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On the cover:

Design for the seal of the United States inspired by the Passover story as originally proposed by Benjamin Franklin who served as a member of the seal design committee in 1776 alongside John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Although Franklin's concept was not adopted by the committee itself, the artist and historian, Benson J. Lossing (1813–1891) subsequently published his own notion of how the seal may have looked had the committee actually selected Franklin's original proposal.

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While the Exodus story has often been looked to as a universalistic narrative that affirms principles of freedom, Jewish and African Americans in the nineteenth century were more frequently drawn to its particularist implications. White Protestants during the colonial and Early Republic eras formed the habit of reading the story metaphorically, as a master narrative that dramatized the liberationist principles underlying their removal from and rebellion against Europe. Beginning in the antebellum period, however, Jewish and black discourse on Exodus emphasized the story's invocation of a single linally defined group's cultural integrity. Insight into how nineteenth century

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To Our Readers...

In the introduction to their new and interesting collection of essays on the meaning of the Exodus story over the course of Jewish history, editors Pamela Barmash and W. David Nelson note that this famous biblical saga constitutes a recurring metaphoric motif that has influenced Jewish life down through the centuries:

[The] “Exodus” refers to much more than a specific limited one-dimensional religious-historical event. Rather, it represents the central, enduring, generative *concept* or *trope* of self-understanding and existential imagination. [It is] an ongoing process of Jewish meaning-making.¹

At first blush, this observation may seem paradoxical to those of us who focus our attention so intently on the American Jewish experience. After all, the story of the Exodus constitutes a literary motif that evokes the ideas of departure, flight, and egression and turns our thoughts to the themes of exile and our people’s wanderings through the desert on their long path toward the Promised Land in Canaan. Yet what place would the story of the Exodus have in the historiography of North American Jewry? And, more particularly, how do themes such as “exile” and “longing for the Promised Land” pertain to Jewish life in the United States where, from the colonial period forward, Jews have enthusiastically embraced the conviction that America was truly their home—a substitutive Zion and a genuine Promised Land?

Gotthard Deutsch (1859–1921), one of the first professors of Jewish history at Hebrew Union College (HUC) in Cincinnati—a scholar who taught Jacob Rader Marcus during his student days at HUC—was interested in reconstructing the history of Jewish rhetoric by proclaiming that a diasporic land had now itself become a Promised Land. According to Deutsch’s research, one of the earliest published expressions of this idea appeared in the German periodical *Sulamith*, edited by David Fraenkel (1779–1865). Fraenkel, also the director of a Jewish academy in Dessau, printed a sermon that one of his own teachers, Joseph Wolf (1762–1826), had delivered in commemoration of the Festival of Shavuot in 1810.² Wolf reminded his students that even if “we no longer have our [ancient] Palestine, we can, if we so choose . . . , transform each

country [wherein we currently live] into [a] Palestine, into a promised and beloved land.”³

Not long after Wolf’s opinion appeared in print, we discover that similar expressions appeared in other American Jewish publications. In 1824, for instance, Isaac Harby (1788–1828), a leading Jewish intellectual in Charleston and one of the founders of the Reformed Society of Israelites, insisted that if the people of the United States actualized the lofty rhetoric enshrined in the nation’s founding documents, there would be no reason whatsoever for American Jews to hope for a return to Zion—“some stony desert,” as Harby described it. If America lived up to its promise, Harby prophesied, its Jewish citizenry would remain forever loyal to “this happy land.”⁴

Arguably the most frequently cited example of the “Zion in America” phenomenon also comes from Charleston. The Reverend Gustavus Poznanski (1804–1879), the religious leader of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, spoke these famous words at ceremonies marking the dedication of his congregation’s new building in March 1841:

This synagogue is our *temple*, this city is our *Jerusalem*, this happy land our *Palestine*, and as our fathers defended with their lives *that* temple, *that* city, and *that* land, so will our sons defend *this* temple, *this* city, and *this* land.⁵

Isaac Mayer Wise expressed this same point of view in 1868 in his dedicatory address at the cornerstone-laying ceremonies for Congregation Bene Israel in Cincinnati: “America is our Palestine; here is our Zion and Jerusalem; Washington and the signers of the glorious Declaration of Independence—of universal human right, liberty and happiness, are our deliverers.”⁶ Nearly fifty years later, in the early decades of the twentieth century, U.S. Congressman Julius Kahn’s (1861–1924) effusions document that well into the twentieth century, American Jews were still insisting that America was their true Promised Land:

[American Jews] are willing to give all they have, even to life itself if need be, for the United States. They revere its flag and its institutions; they owe no allegiance and desire to any other country in the world. This is their Zion.⁷

Since World War II, such fervent patriotic rhapsodies have become noticeably passé for most American Jews, who are often uncomfortable with such outpourings in the aftermath of the Holocaust and, especially, since the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948. Yet the deep-seated sentiment that America is—to use Irving Berlin’s immortal phrase—“our home sweet home” unquestionably endures. In a Thanksgiving Day essay that appeared in the *Huffington Post*, writer Ian Reifowitz, for example, proudly informed his readers that “America is my home.... It is the place that made my life and that of my family possible.”⁸ In a recent history of the American Jewish experience, historian Beth Wenger movingly described what America means to its Jewish citizens in the first decade of the twenty-first century: “To American Jews,” she wrote, “America is home. There, exist their thriving roots, there, is the country which they have helped to build; and there, they share its fruits and its destiny.”⁹

It is this enduring Jewish certainty—that the American republic has long been and continues to be a bona fide Jewish haven and home—that has fostered what might be termed “the Americanization of the Exodus story.” In contrast to the hardships and cruelties that mirrored the story of Egyptian bondage in almost every other corner of the Jewish Diaspora, United States Jewry believed their country to be a surrogate for the biblical ideal of a land flowing with milk and honey. America became the true Promised Land for an incalculable number of Jews fleeing a superabundance of real-life pharaohs who afflicted them in every corner of the Old World.

The Exodus from the Iberian continent beginning in 1492 hurled thousands of Jews into a new diasporic wilderness. Ultimately, this Exodus carried some of these Jews to the European colonies of the Atlantic world, where they would become participants in the European settlement of North America. In his extremely informative essay on Jewish life in colonial Jamaica during the seventeenth century, Stanley Mirvis deepens our understanding of the Jew’s search for genuine liberty and economic opportunity in the New World during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. All who are interested in the evolution of Jewish life in the Caribbean colonies will be grateful for Mirvis’s detailed research and, especially, for the valuable documentary translations he has appended to his narrative analysis.

Mirvis's article brings the details of Jewish life in Jamaica during this period into bold relief. His research focuses on the lives of David and Abraham Alvares, Jewish businessmen and former conversos who played a foundational role in establishing Jamaica's Jewish community in the late 1670s. Readers will learn much about the challenges that Jewish businessmen encountered in their struggle to make a good living. Mirvis's research sheds light on Jewish communal life in Jamaica as well as on the remarkably high level of interconnectedness that typified Jewish life in the Caribbean colonies.

After being exiled from the Iberian Peninsula, the Alvares family seems to have first settled in the nearby city of Bayonne, together with other Jewish exiles from Spain and Portugal. From Bayonne, the Alvares clan relocated to the Dutch colony of Pernambuco. After Pernambuco was reconquered by the Portuguese and the Brazilians, the Alvares family took flight again and made their way to Amsterdam. Finally, in 1677, they traveled to Jamaica to take advantage of beckoning mercantile opportunities. Mirvis discovered that there were many Jewish colonists in Jamaica who, like the Alvares family, had lived in Bayonne previously. This article underscores the influence that Bayonne's Jewry had on the fledgling community the Jewish colonists established in Jamaica.

Mirvis also underscores the physical mobility and the astonishing economic maneuverability that characterized both the Jews of Jamaica and Jewish mercantile life in general throughout the volatile Atlantic world during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In summarizing his study of the Alvares family and others like them, Mirvis points out that Jews in the Caribbean colonies "shared a common history and path of migration from the Iberian world to the *"tierras de libertad."* In other words, the desire to find a land of liberty—a land flowing with milk and honey—motivated a hearty band of exiled Jews to voluntarily wander into the wilderness of the New World.

It is also important to bear in mind that the legacy of the Exodus story influenced many early Americans, not just the Jewish colonists. Thomas Paine, for example, famously referred to King George III as "the hardened, sullen tempered Pharaoh of England."¹⁰ And, in 1777, Nicholas Street, pastor of the Church of Christ in East Haven, Connecticut, told his congregation that the fledgling American nation should be compared to "the children of Israel in Egypt, their sufferings and oppression

under the tyrant Pharaoh, their remarkable deliverance by the hands of Moses out of the state of bondage and oppression.”¹¹ Little wonder that, not long after the Declaration of Independence had been promulgated in 1776, a committee consisting of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams was formed for the purpose of designing a “Great Seal” for the new nation. It was Franklin who proposed the adoption of a seal depicting the image of Moses standing at the shore of the Red Sea, his hands extended outward as the waters overwhelmed the cruel Pharaoh and his minions. To underscore the purpose of using this imagery, Franklin further recommended putting these words around the seal’s perimeter: “Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God.”¹² By asserting that America truly was a divine *terminus ad quem* for their desert wanderings, Jews embraced a bona fide American Protestant mythos that depicted the newly established republic as *the* “New Israel.”

