

THE MAKING OF HABSBURG JEWRY IN
THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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At the beginning of the long eighteenth century that stretched from the final decades of the seventeenth century until the Congress of Vienna (1815), the ratio of the Jewish population of the Habsburg Monarchy to the great Jewish center in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth was one to ten; by the end of this period it had risen to one to four. Over this long century, the Jews of “the lands in between,” as the Monarchy has been called, came to be uniquely constituted in almost equal measure by eastern and central European Jews. While it was unrealistic to expect that its various components would rapidly meld into a unified whole, nevertheless, certain trends could be discerned during this period, drawing the diverse parts together to form a “Habsburg” Jewry: a shared sense of dynastic loyalty; then patriotic sentiments about the land and its inhabitants; and, eventually, even adumbrations of modern nationalism.

Styling the period from the last third of the seventeenth century until the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 as “the long eighteenth century” suits well the history of Habsburg Jewry. This period exhibited remarkable continuities that in certain spheres could even be extended to the mid nineteenth century. But it also witnessed sharp breaks with the past, calling for a periodization that divides the century and a half into two almost equal halves: a “late” early modern phase, and a full-fledged modern one. Conveniently, the two were separated by the Seven Years’ War (1756–63), which ushered in the beginnings of a shift discernable in spheres as varied as politics, economy, society, culture, and religion. These transitional years signaled the decline of the *Pietas Austriaca*, the era of the Baroque Counter-Reformation, and witnessed the emergence of the modern state. But it was the enlightened absolutist regime of the Emperor Joseph II some two decades later that – for Habsburg Jewry and, in a sense, for European Jewry in general – ushered in a qualitatively new, modern era.

Often viewed as lagging behind western – in particular, German – Jewry, the Jews of the Monarchy, even in backwater Galicia, were suddenly thrust into the forefront of Jewish modernization during the brief reign of

Joseph II (1780–90). On the eve of the French Revolution, the Emperor's reforms had brought about changes in the legal status and the culture of Habsburg Jewry that were well in advance of any other country in Europe, including France and Prussia, the seedbed of the Berlin Haskalah. The Europe-wide warfare that ensued over the next quarter of a century, if it did not altogether put an end to this transformation, then it at least brought about its suspension for the time being.

POPULATION, MIGRATION, SETTLEMENT, ECONOMY

During the long eighteenth century, the Habsburg Monarchy emerged as a major European power. This was a period of almost incessant warfare from which the Monarchy emerged with its territories vastly augmented and its population considerably enlarged. At the outset of the reign of Emperor Leopold I (1658–1705), the bulk of his possessions, the so-called German Hereditary Lands and the lands of the kingdom of Bohemia, were located firmly within the boundaries of the Holy Roman Empire, in fact comprising its largest component. Only the northern rump of what was left under Habsburg control of the Kingdom of Hungary lay beyond the borders of the Empire. Its population numbered about 3 million; its total area constituted about 5,000 Austrian square miles.¹

By 1815, the Habsburg Monarchy had been greatly transformed by four great territorial acquisitions. To the east, after having successfully withstood the Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683, Leopold I went on the offensive and by the end of the century, after a bloody thirteen-year war, had reconquered large parts of Hungary that had been occupied by the Ottomans for over a century and a half. Scarcely had peace been concluded, with the signing of the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, when again a Europe-wide war broke out when the Spanish line of the Habsburgs came to an end, setting off the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–13). At its conclusion, the Monarchy under Emperor Karl VI (r. 1711–40), Leopold's son, gained considerable territory: to the west, the Spanish – henceforth Austrian – Netherlands (Belgium), and to the south, large parts of the Italian peninsula. As a result of the War of Polish Succession (1733–38), Karl consolidated his Italian possessions in Lombardy (the Duchies of Milan and Mantua), while his son-in-law, Francis Stephen, who had been compelled to cede the Duchy of Lorraine, was indemnified in 1737

¹ P. G. M. Dickson, *Finance and Government under Maria Theresa, 1740–1780*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1987), and Charles W. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1618–1815* (Cambridge, 2000).

with the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. When at the turn of the century the lands of the Venetian Republic were acquired in exchange for Belgium, Austria finally came to rule over a contiguous northern Italy. The fourth great acquisition was to the north, this time gained without having to wage a bloody war. The Empress Maria Theresa (r. 1740–80) was awarded what became the kingdom of Galicia by the First Polish Partition of 1772, adding to it Bukowina in 1775, gained from the Moldavian Principality then under Ottoman auspices. The Monarchy suffered one great defeat when it lost most of the rich province of Silesia to Prussia in 1742 during the War of Austrian Succession (1741–5).

In the span of a century and a half, the Monarchy's population had multiplied more than sevenfold. Already by the mid-1780s it had over 23 million inhabitants, while its area more than doubled; by 1815, with the exchange of Belgium for the Venetian Republic during the French Wars, the size of its territories was even greater.

The Jews of the Monarchy underwent a similar demographic transformation. In the wake of the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), the Jewish population was reduced to about 30,000 souls, mostly concentrated in the lands of the Bohemian crown (Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia), but some also lived in Lower Austria, and a negligible number in Royal Hungary (the northern rump of the kingdom that remained under Habsburg rule). By the mid-1780s, when somewhat reliable censuses were held, roughly 350,000 Jews (perhaps more, since the Galician numbers were notoriously unreliable) were registered within the Habsburg lands. While a considerable part of this tenfold growth can be attributed to the acquisition of Galicia, the rest must be ascribed to natural increase.

But the growth of the Jewish population was unevenly distributed among the lands of the Monarchy. It is clear that the rise in the Jewish population of Bohemia, Moravia, and later Galicia was more modest than the pace called for by their natural increase. On the other hand, the Jewish population of Hungary grew by leaps and bounds: 12,000 were recorded in the Jewish census of 1735 – and even of these only 4,000 had been born in the country – while the general census of 1787 registered 83,000, a rate of increase unmatched by any other Jewry in Europe. By 1830, the Jewish population of Hungary had drawn even with that of Galicia, both approaching the quarter of a million mark.²

We are justified in viewing the Monarchy in the eighteenth century as a more or less closed demographic unit with little in-migration from other countries. Consequently, Hungary's gain can be attributed largely

² Michael K. Silber, "Hungary, until 1918," in Gershon Hundert, ed., *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, 2 vols. (New Haven, 2008), 770–82.



Figure 29.1 The Jews of the Habsburg Empire: late eighteenth century. *Source:*

Evyatar Friesel, *Atlas of Modern Jewish History* (New York, 1990), [34–5].

Map composed by Michael K. Silber.

to internal Jewish migration within the Habsburg possessions. By extrapolating the rate of natural increase, we can estimate the size of migration from Moravia and the west over the long eighteenth century as being at about 30,000 to 35,000 Jews, and from Galicia from the end of the 1760s

onward another 25,000.³ Undoubtedly, the limitations placed on the number of Jewish families in the Bohemian crownlands by the notorious Familiants Laws of 1726 and 1727 – 8,541 for Bohemia, 5,106 for Moravia, and 119 for Silesia – played a role, but the economic pull was no less important than the discriminatory push as can be seen by the earlier waves of migration.⁴ The unrest in Poland on the eve of its first partition, the economic disruption as a consequence of the partitions and cutting Galicia off from its markets to the north, and later Joseph II's harsh decrees expelling Jews from the villages, all contributed to the Hungarian migration. It should also be kept in mind that Galicia, especially its eastern half, had the highest concentration of Jews in Europe, contributing to a constant flow of emigration not only to northeast Hungary, but also to the Romanian principalities and southern Russia.⁵

Jews were not spread uniformly over this sprawling empire. The pattern of Jewish settlement was primarily determined by legal status, and this varied from province to province, each with its own particular laws or constitution.⁶ While Jews enjoyed the royal privilege (*Judenschutz*) to settle and trade in some lands of the Monarchy, many other provinces enjoyed the privilege of not tolerating Jews at all within their precincts. These included, with minor exceptions, all the German lands after the expulsion of Jews from Vienna in 1670 (Upper and Lower Austria, Tyrol, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Vorarlberg, and Further Austria). In the lands of the Hungarian crown, they were prohibited from settling in the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia, as well as the Military Border, while in the Principality of Transylvania and the Banat in southern Hungary they were restricted to one town. Other regions that excluded Jews were the mining counties in the north of Hungary and the privileged Jász-Kún and Hajdu regions on the Great Hungarian Plain.

Legal status also had an impact on the urban–rural distribution of the Jewish population. There were three primary designations of types of settlement: the royal free city (*Stadt, civitas*) enjoying municipal autonomy; the market town (*Marktfleck, oppidum*); and the village (*Dorf, pagus*) – the last two privately owned by the nobility, the Church, or the royal treasury. Almost all of the so-called royal free cities – twenty-seven in

³ See the tables in Ferdinand Seibt, ed., *Die Juden in den böhmischen Ländern* (Munich, 1983), 325.

⁴ Ivo Cerman, "Familiants Laws," in *YEJEE*.

⁵ The 1764 census of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth officially registered close to 600,000 Jews in 58 *województwa* ("provinces"). With more than 100,000 Jews, the *województwo* of Rus, which constituted most of eastern Galicia after 1772, was by far the most populous.

⁶ Ruth Kestenberg-Gladstein, "Differences of Estates within pre-Emancipation Jewry," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 5 (1954), 156–66; 6 (1955), 35–49.

Bohemia, six in Moravia, fifty-two in Hungary, and a considerable number in Galicia – exercised their privilege not to tolerate Jews, who were compelled to settle on the outskirts of these cities in market towns (Obuda is a good example) or suburbs (Eisenstadt, Pressburg) owned by the aristocracy. With the exception of Prague, where close to a quarter of Bohemian Jewry lived, the number of Jews in the royal free cities was negligible.

The market town, whose size could range between 2,000 and 20,000 inhabitants, was the ideal type of Jewish settlement, fulfilling a typical mediating role between village and city. In Moravia, where Jews were prohibited from settling in villages and excluded from the royal free cities, almost its entire Jewry was concentrated in 52 market towns. In the last third of the eighteenth century, about 75 percent of the Jews in Galicia, 35 percent in Bohemia (with about 20 percent more living in Prague), and 40 percent in Hungary lived in such towns. With the high concentration of wealth and land in the Bohemian crown lands, most of these towns were in the possession of a few aristocratic magnates. Even before the reconquest of Hungary, Jews expelled from Lower Austria and Vienna began to settle in market towns along the Hungarian border belonging to aristocrats like Esterházy, Batthyány, and Pálffy.

