

# JESUS RECLAIMED

## Jewish Perspectives on the Nazarene

*Walter Homolka*

Translated by  
Ingrid Shafer



berghahn  
NEW YORK • OXFORD  
[www.berghahnbooks.com](http://www.berghahnbooks.com)

# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>xi</b>
<i>Leonard Swidler</i>	
<b>Translator's Preface</b>	<b>xv</b>
<i>Ingrid Shafer</i>	
<b>Preface</b>	<b>xix</b>
<b>Introduction. When a Jew Looks at the Sources: The Jesus of History</b>	<b>1</b>
The Sources	1
The Early Years	2
Public Appearance	3
Jesus's Message	5
Arrest and Trial	7
Death	9
<b>Chapter 1. Jesus and His Impact on Jewish Antiquity and the Middle Ages</b>	<b>13</b>
Jesus in the Mishnah and Talmud	15
The <i>Toledot Yeshu</i>	17
Rabbinic Polemics against Jesus	19
Christian Talmud Criticism and Censorship	22
<b>Chapter 2. The Historical Jesus: A Jewish and a Christian Quest</b>	<b>29</b>
Jesus and the Jewish Enlightenment	29

The Christian Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Departure from Dogma	31
The Jewish Quest as Repatriating Jesus to Judaism	46
Judaism Out of Place: The Berlin Anti- Semitism Debate and Max Liebermann's "Jesus"	49
Leo Baeck and Adolf von Harnack: Controversy and Clashes between the Jewish and Christian Quests	56
The Jewish Quest from Joseph Klausner to Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich	68
<b>Chapter 3. Jesus the Jew and Joseph Ratzinger's Christ: A Theological U-Turn</b>	<b>101</b>
Jesus Was a Jew: A Cultural Coincidence?	101
The "Rabbi Jesus": For Christians Only Important as Christ?	105
"Reading the Whole Bible in the Light of Christ": Joseph Ratzinger's Hermeneutics	106
Christian Faith and "Historical Reason"	107
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>135</b>

# Preface

When Reza Aslan published his academic study on the life of Jesus, he pursued his passionate interest in the person of Jesus as a historical figure. In *Zealot*, Aslan paints a picture of a zealous revolutionary from ignorant and poor Galilee, a man whose aim was not so much a heavenly kingdom as a Palestine liberated from Roman occupation. Did Jesus understand the concept of a God who became human? According to Aslan: no. Aslan's Jesus is fully and completely Jewish, animated by the messianic thought that King David's Israel must be resurrected as a state under God's authority. Readers' reactions were extremely divided. As it turns out, however, many were more troubled by the author rather than the content itself.<sup>1</sup> Reza Aslan is Muslim.

Aslan's book belongs to a genre that goes back to Hermann Samuel Reimarus in the eighteenth century. Research on the life of Jesus has experienced three major waves since that time. Aslan is probably the first Muslim author in this field, although he has always insisted that he writes from an impartial scholarly perspective.

The question whether he—a Muslim—has the right to do so is not new either; similar questions have been asked over the past two centuries as Jewish scholars became increasingly interested in the topic. But why might Jews be interested in Jesus? At first glance, one could surmise that research on Jesus through Jewish eyes does not exactly promise success. In the words of the British rabbi Jonathan Magonet, “The question of who Jesus was or might have been is actually of interest to very few Jews. Or to

be even more precise, among most Jews he has no significance whatsoever.”<sup>2</sup>

This book attempts to do justice to Jesus of Nazareth in his Jewish setting and to depict the Jewish perception of Jesus throughout the centuries. It goes without saying that an unbiased view of Jesus by Jews is a difficult task. His historical impact represents a dramatic threat not only to Judaism as a whole, but also existentially to each individual Jew. Centuries of persecution, oppression, forced migration, and exclusion in the name of Jesus imprinted themselves deeply into the memory of a people whose fate in the “Christian West” has been anything but easy. This realization, however, also raises the question of whether Jewish scholars can engage in a meaningful discussion of Jesus as a person considering their concern with Christianity as a rival religion.

This book would not have been possible without my twenty-five years of academic engagement with Christianity from a Jewish perspective. My special thanks go to the faculty members who respectfully welcomed me and served as my intellectual inspiration between 1983 and 1986 while I was a Jewish guest student at the School of Protestant Theology at the University of Munich and the Munich School of Philosophy of the Jesuits in Germany. My dissertation, supervised by Christoph Schwöbel at King’s College London,<sup>3</sup> drew on knowledge and experience from that time. Those insights proved valuable during the years of my practical rabbinate; which too were shaped by the manifold interest many Christian communities have in Judaism.

These experiences were further augmented in the committee for Jewish-Christian dialogue hosted by the Central Committee of German Catholics. In addition, I supplement these diverse experiences with the insight that knowledge gained from Judeo-Christian dialogue must be mediated for each generation anew. I am very grateful that I had the

opportunity to personally encounter outstanding Jewish philosophers of religion such as Schalom Ben-Chorin, Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich, and Pinchas Lapide. It is imperative for me to continuously recall the findings of previous generations of Jewish thinkers in order to preserve the ways Jews and Christians understand one another. This volume is an attempt to carry out this commission.

I am particularly grateful for Leonard Swidler's initiative to translate the German original into English. I am honored to have received his reverence for my work and, thanks to him, a thoroughly revised and much enhanced English version is now available. All of this would not have been possible without Ingrid Shafer's immense effort in taking it upon herself to translate the original book. Translation is always creation and so I would like to express my deep gratitude for her collaboration. I also wish to give special thanks to Hartmut Bomhoff whose extensive assistance helped this work achieve its present form. Thanks also to Marie-Luise Schmidt who revised the book for the English edition. And of course many thanks to the copy editors who combed through the final versions: Debra Corman, Caitlin Mahon, and David Heywood-Jones, as well as Caroline Diepeveen for creating the index.