Michael Hoberman’s informative article explores the Americanization of the Exodus story among Jews and blacks. He provides readers with a comparative analysis of how Jews and African Americans made use of the story to serve their own particularistic needs, especially during the debates over slavery that raged during the antebellum period. Hoberman observes that there were Jews in the North who opposed African American slavery because they embraced “a particularly Jewish obligation” that arose from an understanding that their ancestors, like America’s black slaves, had been cruelly oppressed in Egypt. Concomitantly, there were Jews in the South who adopted a very different interpretation of that same biblical text, preferring to read this biblical episode without employing metaphors. For them, Exodus was a story about the Hebrews in Egypt, not about the Negro slaves in America. Those who tried to universalize this biblical saga, these Southern Jews asserted, were misappropriating the original meaning and intention of the Hebrew scriptures.

African Americans, too, relied on the scriptural story of the Exodus in their painful struggle for freedom during the years leading up to the Civil War. In recounting the thoughts that ran through his mind when he first heard William Lloyd Garrison (1805–1879) decry American slavery, Frederick Douglass (1818–1895) said to himself: “You are the man ... raised up by God to deliver his modern Israel from bondage.”¹³ Hoberman points out that in countless ways African Americans

persistently noted their “resemblance to the Israelites [in the Bible].” With their own interpretation of the Exodus, blacks sought, in part, to compel the nation to confront its “extensive and perverse Christian hypocrisy.” A hundred years later, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. continued to put the theme of Exodus and the notion of the Promised Land into service for the needs of the Civil Rights movement. For King, the “land flowing with milk and honey” became the symbol of yet another destination: political, civic, and economic equality for all Americans. Thus, in his last speech, delivered on 3 April 1968, King famously declared, “I’ve been to the mountaintop [and] I want you to know ... that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land!”¹⁴

In the last section of his essay, Hoberman briefly considers how the particularistic interpretations of Jews and African Americans have influenced their relationship over the years. “The reality of a Bible that could and did bear different messages for different peoples,” Hoberman concludes, “became impossible to ignore.” The competing interpretive claims regarding the rightful heir of the Exodus story in America “continue to complicate social relations in the United States.”

Best-selling author Bruce Feiler has famously asserted that, “The Exodus story is America’s story.” The new scholarly essays featured in this edition of our journal give readers yet another opportunity to consider how the themes of Exodus, deliverance, and home have influenced the American Jewish experience.¹⁵

G.P.Z.

Cincinnati, Ohio

Notes

¹W. David Nelson and Pamela Barmash, eds., *Exodus in the Jewish Experience: Echoes and Reverberations* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), viii.

²*Sulamith, eine Zeitschrift zur Beförderung der Kultur und Humanität unter der jüdischen Nation* (*Sulamith: A Journal for the Advancement of Culture and Humanity in the Jewish Nation*) (Leipzig: A.L. Reinicke, 1806–[1848]).

³*Sulamith* IV, no. 1, 44–45. According to the Deutsch Catalogue, Joseph Wolf delivered a sermon on the Festival of Shavuot wherein he averred: “*Wir haben Zwar kein Palaestina mehr, aber wir koennen, wenn wir wollen ... uns jedes Land zu einem Palaestina, zu einem gelobten und*

geliebten Lande umschaffen.” See Deutsch Catalogue, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁴Naomi W. Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897–1848* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2003), 41. See also L.C. Moïse, *Biography of Isaac Harby with an Account of the Reformed Society of Israelites of Charleston, S.C., 1824–1833* (Columbia, SC: The R.L. Bryan Company, 1931), 118.

⁵*Charleston Courier* (20 March 1841).

⁶Isaac M. Wise, *American Israelite* (12 June 1868): 4, col. 5.

⁷*New York Times* (magazine section), 16 February 1919.

⁸See http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ian-reifowitz/on-thanksgiving-im-thankf_b_8666620.html (accessed 23 February 2016).

⁹Beth S. Wenger, *The Jewish Americans: Three Centuries of Jewish Voices in America* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 321.

¹⁰Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (London: W.T. Sherwin, 1817), 36.

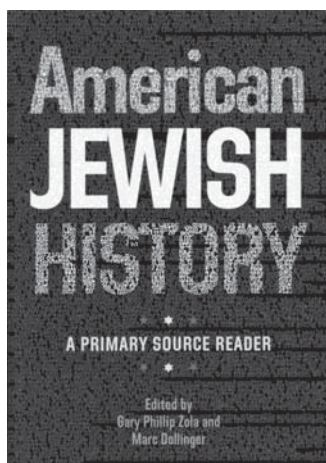
¹¹Nicholas Street, *The American States Acting Over The Part Of The Children Of Israel In The Wilderness, And Thereby Impeding Their Entrance Into Canaan's Rest: Or, The Human Heart Discovering Itself Under Trials. A Sermon, Preached At East-Haven, April, 1777.* See page 3, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/evans/n12362.0001.001/2?page=root;size=100;view=text> (accessed 15 February 2016).

¹²See Derek Davis, *Religion and the Continental Congress, 1774–1789: Contributions to Original Intent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 138ff.

¹³Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, with introduction and notes by David W. Blight (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 285.

¹⁴Martin Luther King Jr., “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop,” 3 April 1968, Mason Temple, Memphis, Tennessee, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkivebeentothemountaintop.htm> (accessed 15 February 2016).

¹⁵See the dust jacket of Bruce S. Feiler, *America’s Prophet: Moses and the American Story* (New York: William Morrow, 2009), Feiler also says: “The Passover story is America’s story,” 296.



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“[This] stunning new collection of documents...conveys the remarkable breadth and extraordinary diversity of the American Jewish Experience across 350 years. The editors' selections capture the voices of America's Jews and illuminate their lives through the prisms of business and labor; immigration and adaptation, religion and Zionism, family life and philanthropy, politics and antisemitism. Setting the gold standard for the field, Zola and Dollinger's source reader is indispensable for those teaching modern Jewish history.”

—**Pamela S. Nadell**, director of the Jewish studies program at American University

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The Alvares Family Patriarchs and the Place of Pre-1692 Port Royal in the Western Sephardic Diaspora

STANLEY MIRVIS

David Baruh Alvares, his son Abraham, and their families were among the first Jewish pioneers in Jamaica and leading figures among the Jewish community of late seventeenth-century Port Royal. Their lives spanned the period of the first Jewish settlement in Jamaica from the 1670s until the destruction of Port Royal by an earthquake and tidal wave in June of 1692. This article and its documentary appendixes, which include transcriptions and translations of David's and Abraham's wills, explores Western Sephardic life in pre-1692 Port Royal as represented by one of its most prominent families.

Seventeenth-century observers and modern historians alike have acknowledged the presence of Spanish-Portuguese Jews in Jamaica during the pre-1692 era. From John Taylor in 1688 to Frank Cundall in the first half of the twentieth century, observers and historians alike have seen Jews as emblematic of Port Royal's ethnic and religious pluralism. Though too marginal to receive sustained attention, these Jews were too curious to ignore. Recent research has attempted to redeem Port Royal's Jews from the margins of Jamaican history, particularly through their economic activity.¹ Through a microanalysis of the Alvareses' last will and testaments I hope to further explore the full significance of Jamaica's early Jewish inhabitants within the broader Western Sephardic Diaspora.

First, a note on periodization. June of 1692 was a significant watershed moment for Jamaican history, and I have therefore chosen to focus on David and Abraham Alvares in part because their lives came to an end with the destruction of the city they knew as their home. Port Royal never regained its primacy as a center for trans-Atlantic trade after the devastating earthquake.² Among the estimated two thousand casualties lay at least twenty-two Jews, not including those who died later—likely including David and Abraham—as a result of malarial fever.³ The year 1692 was, however, a watershed moment for more than just the earthquake and its aftermath. The date also marks a shift in the residential

patterns of the Jews in Jamaica toward Spanish Town and Kingston, and it inaugurates a period of more direct migration from the Metropole rather than from proximate Caribbean colonies. The earthquake and subsequent French invasion also ushered in a sustained policy of Jewish taxation that would become a perennial concern for Jamaican Jews and that would exhaust their channels of political lobbying throughout the eighteenth century.⁴

This article further seeks to use the micro-historical analysis of David and Abraham Alvareses' wills to better understand the nature of the Caribbean relationship with European parent communities and to offer a more nuanced understanding of the internal interaction of smaller communities within the Western Sephardic Diaspora. Current studies tend to view smaller communities such as Hamburg, Bayonne, Livorno, and those in the Americas as satellite dependencies on Amsterdam. Though there is certainly a great deal of truth to this model, particularly with regard to ritual exports and rabbinic authority, it does not tell the full story. Though Jamaican Jews looked toward Amsterdam and London as sources of both migration and communal authority, their wills reveal that communal Judaism on the island took shape just as much in the transitory space of Bayonne as in the capitals of either London or Amsterdam. As will be shown through the Alvares patriarchs, Bayonne was a source of Jewish migration and familial ties for Port Royal's Jews equal to Amsterdam. Furthermore, early Jamaican Jews from Bayonne formed an insular enclave within the community of Port Royal suggesting that interactions between smaller communities are as essential to the migratory patterns of the Western Sephardic Diaspora as was the patronage of Amsterdam.