Beside the impressive migration to Hungary, the long eighteenth century also witnessed considerable migration to villages where this was permissible (again excepting Moravia, where only 2 percent or so lived outside the towns). A striking evidence of this is the rise, then decline, of Prague's Jewish population, both in absolute numbers and in its share of Bohemian Jewry. In 1638, 7,815 Jews were recorded in Prague; in 1712, 11,517; in 1740, possibly over 14,000; while in 1789 only 8,215.⁷ Proportionately, Prague dropped from having more than one-third to less than one-quarter of Bohemian Jewry during these decades. During the reign of Joseph II, 35 percent of Jewry in Bohemia lived in rural areas, roughly 25 percent in Galicia, while as many as 60 percent in Hungary, with its 83,000 Jews. This last detail is noteworthy: since, as we have seen, Hungary experienced a constant flow of Jewish immigrants primarily from Moravia and Galicia, provinces with either insignificant or relatively small village populations, it meant that Jews were moving from lands with robust communal life – 45 percent of Galician and 75 percent of Moravian Jewry lived in towns with concentrations of more than 500 Jews – to isolated rural locations, with mostly a few Jewish families to a village.

Within market towns, and even villages, further discriminatory legislation determined Jewish residence. This was particularly true of Bohemia and Moravia, where in addition to the Familiants Laws limiting the number of Jewish families in various locations, decrees were issued between 1727 and

⁷ See the rich statistical table in Wilfried Brosche, "Das Ghetto von Prag," in Seibt, ed., *Die Juden in den böhmischen Ländern*, 117–19.

1731 relocating Jewish domiciles and segregating them from Christian ones. The authorities were especially concerned to ensure that no Jewish house was in close proximity to a church and could disturb worship, or even had a view from a window from which religious processions could be mocked.⁸ These Jewish quarters were true ghettos, and were especially characteristic of Moravia where Jews – but also Christians – were ordered to relocate and exchange houses in fifty-four localities in order to produce clear-cut division between the Christian town and the *Judengasse* (“Jewish street”).⁹ Outside the Bohemian crown lands, there were a few communities that also had similar Jewish ghettos, such as Eisenstadt, whose Jewish quarter was set off by a chain, or the Pressburg *Judengasse* whose heavy gates were to provide crucial defense against the riots of 1848. But in general, in Hungary and Galicia, with few exceptions – such as the prohibition of Jewish dwellings in two quarters of Lemberg at the turn of the century – no such residential discrimination obtained within permitted settlements.

Jews played an important economic role in the backward economy of the Habsburg lands, yet occupational restrictions were just as onerous as residential ones. Jews could not own land (not even the rustical land of the serfs) and were excluded from the merchant and craft guilds. Jews did engage in a limited number of crafts, and at times, as in Prague, they also formed their own guild associations. While Jews managed to circumvent some of the residential and occupational limitations, these discriminatory measures had an undeniable effect on the occupational structure of Habsburg Jewry. A considerable sector was engaged as either village *arendars* – who leased such noble monopolies as distilleries, inns and mills – or itinerant traders, the so-called *Pinkeljuden* who plied their wares in the countryside carrying a sack on their backs. The distribution of the occupations in Bohemia, Hungary, and Galicia was strikingly similar: about half of the Jewish population engaged in trade, mostly petty trade; about a fifth in crafts; and a third in *arenda* in Hungary and Galicia, though about half as much in Bohemia where various miscellaneous economic endeavors completed the profile.¹⁰

⁸ František Roubík, “Die Judensiedlungen in Böhmen auf den Ortsplänen vom Jahre 1727,” *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für Geschichte der Juden in der Čechoslovakischen Republik [JGGJČR]* 3 (1931), 283–306, here 292, 298.

⁹ Willibald Müller, “Konskription und Separierung der Judenschaft im Jahre 1727,” in Müller, *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte der mähr. Judenschaft im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Olmütz, 1903), 33–72. See Michael L. Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation* (Stanford, 2011), 29–30.

¹⁰ Ruth Kestenbergl-Gladstein, “Economic History of Jews in Non-metropolitan Bohemia in the 17th and 18th Centuries” [Hebrew], *Zion* 12 (1947), S. 160–89; Jirí Woitsch and František Bahenský, eds., *Etnografický atlas Čech, Moravy a Slezska*, vol. V: *Zidovské*

In Hungary, the dramatic increase of the Jewish population brought a much-needed infusion into the economy. In the countryside, as peddlers, general store owners, innkeepers, Jews came to displace the traditional so-called Greek traders. In the market towns, as noted, they played a key economic role mediating between the cities and the villages.

The dynamic in the economic sphere was noticeable also in the very upper reaches of Jewish society. In light of the weakness of the Habsburg state, the financial and entrepreneurial activities of Court Jews in Vienna, such as Samuel Oppenheimer and Samson Wertheimer, and their wide network of Jewish agents were essential in waging the ongoing wars against the Ottomans in the east and the French in the west at the end of the seventeenth century and again at the beginning of the eighteenth. Their network of Jewish military subcontractors, reaching down to the lowest traders, supplied the blankets, provisions, military arms and supplies, draft oxen for hauling cannons and wagons, cattle for meat, and horses for the cavalry.¹¹ While the relative importance of the role of Viennese Court Jews declined toward the middle of the century, the constant years of warfare, especially the Seven Years' War, provided entrepreneurial opportunities for the Wetzlar, Arnstein, and Eskeles families as army purveyors and bankers. Leasing the state tobacco monopoly also became a Jewish niche, beginning with Diego d'Aguilar in the 1730s and 1740s, and then a consortium formed by the Hönig family in the second half of the century to farm the tobacco lease of the Bohemian lands. Unlike d'Aguilar, the Hönigs succeeded in having Jews subcontract the lease, thus providing a new livelihood for hundreds if not thousands of Jews in the Bohemian countryside.¹² Jews were allowed to enter the Gremium of privileged wholesale merchants in 1782, and the quarter of a century of the French and Napoleonic era again brought a new generation of army contractors and wholesale buyers into prominence,

obyvatelstvo v Cechách v letech 1792–1794 (Prague, 2007); Raphael Mahler, *Yidn in amolikh Poyln in likht fun tzifern*, 2 vols. (Warsaw, 1958); Michael K. Silber, "A Jewish Minority in a Backward Economy: An Introduction," in Silber, ed., *Jews in the Hungarian Economy, 1760–1945* (Jerusalem, 1992), 3–22; and Erzsébet Mislovics, "Demographic and Socio-Economic History of Hungarian Jews, 1700–1830" [Hungarian] (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 2008), 150–238.

¹¹ Péter Hanák, "Jews and the Modernization of Commerce in Hungary, 1760–1848," in Silber, ed., *Jews in the Hungarian Economy*, 23–39.

¹² Michael Hainisch, "Das österreichische Tabakmonopol im 18. Jahrhundert," *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 8 (1910), 394–444; Louise Hecht, "Von jüdischen Tabakbaronen und Trafikanten," *Brücken – Germanistisches Jahrbuch* 18 (2010), 203–23. Woitsch and Bahenský, eds., *Etnografický atlas*, map 12 on Jews engaged in tobacco trade in Bohemia in the 1790s, provides a striking visual illustration of the spread of this new economic endeavor.

giving rise to a new economic elite invested in textile factories, especially in Bohemia.¹³ Their networks spread throughout the land and also brought about a measure of trickle-down prosperity, though great disparities in income and wealth obtained between the elites in Vienna and Prague and even mid-range merchants, not to mention the overwhelming mass of poor peddlers and *arendars*. Eventually, the cost of the incessant warfare proved devastating to state finances. In 1811, Austria declared bankruptcy and initiated a sharp devaluation that overnight wiped out great and modest fortunes. The Wehle family “went to bed worth one hundred thousand Gulden and woke up worth only twenty thousand.”¹⁴ Only toward the end of the 1820s would the Habsburg economy recover and a new era of capitalism take off. Nevertheless, most of the occupational and residential restrictions, as well as the special Jewish taxes, continued up to the 1840s, and some even up to 1860, despite a brief hiatus during the short-lived reforms of Joseph II in the 1780s.

COMMUNITY AND SUPER-COMMUNITY

It is in the market towns throughout the Monarchy that Jews were commonly issued charters or privileges by the aristocracy in the late seventeenth century and early part of the eighteenth century, ensuring the Jewish right to settle on their lands, to engage in trade, and to enjoy a measure of religious freedom and communal autonomy. However, toward the end of the eighteenth century, the grant of these privileges in Hungary’s newly constituted communities became less common, perhaps even superfluous, though older ones were regularly renewed up until 1848 whenever a new lord succeeded to the domain.¹⁵ The privileges were of a collective

¹³ Herman Freudenberger, *Lost Momentum: Austrian Economic Development 1750s–1830s* (Vienna, 2003), 167–205.

¹⁴ Josephine Goldmark, *Pilgrims of ’48* (New Haven, 1930), 176.

¹⁵ The 1748 privilege issued for the Jews of Pápa in Hungary was renewed without change by the Counts Esterházy in 1755, 1801, and 1829. See *Magyar Zsidó Szemle [MZsSz]* 2 (1882), 623–4. The *privilegium* for Mattersdorf was first issued in 1694 and revised in 1800, as the preamble states, because some points were “under the present circumstances no longer applicable.” It remained valid at least until 1833. It is remarkable that, despite the preamble, no meaningful change is discernable over close to a century and a half. Fritz P. Hodik, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mattersdorfer Judengemeinde im 18. und in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Eisenstadt, 1975), 43–54, places both texts side by side. Many of the privileges collected by Jacob Goldberg, ed., *Jewish Privileges in the Polish Commonwealth: Charters of Rights Granted to Jewish Communities in Poland–Lithuania in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem, 1985–2001), remained relevant in Galicia after its annexation.

nature, granting Jews the right to organize as a separate legal corporation, but individual charters were not unknown, such as those of the handful of Court Jews in Vienna at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries who were permitted residence and trade in the capital for a set period, but lived constantly with the threat that extensions could be denied. In fact, Viennese Jewry as a collective first constituted itself as a community only in the wake of the 1848 revolution.¹⁶ It should also be recalled that, while the market towns were the loci of rich Jewish communal associations, Jews who lived in villages were deprived of even the most basic institutions such as a synagogue, and made do with an occasional visit to the town, usually during the holidays. A quorum could be assembled on the Sabbath when Jews from various villages came together for prayers; the wealthier villagers could also hire a tutor for their offspring. But, in general, village life was characterized by the poverty of its Jewish life: the *Dorfjuden* or *yishuvniks* were often mocked as ignorant bumpkins.