Finally, we must give thanks to the National Gallery of London for giving us the rights to use one of Gerrit van Honthorst's (1592–1656) most famous paintings for the cover: *Christ before the High Priest*. Honthorst painted it in Rome around 1617; the work shows the powerful influence of Caravaggio. The scene is focused on the burning candle in the center of the composition and the arm and raised finger of the High Priest beside it. The book on the table in front of the High Priest contains the proscriptions of Mosaic Law. The painting is concentrated in theme: the relationship of Jesus the Jew and his message within his Jewish context.

Rabbi Walter Homolka, PhD, DHL

## Notes

1. See John Williams. "The Life of Jesus: Reza Aslan Talks about *Zealot*." *New York Times*, 2 August 2013. <http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/08/02/the-life-of-jesus-reza-aslan-talks-about-zealot/>. Accessed 24 July 2014.
2. Jonathan Magonet, *Talking to the Other: Jewish Interfaith Dialogue with Christians and Muslims* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 125.
3. Walter Homolka, *Jewish Identity in Modern Times: Leo Baeck and German Protestantism* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995).

## *Introduction*

# **When a Jew Looks at the Sources The Jesus of History**

## **The Sources**

The early Christian Gospels are considered the most important sources for the life of the historical Jesus.<sup>1</sup> The Passion is of course the best documented episode. The earliest of the three Synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of Mark, dates to around 70 CE and is based on earlier sources. The source with the highest degree of authenticity is the so-called Q source where we can read Jesus's words. John's Gospel—the latest of the four Gospels, dated around the end of the first century—has limited historical value because of its post-Easter faith perspective. The non-Christian testimonials (Flavius Josephus, Suetonius, Tacitus) offer us little on Jesus's biography.<sup>2</sup> According to Johann Maier, the first but rather insignificant Jewish reference to Jesus is in the so-called Testimony Flavianum in Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* XVIII, pp. 63f. (cf. XX, pp. 199–203, the martyrdom of James), the wording of which was probably edited much later by Christians.<sup>3</sup> According to Josephus:

Now about this time arose an occasion for new disturbances a certain Jesus, a wizard of a man, if indeed he may be called a man who was the most



monstrous of all men, whom his disciples call a son of God, as having done wonders such as no man hath ever done... He was in fact a teacher of astonishing tricks to such men as accept the abnormal with delight... And when, on the indictment of the principal men among us, Pilate had sentenced him to the cross, still those who before had admired him did not cease to rave.<sup>4</sup>

## The Early Years

There can be little learned from the Gospels about Jesus's youth. He came from Nazareth in Lower Galilee and, according to Matthew 1:18,<sup>5</sup> he was the first child of Mary (Miriam), born before the end of the reign of Herod the Great in 4 BCE (Mt 2:1) (presumably a few years earlier). His name, "Jesus," is the Greek translation of the Hebrew "Yeshua" (God helps). The Evangelist Mark writes of at least six children: James, Joses, Judas, Simon, and the sisters of Jesus, who remain nameless (Mk 6:3). Two fictional lists of ancestors (Mt 1–17 and Lk 3:23–38) make Jesus of Nazareth the descendant of Abraham and King David, but like the topic of the virgin birth, they are not intended as historical statements, instead carrying theological significance.

It remains questionable whether Bethlehem near Jerusalem is in fact the birthplace of Jesus or was just associated with him because of God's promise to King David. The hypothesis that Jesus was born in the Galilean Bethlehem (*Beit Lehem Ha'glilit*) near Nazareth rather than in front of the gates of Jerusalem was argued as early as 1922 by Joseph Klausner (1874–1958).<sup>6</sup> He pointed out that the Galilean Bethlehem can be found in the Talmud and in Midrashic literature and excavations prove that it was a significant settlement at the time of Jesus; there is no such

evidence from the Herodian period for a Bethlehem in Judea. The sentence “After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb” (Lk 2:21) makes it clear that the family lived as Jews among Jews. As the firstborn son of a Jewish family, Jesus was redeemed in the Temple; later, Jesus learned his father’s trade (Mk 6:3; Mt 13:55). Joseph was a craftsman (Greek τέκτων, often misleadingly translated as “carpenter”), probably involving working with wood, clay, or stones. According to Luke 2:42–48, at the age of twelve, Jesus impressed the scribes in the Jerusalem Temple with his knowledge of the Torah, which points to the possibility that he attended school, but might also be a fictional insertion to identify him as an outstanding teacher of the Torah. Although Jesus’s mother tongue was Galilean Western Aramaic he must also have mastered Hebrew as according to Luke 4:16–17 Jesus read from the Torah before interpreting the text. His frequent question to his listeners “Have you never [/not] read ... ?” (e.g., Mk 2:25, 12:10, 12:26; Mt 12:5, 19:4) implies reading competence.

## Public Appearance

Based on the only clearly indicated date in the Gospels, the appearance of John the Baptist, it is most reasonable, according to biblical scholar Anton Vögtle, to assume a public ministry of around two years, an assumption that is consistent with a probable date of death during Passover 30 CE.<sup>7</sup> According to Luke 3:1 and 3:23, Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his public ministry: “In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea.” In the twenties of the first century CE, Jesus belonged temporarily to the circle around John the Baptist, who emerged as an ascetic

prophet in Perea, a Transjordanian region near the Dead Sea, and who called for repentance in light of the imminent coming of the Lord and the Last Judgment. “Here John offered the forgiveness of sins in ritual form—independently of the possibilities of the temple in providing atonement. This was a vote of no confidence in the central religious institution of Judaism, which had become ineffective.”<sup>8</sup> According to Luke 1:5, John was the son of the priest Zechariah, of the priestly class Abijah, and Elizabeth, from the family of Aaron.