Pre-1692 Port Royal

After the English conquest of Jamaica in 1655—part of Oliver Cromwell's semi-messianic "Western Design"—the island that had been home to a small community of Spanish farmers and tanners on the north coast was transformed into one of the most important trading hubs in the Atlantic.⁵ As the English turned their attention toward privateering and Atlantic trade, they committed their resources to fortifying Port Royal at the tip of the Palisadoes, a sand peninsula forming the outer barrier of what is today Kingston Harbor.

Port Royal held considerable advantages for the British: The protected harbor made it possible to sustain a naval and privateering fleet year-round and early inhabitants spoke of the healthy climate. The cost of living was, however, dramatically higher in Port Royal compared to other English port cities or even settlements on Jamaica's mainland. Without an indigenous source of fresh water, potable water had to be ferried from across the harbor.⁶ The Port Royal diet almost entirely consisted of imported foodstuffs from England, North America, and other parts of the Caribbean. Even tortoise meat, the signature staple dish of Port Royal, was largely imported from the Cayman Islands.⁷ Despite these drawbacks, the white population of pre-1692 Port Royal grew prodigiously between 1655 and 1692.⁸ According to Henry Morgan's census of 1680, Port Royal was home to a total of 523 households, approximately 2,069 individual European settlers, and around 814 enslaved people, making Port Royal one of the most densely populated cities in the English colonial world just short of Boston and New York.⁹

Late-seventeenth-century Jamaica was a politically divided community. One historian writes that "between 1655 and 1689 there were two Jamaicas: the agricultural colony and the buccaneer's rendezvous."¹⁰ The English crown played a game of tug-of-war with the Jamaican Assembly and its own appointed governors whether to privilege the interests of the landholding planters or the more individualized, less manageable, merchant class of Port Royal. The fortunes of the merchant class were very much connected with an attempt to localize Caribbean privateering activity in Port Royal and likewise diminished as privateering became increasingly marginalized after 1680.¹¹

Though in taste, fashion, and leisure, Port Royal differed little from other Protestant port cities, it nevertheless held a less-than-favorable reputation within the English world. Its reputation as a debauched city stemmed from its now infamous allure to pirates, prostitutes, and alcoholics. As one late-seventeenth-century visitor put it: "Port-Royal is the very Sodom of the Universe"—a sentiment shared by the adventurer John Taylor, who concluded that the city was "almost impossible to civillize."¹²

These negative descriptions, true as they may have been to some extent, ought not to be taken as a complete picture of life in pre-1692 Port Royal. Though there were certainly brothels, reckless drinking, and

irascible pirates, Port Royal also had an efficient marshal's office and prison, along with other tools of law enforcement.¹³ It also offered a good quality of life for families and boasted of a religious and ethnic diversity that included a population of Catholics, Quakers, Huguenots, and Jews, in addition to an active presence of the Established Church of England.¹⁴

In what some perceived to be divine punishment for the vice of Port Royal, its primacy as the center of Jamaican settlement came to an abrupt end with the earthquake and tidal wave of 7 June 1692.¹⁵ Some estimates place the death toll at around two thousand souls.¹⁶ This catastrophe was conflated by the collapsing of rigid English brick buildings unsuited for the seismic realities of life in the Caribbean and subsequent riots that left many murdered in the streets.¹⁷

The calamity of June 1692 did not end with the recession of the tidal waters. Malarial fever plagued the survivors for nearly an entire year. Furthermore, war with France had begun in earnest at the onset of the Glorious Revolution in 1688. With the destruction of defensive infrastructure in 1692, the island remained vulnerable to attack. The French took advantage of this weakened state and violently invaded Jamaica in the summer of 1694. The short-lived endeavor to rebuild Port Royal came to an end in 1703, when a warehouse fire destroyed what remained of the city.¹⁸ It would not be until the middle of the eighteenth century that Port Royal would again be home to a significant population, though it never regained its primacy at the center of English Atlantic trade. After 1680, sugar began to drive the colonial Jamaican economy into the new century. With the rise of sugar, Port Royal's merchant community, and the city itself, would be relegated to the margins of history. The city that David and Abraham Alvares came to know as their home largely died along with them in 1692.

The Jews of Pre-1692 Port Royal

David and Abraham Alvares were leading figures in what became a full-fledged community of Spanish-Portuguese Jews in pre-1692 Port Royal. Spanish Jamaica, though loosely under the authority of the Inquisition in Cartagena das Indias during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, was undoubtedly home to New Christians, some of whom may have retained ethnic or even religious ties to their Jewish

heritage. And, as in all parts of the Castilian Americas, Spanish Jamaica was also home to a population of Portuguese trading households.¹⁹

In an attempt to combat the dwindling pool of native laborers, a charter granted to a *hacendista* (land holder) during the early sixteenth century made explicit provisions for the settlement of Portuguese field hands.²⁰ Some of these Portuguese settlers were very likely New Christians. Indeed, the Portuguese in the Castilian Americas were largely synonymous with Judaizers despite the presence of Old Christians and sincerely Catholic New Christians within the *Nação* (Portuguese Nation).²¹ Some of these Portuguese inhabitants are also known to have remained on the island after the British conquest.²² Whether or not some members of the original Jewish inhabitants of the island had been among the presumed converso population of Spanish Jamaica is ultimately a matter of conjecture.

In the earliest record of Jewish activity on the island, Jacob Jeosua Bueno Enriques, a former New Christian, petitioned the restored crown of England in 1661 for a license to exploit copper mines he discovered through reports from a Spanish prisoner.²³ In return for identifying and exploring the copper mines, he asked for a land grant, patents of naturalization for himself and two brothers, and the free practice of Judaism. Little else is known about Enriques except that in his petition he reports that the English residents of Jamaica referred to him as a “French Jew” (*el Iudio frances*).²⁴ Like so many other Jewish inhabitants of colonial Jamaica—and as will be discussed in greater detail below—Enriques’s origins were likely Iberian via southwestern France.

Jews found their way to the shores of Port Royal before 1692 in small waves corresponding to the changing colonial hands of proximate colonies. Most of the Jewish refugees from Brazil before and after the Portuguese recapture of Pernambuco in 1654 returned to Amsterdam or moved farther eastward toward Livorno in Tuscany, though many later found their way back to the Americas, forming the seed community for the Jewish Caribbean and Guianas.²⁵ Among these Brazilian refugees to settle in Port Royal was David Baruh Alvares. David thus serves as an important representative of the critical role Brazilian refugees played in pioneering Jewish settlements in the Caribbean.

According to one twentieth-century chronicler of Jamaican Jewish history, another small group of Jews arrived directly from London’s

nascent Jewish community in 1663, more than half a decade after the expulsion from Brazil.²⁶ The arrival of these “English” Jews suggests a more direct role of London’s Sephardic community in the Jewish colonization of the Caribbean rather than via the Spanish-Portuguese Jewish metropole of Amsterdam or Dutch colonies such as Curaçao. The fledgling London community furthermore dispatched at least five indigent individuals to Jamaica before 1692, and the London community also included some Jamaican returnees.²⁷

Very soon after, in 1664, another small group arrived from Cayenne (French Guiana) when the French wrested the colony from the Dutch, who had formerly promoted Jewish settlement there. Similarly, with the 1667 Dutch recapture of Suriname, a colony under English rule since 1651, another small group sought their fortunes in the English West Indies.²⁸ The last significant wave of Jewish arrivals to Jamaica in this period occurred with the implementation of the French *Code Noir* in 1685. Though ostensibly intended to regulate slavery in France’s colonies, the very first article decreed the expulsion of Jews.²⁹ As a result, the Jewish populations of Martinique, Guadalupe, and, to a lesser extent, St. Domingue relocated to the Dutch and English Caribbean. Though there are no extant population figures from these years, the French Caribbean expellees likely constituted the largest, and the last, significant pre-1692 wave of Jewish migration to Jamaica.