Besides the *privilegium*, which defined relations between the lord and the Jews on his estate, the self-regulating internal affairs of the community were set out in its *takkanot*, often translated for the benefit of the authorities as its *Polizeiordnung*. These statutes related to the administration of the community, but often would also seek to curb deviant behavior such as gambling, or frequenting theatres and comedies, as well as cafés run by non-Jews. Social discipline aimed at preserving modesty, sumptuary regulations, and even statutes stating the length of the beard were issued. Alongside the *kehillah* with its many religious, administrative, judicial, and educational activities, many of the larger communities also had a number of other associations, chief among them the *hevra kadisha* (“burial society”), which in time came to take on charitable functions and caring for the sick as well. Associated with the *hevrot* were the enameled glass ceremonial beakers that, along with the illustrated *pinkasim*, and even the 1773 multi-paneled group portrait of the Prague *hevra*, testified to a unique visual culture in these lands. Nearly a dozen artists and illustrators flourished in Vienna, Bohemia, Moravia, and western Hungary during the long eighteenth century.¹⁷

¹⁶ David Kaufmann, *Samson Wertheimer* (Vienna, 1888), and Max Grunwald, *Samuel Oppenheimer und sein Kreis* (Vienna, 1913). For the 1723 list of the dozen Jews in Vienna who enjoyed individual privileges, see A. F. Pšibram, ed., *Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1918), I, 312. Biographies of the Viennese Court Jews can be found in the incomparable Bernard Wachstein, *Die Inschriften des Alten Judenfriedhofes in Wien*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1917).

¹⁷ Vivian B. Mann, Richard I. Cohen, and Fritz Backhaus, eds., *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage, and Power 1600–1800* (Munich, 1996), 118.

One more institution that especially flourished in the Habsburg lands during the long eighteenth century was the *yeshiva*. The once-thriving academies in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth had all but disappeared during these years,¹⁸ and the center of gravity of the *yeshivot* had shifted to central Europe, to the Habsburg lands and a handful of large communities farther west. But it was Prague, above all, which attracted the largest number of students from all over Europe to attend its various *yeshivot* and to hear the lectures of such charismatic academy-heads as Abraham Broda, Jonathan Eibeschütz, and Ezekiel Landau.¹⁹ Important *yeshivot* could also be found throughout the Monarchy in the mid-sized communities, especially in Moravia, but Kolin (Bohemia) and Pressburg (Hungary) also had outstanding academies at various times. At the end of our period, around 1815, when the *yeshiva* had all but disappeared in Germany and had begun to decline in Prague, and in far-off Lithuania the Volozhin *yeshiva* was still in its infancy, it was Pressburg that rose to pre-eminence during the incumbency of Moses Sofer (r. 1806–39) as the largest and most important *yeshiva* in Europe.²⁰

In general, the Jews in the Habsburg lands possessed a type of communal autonomy that was little different from that enjoyed by Jews in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. One can even argue that, in practice, communal autonomy might have functioned even better in the Monarchy, if we take into account that magnate interference and abuses were kept in check by a much stronger state intent on preserving its own imperial interests and maintaining a rule of law that was often much weaker in the Commonwealth.²¹ Striking evidence of the strength of communal autonomy in the Habsburg lands is the fact that, when the corporate character of the traditional community was dismantled throughout Europe by the mid nineteenth century, only in Moravia (and two communities in Hungary: Eisenstadt and Mattersdorf) were the *kehillot*

¹⁸ Selig Margolios, “Woe, Yeshivas Have Been Eliminated in Poland!” introduction to Margolios, *Hiburie Liqutim* (Venice, 1714/15).

¹⁹ On foreign students in Prague *yeshivot*, see František Roubík, “Zur Geschichte der Juden in Böhmen in der ersten Hälfte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts,” *JGGJČR* 6 (1934), 295–322, esp. 300, 313–20.

²⁰ Michael K. Silber, “‘There Are No Yeshivot in Our Country – For Several Good Reasons’: Between Hasidim and Mitnagdim in Hungary” [Hebrew], in Emanuel Etkes, David Asaf, Israel Bartal, and Joseph Dan, eds., *Be-Ma’agalei Hasidim: Qovetz Mehqarim le-Zikhro Shel Professor Mordekhai Wilensky* (Jerusalem, 1999), 75–108.

²¹ “The rabbis of Little Poland whose foolish ways are to buy themselves rabbinates . . . [in] Greater Poland we fear . . . that a rabbi will be appointed in our community by the lord for love of money”: Letter of the Elders of Lissa in “From the Archives of Frankfurt am Main concerning its Rabbinat, 1759” [Hebrew], *Tzfunot* 8 (1990), 105–8, here 107.

transformed into not only religious communities, but also “political Jewish communities” – state-recognized self-governing Jewish municipalities.²²

The super-communal Council of the Land in Moravia, too, “bore close resemblance – although on a much smaller scale – to the Council of the Four Lands in Poland (and the Council of the Land of Lithuania).”²³ Interestingly enough, when the state first intervened in the administration of the communities during the reign of Maria Theresa, abolishing Jewish autonomy was not on the agenda. The Moravian *General-Polizei-Prozess- und Kommerzialordnung* issued in 1754, for example, more or less reconfirmed the super-*kehillah* autonomy of Moravian Jewry. The Jewish courts were to continue to function in suits between two Jews in the first instance. Instead of abolishing the Jewish autonomous organization, Maria Theresa preferred to retain and co-opt it as an ancillary bureaucratic body. In the case of Galician Jewry, she went even further. In the absence of a super-*kehillah* organization, the Council of Four Lands having been abolished in the Commonwealth during the previous decade, Maria Theresa set one up in 1776: a central Directory along Moravian lines. Although its functions were primarily those of a tax-collecting body, the chief rabbi who was appointed as its head had extensive powers. Jurisdiction of the rabbinic courts on the community level was left intact and the exercise of the ban by the Jewish authorities was still permitted by these two most important pieces of Theresian legislation regulating Jewish affairs.²⁴

An additional super-communal institution in the Habsburg lands that was not found in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth was the type of rabbi who exercised centralized, hierarchical power over substantial subordinate communities in an entire land, as did incumbents of the chief rabbinate in Moravia, Bohemia, briefly Hungary, and later Galicia.²⁵

²² Emil Goldmann, “Die politische Judengemeinden in Mähren,” *Zeitschrift für Volkswirtschaft, Socialpolitik und Verwaltung* 17 (1898), 557–95, and Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution*, 331–2.

²³ Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution*, 22, and see the introduction to Israel Halpern, ed., *Taanot Medinat Mehrin, 1650–1748* (Jerusalem, 1951), 9–16. An even smaller super-communal organization obtained in western Hungary: Bernhard Wachstein, ed., *Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Eisenstadt und den Siebengemeinden* (Vienna, 1926), 553–711. On super-communal organizations in general, see Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. and afterword Bernard Dov Cooperman (New York, 1993), 103–12.

²⁴ See §30 of the 1754 Moravian, and II §13 of the 1776 Galician regulations, in Müller, *Urkundliche Beiträge*, 81–102, and *Edicta et Mandata* (Leopoli, 1776), esp. 100. On the central Directory, see Abraham Jacob Brawer, *Galicia ve-Yehudeiha* (Jerusalem, 1965), pp. 178–86.

²⁵ See the classic study by Leopold Löw, “Das mährische Landesrabbinat,” in his *Gesammelte Schriften*, 5 vols. (Szeged, 1890), II, 165–218; Sándor Büchler, “Az országos

All this should make one skeptical of recent typologies that seek to contrast east and west, the collective privileges enjoyed by Jews in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth versus personal ones in the Holy Roman Empire.²⁶ They overlook the fact that, at least until mid eighteenth century, the majority of the Empire’s Jews were to be found in the Habsburg kingdom of Bohemia, and that these were constituted as *collective* corporate entities exercising considerable self-governance on both local and statewide levels.²⁷

RELIGIOUS CHANGE: KABBALAH AND HALAKHAH

Let us now address the changes that began to become noticeable in the religious sphere after the Seven Years’ War. First, a subtle but far-reaching change took place in what can be called the soteriology of Judaism, in particular in the demand that knowledge and study of the Kabbalah were essential for the soul’s salvation. Such a demand was a relatively new development that took off toward the middle of the seventeenth century and peaked in the mid eighteenth century. The 1770/1 testament of Leib Oppenheim, the rabbi of Freistadt/Galgoc in Hungary, reflects this sentiment: although one should devote oneself to the study of Talmud, “he should also set aside time for the study of Kabbalah, the secrets of the Torah. For whoever does not see this in this world will not merit to see the hidden light vouchsafed for the righteous in the eternal life of the world to come, and will not enter into the precincts of the Holy One.”²⁸ This was

förabbi hivatal Magyarországon” [The Office of the Chief Rabbinate in Hungary], *IMIT Évkönyv* (1896), 271–86; Tobias Jakobovits, “Das Prager und Böhmisches Landesrabbinat Ende des siebzehnten und Anfang des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts,” *JGGJČR* 5 (1933), 79–136; Joshua Z. Teplitsky, “Between Court Jew and Jewish Court: David Oppenheim, the Prague Rabbinate, and Eighteenth-century Jewish Political Culture” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2012).

²⁶ This has been argued by Adam Teller, “Telling the Difference: Some Comparative Perspectives on the Jews’ Legal Status in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Holy Roman Empire,” *Polin* 22 (2009), 109–41, and David J. Sorkin, “Beyond the East–West Divide: Rethinking the Narrative of the Jews’ Political Status in Europe, 1600–1750,” *Jewish History* 24, 3–4 (2010), 247–56. Both have ignored the preponderant role of the kingdom of Bohemia and its Jews *within* the Holy Roman Empire, and their extensive collective privileges.

²⁷ While Jewish statistics for the Holy Roman Empire (the Reich) are notoriously difficult to ascertain, it is clear, however, that the Jews of the Bohemian crownlands formed the majority of its Jewish population until the mid eighteenth century. For some estimates: Jacob Toury, *Qavim le-Heqer Kenisat ha-Yehudim le-Haim ha-Ezrahiim be-Germaniah* (Tel Aviv, 1972), 11; Raphael Mahler, *Divrei Yemei Yisrael. Dorot Aharonim*, vol. I, book 2 (Merhavva, 1954), 14.