Jesus’s baptism in the Jordan River complies with the standard practice of the *tevilah*, the traditional full-body immersion for ritual purification. The meeting with John marked a decisive turning point. Jesus returned to Galilee to follow his own calling and in the spring of 28 or 29 CE he began his work as an independent charismatic itinerant preacher. He resided at Capernaum on the northeast end of Lake Gennesaret [Sea of Galilee] where his sphere of influence included the Jewish area north and east of the lake. At the time Galilee was considered an unruly region. The local Jewish population was isolated from the religious center in Judea and was threatened by pagan influence. Capernaum was right on the border between the territories of Herod Antipas and Philippos.

Jesus apparently found little support in Capernaum itself. From there, he moved on to the surrounding area with his first companions, Shimon, Andrew, Levi, and Mary Magdalene. He ordered his disciples to abandon parents, children, and the usual daily activities and to follow him: “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple” (Lk 14:26). The Evangelist John writes of three years in which Jesus appeared in public, while the three Synoptic Evangelists mention only one year and also only one journey to Jerusalem. His specific itineraries cannot be definitively re-

constructed. Indeed, many locations listed in the Gospels were later additions and reflected the spread of Christianity at the time of their editorial revisions.

## Jesus's Message

Based on the historical evidence and the scriptural sources available, one may very well ask just how can we summarize Jesus's teachings succinctly. Theissen attempts just this when he argues:

At the centre of Jesus's message stood Jewish belief in God: for Jesus, God was a tremendous ethical energy which would soon change the world to bring deliverance to the poor, the weak and the sick. However, it could become the "hell-fire" of judgment for all those who did not allow themselves to be grasped by it. Everyone had a choice. Everyone had a chance, particularly those who by religious standards were failures and losers. Jesus sought fellowship with them.<sup>9</sup>

Jesus's style of preaching and argumentation was essentially rabbinic; his parables<sup>10</sup> (Hebrew: *meshalim*) followed biblical figurative language and the imagery was taken from the everyday lives of farmers and fishermen: the sower, the mustard seed, the fisher of men, the "calming" of the storm. His first disciples called him "Rabbi" (e.g., Mk 9:5, 11:21, 14:45; Jn 1:38, 1:49, 3:2, 4:31) or "Rabboni" (Jn 20:16). This Aramaic title means "my master" and corresponded to the Greek διδάσκαλος, or "teacher." It expressed respect and accorded Jesus the same rank as the Pharisaic scribes (Mt 13:52, 23:2, 23:7). According to Mark 6:1–6, Jesus's teachings were rejected in his hometown and he was said never to have returned there. But ac-

According to Luke 8:2–3, Mark 1:31, and Mark 15:40, women from around Jesus’s home supported him and his disciples. According to Mark 15:41, they remained with him to his death.

Like Hillel (30 BCE–9 CE), Jesus accorded the commandment “love thy neighbor” the same importance as fear of God and consequently placed them above all other Torah commandments (Mk 12:28–34). Based on a Christian lack of knowledge or misunderstanding of Judaism at Jesus’s time, many believed, for a long time, Jesus represented an interpretation of halakha which could not be derived from Judaism. However, acknowledging the pluralist nature of Judaism at that time, this passage is now read as an inner Jewish interpretation of the Torah. For Joseph Klausner, the Gospels describe Jesus as an observant Jew:

As much as the Synoptic Gospels are filled with hostility toward the Pharisees, they cannot avoid describing Jesus as a Pharisaic Jew in his attitude toward the law. Accordingly, he demands that sacrifices be offered at various occasions (Mk 1:44; Mt 5:23–24), he also does not object to fasting and prayer, if it is done without arrogance (Mt 6:5–7, 6:16, 6:18). He himself follows all ceremonial laws, wears tassels (Mk 6:56 and parallels), pays the half shekel for the temple, makes the pilgrimages to Jerusalem for Passover, says the blessing over wine and bread, etc. He warns his students against contact with Gentiles and the Samaritans; he answers the request to heal a pagan child in a spirit of ultra-nationalism.<sup>11</sup>

The “beatitudes” attributed to the Q source (Lk 6:20–22; Mt 5:3–11) assure the poor, the mourners, the powerless, and the persecuted that for them the kingdom is already present and certain for their future as a just turn

to compensate them for their suffering. They were the first and most important recipients of the words of Jesus. According to Luke 4:18–21, his “inaugural sermon” consisted only of the sentence “Today, this Scripture [Is 61:1–3] has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Thus, the biblical promise of a “Jubilee year” of forgiveness of debt and redistribution of land (Lv 25) was actualized for the contemporary poor. According to sociohistorical studies, the rural Jewish population suffered from exploitation, tax levies for Rome and the Temple, constant Roman military presence, debt slavery, hunger, epidemics, and social uprooting.<sup>12</sup> Jesus’s relief for the poor, healing, and the coincidence of prayer and almsgiving were similar to that of the later charismatic miracle worker Hanina ben Dosa (ca. 40–75 CE), a representative of Galilean Hasidim.<sup>13</sup> This is another reason why contemporary scholars of religion, unlike their predecessors, place Jesus of Nazareth entirely within the Judaism of his time and emphasize the similarity of his message to the teachings of the Pharisees.<sup>14</sup>

## **Arrest and Trial**

Even if we combine all four Gospels, they still only really talk about Jesus’s final years. The sequence of his entry into Jerusalem, the cleansing of the Temple, arrest, interrogation in the house of the High Priest, delivery to Pilate, interrogation by the Romans, scourging, mockery, his execution by Roman soldiers, and his burial are fairly consistent in many details across all the Synoptic Gospels. The question of who was originally responsible for his arrest, however, is more controversial. For example, David Flusser questions whether the High Council meeting which supposedly condemned Jesus to death ever occurred.<sup>15</sup>

Jesus and his disciples spent the night at the foot of the Mount of Olives in Gethsemane, a rest area for Pass-

over pilgrims. On the night following the final meal shared by Jesus and his disciples, Judas Iscariot reportedly led a crowd armed with “swords and clubs” (Mk 14:43) or a “detachment of soldiers” (Jn 18:3) to arrest them. Paul Winter, therefore, assumed that Jesus was arrested and sentenced not by the Jewish High Council, the Sanhedrin, but by the Romans, accompanied by the armed Jews of the Temple Guard. In this scenario, the occupiers sought to suppress the potential political-revolutionary tendencies that existed among Jesus’s followers or could have been stirred up by his message and deeds.<sup>16</sup>

Historians holding both positions assume that both the Romans and the Sadducee ruling class were interested in Jesus’s arrest. The “Temple conflict” threatened both the Jewish elites’ position of power as well as signifying unpredictable consequences for the autonomy of the Jewish community as a whole. In short, it could have caused long-term political instability.<sup>17</sup> According to this interpretation, Caiaphas’s statement, recorded in John 11:50, that “it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed” is plausible.