Population figures for pre-1692 Port Royal’s Jewish community are far from exact, but we do have some bases for informed conjecture. In December of 1671, Governor Sir Thomas Lynch, while defending the Jews of Jamaica, reported that twenty-nine Jews lived on the island.³⁰ At that time, at least thirteen Jews possessed patents of denization, while the remaining sixteen resided on the island by virtue of their connections to these naturalized Jews. At least eight Jews can be positively identified as the recipients of land grants in pre-1692 Port Royal.³¹

According to the previously mentioned census of 1680, Jews made up less than 4 percent of the white households in the city, comprising only seventeen to twenty households.³² There appears to have only been around seventy-five individual Jews in Port Royal at the time, still less than 4 percent of the total white population. Had the census been taken some six years later, after the implementation of the *Code Noir*, the numbers would no doubt have been higher.

It is safe to assume that there were no more than a hundred individual Jews in Port Royal by the time of the earthquake. But, despite their demographic insignificance, by 1680 Port Royal's Jewish population had surpassed that of Barbados, making it the single largest community of Jews in the English Americas.³³ By comparison, Dutch Curaçao likely had more than five hundred Jews by 1700.

Though their numbers were small, the Jews of Port Royal were a highly recognizable minority and contributed to the commercial health of the island disproportionate to their numbers.³⁴ As part of the broader Portuguese *Nação* with access to large international family networks, they played a crucial role in the bullion trade with the Spanish Americas.³⁵ These Jews were ideally suited for clandestine commerce with the Dutch Americas—in defiance of the Navigation Acts, which prohibited the trafficking of certain commodities to the Netherlands and her colonies—by virtue of their family networks and linguistic flexibility. More recent research also suggests that their economic presence was perhaps most strongly felt as some of the most important distributors of enslaved people in the city.³⁶

Under the English, Port Royal was a place of remarkable ethnic and religious diversity. John Taylor included in his description of the city's inhabitants people of African descent, indigenous peoples, English, Scots Irish, and "Also...many Jewes, very wealthy merchants haveing free commerce with our English factory."³⁷ The small port town also offered a haven to Protestant dissenters such as French Huguenots and English Quakers. Apart from the enslaved population and what remained of the native inhabitants, Jews were the only group to be alien both in religion and nationality, making them a conspicuous white minority. Like Quakers, Jews were religiously divergent from the Established Church of England, and like Huguenots, they were alien by virtue of their Iberian nationality. Unlike these two Protestant minorities, however, Jews never married into the families of established Anglicans and so never gained access to high military and civic orders.³⁸

As in other port cities, religious tolerance was the rule rather than the exception, but it was a top-down process and a mercantile rather than ethical consideration. Charles II instructed Lynch—a stalwart defender of the Jews in Jamaica—to grant religious freedoms to non-Catholics in 1670.³⁹ At odds with the non-Jewish merchants, Lynch found himself

defending, more than once, this crown policy. Anti-Jewish petitions to the crown from Port Royal's non-Jewish merchants began as early as October of 1671, when the Governor's Council considered a petition from non-Jewish merchants attempting to restrict Jewish trading activity on the island.⁴⁰

The Jamaican Assembly considered a second petition against the Jews in June of 1672, when thirty-one merchants complained that Jews were in violation of the current Navigation Acts (last renewed in 1670) and traded as "a kind of joint stock company."⁴¹ Similarly, in 1684, Port Royal merchants protested that Jews undermined the other merchants on the island by bringing their goods to market sooner by virtue of their proximity to the harbor.⁴² In a now-infamous petition, submitted to the Board of Trade in London only four months before the earthquake, the non-Jewish merchants of Port Royal grumbled that: "The Jews eat us and our children out of all trade.... We do not want them at Port Royal ... and though told that the whole country lay open to them they have made Port Royal their Goshen."⁴³

Despite these barriers to Jewish integration into Jamaican merchant society, pre-1692 Port Royal possessed not only an economically prosperous Jewish community but also one with a somewhat well-developed ritual life clustered together in the town's Middle Precinct.⁴⁴ Port Royal's Jews began to ferry their dead to Hunt's Bay, across the harbor on the Liguanea Plain (today a suburb of Kingston), sometime before 1663, the date of the earliest legible tombstone (I Adar, 5423/ג"התכ).⁴⁵ Based on the existing cemetery record of Hunt's Bay there are forty-eight Jews buried there from the pre-1692 era.⁴⁶

A synagogue is also thought to have existed in pre-1692 Port Royal. John Taylor referred to a "Jewe's sinagog," and the eyewitness to the earthquake Edmund Heath reported "I ... turned into the Jew's street in order to get home, where the synagogue fell by my side."⁴⁷ Furthermore, it is possible that a deed from 1677, "for the purchase of the Jews of Port Royal, a lot of land"—granted to three prominent Jews, including Moses Yeshurun Cardoso (discussed below)—may have been for the purpose of erecting a synagogue.⁴⁸ It is uncertain, however, whether this structure was an actual synagogue building or a more informal meeting place. Unlike cemeteries and ritual baths, there is no real need for a synagogue to establish a functioning Jewish community, especially one with so few members.

Jamaican Jewry was far from an autonomous self-sustaining communal entity. Jamaica, like Curaçao and the rest of the Western Sephardic Diaspora, was in some way dependent on the mother communities of Amsterdam or London.⁴⁹ They not only received ritual items, such as Torah scrolls and ornaments from Amsterdam and tombstones engraved in London, they also received rabbis (*hakhamim*) trained at Amsterdam's Etz Hayim Yeshivah. Though there are no extant Jamaican communal minutes from this period, the very presence of a *hakham* implies the existence of a functioning communal board (*ma'amad*) capable of overseeing the requirements of communal Jewish life, such as raising taxes (*fn̄ta*), issuing ordinances (*haskamot*), imposing bans (*herem*), and perhaps even aiding in the process of conversion to Judaism for conversos without the direct intervention of Amsterdam or London. They also participated in somewhat extra-communal confraternities such as a burial society (*hevra kadishah*).

R. Josiah Pardo, formerly in the service of the Curaçao community, was the first known *hakham* to lead the community. He was the son of the prominent Amsterdam rabbi David Pardo and son-in-law of Amsterdam's principal rabbinic authority Saul Levi Morteira, therefore with clear Italian origins. In this way, Port Royal mirrors the establishment of Jewish communal life in Amsterdam based on Venetian models. Before arriving in Curaçao in 1674, Josiah had officiated as the *hakham* in the community of Rotterdam and had later served as the head of Amsterdam's poor relief confraternity (*gemilut hasadim*). It has been suggested that he departed Europe for Curaçao in 1674 as a result of a personal financial crisis.⁵⁰ He began his rabbinic post in Jamaica in the summer of 1683, at which point the record of his life ends. Some historians of the Dutch West Indies speculated that Pardo died in the earthquake, though it is very likely that his tenure in Jamaica was considerably shorter than nine years.⁵¹

Hunt's Bay cemetery contains a tombstone for one "Arab R Yosiau Pa[r]d[o]," dated 27 August 1684 [image 1].⁵² This is clearly the tombstone of the *hakham*. Even if the family name is somewhat obscure, the bottom Hebrew inscription, from II Kings 22:2, refers to the death of King Josiah, who "walked in the way of David his father." The choice of this passage is clear, as it praises the merits of a biblical figure with the same name as the deceased. This passage may also have been chosen for

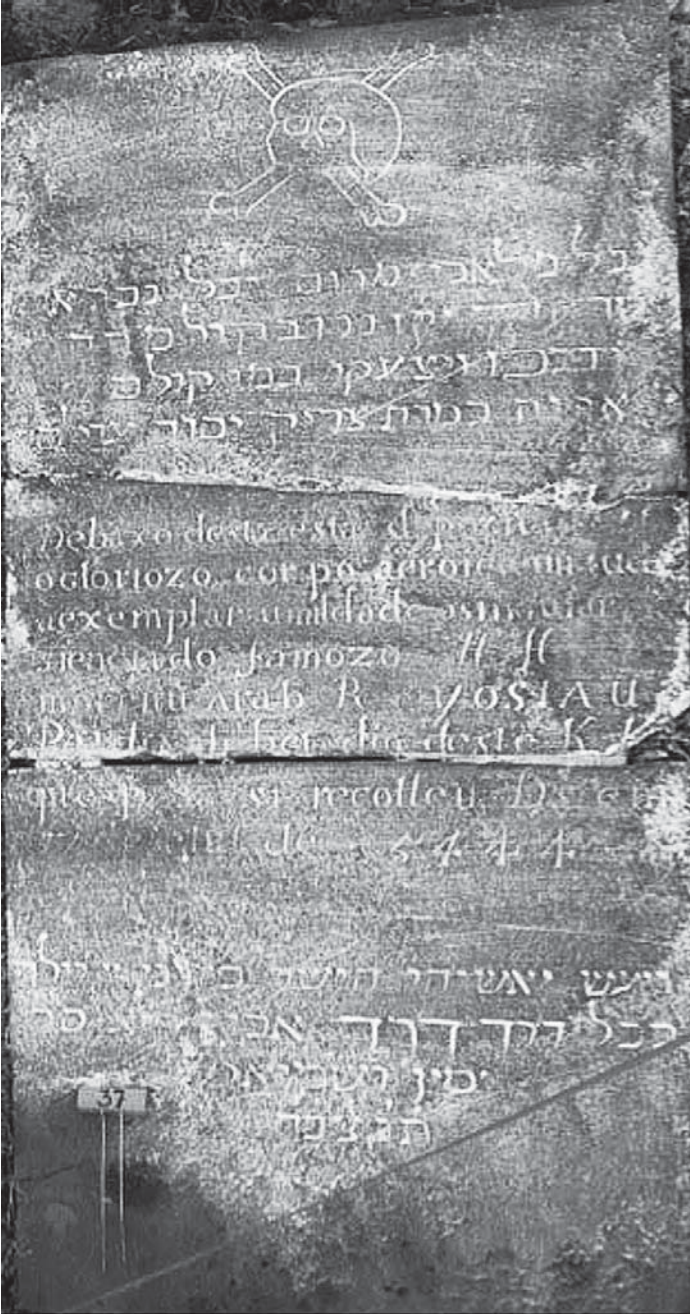


Image 1: Tombstone of the *hakham* Josiah Pardo (1684).