²⁸ Leib Oppenheim, *Derekh Olam ha-Nitzhii*’ (Prague, 1807), fol. 14b.

exactly the position that Ezekiel Landau, the rabbi of Prague and the pre-eminent halakhic authority of the time, came vigorously to oppose. More than anyone else, he most embodied the retreat from the Kabbalah, negating its soteriological pretensions. His views were well known in the past on the basis of his published works and ascribed to the allegation that the Kabbalah was tainted by Sabbatean heresy.²⁹

Sabbateanism indeed flourished in the Bohemian lands. News of Sabbatai Zevi had been greeted with joy in Vienna and Prague in 1666. It was reported from Vienna that several Jews had asked the imperial court for permission to depart for Palestine because their messiah had arrived. In order to insult the Jews during the Mardi Gras carnival in Prague, nobles organized a mock parade of the messiah: “The Messiah read from a book: Follow after me! A trumpet has blown; some of the cavaliers spoke Hebrew.” In Buda, the grandfather of the famous heresy hunter Jacob Emden “condemned to death a Jew because he refused to pray a blessing for Sabbatai Zevi. He ruled that this person was a rebel against the royal House of David and declared his life forfeit.”³⁰ Throughout the eighteenth century, Prossnitz and Holleschau in Moravia, Prague and Kolin in Bohemia, Rechnitz and Stampfen in Hungary were known to harbor nests of crypto-Sabbateans. The 1750s proved a turning point in the history of the Sabbatean movement. In the east, in what was soon to become eastern Galicia, Jacob Frank had gathered hundreds of followers captivated by his personality and his own radical brand of Sabbatean teachings. It was an episode that culminated in the mass conversion of some 600 men, women, and children to Roman Catholicism in Lwow in 1759 and 1760. Later, Frank took up domicile in Brno, Moravia, and was supported by small conventicles of so-called believers (*ma’aminim*) in the Bohemian lands, who still continued to adhere outwardly to normative Judaism. Many of these Bohemian Sabbateans had taken part earlier during the 1750s in the prolonged and no-holds-barred controversy that rent the rabbinic world apart, focused on the charismatic rabbi Jonathan Eibeschutz, considered the most brilliant talmudic mind of his time, but suspected of having composed sacrilegious amulets and a kabbalistic manuscript tainted with the worst type of Sabbatean heresy.³¹

²⁹ See Landau’s commentary on Berakhot 28b in his *Hidushei ha-Tzlach*, as well as his sermon of Shabbath ha-Gadol of 1782.

³⁰ Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah* (Princeton, 1973).

³¹ Of the extensive literature on both these episodes, I refer only to Gershom Scholem, “A Frankist Document from Prague,” in *Salo W. Baron Jubilee Volume*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1975), II, 787–814; Pawel Maciejko, *Jacob Frank and the Frankist Movement, 1755–1816* (Philadelphia, 2011); *And I Came This Day unto the Fountain* by R. Jonathan Eibeschutz, critically edited and introduced by Pawel Maciejko, with additional studies by Noam Lefler, Jonatan Benarroch, and Shai Alleson Gerberg (Los Angeles, 2014).

Thus, Landau had good reason to oppose the Kabbalah in light of its association with Sabbateanism. However, a censored and unpublished section of a key sermon delivered in the autumn of 1770 has recently come to light, which leaves no room for doubt that he condemned the Kabbalah *per se*, not only for its association with Sabbatean abuse.³² If Sabbateanism, with its *ma'aminim* and the saliency it accorded to credo, can be seen as a form of confessionalization in Judaism, then Landau's counter-move to mute religious speculation by stressing the sufficiency of praxis can be conceived of as a form of de-confessionalization. Interestingly, this coincided with Moses Mendelssohn's similar emphasis on ritual performance and the de-dogmatization of Judaism.

Of course, within a generation, young scholars affiliated with the growing Hasidic movement in Galicia, such as Ezekiel Paneth and Zvi Elimeleh of Dynow, lamented the neglect of Kabbalah and sought once again to reinstate it to its rightful place, blaming authorities like Landau for the sorry state Judaism was in.³³ But the damage, at least in central Europe, was done. When a German synod held in 1836 raised the question "Is the Kabbalah deemed tradition?" the majority voted "no" – it exercised no binding influence: "On this occasion it was also noted that the high court in Prague had expressly declared that no one should consult the Kabbalah."³⁴ Whether this provides sufficient explanation for why Hasidism, uniquely of all religious movements in early modern Judaism, was contained as a regional phenomenon (just consider, by contrast, the cosmopolitan nature of Sabbateanism) that could not breach the borders separating the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth from the Holy Roman Empire still remains to be explored.

The rapid retreat from Kabbalah is one of the most noteworthy religious phenomena of this period. Did it reflect a growing rationalization, a disenchantment of the world, an Enlightenment *Zeitgeist*? Writing in the 1790s at the other end of the Monarchy in Galicia, Dov Ber Birkenthal of Bolechow recalled the pervasive ambience of enthusiasm in his youth, a craze for the Kabbalah and neglect of the Talmud. Phenomena such as

³² Maoz Kahana and Michael K. Silber, "Deists, Sabbatians and Kabbalists in Prague: A Censored Sermon of R. Ezekiel Landau, 1770" [Hebrew], *Kabbalah* 21 (2010), 349–84, esp. 378–81.

³³ Ezekiel Paneth, *Mar'eh Yehezkel ha-Shalem*, ed Mordekhai Grinfeld, 2 vols. (Monsey, NY, 2004), I, 106–20; Zvi Elimeleh of Dynow in his commentary *Ma'ayan Ganim* on the sixteenth-century treatise of Yosef Yaavetz, *Or ha-Haim*: "Woe to us, that several of the great righteous of the generation have closed off the door of this wisdom [Kabbalah] to their students" (ch. 1).

³⁴ "Verhandlung der Israelitischen Kreis-Synode zu Würzburg, im Jahre 1836," *Sulamith* 8, 1 (1834–43), 373–4.

dybbuk possession confirmed the belief that malevolent demons were ubiquitous: “I saw with my own eyes several of our people who were possessed by the spirit . . . They would throw themselves down in the front of the synagogues . . . They would pound their chests cruelly with large rocks.” However, “In 1758 and 1759, I came to know and to be convinced that we mortals including gentiles have nothing to fear from the influence of demons.” Although not stated expressly, these were the very years Dov Ber took part in the debates with Jacob Frank and his followers in Lwow. Did the excesses of Sabbatean heresy bring about this volte-face? Later he adds that the decisive factor was the annexation of Galicia by the Habsburg state: “It is now some thirty years or more that one has not heard of harm coming to people at the hands of demons . . . For fear of the armies and the numerous soldiers of His Majesty the emperor, the demons have fled entirely from these lands.”³⁵

The *dybbuks* may have fled Galicia, a fact confirmed and mourned by the compiler of the legends of Israel Ba’al Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism,³⁶ but, in spite of the beneficial presence of Joseph II and his enlightened regime, they seemed to have lingered on to do mischief in Moravia. Two accounts of demonic possession and exorcism, conducted ninety years apart in 1696 and 1785 by incumbent Moravian chief rabbis in the community of Nikolsburg, seem to suggest that little had changed in the interim, and cautions against drawing overhasty conclusions about disenchantment.³⁷

To be sure, interest in the occult persisted even in an age of Enlightenment, and not necessarily among the benighted populace.³⁸ The cultural profile of Nathan Arnstein and Bernhard Eskeles, brothers-in-law and partners in one of the most important banking firms in Vienna, whose wives were famous *salonnières*, becomes somewhat more complex when their membership in the Order of Asiatic Brethren is considered. Founded in Vienna in 1781–3 by Thomas von Schönfeld (the Sabbatean Moses Dobruska in his former

³⁵ Gershon D. Hundert, “The Introduction to *Divre Binah* by Dov Ber of Bolechów,” *AJS Review* 33, 2 (November, 2009), 225–69, here 241–2.

³⁶ Dov Ber of Linitz’s preface to *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*, trans. and intro. by Dan Ben-Amos and Jerome R. Mintz (Bloomington, 1970), 3–5.

³⁷ *Ma’aseh h[ashem] ki nora hu*, published in Moses ben Menahem Graf, *Zera kodesh matzevata* (Fürth, 1696), and Abraham Hayat, *Ruah Haim* (Nikolsburg, 1785). Both are reprinted in Gedalyahu Nigal, *Sipurei Dybuk be-Sifrut Yisrael* [Tales of the *Dybbuk* in Jewish Literature] (Jerusalem, 1983), 132–44. See now Sarah Zfatman, *Tze Tome!* [Out Unclean Spirit!] (Jerusalem, 2015), an impressive annotated edition of the various versions of the first Nikolsburg exorcism.

³⁸ Jacob Katz, “The Suggested Relationship between Sabbatianism, Haskalah, and Reform,” in Katz, *Divine Law in Human Hands: Case Studies in Halakhic Flexibility* (Jerusalem, 1998), 504–30.

incarnation), the Order – “an imitation or kind of travesty of the Freemasons” – combined masonic lore with purported kabbalistic teachings and sought to create a neutral association for Jews and Christians alike. Among the many prominent civil servants and aristocrats who mingled with the Jewish bankers, one could find Count György Festetics (1755–1819), the head of the Hungarian Freemasons who, in the lodge, went by the “kabbalist” appellation “Eliphaz.”³⁹

The decade of the 1750s is also significant in that it marks a key transition in the history of Halakhah, setting off a dialectical development over two generations that would culminate in the closing years of the second decade of the nineteenth century. Two figures have dominated the halakhic discourse of the last two and a half centuries, Ezekiel Landau (1713–93), rabbi of Prague, and Moses Sofer (1762–1839), rabbi of Pressburg, better known by the titles of their respective responsa collections, *Noda bi-Yehudah* and *Ḥatam Sofer*. As we have seen, both were the leading heads of academies in their day, but both were also the leading decisors of their generation and subsequent ones as well, to this very day.

The two have been often contrasted. Landau’s more flexible approach was taken to be representative of traditional Halakhah before the challenge of modern Jewish ideologies at the turn of the century brought about a conservative reaction led by the Ḥatam Sofer.⁴⁰ But, rather than being viewed as merely a passive foil to highlight the conservative innovations of his successor the Ḥatam Sofer, Landau has now been evaluated on his own terms. Far from representing the culmination of the final chapter of what Jacob Katz characterized as “traditional society,” Landau in fact inaugurated a more open process toward the end of the 1750s that could be characterized as reflecting the Enlightened *Zeitgeist* of the eighteenth century. Landau’s project was basically one of canonization, determining which elements of tradition were to be considered authoritative in deciding halakhic issues. His astonishing determination to return to the pristine talmudic source, skipping over the medieval authorities; his “purification” of the canon by excluding bodies of knowledge such as the Kabbalah and time-honored customs derived from such sanctified sources as the medieval German Pietists; as well as his dismissal of local practice – all reveal the

³⁹ Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723–1939* (Cambridge, MA, 1970); Gershon Scholem, *Du Frankisme au jacobinisme* (Paris, 1981).

⁴⁰ Moshe Samet, *He-Hadash Asur Min ha-Torah* (Jerusalem, 2005); Jacob Katz, “Towards a Biography of the Hatam Sofer,” in Francis Malino and David Sorkin, eds., *From East to West: Jews in a Changing Europe* (London, 1990), 223–66; and Katz, *He-Halakha be-Metzar* (Jerusalem, 1992).

dynamic development of Landau's halakhic worldview.⁴¹ Landau's puritanical approach, combined with his liberal flexibility, proved an inspiration for some of his Haskalah-minded disciples in the following generation, such as Aron Chorin, rabbi of Arad, and Moshe Kunitz, rabbi of Buda, who went on to sanction synagogue reforms by returning to halakhic fundamentals at the expense of accepted traditions. But it also elicited a reactionary conservatism in the likes of the Hatam Sofer, whose Orthodox worldview began to be formulated in the second decade of the nineteenth century in calculated rejection of Landau's approach.