Two contemporary Jewish legal experts have examined Jesus’s trial.<sup>18</sup> Haim Cohn (1911–2002), Supreme Court judge of the state of Israel and legal historian, examined the trial extensively and provided a detailed picture of the most likely events surrounding the Crucifixion.<sup>19</sup> His book was published in 1968 in Hebrew and in 1980 in English. Justice Cohn presents a search for forensic and historical analysis to create a legal, political, and religious context for the events as they might really have happened. Cohn’s readers are encouraged to give their own verdict on whether we can actually speak of Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus.

The Hessian attorney general Fritz Bauer (1903–1968) is best known for his legal processing of a number of Nazi

war crimes. His essay “The Trial of Jesus” (1965)<sup>20</sup> is essentially a plea for a more humane legal system. He writes, “Pilate’s verdict reflects the human shortcomings of all judgment, the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the actual events, the excessive demands on the judge by public opinion and its pressure on his verdict.”<sup>21</sup> Bauer reminds us that from the religious Christian point of view, the “trial of Jesus culminating in the Crucifixion represented God’s judgment and will; it was part of the Almighty’s plan for the world; without it there would be no Christianity.”<sup>22</sup>

## **Death**

All four Gospels are unanimous that the execution sanctioned by Pontius Pilate as governor of Judea (26–36 CE) took place the day before the Sabbath, thus on a Friday. This was the main Passover holy day for the Synoptics as it followed the Seder and so, according to the Jewish calendar, it must have been the fifteenth of Nisan. In the Gospel of John, however, it was just before Passover—the fourteenth of Nisan. This dating, which attests to the strong narrative and fictional character of this late Gospel, has theological significance: Jesus would have died at the time of the slaughter of the Passover lamb.

According to Mark 15:27, Jesus was crucified along with two bandits on the hill of Golgotha (place of the skull) outside Jerusalem’s walls and, according to Luke 23:35–37, it was accompanied by the scorn and derision of those present. The pre-Markian Passion narrative provides no additional details and only indicates that Jesus was “crucified at the third hour” and “died at the ninth hour.” Calendric and astronomical calculations suggest 30 CE as the most likely year of death.<sup>23</sup>



## Notes

1. For a more thorough analysis, see Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1998), 17–124; Peter J. Tomson, “*If This Be from Heaven ...*”: *Jesus and the New Testament Authors in Their Relationship to Judaism* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001).
2. Cf. Wolfgang Stegemann, *Jesus und seine Zeit* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2009); Jürgen Roloff, “Jesus von Nazareth,” in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz, 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), vol. 4, col. 463f.
3. Johann Maier, *Judentum von A bis Z: Glauben, Geschichte, Kultur* (Freiburg: Herder, 2001), 231.
4. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities: Books XVIII–XIX*, tr. Louis H. Feldman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 48.
5. Unless otherwise specified all biblical references are from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Roland Murphy, copyright 1991.
6. Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times and Teachings* trans. Herbert Danby (New York: Bloch, 1989; Hebrew ed., 1922), 231f.
7. Anton Vögtle, “Jesus Christus nach den geschichtlichen Quellen,” in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, ed. Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner, 2nd ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 1986), vol. 5, col. 922ff.
8. Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 569.
9. *Ibid.*, 570.
10. Gary G. Porton, “The Parable in the Hebrew Bible and Rabbinic Literature,” in *The Historical Jesus in Context*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C. Allison Jr., and John Dominic Crossan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 206–221.

11. Joseph Klausner, "Jesus von Nazareth," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Berlin: Eschkol, 1932), vol. 9, col. 69f. See also Herbert W. Basser, "Gospel and Talmud," in Levine, Allison, and Crossan, *Historical Jesus in Context*, 285–295; Bruce Chilton, "Targum, Jesus, and the Gospels," in Levine, Allison, and Crossan, *Historical Jesus in Context*, 238–255.
12. David L. Balch and John E. Stambaugh, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 102.
13. Bernd Kollmann, "Paulus als Wundertäter," in *Paulinische Christologie*, ed. Udo Schnelle and Thomas Söding (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 95f.
14. Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 571. See also Schalom Ben-Chorin, "Judentum und Jesusbild," in *Neues Lexikon des Judentums*, ed. Julius H. Schoeps (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2000), 400–402.
15. David Flusser, *The Sage from Galilee: Rediscovering Jesus' Genius* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 138–142.
16. Paul Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus*, ed. T. A. Burkill and Géza Vermes, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1974), 44–48, 136ff.
17. Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 468, 571.
18. See also David R. Catchpole, *The Trial of Jesus: A Study in the Gospels and Jewish Historiography from 1777 to the Present Day* (Leiden: Brill, 1971).
19. Haim Cohn, *The Trial and Death of Jesus* (New York: Ktav, 1980).
20. Fritz Bauer, "Der Prozeß Jesu," in *Fritz Bauer: Die Humanität der Rechtsordnung; Ausgewählte Schriften*, ed. Joachim Perels and Irmtrud Wojak (Frankfurt: Campus, 1998), 411–426.
21. *Ibid.*, 424.
22. *Ibid.*, 411.
23. Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 572; Roloff, "Jesus von Nazareth," vol. 4, col. 466.