Photograph by Rachel Frankel, 2008 Caribbean Volunteer Expedition's documentation of the Hunt's Bay Cemetery.

its reference to “David his father,” perhaps an allusion to R. David Pardo. Josiah Pardo thus served the Port Royal community for no more than a single year, too little time to have left a lasting legacy on the island.

During Pardo’s short-lived tenure on the island, David and Abraham Alvares would have been among the most prosperous and well-known members of the community. The Hebrew inscriptions on the tombstones of both David and Abraham include the honorific acronym “כמ״ר” (*kavod morenu u-rabenu*, honored teacher and rabbi) that, though formulaic, suggests that they were men with a learned reputation in matters of rabbinic law and ritual and respected as such in the community.

David and Abraham Baruh Alvares

David Baruh Alvares was among the Brazilian Jewish pioneers who went on to establish the Jewish community in Jamaica. According to a denouncement to the Lisbon Inquisition from the famous Marrano martyr Isaac de Castro Tartas, David Baruh Alvares, along with his older brothers Pedro and Luis, was among the former converso residents of Pernambuco in Brazil during the 1640s.⁵³ According to de Castro’s denouncement, as a New Christian, David was known by the name of Martim Alvares. David may have also been involved, during this period of his life, in the trade of enslaved people directly from the West African coast.⁵⁴ It appears that he migrated from Iberia to Bayonne to Brazil and then, around 1675, to Amsterdam, where he was married. He then moved on to Jamaica within two years.

David resided on the island as early as October of 1677 and a year later (October, 1678), he took the oath of allegiance to become a free denizen of Jamaica.⁵⁵ Naturalization in this early period required an official act of parliament, though as denizens, Jews could trade freely within the English world, own land, and arbitrate disputes in court. Denization was, however, an expensive process that offered no relief from alien tariffs. Denizens likewise could not serve on juries or hold any civic office and their children, regardless of where they were born, could not inherit the status.⁵⁶

David died in November of 1692, five months after the devastation of Port Royal, and was interred at the Hunt’s Bay Cemetery.⁵⁷ He likely died as a result of the epidemic fever that plagued the island in the wake of the tragedy. Four years after the death of her husband, David’s wife

Rachel took the oath of allegiance, in November of 1696, likely so that she could settle his outstanding affairs through arbitration and pursue a more public role as a widow.⁵⁸ She continued to reside in Jamaica for another twenty-seven years, alongside the family of her younger son Jacob, until her death on Purim day of 1720.⁵⁹

David's eldest son Abraham took the oath of allegiance six years after his father in November of 1684.⁶⁰ In January of 1685, two months after his denization, Abraham registered a land patent for a fifty-acre plantation that included both pasture and woodland in Vere (now part of Clarendon Parish).⁶¹ Abraham, who appears to have amassed even greater wealth than his father, also seems to have been an indirect victim of the earthquake, having died in February of 1693, just three months after his father.⁶² He also appears to have been more integrated into Jamaica's non-Jewish society than his father. While the three witnesses to David's will were all Jews, the three witnesses to Abraham's were all non-Jews.

David's tombstone, like most of his Jamaican Jewish contemporaries, included three epitaphs—one each in English, Hebrew, and Spanish—portraying him as a man of three worlds: English, Jewish, and Iberian. His Hebrew epitaph remembered him as “dear, sagacious, honorable, and venerable” [image 2].⁶³ His tombstone also included some notable iconographic features. Crossbones appear on the top corners, and the face of a cherub is found on the bottom center. The cherub is a common early modern iconographic motif found on Jewish and non-Jewish tombstones alike, and indeed this one is slightly less elaborate than others found at Hunt's Bay.

The presence of two pickax-and-shovel symbols is significantly more curious and uncommon among colonial Jews. This symbol appears on only one other known tombstone at Hunt's Bay, also from 1692.⁶⁴ Though rather uncommon for Spanish-Portuguese Jews, this image in various forms is found on tombstones throughout the Atlantic world and may carry no other meaning than as a symbol of the act of burial itself. However, given the iconographic significance and pervasiveness of the symbol in later Freemasonry, it is possible that David may have had some association with early non-operative forms of esoteric proto-Freemasonry.⁶⁵ He may have even been among the suspected group of seventeenth-century Jewish “Freemasons” who have been implicated in bringing this esoteric community to North America.⁶⁶ If indeed this

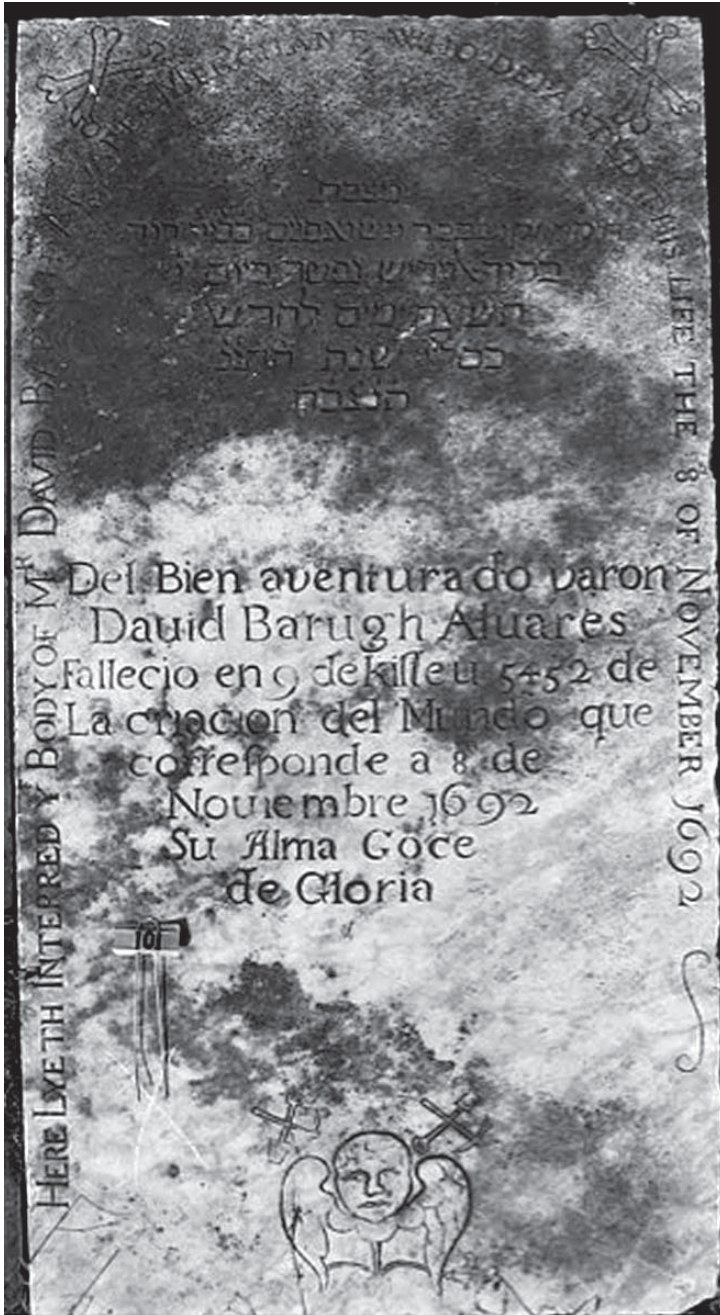


Image 2: Tombstone of David Baruh Alvares (1692).
 Photograph by Rachel Frankel, 2008 Caribbean Volunteer Expedition's documentation of the Hunt's Bay Cemetery.

symbol implies some connection with an esoteric association, then it sheds new light on the cultural lives of Jews in colonial Jamaica and implies a certain level of familiarity with early modern esoteric mysticism.⁶⁷

One possible clue as to the nature of David's suspected esotericism is in John Taylor's description of an elaborate public festival held in Port Royal in December of 1687 celebrating the arrival of the Duke of Albemarle as the new crown-appointed governor of Jamaica.⁶⁸ Taylor described two days of celebratory artillery fire, streets lined with spectators, streaming banners, waving flags, hundreds of soldiers ceremonially volleying fire, and bonfires that burned throughout the night. One of the crowning events of this public spectacle was the presentation to the Duke of Albemarle of an elaborate throne or "chaire of state" in Port Royal's St. Paul's Church to symbolize the strengthening of royal authority in Jamaica. Taylor reports that the chair was "cover'd in azur velvet, richly bost, fringed and embroider'd with gold in curious work with nine steps of ascent, with golden lions *like Solomon's throne* all covered with rich embroideries."⁶⁹ The chair was presented to the governor by "the Spanish factor, Seigniora [*sic*] San Jago and Senior Alverious a Jew, merchant on Port Royall."⁷⁰ This is likely a reference to David Baruh Alvares.

