*, 382. Cf. Genesis Rabbah 56:9, where Abraham prays: "Master of the universe, regard it as though I had sacrificed my son Isaac first and only afterwards sacrificed this ram." In other traditions, God swears that the ram's ashes are Isaac's.