## Chapter 1

# Jesus and His Impact on Jewish Antiquity and the Middle Ages

Rabbinical Judaism's victory after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, ushered in a kind of normative Judaism whereby attitudes that did not comply with fundamental beliefs of the newly established standard were dismissed as heretical by the rabbinic elite. The term for antirabbinic Jews and heretics was *min* (plural: *minim*). In the early Talmudic literature, in addition to "species" (kind) and "anomaly" (variant), *min* meant "gender" and "sexuality." At the time, this insult was not explicitly aimed at Jewish Christians, that is, Christians; Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1 contains an entire list of heretics who will have no part in the "World to Come." The twelfth benediction of the Eighteen Benedictions, the *Ha'minim Birkat*, which was accepted as the nineteenth benediction in Yavneh in the presence of Rabban Gamliel II (ca. 90–130 CE), is therefore not specifically aimed at the early Christians. As a petition for the annihilation of apostates, it may date back to the rule of Alexander Jannaeus (103/104–76 BCE), who had persecuted the Pharisees. The reference to Jewish Christians is rather indirect: as they could not respond to this blessing with "Amen," they could be expelled from the

synagogue.<sup>1</sup> Over time, however, it was made clear that Christians were no longer to be considered heretics.

Rabbi Menachem Ha-Meiri of Perpignan (1249–1316) explained that the Christians were not idolaters, but represented a doctrine of high ethical standard. It is assumed that the first confrontation with the Jewish Christian Jesus image occurred in the Greek Jewish Diaspora. Regarding the rabbinic traditions in the early Tannaitic period (70–240 CE; the *Tannaim* were Jewish teachers of the law), Johann Maier acknowledges no such indications and points out that Christianity only emerged as a serious challenge under Constantine the Great in former Palestine; namely as the successor to Rome's power. After the conversion of the Roman Empire and the tightening of anti-Jewish laws, the rabbis transferred the negative images of Esau and Edom onto Christianity and continued to expect the fulfillment of God's response to Rebekah, "The one [nation] shall be stronger than the other" (Gn 25:23), or even the vision of Obadiah (1:21), "Those who have been saved shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's." The typology of "Edom" and "Esau," "church" and "Rome," was still widely used in the Middle Ages. According to Daniel Krochmalnik, we can point to Rashi (1040–1105) and his comment on Obadiah as an example of this tradition. In Rashi, at Obadiah 1:21, we read: "And the leaders of Israel are going up to Mount Zion as victors in order to pass judgment, to punish Esau for what he had done to Israel, the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom will be the Eternal One's, to teach you that his kingdom will be complete only when he will have punished Esau's wickedness [In the Aramaic translation, 'the mountain of Esau' is 'the large city of Esau,' which—according to the Rashi commentary—can be equaled to Rome].' This kind of encrypted Jewish polemic was not unknown to the ecclesiastical authorities at the time."<sup>2</sup>

## Jesus in the Mishnah and Talmud

There are some short rabbinic texts which refer to Jesus's descent, teaching, and impact.<sup>3</sup> He is called "the son of Pantera" (Chul 2:22, 2:24), is said to have been hanged on the evening of Passover as a magician and imposter (bSanh 43a), and is mentioned by his followers, who are said to heal the sick in his name (Chul 2:22f.; cited in bShab 116a–b).

Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus supposedly heard some scholarly reference associated with the name of Jesus in Sepphoris (Chul 2:24). According to the Jewish tradition, Jesus of Nazareth was also subsequently identified with other figures, such as an Egyptian magician called Ben Stada who, it was claimed, was executed early in the second century CE.

According to Maier, the name "Pantera(s)" was a common name for soldiers and makes Jesus into a kind of counterstory to that of the illegitimate son of a Roman legionnaire. Around 180 CE, the Greek philosopher and skeptic Celso presented a view<sup>4</sup> (passed on to us by Origen) in which he refers to a Jew who claimed the mother of Jesus committed adultery and bore an illegitimate child. And so, at last, the claim that Jesus was a legitimate descendant of the house of David had been called into question. Schalom Ben-Chorin put it succinctly: "These relatively late, often spiteful anomalies have no historical value, but already form the precipitate of the controversy between Jewish Christians and normative Judaism."<sup>5</sup>

A derogatory description of the Passion of Jesus can also be found in the Talmud. The Babylonian Talmud (bSanh 43a) describes the execution: "[On the eve of the Sabbath and] on the eve of Passover Jesus of Nazareth was hanged. And a herald went out forty days earlier and announced: Jesus of Nazareth is led out to be stoned, be-

cause he practiced sorcery, stirred up Israel, and seduced [*hiddiakh*] them [to idolatry]." The age and authenticity of this memo are controversial. Joseph Klausner considers it to be original and dates it to around 200 CE.<sup>6</sup> Johann Maier, however, argues that it could not have originated before 220 CE. For him, references to the execution of Jesus for proselytizing for a foreign cult shows how the charges aimed at Jesus are probably based on cases against others.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to Maier, Peter Schäfer does not consider the rabbinic texts which refer to Jesus secondary and post-Constantinian constructs. While Maier only accepts a few texts as legitimately based on Jesus of Nazareth, for Schäfer, the texts provide evidence of "devastating" rabbinic criticism of contemporary Christianity and its founders. For example, he points to the discrepancy between these passages and the Gospels: "According to the New Testament Jesus was crucified (obviously following Roman law), whereas according to the Talmud he was stoned and subsequently hanged (following rabbinic law)."<sup>8</sup> If the Talmud subsumes the proceedings against Jesus into Judaism, it thereby accepts the Christian accusation and confirms it with the intention to limit it. For Schäfer, this represents an early counter-Gospel based on thorough familiarity with the New Testament prior to the medieval *Toledot Yeshu*.