SECULARIZATION, ACCULTURATION, AND CONVERSION

Viennese Jewry was in the vanguard of cultural and religious transformation of the Jews in the Habsburg Monarchy in the eighteenth century. Up until mid-century, the small group of wealthy Court Jews in Vienna seem to have led conventional traditional lives, some even attaining considerable status as recognized scholars in the Talmud and the Kabbalah.⁴² Important evidence of a significant change in religious life that occurred sometime between the conclusion of the Seven Years' War and the promulgation of the Edict of Toleration is provided by the early history of the Viennese *hevra kadisha*.⁴³ Established in 1763 by young bachelors from the leading families in Vienna, they numbered among their ranks scions of the most prominent Court Jews, such as members of the Wertheimer, Sinzheim, Margulies, Jaffe, and Schlesinger families, the young teenagers Nathan Arnstein and Bernhard Eskeles, and even the newcomer Karl Abraham Wetzlar, all of whom were later to play such important roles in Vienna's economy and were among the first Jews to be ennobled in modern times. (Perhaps it was these young men who raucously caroused on Purim eve three years later, sleigh-riding through the streets of Vienna with music and torches, and subsequently incurring heavy fines for flouting the general mourning that had been declared for the late Emperor.)⁴⁴ The intent of the founders to pursue the trio of classical virtues – study, worship, and charitable good deeds – was given expression in the regulations of the society in terms that, at such a late date, were remarkably traditional: weekly lessons in the Talmud, fasting on the eve of the New Moon, a

⁴¹ See the groundbreaking thesis of Maoz Kahana, *From the Noda bi-Yehudah to the Hatam Sofer: Halakhah and Thought in their Historical Moment* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 2015).

⁴² Their tombstones note honorifics such as *moreinu* ("possessing an advanced diploma") or *aluf* ("a learned communal leader"): Wachstein, *Inschriften*.

⁴³ B. Wachstein, *Die Gründung der Wr. Chewra Kadischa im Jahre 1763* (Vienna, 1911).

⁴⁴ Oluf Gerhard Tychsen, *Bürowische Nebenstunden*, vol. VI (1769), 74.

quorum to study at the bedside of the sick, reciting psalms for the ill and the dead, personal commitment to participating in the burial of the dead, and so on. Rather cheekily, the bachelors pronounced the pious hope that the society would serve as a model to be emulated by the married men.

Yet, within two decades or so, there was a noticeable retreat from these virtuous intentions. "We have seen with clarity," the regulations intoned, "that everything changes according to the time and the place." Consequently, a sermon in ethics replaced the Talmud lesson, fasting was declared burdensome, forming a quorum for the sick impractical, and burial of the dead relegated to professionals. While the regulations could still conclude with an appeal "to preserve and observe the Torah more precious than gold and pearls . . . so that He will gather us from the four corners of the earth to bring us to Zion," they gave clear proof of waning piety and religious fervor, despite the absence of new ideological orientations such as those espoused at the time by Berlin's innovative benevolent society, the *Gesellschaft der Freunde*, which sought to displace the traditional *hevra kadisha*.

There were other early indications of the religious decline that was to gain momentum in the next generation of Vienna's Jewish elite. The first converts from this stratum were relative newcomers to the capital such as Karl Abraham Wetzlar, who had made his fortune during the Seven Years' War as an army purveyor, and had moved to Vienna in 1767. In 1776, he converted and soon thereafter was ennobled as Baron von Plankenstern. In the next three years, his children followed him to the baptismal font, including Raimund, who later served as godfather to Mozart's firstborn son.⁴⁵ Several members of the Hönig and Dobruschka families, both prominent in tobacco leasing, also converted around this time and were raised into the nobility.⁴⁶

Scandal and conversion also touched on two of the most prominent families in Vienna already in the late 1770s. Eleanora Eskeles (1752–1812), daughter of the late Moravian chief rabbi, abandoned her Jewish husband Meyer Fliess, and in 1777 became the mistress of Valentin Günther, the Emperor's favorite, bearing him two children.⁴⁷ Joseph Adam Arnsteiner (1754–1811), who had also married into the Fliess family, was baptized as

⁴⁵ Klaus Edel, *Karl Abraham Wetzlar Freiherr von Plankenstern, 1715(16)–1799* (Vienna, 1975).

⁴⁶ Anna L. Staudacher, *Jüdische Konvertiten in Wien 1782–1868*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 2002). On ennoblements, see Heinrich Schnee, *Die Hoffinanz und der moderne Staat* (Berlin, 1963), vol. IV, 311–45.

⁴⁷ Hilde Spiel, *Fanny von Arnstein: Daughter of the Enlightenment 1758–1818* (New York, 1991), 68–9, 73–9, and Paul Bernard, *The Limits of Enlightenment: Joseph II and the Law* (Urbana, 1979), 93–4.

Michael Joseph Arnsteiner in 1778. No amount of pleading on his part could bring about a rapprochement with his parents.⁴⁸ Their siblings, later ennobled as Baron Nathan Adam von Arnstein (1748–1838) and Baron Bernhard von Eskeles (1753–1839), married around this time two daughters of the wealthy Daniel Itzig from Berlin, respectively Fanny (1757–1818) and Cäcilie (1760–1836). Both became leading *salonnières* in Vienna, holding “large musical parties,” with Fanny entertaining such celebrities as Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton, and at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 hosting the foremost statesmen of Europe, among them Talleyrand, Wellington, Castlereagh, and Hardenberg.⁴⁹ Although both Arnstein and Eskeles remained Jewish, they lived to witness the conversion of their offspring. Fanny von Arnstein’s daughter Henriette (1780–1859), who married Heinrich Pereira, had their 4-year-old son converted in 1808. Cäcilie Eskeles’s daughter Henrika Eskeles (b. 1802) herself converted in 1824 and married Count Franz von Wimpffen the following year.⁵⁰

Even before the reign of Joseph II, Habsburg Jewry had undergone a certain limited degree of acculturation that at times also indicated a modicum of secularization. Take the Jewish beard for instance. In a clean-shaven century such as the eighteenth, Jewish men could readily be distinguished by their beards. When the young Abraham Levie from Amsterdam arrived in Nikolsburg in 1719, he noted in his travel account that the same clothing was worn in Moravia as in Poland, and that “The married men all wear beards, big beards, and do not permit themselves to be shaved even with scissors.” In Vienna, he was struck by the contrast between two Court Jews: Samson Wertheimer, called the “Judenkaiser,” who was “dressed in the manner of a Pole and has a long white beard,” and the other rich Jew, Mendel Oppenheimer, who was short in stature and had no beard at all.⁵¹ It was quite acceptable that Court Jews should shave off their beards seeing as how they were “close to the powers that be.” Nevertheless, Oppenheimer seems to have been an exception because married men, including most Court Jews, did grow beards, but the full Polish style gave way in the Bohemian lands to the so-called chin beard that accorded with general fashions by exposing most of a shaven visage. Apparently, the chin beard got smaller and smaller so that the very first statute that Ezekiel Landau instituted upon arrival in Prague in the summer of 1755 was to establish its minimal length as the

⁴⁸ Spiel, *Fanny von Arnstein*, 52–6. ⁴⁹ Spiel, *Fanny von Arnstein*.

⁵⁰ See the entries for Arnstein and Eskeles in the exceptional genealogical study by Georg Gaugusch, *Wer einmal war: Das jüdische Großbürgertum Wiens 1800–1938*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 2011–16).

⁵¹ *Travels among Jews and Gentiles: Abraham Levie’s Travelogue, Amsterdam 1764*, ed. Shlomo Berger (Leiden, 2002), 79.

“breadth of a half a finger.”⁵² The state too felt the need to restate and enforce distinguishing signs, and Maria Theresa’s new regulation for the Jews of Vienna in 1764 declared beards mandatory for married men. If caught without a beard, the punishment was prison, and a first-time violation drew a substantial fine of 24 Reichsthaler for the wealthy, and bodily punishment for the poor; the second time – even harsher – expulsion from Vienna.⁵³ But what about bachelors? For some reason, unknown even to the rabbis, the custom had evolved in central Europe that bachelors did not grow beards. But then, agonized the bureaucrats, how could young Jewish men be distinguished as recognizably Jewish? Indeed, most of the complaints that reached the court involved sword-toting young Jews who mixed freely with Christians, habituated cafés, taverns, and city parks, attended operas and comedies where they occupied the best seats in the theatre, and hung about dance halls engaging in a variety of unacceptable behavior with disreputable wenches. “I have often noted the spectacle of Jewish youths and maidens mixing with the nobility,” opined Count Hatzfeld; “They could not be distinguished from them by their clothes which were just as costly as those of the nobility.”⁵⁴ This did not sit well with the Empress, and in 1760 she ordered that Jewish bachelors without beards should wear yellow armbands. The regulation apparently was observed in the breach: twenty-six Jewish young men between the ages of 15 and 26 were arrested that year in Prague for not wearing the yellow badge. On the other hand, it did elicit protest from foreign Jews who declared their refusal to come to Prague because of the decree.⁵⁵ But by 1781, when Joseph II proposed to eliminate all distinguishing signs, the Moravian authorities noted that:

As for the difference in the costume, it has long since ceased in Moravia, so much so that besides pious Jews who still wear beards in accordance with their laws, one can perceive no difference between Jewish and Christian men and women in their dress, especially the women and daughters of the rich Jew who socialize just like the nobility.⁵⁶

As time went on, even after the various Edicts of Toleration issued by Joseph II had abolished any legislation that mandated distinguishing

⁵² Tobias Jakobovits, “Die Judenabzeichen in Böhmen,” *JGGJČR* 3 (1931), 145–85, here 171.

⁵³ Alfred Pribram, *Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien* (Vienna, 1918) I, 378.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 366, 434–5.

⁵⁵ Jakobovits, “Judenabzeichen,” 181; Beilage XII; L. Moses, “Der gelbe Fleck in Prag,” *JGGJČR* 9 (1938), 459–62; Gerson Wolf, *Aus der Zeit der Kaiserin Maria Theresia* (Vienna, 1888), 66.