What is striking in this description, in light of David's tombstone iconography, is the reference to Solomon's throne. Indeed, though anachronistic, the later Royal Arch branch of Freemasons, with which that symbol is most associated, dedicated itself to preserving what it believed to be the building secrets and hidden meanings of Solomon's Temple.⁷¹ The choice to model the throne on Solomon's Temple may have therefore been more than an arbitrary aesthetic consideration and is suggestive of David's suspected mysticism or possibly even some form of Messianism.

A somewhat less speculative conclusion derived from Taylor's remarks about David's participation in this ceremonial performance of state, in which he and the Spanish agent presented a "chaire of state" to a crown-appointed governor, is that a Jew played some role in the political exchange between the Spanish and English Americas. According to Taylor, Jamaica's Assembly allowed for the presence of only a single Spanish agent—in this case, the man referred to as San Jago—to represent the interests of the Castilian crown on the island.⁷² The possibility that a Spanish-Portuguese Jew served as cultural, or even political,

intermediary between the Castilian and English Atlantics serves as an important counterbalance to the much more spotlighted role of Jews in the contraband bullion and slave trades between the English and Spanish Americas.

Abraham's tombstone also possesses some notable iconographic features. It is similarly trilingual, with inscriptions in Spanish, English and Hebrew. His Hebrew epitaph, typically more descriptive than the other two, remembers him as "a righteous and upright man who gave to the poor and whose splendid and righteous works will stand forever" [image 3].⁷³ Along with a floral pattern on the top corners of his tombstone, a prominent skull and crossbones is etched into the bottom center. Skull and crossbones symbols were an early modern iconographic convention symbolizing a state of corporal death, mortality, and possibly an indirect reference to resurrection.⁷⁴ By the eighteenth century, these symbols are as ubiquitous in English contexts as in Spanish and are found in every cemetery of the early modern Atlantic world. They are similarly found in the regulations (*takkanot*) of the Amsterdam *hevrah kadishah* from this period.⁷⁵ They appear on both men's and women's tombstones at Hunt's Bay Cemetery, including on that of Abraham's wife, Esther Baruh Alvares.⁷⁶

Little is known about the nature of the Alvareses' trading activity in Jamaica except that David was joint owner in a ship referred to in his will as the "*Joseh*" [i.e. *Joseph*], bequeathed to his younger son, Jacob. The nature of the *Joseph's* activities and routes are unknown except that her captain, Jan Bruks, may very well have been Dutch. If that was indeed the case, David may have been following the example of other Jewish traders in the English Atlantic of playing hard and fast with the Navigation Acts.⁷⁷ If David continued his involvement in the slave trade, as he had done in Brazil, it is possible that the *Joseph* carried human cargo.

Commercial activity, and the identification as "merchant," did not preclude the owning of plantations. David was listed among twelve planters in a petition submitted to the crown by Port Royal's Jews in August of 1692; they intended this to defend themselves against accusations that they trade at the expense of cultivating long-term plantations.⁷⁸ And, as mentioned previously, Abraham held land patents for at least one plantation in Vere and likewise made stipulations in his will for the liquidation of his plantation property, including its enslaved labor force.

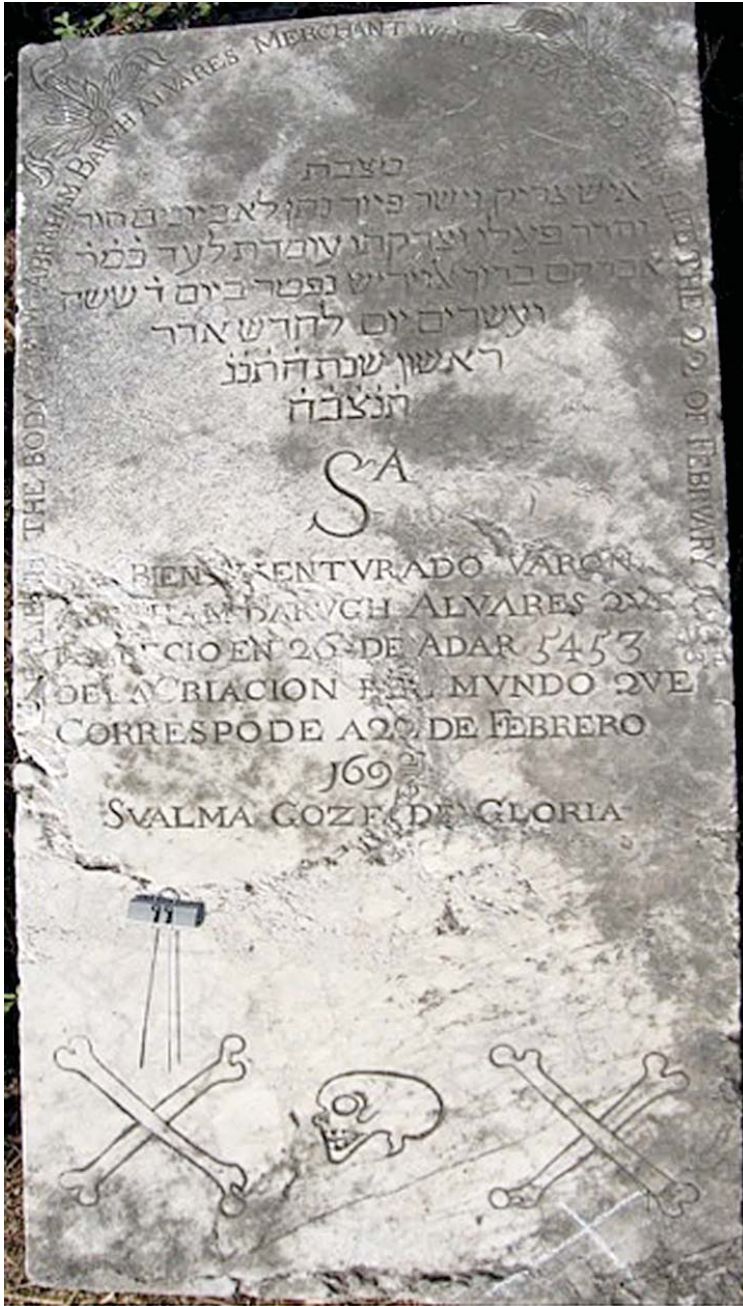


Image 3: Tombstone of Abraham Baruh Alvares (1693). Photograph by Rachel Frankel, 2008 Caribbean Volunteer Expedition's documentation of the Hunt's Bay Cemetery.

Like other Port Royal merchants, the Alvareses' commercial activities were highly diversified.⁷⁹ In addition to importing and selling luxury goods from Europe, Jews often invested the profits from their mercantile activities into plantations that they managed as absentee owners. It is more common to find Jews residing on their Jamaican plantations in the mid-eighteenth century than in the late seventeenth. It is hard to know, therefore, on which side of Jamaica's political divide David and Abraham would have been, as they had vested interests in both camps: the merchants and the planters.

Like all other Jamaican settlers during this period, the Alvares family possessed enslaved people. David's household was listed in the 1680 census as being in possession of six slaves: three women (one of whom was born into their possession) and three men (one of whom died before the census).⁸⁰ Abraham also referred to his enslaved "plantation negroes" in his will. It is unknown how many enslaved people they owned as a plantation work force and, strangely, unlike their Jewish and non-Jewish counterparts in Jamaica during this period, neither David nor Abraham made any specific bequests of slaves to their beneficiaries. These are the only sources that suggest how and to what extent people of West African descent had been integrated into the Alvares family, though they undoubtedly were a fundamental part of the household rhythm and daily routine.