Schäfer emphasizes the difference between the Babylonian and the Palestinian (Jerusalem) Talmud. While the former is characterized by vigorous polemic, this is largely absent from the latter. Schäfer explains this discrepancy by drawing our attention to the fact that the rabbis of Babylonia, in the anti-Christian Sassanid Empire, were encouraged to polemicize, while criticism in the regions where the Palestinian Talmud originated was only possible in encrypted form. Jewish counterhistory, according to Schäfer, served self-justification: "And at precisely the time when Christianity rose from modest beginnings to

its first triumphs, the Talmud (or rather the two Talmudim) would become the defining document of those who refused to accept the new covenant, who so obstinately insisted on the fact that nothing had changed and that the old covenant was still valid.”<sup>9</sup>

### **The *Toledot Yeshu***

There is a coherent narrative about Jesus and the origins of Christianity in the form of the *Toledot Yeshu*, which is available in Aramaic, Hebrew, Yiddish, and Jewish Arabic. That this “life of Jesus” exists in numerous, widely divergent versions is an expression of the defensiveness of Jews who had lived in the Diaspora under the repression of Christian rule since late antiquity. It interprets the Gospel reports about the life of Jesus in a pronouncedly anti-Christian way and consequently reviles the central beliefs of the followers of the one who they believed was the true Messiah, conceived of God in the Virgin Mary. Maier terms this “story of Jesus,” infused with all the satirical and polemical style of an entertaining novel, a kind of underground literature:

The core is based on an Aramaic version from the eighth/ninth century, probably along with the Western Diaspora traditions. Popular versions developed during the Middle Ages which, during the modern period, circulated as secret reading in German Jewish works. Joseph’s fiancée Mary is deceived or seduced by a Roman soldier named Pandera and so conceives Jesus, who works miracles by using spells he learned from John the Baptist or by making use of the tetragrammaton stolen from the Temple. This demagogue declares himself the Messiah and Son of God, he is defeated by

Judas and is then handed over to the wise representatives of righteousness. The disciples steal his body and claim he had risen from the dead.<sup>10</sup>

This folk literature, with all its malice, is evidence of the suffering of the Jews in the Middle Ages. Schalom Ben-Chorin cites the words of the Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz in relation to this: “The Christians shed our blood, we merely shed ink.”<sup>11</sup> For the various versions of the *Toledot*, which is also known under the name *Maasse Talui* (*ha’talui* means “the hanged”), the Berlin *Encyclopaedia Judaica* of 1932 lists the following characteristic features:

1. Jesus is begotten and conceived in sin.
2. He forces himself into the synagogue and preaches as a disrespectful student in the presence of his teachers.
3. Through cunning, he acquires the name of God by writing it down on parchment and concealing it in a wound in his hip.
4. He gathers disciples around him, is summoned before the queen (anachronistically: Helena), and convinces her, and later the people, with miracles.
5. Judas, called to expose Jesus, is also granted possession of God’s name and vanquishes Jesus. Both rise into the air by the power of God’s name.
6. Jesus returns to Jerusalem a second time to acquire God’s name again; he is betrayed and captured.
7. He asks all the trees that none of them serve as his gallows; he forgets the cabbage stalk and is hanged.
8. A gardener, Judah, steals Jesus’s body and secretly buries it in a different place.

In his article in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jehoshua Guttmann<sup>12</sup> draws attention to the fact that different representations can be found in the Genizah fragments: Jesus rises



into the air prior to the Crucifixion by the power of God's name; the gardener Judah tries to follow him, whereupon Jesus conceals himself in the cave of the prophet Elijah which he immediately closes by the power of God's name.

The *Toledot Yeshu* was often cited and attacked, and used for anti-Jewish agitation from the time of the church fathers up until Martin Luther. With the assistance of a Jewish convert to Christianity, the Viennese theologian Thomas Ebendorfer (1388–1464) created a Latin translation of the *Toledot Yeshu* and attached to it under the title *Falsitates Judeorum* an anti-Christian invective poem in Hebrew with interlinear glosses and commentary as well as an unfinished anti-Jewish treatise. This translation was used for anti-Jewish propaganda purposes at a time when Jews were almost completely expelled from the Holy Roman Empire and confirms the earliest Christian reception of the entire *Toledot Yeshu* in medieval Ashkenaz. Ebendorfer's transmission is also one of the oldest records of a Jewish life of Jesus at all.<sup>13</sup> A detailed analysis of the individual motives in the *Toledot Yeshu* was argued in 1902 by Samuel Krauss.<sup>14</sup> His argument instigated a new scholarly discussion of Judas Iscariot as a Jewish figure at the time.<sup>15</sup> Some years later there was a related discussion pertaining to a Jewish Persian *Toledot Yeshu* manuscript.<sup>16</sup>

## **Rabbinic Polemics against Jesus**

While the *Toledot Yeshu* as a parody of the life of Jesus was folk literature, in Spain and southern France Jewish polemicists began to refute Christian and Christological positions at a more scholarly level. Rabbi Shem Tov ben Isaac ibn Shaprut (1350–unknown), who participated in the 1379 disputation in Pamplona, was the first to translate the Gospel of Matthew and parts of the other three Gospels into Hebrew. It was Joseph Kimchi (1105–1170),

however, who wrote one of the first anti-Christian polemics: *Sefer Ha'Berit* (Book of the Covenant), printed in Constantinople in 1710. The book is a dialogue between a "faithful" (*ma'amin*) and a "heretic" (*min*) and attacks Christological interpretations of the Bible. Additional topics include original sin, the incarnation, and the moral standards of Jews and Christians concerning the issue of usury.