⁵⁶ Report of the Moravian Gubernium, August 9, 1781, *MZsSz* 20 (1903), 113.

marks, religious observance and reluctance to acculturate still dictated the Jewish visage. One observer of the Viennese scene noted in 1805, “Ordinary Jews wear their beards long; the more wealthy and liberal they become in their observance, the smaller becomes their beard until finally it disappears altogether.”⁵⁷

All this is true as far as the western part of the Monarchy is concerned. In Galicia, Dov Ber Birkenthal wrote with pride of how Jews had always separated themselves by refusing to imitate the dress and language of their surroundings, speaking amongst themselves Yiddish without a single foreign word. Yet when confronted with religious laxity, the association that came to his mind, as worldly as he was, was the shaven visage, and precisely that of a bachelor. “In these times, some of our people have begun to imitate the shaven young bachelors [*bahurim*] of Ashkenaz,” he moaned, “who are accustomed from their youth to pursue the appetites of this world, and they permit themselves [to transgress] several positive and negative commandments, for many have mingled with gentiles.”⁵⁸ By the end of our period, in their appearance, the masses of Jews in the eastern and western part of the Monarchy had drifted apart, and the men, in particular, could be readily distinguished by type of beard – or the lack of one.

Until the era of Joseph II, linguistic acculturation progressed slowly but perceptibly. Although Yiddish remained their mother tongue, many Jews gained a measure of elementary linguistic proficiency in their interaction with non-Jewish surroundings. The wealthier classes had their children tutored in various languages, and the learned elite may also have had knowledge of the local vernacular. While Eliah Rosenthal was attending the Pressburg *yeshiva* of R. Meir Barbi in 1775, his father, the wealthy uncrowned head of Hungarian Jewry, urged him not to neglect lessons in French and German.⁵⁹ Thus we should take with a pinch of salt what Isaac Hirsch Weiss writes in his memoirs of his father’s youth in the 1770s: that only one man in his community in Moravia could sign his name in German.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, on the whole, most Jews had but rudimentary knowledge of German. As Ezekiel Landau noted in 1782 in his famous sermon of *Shabbat ha-Gadol*, the Great Sabbath before Passover, when welcoming the Josephinian schools:

The government has done a great favor in deciding to teach our children to speak correctly. Even in the Bible we were criticized for not knowing how to speak the

⁵⁷ Johann Pezzl, *Neue Skizze von Wien* (Vienna, 1805), 57.

⁵⁸ Hundert, “Introduction to Divre Binah by Dov Ber of Bolechów,” 235, 238, 256, 266.

⁵⁹ Letter of Naphtali Rosenthal, 7 Adar I 1755: Budapest, Rabbinic Seminary, Rosenthal correspondence Mss., fol. 3.

⁶⁰ I. H. Weiss, *Zikhronotai* (Warsaw, 1895), 15.

various languages. Do not think that you know how to speak the German language. No one can be said to know a language unless he can speak it grammatically . . . most of our labor is in the area of trade and commerce, which requires the ability to write and to speak the language of the country.⁶¹

Indeed, soon after the schools were established, masses of Jewish children in backward communities throughout the Monarchy achieved a competency in German that only few Jews in larger urban centers like Vienna, Prague, and Pressburg had possessed earlier. The 1780s, then, marked the popularization of what had been until then solely the culture of elites.

HABSBURG POLICIES AND JEWISH LOYALTIES

The relationship between rulers of the Habsburg house and their Jews was complex. On the whole, it seemed one-sided, with Jews celebrating their sovereigns only to be rewarded with contempt, even hatred. Nevertheless, there were at times contrary moments that complicated this generalization.

The spirit of the counter-Reformation was an important factor in the Habsburg policies toward their Jewish subjects in the first half of the long eighteenth century, while the regime of Joseph II toward the end of the century was marked by a drive to establish a more centralized state along the lines of enlightened absolutism. The twenty or so years in between formed a period of transition, leaving behind the era of Baroque confessionalization, instituting bureaucratic reforms and greater social disciplining, and moving toward the creation of a more capable military and a modern centralized state apparatus.

The expulsion of the Jews of Vienna and Lower Austria in 1670 was brought about by a combination of bizarre superstitions at the court – especially harbored by the pregnant Spanish-born Empress Margareta who was “zealous in her Religion, and an Enemy unto the Jews” – the hooliganism of university students, jealous competition from the burghers, the uncertain motives of a circle of high court officials and clerics who were often at loggerheads, and traditional anti-Jewish prejudices. The feuding within Viennese Jewry, typical of many Jewish communities during this period, exacerbated the already fraught situation with internal scandal.⁶²

⁶¹ Ezekiel Landau, “Sermon for the Sabbath Preceding Passover (1782, Prague),” in Marc Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching 1200–1800: An Anthology* (New Haven, 1989), 366–7.

⁶² David Kaufmann, *Die letzte Vertreibung der Juden aus Wien und Niederoesterreich. Ihre Vorgeschichte (1625–1670) und ihre Opfer* (Vienna, 1889); Peter Rauscher, “Auf der Schipp’: Ursachen und Folgen der Ausweisung der Wiener Juden 1670,” *Aschkenas* 16 (2006), 421–38. The sources can be found in Pribram, *Urkunden und Akten*, I, 197–265.

In the Holy Roman Empire outside the Habsburg territories, expulsions of this kind were becoming exceedingly rare,⁶³ a key factor in which, ironically, was the possibility of appealing to the Emperor as final arbiter, an option unavailable to Habsburg Jewry alone. And yet, eight years after the Vienna expulsion, Prague Jewry joyously celebrated the birth of the Crown Prince with a raucous joyful carnival parade, a spectacle whose like “had not been seen in hundreds of years.”⁶⁴ To be sure, not all Jews were happy to greet the Habsburgs. One contemporary account of the failed Habsburg siege of Buda during the summer and fall months of 1684 noted that the Ottoman commander “had Seven thousand Men of the old Troops, not counting the Inhabitants and Jews, who did almost as much Service as the Souldiers.”⁶⁵

Nevertheless, there was some light amidst the shadows of Leopold’s reign (1658–1705). The years of constant warfare, first against the Turks, then the French, then the long years of the War of the Spanish Succession, created a spiral of military expenses as the need to outfit, arm, and provision ever-growing armies made increasing demands on state finances and infrastructure.⁶⁶ It was this weak state that created unprecedented opportunities for Samuel Oppenheimer, Samson Wertheimer, and a handful of Court Jews who were permitted to return to Vienna to provide the finances and provisioning of the troops without which the victories of Prince Eugene of Savoy would not have been possible.⁶⁷ The deep pride in the prominent role Court Jews played in the military campaigns comes across in the rather impudent reply one of Oppenheimer’s Jewish agents gave in the winter of 1702 when threatened with expulsion from the Hungarian city, Győr. He was not leaving at any time, he informed the authorities firmly. Need they be reminded that his master had assiduously looked after His Majesty’s treasury, and that had he failed to do so perhaps His Majesty would not have been able to hold his own in the war?!⁶⁸ Oppenheimer and other Court

⁶³ See the list of expulsions in the Reich in Sabine Frey, *Rechtsschutz der Juden gegen Ausweisungen im 16. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt, 1983), 149–50.

⁶⁴ *Judaorum Morologia oder Jüdisches Affen-Spiel* (Leipzig, 1678).

⁶⁵ Jean de Préchac, *The Serasquier Bassa: An Historical Novel of The Times, Containing All That Pass’d at the Siege of Buda* [trans. from French] (London, 1685), 85.

⁶⁶ See Michael Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence 1683–1797* (London, 2003); Peter Rauscher, ed., *Kriegsführung und Staatsfinanzen* (Münster, 2010), 24, for a diagram of the rising military outlays of the Habsburg Monarchy during 1655 to 1735.

⁶⁷ Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550–1750*, 3rd edn. (London, 1998); Max Grunwald, *Samuel Oppenheimer und sein Kreis* (Vienna, 1913). See the list of close to eighty contracts for provisioning the army between 1685 and 1698 in *Magyar Zsidó Oklevéltár [MzsO]* (Budapest) 14 (1971), 36–7. See also *MZsO* 16 (1974), 371–4, 388–412; *MZsO* 17 (1977), 31–169.

⁶⁸ József Kemény, *Vázlatok a győri zsidóság történetéből* (Győr, 1930), 215–16.

Jews could at times parlay their economic influence to intervene on behalf of the Jewish collective, as in the successful suppression and confiscation of Johann Andreas Eisenmenger's scurrilous anti-talmudic tract *Entdecktes Judenthum*.

Karl VI (r. 1711–40) ascended the throne after the brief rule of his brother Joseph. Under his reign, Jews encountered the usual litany of woes: accusations of host desecration, of stealing ritual objects, of blasphemy; imprisonment; torture; executions; book burnings; synagogues being shut down; ritual blood libels; mob violence; etc.⁶⁹ We have seen the introduction of the Familiants Laws limiting the number of families in the Bohemian crownlands, and the segregation of Jewish residences from Christian ones. Nevertheless, certain of Karl's actions and statements are noteworthy. When he was conducting war on the Iberian Peninsula as King of Spain in 1709, he declared, "It has long been my intention to introduce the Jews to Spain," and in 1728, on the heels of the Familiants Laws, he issued a remarkable decree permitting Jews to resettle in Sicily, then a Habsburg possession, to engage unhindered in trade, to exercise their religion freely, to enjoy judicial autonomy, and even to be permitted to purchase property.⁷⁰ Could it be that, in his capacity as King of Spain (as he continued to style himself long after the Treaty of Utrecht), he allowed himself to be far more liberal toward Jews, in particular Sephardim? Would this explain another riddle – namely, the ennoblement in 1726 of Diego d'Aguilar as Baron of the Holy Roman Empire without much ado, even though his identity as a Portuguese Jew was no secret at the court?⁷¹

Karl spent much energy in trying to ensure that the powers-that-be recognized his daughter Maria Theresa as the legitimate heir to his throne, to no avail. The War of the Austrian Succession broke out soon after she ascended the throne in 1740. In the hiatus between hostilities, celebrations took place throughout the Monarchy with the birth of Crown Prince Joseph in 1741. Once again, the Jews of Prague demonstrated their dynastic loyalty by hauling out carnival props from storage and putting on an even more splendid parade than the two earlier ones in 1678 and 1716. The spectacle was commemorated in an impressive print and an accompanying pamphlet that lovingly described the order of the procession, the various

⁶⁹ See Miller, *Rabbis and Revolutionaries*.

⁷⁰ Letter from Karl to Count Wratislaw, Barcelona, November 23, 1709, in Alfred Arneth, "Eigenhändige Correspondenz des Königs Karl III. von Spanien (nachmals Kaiser Karl VI)," *Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichts-Quellen* 16 (1856), 97–9, here 98; and Felix Liebrecht, "Die Vertreibung der Juden aus Sicilien (1492)," *Die Grenzboten* 32, 2 (1873), 490–500, esp. 500.