Alvares Household Structure

According to the previously mentioned 1680 census, David's household was the largest among Port Royal's Jews at the time, with eight living white family members—four men and four women.⁸¹ David's and Abraham's wills reveal more members of the household. From these documents it is known that the Alvares household included David's wife Rachel (née Narbaes), his two sisters Sara Narbaes (née Alvares) and Esther de Aguilar (née Alvares), his two grown sons Abraham and Jacob, and four married daughters: Rica Gonsales, Judica Nunes, Ester de Castro, and Sara Lopes Torres. His extended kin, living alongside the Alvares clan in Jamaica, also included the four children of David's sister Esther Aguilar—Judica, Isaac, Sarina, and Moses—along with other nieces and nephews, all recognized in Abraham's will with inheritance.

Abraham's wife Esther died in February of 1690 and was remembered in her Hebrew epitaph as "a modest and honorable woman."⁸² Her more elaborate Spanish epitaph suggests that she died as a young

woman after a prolonged illness. Unlike his father, Abraham included no children as beneficiaries of his estate. It is possible that Esther died before giving birth to children, or they may have been unable to conceive. And if they did have children, Abraham may have given them their inheritance through unofficial channels. Or it is possible that, like so many other inhabitants of Port Royal, their children perished in the floodwaters of 1692.

One historian of colonial Jamaica has characterized white settlement between 1655 and 1780 as dominated by itinerate single men: “Jamaica was a place for sojourners, a land in which to make a quick fortune before heading home to Britain.”⁸³ Indeed, especially after the demographic disaster brought on by the earthquake and subsequent French invasion, this characterization rings true, as the gender ratios for white settlers in colonial Jamaica were heavily skewed toward men throughout the eighteenth century. However, pre-1692 Port Royal appears to have been a surprisingly inviting place for families.⁸⁴ Though the male-to-female ratio had been around 4:1 in 1662, by 1673 it had leveled out, 1.5:1, and nearly equalized at the time of the earthquake.⁸⁵ The Alvares family was therefore not unique in settling as a household in Port Royal. They were unusual, however, in the nature and extent of their kinship networks and in their marriage choices.

David’s daughters, Rica Gonsales and Judica Nunes, appeared to have been married in Jamaica sometime between November of 1687 and February of 1693. David left bequests in his will for the explicit purpose of providing dowries for Rica and Judica, though he also stipulated that they would not receive their inheritance unless their marriage partners met with his approval. In the case of his seemingly youngest daughter, Judica, he made stipulations for her ample inheritance of £800 sterling along with a jewel worth an additional £200 “on the condition that she marry with honorable and god-fearing people.”

David’s coercive intervention in his daughters’ marriage choices echoes similar concerns over “clandestine marriage” found on a communal level in other parts of the Western Sephardic Diaspora. Clandestine marriages are those enacted without the official consent of parents or clergy and often suspected of being motivated by either affection or male deception. As with similar fears in the English and Castilian worlds, laws against clandestine marriage were a result of a perceived loss of parental authority.⁸⁶

In the case of communal regulations against clandestine marriage directed at Sephardim, the fear was that such marriages would threaten the channels of wealth distribution and the Portuguese Jewish sense of familial aristocracy.⁸⁷ However, for Western Sephardim there was also the added concern that clandestine marriages threatened the ethnic homogeneity of the *Nação* through marriage with either Ashkenazim or non-Jews, possibly a more pressing concern in the Americas than in Europe. Through the study of wills it becomes apparent that what were communal concerns in places like Amsterdam and Curaçao were also regulated through private means within the domestic sphere. Through leveraging inheritance, David ensured that his daughters would marry within the ethnic and economic expectations of the *Nação*. Marriage patterns among the Sephardim of Jamaica throughout the eighteenth century, reflecting those of their converso ancestors—as opposed to their counterparts in North America—reveal an overwhelming preference toward endogamy (marriage within one’s own ethnic or religious group).⁸⁸

Marriages among the Sephardim tended to also often be consanguineous, between two cousins or an uncle and niece, at a much higher rate than the English during this period.⁸⁹ Consanguineous marriage, though also common among early modern Ashkenazim, held special meaning for Western Sephardim. It strategically not only preserved family wealth but also served as a bulwark to protect the ethnic contours of the nation. Coming from a background where their ancestors were cut off spiritually from Judaism and then socially defined in Iberian society by virtue of their blood “stain,” or *limpieza de sangre* (cleanness of blood), ethnicity for the Western Sephardim became internalized as the very linchpin of their identity as Jews. If blood ties provided the strongest link to their Jewish past, then the continuity of that past ultimately informed their design for the future through their choice of marriage partners.

The Alvares family more than conformed to these marital expectations. David’s daughter Sara married her cousin Jacob Lopes Torres. David himself also married consanguineously. In his will, he referred to his sister Sara Narbaes as the “mother of my wife,” making his wife Rachel also his niece. More than just a close familial relationship through marriage, his widowed sister Sara also lived with David and Rachel in their home—an otherwise uncommon occurrence among the non-Jews of Port Royal. He further requested that, after his death, his sister Sara continue to live in

his home alongside her daughter. This unusual request appears to have been intended not only to ensure that there would be a mutual support between his wife/niece and sister/mother-in-law after his death but also so that they would not become burdensome to their children. The extension of David's patriarchal patronage over all members of his family, especially within the four walls of his home, is one feature of the Alvareses' family life that distinguished them in English Jamaica, a type of household structure far more Iberian than English that had become increasingly defined by companionship and affectivity by the 1690s.

David's household was rather extensive for colonial English standards, and it also extended across the Atlantic. As one historian of the seventeenth-century *Nação* has shown, the very strength of the Portuguese trading nation, as a cohesive network that defied national and religious boundaries, was rooted in its web of households: "the house formed the fundamental unit of the Portuguese merchant class."⁹⁰ Marriages between kin only strengthened the financial bonds of these networks, a reality wholly embodied by the Alvares family. Their networks were not only multinational, they extended across states in active conflict with each other: the Castilian world, the English Atlantic, and the French Atlantic coast. Though other diasporic groups in Jamaica, such as the Quakers and Huguenots, also sustained multinational family networks, Spanish-Portuguese Jews were singular in the extent of these networks and also in their confessional diversity by including both Jewish and converso kin.

Port Royal and Bayonne

Like many Jamaican Jewish families throughout the colonial period, the Alvares family maintained familial, communal, and likely commercial ties to Bayonne. We know from the previously mentioned denouncement from Isaac de Castro Tartas that David Alvares had spent his formative years in Bayonne before crossing the Atlantic to settle in Brazil. In 1687 David requested that money be sent to Bayonne on the first ship leaving for France for the distribution of alms; he also implied that the same should be done on behalf of his sister/mother-in-law, Sara Narbaes. Abraham sustained similar ties to Bayonne in making provisions for the distribution of alms there and also in his support for specified individuals.

Starting in the mid-sixteenth century and intensifying after the union of Portugal and Spain in 1580, conversos had slowly trickled into France's southern Atlantic coast, where Jews had been expelled in the late fourteenth century. Recognized as Portuguese merchants (*marchands portugais*), they received privileges of settlement as such as early as 1550 and retained that status, if only nominally, until those same rights were extended to openly identifying Jews in 1723. The Portuguese merchants of Bayonne—many of them sustaining family connections to the French Americas—were largely confined to the St. Esprit suburb and stood at the forefront of several Atlantic enterprises.⁹¹ Most prominently, Bayonne was home to a burgeoning chocolate industry in which Judeoconversos played a critical role in importing cocoa from the Americas.⁹²

By the mid-seventeenth century, most of Bayonne's Judeoconversos had adopted open Jewish practices and communal structures. Indeed, Bayonne, along with other French territories, became a center for conversion to Judaism and attracted the attention of Jewish missionaries, communal functionaries, and circumcisers, who dedicated themselves to the project of converting the Portuguese New Christian population of southern France.⁹³ It is known from Inquisition spies that clandestine synagogues were in operation as early as the 1650s. By the end of the century, Hebrew inscriptions can be found on tombstones.⁹⁴

It was likely in Bayonne that David and Abraham actualized their return to Judaism. Though the extant communal records of the Bayonne Jewish community begin too late to trace this Alvares clan, there is some evidence that members of the Alvares family retained communal as well as familial connections to Bayonne. In addition to charitable donations, Abraham also supported the marriage of the daughters of the Bayonne Jewish communal functionary (*hazan*), Isaac de Mercado. It is possible that de Mercado may have also been involved in Abraham's process of return to Judaism and his acclimatization to open Jewish life.