As an apologetic work, *Sefer Ha'Berit* is a response to anti-Jewish Christian antagonism.<sup>17</sup> It states, "If, as you say, God was made flesh, did Jesus then have the soul of God? If this is the case, why then did he cry out that God had forsaken him? However, if he had a human soul, and you assert that the deity was present within him after his death, then for Jesus was true what applies to all of humankind."<sup>18</sup> Kimchi not only had a huge influence on Nachmanides (1194–1270), but he also inspired his son, David Kimchi (1160–1236), who became one of the greatest scripture commentators of his time. Kimchi wrote: "Jesus himself said that he had not come to destroy the Torah, but to preserve it."<sup>19</sup> Among the Jewish polemics which countered Christian interpretation of the Hebrew Bible or questioned Christian doctrine in a rational manner were the following:

- *Kalimmat Ha'Gojim* (The Shame of the Gentiles) by Profiat Duran (Isaac ben Moses = Ephodi) (Perpignan, 1379)
- *Bitul Ikkarei Ha'Nozerim Dat* (The Repeal of Dogmas of the Faith of Christians) by Hasdai Crescas (1340–1410/1411)
- *Sefer Nizzachon* (Book of Refutation) from the Rhineland (thirteenth or fourteenth century)
- *Hizzuk Emunah* (Strengthening of the Faith) by Isaac ben Abraham of Troki (1593)

Gershom Scholem (1897–1982) mentions Profiat Duran, who believed Jesus and his disciples were not only great magicians, but actual Kabbalists who were subject to a false interpretation: “The doctrine of the trinity, which they erroneously attributed to the deity, arose among them as a result of their missteps in his science [the Kabbalah] which established the primordial light, the radiant light and the transparent light.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, “Profiat Duran regarded Jesus as a ‘naive (or perfect) saint,’ his disciples as misguided.”<sup>21</sup>

The *Sefer Nizzahon Yashan* [Latin: *Nizzahon Vetus*; Old Book of Polemic] is a collection of Jewish reactions to Christian polemic and was probably produced toward the end of the thirteenth or early in the fourteenth century. The anonymous Ashkenazi author cites Christian testimonials followed by Jewish responses.

David Berger, who edited and translated this work into English, described its organization as almost encyclopedic. It was also a useful aid for Jews who engaged in disputations with Christians. The author refutes the Gospels with considerable competence both in theology and Latin.<sup>22</sup> *Sefer Nizzahon Yashan* can also be linked to notions of vengeance and redemption, for example, when it describes the coming of the Messiah.

Israel Yuval describes how medieval Jews made use of the liturgical language of the other side in order to internally confirm their own position as well as externally and proactively proclaiming it: “This [that is, the ultimate] end consists in the utter destruction of all nations, with their heavenly princes and gods... The Holy One, blessed be He, will destroy all the other nations; Israel alone [will remain].”<sup>23</sup> He connects the *Te Deum* with the *Aleinu*: Christian prayer praises Jesus as “King of Glory” (*rex gloriae*) and announces his incarnation, whereby the body of the Holy Virgin was not desecrated; on the other

hand, an addendum to the *Aleinu* from twelfth-century French Jewish prayer books contains sharp denunciations of Jesus and Mary.<sup>24</sup>

## Christian Talmud Criticism and Censorship

On the ecclesiastical side, the Middle Ages gave rise to intense Christian polemic. With the emergence of the mendicant orders in the thirteenth century, new methods of evangelizing Jews developed. The methods of argumentation were tested in public disputations and were dominated by the view that it was possible to demonstrate the *veritas christiana* by appealing to the traditional rabbinic texts. Differing concepts of the Messiah and the Jewish image of Jesus were brought up in this context. Ora Limor emphasizes that the argument was no longer limited to the Bible, but now also included the Talmud. However, what irritated Christians about the Talmud were not the halakhic elements but the aggadic material. Christian critics discovered heresies there, offenses against the holiness of God, and alleged slurs at Christianity. They interpreted the Talmud as an incorrect interpretation of the Bible and thus as the root of Jewish heresy par excellence.<sup>25</sup>

Around 1200, the church began to censor Hebrew manuscripts in general. Jewish literature was thereby equated with the writings of so-called heretics. After 1230, Christian preachers, such as the Franciscan Berthold of Regensburg (1210–1272) and the lyric poet Conrad of Würzburg (1220/1230–1287; still known as “Master Konrad,” in literary history) identified Jews as heretics: if Jews adhered to the Talmud, they are all doomed to hell. The charge of blasphemy eventually led to a campaign against rabbinic literature itself. In 1239, the baptized Jew Nicholas Donin (dates unknown) filed charges against the Talmud, and Pope Gregory IX (1167–1241) ordered the kings of England,

France, Portugal, and Castile to confiscate all copies of the Talmud and excommunicate any clerics who continued to retain Hebrew literature. Louis IX of France (1214–1270) was the only sovereign to endorse this appeal. To clarify the allegations, he also initiated a public disputation in Paris in 1240 in which Rabbi Yehiel ben Joseph argued, among other things, that the Talmudic polemic refers to a Jesus who had studied with Joshua ben Perahyah but was not “Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth, who certainly did not reject the Torah.”<sup>26</sup> The argumentation of the rabbis could not prevent the public burning of twenty-four wagonloads of Talmudim (over ten thousand Talmud volumes) on 29 September 1242 in Paris. This Talmud burning is considered one of the greatest crimes against culture of the Christian Middle Ages. Rabbi Meir ben Baruch of Rothenburg (ca. 1215–1293) was a witness who then wrote the lament “*Sha’ali Serufah Ba’Esh* ... Inquire, oh thou who art burned by fire, about the welfare of those who mourn for thee.”<sup>27</sup> This elegy has since been integrated into the Ashkenazi liturgy every year on the day of mourning the destruction of the Temple, Tisha B’Av.

In 1244, Pope Innocent IV (1195–1254) confirmed that God, Jesus, and Mary were blasphemed in the Talmud, that the oral teaching adulterates biblical law which already refers to Jesus, and that it trains Jews to reject the true teaching of the church. In response to the Jewish argument that the Talmud was indispensable for Jews to understand the Hebrew Bible, the pope established an expert commission of forty Christian scholars (including Albert the Great, 1200–1280), who once again condemned the Talmud.