⁷¹ Paul Josef Diamant, "Zur Biographie des Baron Diego d'Aguilar," *Archiv für jüdische Familienforschung* 2, 4–6 (1917), 14.

groups, and their costumes and sumptuous clothes.⁷² Yet when the French, Prussian, and Bavarian forces invaded the Bohemian lands, and the Bavarian Emperor Karl VII received homage in Prague, Maria Theresa singled out the Jews for having betrayed her by collaborating with the enemy. In December 1744, she ordered the expulsion of the Jews from Prague and soon after from Bohemia and Moravia as well. An international campaign was launched by Court Jews throughout Europe to solicit foreign sovereigns to intercede on behalf of the expelled Jews. The actions of the Queen were widely perceived as irrational, capricious, and cruel. No one, not even her mother or her husband, could dissuade her. “There is no accounting for this singular affair,” wrote the English ambassador from Vienna, “but by imputing it to some rash vow, or at least to some very early insurmountable prejudice in the course of her education. Her aversion to the sight of a Jew was too great to be concealed.”⁷³ Indeed, it was said that she refused to receive Jews in audience face-to-face and remained behind a paravent. Whether truth or legend, the anecdote accurately reflects her sentiments toward Jews. Near the end of her life in 1777, she would note: “I do not know a worse public plague than this nation; with their fraud, usury, and money dealing they reduce people to beggary, practicing all sort of evil transactions that an honest man abhors. Therefore, they are to be kept away from here and [their numbers] diminished as far as possible.”⁷⁴ Whether it was due to the Europe-wide intercession or the campaign to have her husband elected Emperor, the edict ordering the expulsion from Bohemia and Moravia was suspended in the spring of 1745, but the Jews of Prague were allowed to return only in 1748. She demanded larger annual payments from the Jews of Bohemia and promptly placed a new Toleration Tax on the Jews of Hungary, the so-called *malkegeld* (“Queen’s coin”).⁷⁵

⁷² *Beschreibung einer allerunterthänigsten Freudens-Bezeugung . . .* (n.p., 1741), repr. in “Ein Curiosum aus dem Jahre 1741,” *Deborah* (Prague) 1 (1866), 54–5, 66–7. The print is entitled *Kostbar-Zierlicher Aufzug . . . welcher von der Pragerischen Judenschaft den 24. April A° 1741. Gehalten worden . . .* See also Rachel Greenblatt, *To Tell Their Children: Jewish Communal Memory in Early Modern Prague* (Stanford, 2014).

⁷³ Johann Krengel, “Die englische Intervention zu Gunsten der böhmischen Juden im Jahre 1744,” *Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 44 (1900), 177–281, esp. 277; Baruch Mevorah, “Die Interventionsbestrebungen in Europa zur Verhinderung der Juden aus Böhmen und Mähren 1744–1745,” *Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 9 (1980), 15–81; François Guesnet, “Textures of Intercession: Rescue Efforts for the Jews of Prague, 1744/1748,” *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 4 (2005), 355–75.

⁷⁴ June 14, 1777: Pribram, *Urkunden und Akten*, I, 425–6.

⁷⁵ Béla Bernstein, “Die Toleranztaxe der Juden in Ungarn,” in Marcus Brann and Ferdinand Rosenthal, eds., *Gedenkbuch zur Erinnerung an David Kaufmann* (Wrocław, 1900), 599–628.

In the aftermath of the war, she embarked upon a rigorous campaign of reform and centralization in her realm. She established a standing army, expanded the bureaucracy to counter the power of the local lords, instituted reforms in the obligations owed by a peasant to his lord in order to increase the tax revenues to the crown, and attempted to centralize the administration of her far-flung lands. When the Seven Years' War erupted, Jews throughout the Monarchy, but especially in Prague, did everything in their power to ensure that not even the slightest doubt of their loyalty to the dynasty was posed. Rabbi Landau issued a series of bans on any wrongdoers during the war and earned the grudging approval of the Empress. It was during these years that the key regulations regarding the Jews in Moravia, in 1754, and, with the annexation of Galicia, the General Regulation for Jews in 1776 were legislated. She also toyed with the idea of setting up an area of restricted residence for the Jews of Vienna, but nothing came of it. When she died, Landau eulogized her, praising tactfully those aspects of her character that had nothing to do with her Jewish subjects: her maternal concern for her subjects, her talent as a sovereign, her modesty and piety, etc.⁷⁶ Only two years later, in 1782, on the Sabbath before Passover, did he allow himself to express his true feelings, albeit in an indirect fashion, in a sermon in praise of the new ruler Joseph II and his Edict of Toleration. He contrasted two types of rulers: one like Cyrus, benign, who taxed his subjects fairly; the other like Pharaoh, who not only sought to extract more than was justly due, but in the process also humiliated his subjects. Landau praised Joseph II as a ruler in the mold of Cyrus, but left unsaid whose rule was akin to Pharaoh's.⁷⁷

ENLIGHTENED ABSOLUTISM AND TRANSITION TO THE MODERN ERA

The accession of Joseph II (1741–90) as sole ruler of the Habsburg lands in 1780 ushered in a tumultuous decade of change. The enlightened absolutist Emperor intervened in the internal affairs of his Jewish subjects, altering the contours of Jewish culture and society on an unprecedented scale.⁷⁸ Within a year of succeeding his mother to the throne, Joseph II began to issue Edicts of Toleration for his Jewish subjects, separate patents for each

⁷⁶ Marc Saperstein, "In Praise of an Anti-Jewish Empress: Ezekiel Landau's Eulogy for Maria Theresa," in Saperstein, *Your Voice like a Ram's Horn: Themes and Texts in Jewish Preaching* (Cincinnati, 1996), 445–84.

⁷⁷ "Sermon for the Sabbath Preceding Passover," 361–3.

⁷⁸ What follows is a summary based largely upon Michael K. Silber, "Josephinian Reforms," in *YEJEE*, 831–4.

of the various possessions.⁷⁹ The last of these, the edict for Galicia issued on the eve of the French Revolution in 1789, was the most systematic, the most regulatory, and the most far-reaching piece of legislature on European Jews before the Emancipation of French Jewry. In terms both of cultural transformation and of moving toward a sort of legal civic equality, it propelled the Jews of the Monarchy into the modern era.

To make the Jews more useful and productive subjects meant a dual transformation, economic and cultural. It was through education that a prerequisite linguistic shift would be accomplished, therefore Jews were called upon to establish their own schools where their children would be taught reading and writing in German, and arithmetic. Existing restrictions on livelihood would be removed and new opportunities opened up in agriculture, transportation, crafts, arts, and manufacture. Jews were to be restored to their dignity: swords could be worn; the degrading body tax and discriminatory signs would be abolished. But the Familiants Laws were retained, as well as restrictions on tolerated Jews in Vienna, and the Toleration Tax.

In the wake of the Edict, Jewish *Normalschulen* were established: 1 school each in Trieste and Görz, 25 in Bohemia, 18 in Moravia (at least), 36 in Hungary, and 93 (rising eventually to more than 120) in Galicia and Bukowina.⁸⁰ Thus, thousands of Jewish boys – and, soon after, girls – received a secular education in the Monarchy, in often backward small towns in the periphery, at a time when the *maskilim* in Germany were struggling to keep one school in Berlin afloat.⁸¹ Unlike the program of the Haskalah as outlined

⁷⁹ For Joseph's legislation, see *Vollständige Sammlung aller seit dem glorreichsten Regierungsantritt Joseph des Zweyten ... Verordnungen und Gesetze ...*, 10 vols. (Vienna, 1788–91).

⁸⁰ Lois C. Dubin, *The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste: Absolutist Politics and Enlightenment Culture* (Stanford, 1999); Ruth Kestenberg-Gladstein, *Neuere Geschichte der Juden in den böhmischen Ländern. Erster Teil: Das Zeitalter der Aufklärung 1780–1830* (Tübingen, 1969), 39–65; Louise Hecht, *Ein jüdischer Aufklärer in Böhmen: Der Pädagoge und Reformler Peter Beer (1758–1838)* (Cologne, 2008), 66–83; Louise Hecht, "'Gib dem Knaben Unterricht nach seiner Weise' (Spr. 22,6)," in Martin Scheutz, Wolfgang Schmale, and Dana Štefanová, eds., *Orte des Wissens* (Bochum, 2004), 117–34; Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution*, 47–51; Dirk Sadowski, *Haskala und Lebenswelt: Herz Homberg und die jüdischen deutschen Schulen in Galizien 1782–1806* (Göttingen, 2010); Michael Silber, "The Historical Experience of German Jewry and its Impact on Haskalah and Reform in Hungary," in Jacob Katz, ed., *Toward Modernity: The European Jewish Model* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1987), 107–57; David Rechter, *Becoming Habsburg: The Jews of Austrian Bukovina, 1774–1918* (Oxford, 2013).

⁸¹ Contrasting maps can well reflect visually the reigning paradigm in German Jewish history that tends to gloss over eighteenth-century Habsburg developments. Compare "MAP 6 The Berlin Haskalah and the Establishment of Modern Jewish Schools," in Michael A. Meyer and Michael Brenner, eds., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times: Emancipation and Acculturation, 1780–1871* (New York, 1997), with the two maps of the

by Naphtali Hirtz Wessely in his *Divrei Shalom ve-Emet* (1782), this was a utilitarian agenda that aimed only to impart a modicum of secular education while significantly keeping hands off the traditional religious curriculum. (The school in Trieste with its combined curriculum was the exception that proved the rule.) Such educational reforms could be cautiously accepted by the traditional Jewish establishment; indeed, celebrations overseen by local rabbis accompanied the inauguration of schools in Trieste, Prague, Pressburg, Lemberg, and Brody. There is no reason to suspect that there was any principled opposition to these schools; if anything, it was the financial burden that posed a problem. However, the appointment of the maskil Herz Homberg as supervisor of the Jewish normal schools in Galicia in 1787, and a little later as supervisor of religious education as well, aroused suspicion and opposition.⁸² The schools also played a role in integrating the various Jewries. Communities noted the precedents in the curricula set by Trieste and Prague, and accepted or rejected them. Moreover, the circulation of teachers moving from Bohemia and Moravia to Galicia and Hungary, and some going on to the German lands also served to create a network of young Jewish intelligentsia. For those teachers – perhaps most of them – who were *maskilim*, the Josephinian school system gave them opportunities, resources, and authority to carry out at least a truncated vision of the Haskalah.

In the years that followed, a number of additional decrees were issued in order to bring Jewish legal status in line with general reforms. The second half of Joseph's rule from 1785 onward was characterized by a more systematic and radical bent – in some ways more liberal, but also tending toward rash social engineering. The authority of rabbinic courts was confined to arbitration, the ban of excommunication prohibited, and communal autonomy was restricted to purely religious matters (May 27, 1785 Galician Patent). The general Marriage Patent of 1786 also impinged upon specific Jewish laws and customs, as did the mandated waiting period of 48 hours before the dead could be buried (July 3, 1786). The normal school certification came to be increasingly exploited as a convenient prerequisite for any number of matters: engaging in certain occupations; marriage (April 15, 1786); and entering the rabbinate and Talmud study for children (1789 Galician Edict).