In addition to the Paris Disputation (1240), other famous medieval disputations include Barcelona (1263) and Tortosa (1413/1414). Of particular interest concerning the Jewish image of Jesus is the attitude of the biblical commentator Nachmanides (1194–1270) in Barcelona. He

writes, “As a result, we agreed first to consider the issue of the Messiah, if he has already come, as the Christians believe, or whether he would come in the future, as the Jews believe. After that we wanted to discuss whether the Messiah was truly God or fully human, produced by a man and a woman. Thereupon we wanted to discuss whether the Jews held fast to the true law, or whether the Christians practiced it.”<sup>28</sup> Censorship continued as a result of these disputations, along with the confiscation and burning of the Talmud by popes, French kings, and the Inquisition. This all-encompassing rejection of the Talmud and the associated incrimination finally led to a kind of self-censorship of the offensive passages within the Jewish community (usually remarks concerning the Roman Empire and Greco-Roman paganism and passages on the conversion to Christianity or regarding the Samaritans). The oldest printed Talmud (Venice, 1523) contains nothing about Jesus. In the Basel edition of the Talmud (1578–1580), all passages from the Babylonian Talmud in which Jesus was mentioned or with which Christianity could be associated were deleted. These deleted passages were later cited in special collections.<sup>29</sup> Uncensored Talmud editions were not published in Europe until the early twentieth century, and even then only in critical scholarly works. Protestant theologians also had difficulties with the Talmud in the early modern era. For Johann Jacob Rabe (1710–1798), who translated the Mishnah into German around 1760, the long suffering of the Jews was punishment for their rejection of God’s Son and the secularization and “blackout” of the divine commandments of the Bible through “Pharisaic Judaism.”<sup>30</sup>

## Notes

1. Leo Trepp, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst: Gestalt und Entwicklung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), 200.

2. Cited according to Daniel Krochmalnik, "Parschandata: Raschi und seine Zeit," *Jüdisches Leben in Bayern: Mitteilungsblatt des Landesverbandes der israelitischen Kulturgemeinden in Bayern*, April 2005: 43.
3. See S. David Sperling, "Jewish Perspectives on Jesus," in *Jesus Then & Now: Images of Jesus in History and Christology*, ed. Marvin Meyer and Charles Hughes (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001), 251–259.
4. Henry Chadwick, ed., *Origenes: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).
5. Schalom Ben-Chorin, *Theologia Judaica: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. Verena Lenzen (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992), 2:265.
6. Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times and Teaching* (New York: Bloch, 1989), 27f.
7. Johann Maier, *Jesus von Nazareth in der talmudischen Überlieferung*, 2nd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), 268.
8. Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 71.
9. *Ibid.*, 2.
10. Johann Maier, *Judentum von A bis Z: Glauben, Geschichte, Kultur* (Freiburg: Herder, 2001), 232.
11. Ben-Chorin, *Theologia Judaica*, 2:229.
12. Jehoschua Guttman, "Jesus von Nazareth, Toldot Jeschu," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Berlin: Eschkol, 1932), vol. 9, col. 78f.
13. Brigitta Callsen, Fritz Peter Knapp, Manuela Nisner, and Martin Przybilski, *Das jüdische Leben Jesu, Toldot Jeschu: Die älteste lateinische Übersetzung in den Fal-sitates Judeorum von Thomas Ebendorfer* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2003).
14. Samuel Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen* (Berlin: S. Calvary, 1902).
15. Samuel Krauss, "Neuere Ansichten über 'Toldoth Jeschu,'" *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 76, no. 6 (1932): 586–603; Bernhard Hel-

- ler, “Über das Alter der jüdischen Judas-Sage und des Toldot Jeschu,” *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 78, no. 3 (1934): 198–210.
16. Cf. Walter J. Fischel, “Eine jüdisch-persische ‘Toldoth Jeschu’: Handschrift,” *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 78, no. 3 (1934): 343–350.
  17. Kurt Schubert, *Jüdische Geschichte*, Beck’sche Reihe 2018 (Munich: Beck, 1995), 75.
  18. Joseph Kimchi, *Sefer Ha’Berit* (Constantinople, 1750), 27, cited in Pinchas Lapide, *Ist das nicht Josephs Sohn? Jesus im heutigen Judentum* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1987), 100.
  19. Cited in Lapide, *Ist das nicht Josephs Sohn?*, 101.
  20. Cf. Gershom Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1987), 354.
  21. Profiat Duran, *Kelimat ha-Goyim* [The Shame of the Gentiles], cited in Pinchas Lapide, *Hebrew in the Church: The Foundations of Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 40.
  22. David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizahon Vetus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 36.
  23. Cited in Israel Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perception of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 93.
  24. Cf. *ibid.*, 201.
  25. Ora Limor, “Religionsgespräche: jüdisch-christlich,” in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, ed. Gerhard Müller et al. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 28: 649f.
  26. Cf. Lapide, *Ist das nicht Josephs Sohn?*, 93; see also Reuven Margolies, ed., *Vikuah R. Yehiel mi-Pariz* (Lwow, 1928), 15–17.
  27. Cf. the critical edition of Daniel Goldschmidt, ed., *Seder ha-Qinot le-Tish’ah be’Av* (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1972), 135–137.



28. Cf. Hans-Georg von Mutius, *Die christlich-jüdische Zwangsdisputation zu Barcelona*, Judentum und Umwelt 5 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1982), 28.
29. See also “Jesus,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1978), vol. 10, col. 14.
30. Andreas Kilcher, “Gesetz und Auslegung: Die Mischna, das Elementarbuch der jüdischen Diaspora im Verlag der Weltreligionen,” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, no. 186 (12 August 2008): 51.