Joseph also ordered the brutal expulsion of several thousand indigent and vagabond Jews from Galicia. Only those Jews who personally worked the land were to be tolerated – even encouraged – in rural areas. Jews were

Normalschule dotting Galicia in 1788 and 1797 in Sadowski, *Haskala und Lebenswelt*, 129, 135.

⁸² Rachel Manekin, “Naftali Herz Homberg – ha-Dmut ve-ha-Dimui” [Naftali Herz Homberg – The Person and his Representation], *Zion* 71 (2006), 153–202; Sadowski, *Haskala und Lebenswelt*.

ordered to adopt personal and family names (July 23, 1787) (for the most part German ones, which would have consequences later in the age of nationalism). More important was the military conscription of Jews that began in Galicia in February 1788 and spread to the Bohemian lands and Hungary in the months that followed. This was the first time that Jews served as soldiers in modern times, and it was not universally well received. Various attempts at intercession to exchange personal service for a fee or a surrogate were met by the Emperor with adamant refusal. It has been estimated that 35,000 Jews served in the Habsburg armies during the quarter of a century of French wars.⁸³

The Edict of Toleration issued for Galicia on May 7, 1789, was the most far-reaching to date and was also intended for the rest of the Empire. While it denied the Jews the right to exist as a separate corporate entity, it granted them equal civil rights in their places of residence along with passive and active voting rights in municipal elections. By granting the Jews the right to own land, the possibility opened up that Jews could become serfs, but also owners of noble estates. A few months later, when a decree enabled Jews to buy up entire estates with all the attending feudal privileges, Israel Hönig purchased the Velm estate and became the first Jew in the Habsburg Monarchy in modern times to be raised to the nobility, on September 2, 1789. It would be more than two generations before the first Jew was ennobled in Prussia.

The 1789 Galician Edict of Toleration was the most influential piece of Jewish legislation in central and eastern Europe, since, in a truncated fashion, it became the model for legislation in other countries. By dint of state resources and coercion, the Habsburg Monarchy had initiated cultural, legal, and political changes that transformed its Jews in a quantitative and qualitative manner unequalled by the Haskalah in Germany. The legislation of Joseph II in 1789 represented the furthest point to which enlightened absolutism could move toward Jewish equality within the context of a feudal society of legally differentiated orders.⁸⁴

DYNASTIC LOYALTY, PATRIOTISM, AND CHANGING MODES OF SELF-IDENTIFICATION

If, in Hungary, the Jews of Buda fought the Habsburgs tooth and nail in the 1680s, nearly a century later, in recently annexed Galicia, the Jews of Brody welcomed the new rulers joyously. The chaos and anarchy of a

⁸³ Michael K. Silber, "From Tolerated Aliens to Citizen-Soldiers: Jewish Military Service in the Era of Joseph II," in Pieter M. Judson and Marsha L. Rozenblit, eds., *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe* (New York, 2005), 19–36.

⁸⁴ Silber, "Josephinian Reforms."

disintegrating Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth no doubt made the Habsburg Monarchy seem like a solid alternative. The patriotic celebrations in Brody took place at the end of 1773, lasting from the early afternoon until well into the night, with the usual costly entertainment: a triumphal arch and Habsburg double-eagles decorating the synagogue; speechifying in Latin; prayers, singing, and music; free drinks and a lavish banquet attended by government officials.⁸⁵

Such expressions of patriotism were not unusual. One could find in Jewish homes Hanuka lamps decorated with the Emperor's profile, and hanging Sabbath lamps with the Habsburg double eagle. Published pamphlets and prints commemorated patriotic parades, prayers for the rulers, poems in Hebrew dedicated to the imperial house, sermons in German celebrating victories, and eulogies. And when it came to the Emperor Joseph, messianic imagery was not lacking.

Both *maskilim* and traditional rabbis waxed patriotic on these occasions. In his Hebrew poem entitled "An Israelite Patriot Pours out his Heart" (1789), Barukh Jeitteles, the leading maskil in Prague, celebrated the Emperor both for his military successes at Belgrade and for having restored a humiliated people to their dignity.⁸⁶ At the other end of the monarchy, a generation later, Ezekiel Paneth (1783–1845), the chief rabbi of Transylvania, composed and published at his own expense a eulogy in German upon the death of Emperor Francis I (r. 1792–1835). This remarkable tribute by a Hasidic rabbi was in fact a paean to the dynasty as a whole, an excuse to enumerate lovingly each ruler and his accomplishments, since Rudolph, the first of his line.⁸⁷

And yet, while acknowledging the improved situation of the Jews and praising the dynasty, there were voices that sought to dampen overly enthusiastic identification with the Habsburg state and its inhabitants. Two of these emanated from the most important rabbinic figures of their time. In the wake of the Edict of Toleration, Ezekiel Landau offered his gratitude to the Emperor, but on the eve of Passover 1782 he urged his parishioners to exercise caution: "Even if there should be a gracious and compassionate king who abundantly helps us, we should inwardly know that we are in a land not our own, and that we should remain submissive to the peoples of that land . . . Only next year, when you are in the land of Israel, our own ancestral estate, will you be truly free."⁸⁸ Just over thirty years

⁸⁵ *Wienerisches Diarium* 9 (1774); translated into Hebrew in N. M. Gelber, *Toldot Yehudei Brody 1584–1943* (Jerusalem, 1955), 118.

⁸⁶ B[arukh] J[eitteles], *Ma'arkhei Lev – Herzenergiessung israelitischer Patrioten* (Prague, 1789).

⁸⁷ Ezekiel Paneth, *Trauer Rede* (Hermannstadt, 1835).

⁸⁸ "Sermon for the Sabbath Preceding Passover," 363.

later, in 1813, when the Monarchy had been at war with the French on and off for a quarter of a century, some wealthy members of the Pressburg community pledged patriotic funds for wounded soldiers during the first day of Rosh Hashana services. The following day, according to an anonymous denunciation, the rabbi, Moses Sofer, addressed the congregation with “fanatic enthusiasm,” protesting: “We are in captivity in the Galut, must we give our possessions earned with sweat to idol worshippers?!” Naturally, concluded the denunciation, no one dared anymore in public to make an offering to the mutilated defenders of the homeland. And indeed, a favorite saying of the Ḥatam Sofer was that Jews were “like prisoners of war in the Diaspora.”⁸⁹

Ironically, when, at the very onset of Joseph II’s reign, the question had arisen of whether from then on Jews were to retain their status as only “tolerated,” or should be raised to “received” subjects, liberal bureaucrats like court councilor Greiner urged the latter. By 1787, the Viennese court had made its position clear. When Jews were about to settle on the land in Galicia, a Galician bureaucrat had argued that a clear distinction should be made between Jews and “nationals,” i.e. native subjects, the latter to be preferred in land allocation. The court angrily rejected this and declared that there was to be no difference between Jews and “nationals,” because Jews themselves were “nationals.” They were to be considered “entirely equal to all other inhabitants of a similar category.”⁹⁰ The Galician *Judenpatent* of 1789 made this principle public knowledge.

The liberal actions of the state had called into question traditional modes of Jewish self-perception and self-identification, and elicited a range of Jewish reactions that adumbrated the great schisms of the nineteenth century.

CONCLUSION

It had long been the goal of the Habsburg Monarchs to bring the disparate lands of their Empire, each still with its own set of laws and legislative body, into an increasingly unified, centralized, and uniform political body. At the end of the long eighteenth century, advances had been made, yet the goal was to prove elusive even in the nineteenth century. Likewise, the various Jewries in the Monarchy still retained much of their heterogeneous nature and would do so in the future, in some ways even drifting more apart. Nevertheless, during the last decades of the eighteenth century, migration to Hungary from both Galicia and the Bohemian lands, the

⁸⁹ Anonymous denunciation, January 25, 1814: AVA Polizei Hofstelle 1814 ad 520.

⁹⁰ Report of Hofrat Greiner, September 7, 1781, in Pribram, *Urkunden und Akten*, I, 465, also 467; and Mauricy Lewin, “Geschichte der Juden in Galizien unter Kaiser Joseph II” (Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1933), 90.

common dynasty and growing patriotism, the increasingly centralized bureaucracy and the bulldozing policies of Joseph II had created shared experiences in education, the military, citizenship, etc., that brought them closer together, while distancing them from other European Jewries, so that we can with justice speak of the making of a common Habsburg Jewry.

With the threat of revolutionary upheaval emanating from France, the Monarchy retreated from the Josephinian reforms during the twenty-five years of war it waged against the French and Napoleon. The 1789 Galician *Judenpatent*, slated also for extension to the other Habsburg provinces, was issued only in truncated form in Bohemia. The secular school system first collapsed in Hungary soon after the death of Joseph II, then was abolished in Galicia by his nephew in 1806.⁹¹ Toward the end of the Napoleonic War, *maskilim* made several attempts to launch schools in Prague, Vienna, Pressburg, and Tarnopol along the lines of the Haskalah's dual program, now uniting secular studies and a reformed Bible-centered religious curriculum under one roof, with varying success. While many traditional rabbis, in particular Samuel Landau and Eleazar Fleckles of Prague, now made their peace with the program of the moderate Haskalah, a new reaction also emerged, led by the maverick conservative Moses Sofer, which rejected this accommodation and reaffirmed the initial opposition to Wessely and Mendelssohn.⁹²

Historians have debated whether the transition to the modern age was incremental, spread over a century, or as Jacob Katz argued, a sharp break initiating a crisis in what he called traditional society. Ironically, more than German Jewry, it was the Jews of the Habsburg Monarchy, largely ignored by Katz, who in all their variety were transformed suddenly overnight by the state, but in a manner that did not necessarily induce crisis within a traditional society that could be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the state-mandated changes.⁹³

⁹¹ Dirk Sadowski, "The Jewish German Schools in Galicia (1782–1806) – School Reality and Corporate Resistance," *Jewish Culture and History* 13, 2–3 (2012), 153–72.

⁹² Silber, "The Historical Experience of German Jewry"; Hillel J. Kieval, "The Unforeseen Consequences of Cultural Resistance: Haskalah and State-Mandated Reform in the Bohemian lands," *Jewish Culture and History* 13, 2–3 (2012), 108–23.

⁹³ Note that it is only in the tenth chapter of *Out of the Ghetto* (Cambridge, MA, 1972) that Katz gets around to addressing the role of the state. This order makes good sense for the German states where, for the most part, significant Jewish legislation was introduced only in the first decades of the nineteenth century, long after the rise of Haskalah, Reform, and Orthodoxy which Katz analyzes in earlier chapters. It becomes problematic when applied to the Habsburg states.

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