David and Abraham are more than representative of the strong early ties between Bayonne and Jamaica. Of the twelve Jewish planters named in the aforementioned Jewish petition to the crown following the earthquake in August of 1692, only five of them could be positively identified as the testator of a surviving will.⁹⁵ Of those five wills, only three diasporic connections are mentioned: one to London and two to Bayonne.⁹⁶ Of the 123 Jewish wills probated in Jamaica composed before 1750, only

forty-five contain references to familial beneficiaries living in other parts of the Diaspora. London appears nineteen times, Amsterdam fifteen times, Bayonne and the “Kingdom of France” fourteen times.⁹⁷ In terms of Jewish Jamaican familial connections across the Atlantic, Bayonne was thus essentially on par with Amsterdam during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

More than just an important link in the chain of migration to Jamaica, the Jews of Bayonne who settled in the New World tended to form an enclave, as their familial connections are usually clustered in clans such as the Alvareses. It is clear from the wills of several pre-1692 inhabitants that other Jews with known ties to Bayonne were more likely to be found among their network of people attached to their estates as guardians, executors, or beneficiaries. The Jews of Bayonne thus formed a distinctive subgroup within the Jewish community of Jamaica.

A case in point is Moses Yeshurun Cardoso, a fellow Bayonne Jew, who appeared in both David’s and Abraham’s wills. David appointed Cardoso as a quasi-executor and requested that he assist his wife and son in the administration of his estate—seemingly to offset a potential tension he anticipated between them—and Cardoso also served as a witness to David’s will. Abraham likewise appointed Cardoso as a joint executor of his estate and empowered him to not only dispose of his plantation property but to also oversee the distribution of the proceeds among the poor of Jamaica.

Cardoso, in his own will drafted in 1725, included a nephew, niece, and male cousin among his beneficiaries in Bayonne.⁹⁸ Among the witnesses to his last will and testament was Isaac Lopes Torres, a fellow Bayonne Jew and a relative of the Alvares family. Cardoso lived in Jamaica along with his sister, his wife Rebecca, and three children. Indeed, Moses Yeshurun Cardoso’s son, Jacob Yeshurun Cardoso, continued the family ties to both Port Royal and to Bayonne as late as 1751.⁹⁹ At that time Jacob still resided in Port Royal and supported its Jewish institutions, while the vast majority of Jamaican Jewry had moved to either Kingston or Spanish Town. He also remitted inheritance to Bayonne for the support of two cousins living there when the overseas Jamaican Jewish networks had largely shifted to London and Amsterdam.

Another one of David’s and Abraham’s contemporary Bayonne Jews in Jamaica was the famous “marrano poet” Daniel Israel Lopez Laguna,

who apparently migrated directly from a Spanish Inquisition prison to Jamaica.¹⁰⁰ It is known from his poetic, quasi-autobiographical adaptation of Psalms, *Espejo fiel de vidas* (Faithful Mirror of Life) that, though born to New Christian parents in Portugal, he grew up among openly professing Jews in Bayonne. He clearly intended to make Jamaica a permanent home for himself and his family. After having his *Espejo* published in London (1720), he returned to Jamaica, where he drafted a will in Spanish and where he was ultimately buried.¹⁰¹ Laguna bequeathed substantial residential property in Kingston to his wife, Rebecca, and three sons, but he also continued to support family in Bayonne. He stipulated from the rents of his property in Kingston an estimated four-pound annuity be designated for the benefit of “my sister Rachael Lopes Laguna [who is an] orphan and blind in Bayona,” along with an orphaned cousin, Esther Suares del Valle, presumably also living in Bayonne.

Another member of David and Abraham’s Bayonne cohort was Diego Luis Gonsales, who appears to have been a major real estate developer in Jamaica. He bequeathed in his will no fewer than seventeen residential properties, along with a storehouse in Port Royal, divided between his three sons and wife.¹⁰² In addition to his family network in and around Port Royal he supported his brother, David Nunes Gonsales, who lived in Bayonne, with a forty-pound lifetime annuity.

The Jamaican Jews from Bayonne, like the Alvares family, shared a common history and path of migration from the Iberian world to the “*tierras de libertad*.” They formed an enclave in Jamaica and presumably also in Amsterdam and London, where they were an enclave within an enclave, a “diaspora within a diaspora.” Undoubtedly, the rabbinic practice of Judaism that they learned from the Jewish missionaries in Bayonne significantly informed the nature of Jewish communal and ritual life in Port Royal. The interaction of the communities of the Western Sephardic Diaspora was more complex than simply being satellite dependencies under the patronage of Amsterdam; rather, it was an integrated network where each individual community was mutually dependent on and reinforced by each other. In the late seventeenth century, Jamaica was as much interconnected with Bayonne as it was with London or Amsterdam.

Conclusion

Spanish-Portuguese Jews were an integrated part of life in Port Royal life before 1692. They were in many ways indistinguishable from their non-Jewish white neighbors: They traded in the same goods, took oaths of allegiance, settled disputes in court, owned plantations, participated in the ceremonies of state, possessed and sold enslaved people—and their bodies lay side by side with other Port Royal inhabitants with the recession of tidal waters in 1692.

In other ways they were completely distinct. They clustered together in a residential enclave, refrained from eating the ubiquitous tortoise soups sold in the town's many taverns, were alien in both religion and nationality, spoke Iberian languages, and were buried in their own cemetery. Their family lives resembled those of Iberian patriarchal clans, with extended household networks, as opposed to the increasingly companionate families of the English world or the itinerant Caribbean single white male pioneers. In this way, the Jews played a critical role in shaping not only Jamaican commerce but Jamaican cultural life as well. They became agents of the continuity of hispanicity in Jamaica after the Spanish period came to an end in 1655. And, in this way, they embodied the spirit of the early modern hybrid Atlantic world by defying national, ethnic, and religious homogeneity: They were, as is so explicit in their tombstones, at one and the same time—Iberian, Jewish, and English.

Their kinship networks furthermore extended to other territories in active conflict with England, specifically to the French Atlantic coast. Bayonne was crucial in the development of Jamaican Jewish society before 1692. It was there that the most prominent members of Port Royal's Jewish community returned to Judaism and cultivated a familiarity with communal Jewish life that they would later apply in building the same in Jamaica. Port Royal's Jews received their Torah scrolls and their rabbis from Amsterdam, their tombstones from London, but their people from Bayonne and other parts of the Dutch, French, and Spanish Caribbean. Even though pre-1692 Port Royal is demographically insignificant within the broader context of the Western Sephardic Diaspora, it is nevertheless enormous for what it represents—the interconnectivity of the Diaspora and mutual dependence between small and large communities. The Alvares family and their patriarchs, David and Abraham, stood at the

forefront of these developments, and their wills enable us to access the private lives of the nonrabbinic, nonintellectual figures of the Jewish past.

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APPENDIXES¹⁰³

APPENDIX I:A: WILL OF DAVID BARUH ALVARES¹⁰⁴

En el nombre de dios todo poderosso amen.

Digo yo, David Alvares, abiendo hecho tanteo de lo que poseo en esta ysla de Jamaica y fuera della y considerando que la vida es ynsierta, estando en mi entera salud y perfeto juisio me paresió asertado con la ayuda del dio bendito, azier estos apuntamientos que abajo sigen para la disposición de mis bienes para que al fin de mis días se cunpla en todo e por todo como me [*sic*] postrera voluntad y testamento, poniéndole las fuersas que se requieren como si fuera echo ante escribano con todos sus requisitos. Son como se sigen:

Item: primeramente encomiendo mi alma a dios todopoderoso para que se apiade della, perdonándome mis pecados y mi cuerpo a la tierra para que me intierrem [*sic*] entre mis ermanos en su entaramiento.

Item: que lego se mande pagar cualquier débito legítimo que yo debiere, costanto contada realidade.

Item: a myjo Abram Alvares bisto aberle dado cuando se cassó quinientas libras esterlinas le dego más ochosienta [*sic*] libras esterlinas.

Item: y a mijo Jacob Alvares le dego ocho sienta libras.

Item: y a mi ja Rica Alvares le dego para su doto [sic] otras ocho sientas libras esterlinas y que sea con gente de bien.

Item: y a mi yja Judica Alvares le dego otras ocho sientas libras esterlinas y además a más se le dará en mi nombra [sic] una joya de dusientas libras esterlinas, encargando que la cassen con jente onrada y temiento del dio.

Item: y a se mesma a mi yja Ester que está casada con el dotor Jacob de Castro a la qual le di en aquel tienpo lo que pude al primer yjo uija [sic] que tuviere le dego dusientas libros esterlinas y casso que tenga nesidad se las darán luego.

Item: y a mi yja Sara que está casada con mi sobrino Jacob Lopes Tores le dego otras dusientas libras estarlinas en la misma conformidad que a mi yja [E]Ster.

Item: y a mi ermana Ester de Aguilar le dego sien libras esterlenas para ella e sus erderos adbertiendo que si tubiere alguna yja soltera sean y es mi voluntad sean para ayuda de su dote.

Item: así mesmo dego a una yja de Francisco [defrn^{co}] de Ledesma llamada macho dusienta [sic] libras tornesas a ella u a su yja la primera que se casase.

Item: y a mi ermana Sara Narbaes, madre de mi mujer, que al presente bibe conmigo le pido encaresidamente esté sienpre con mi mujer y casso que la dicha mi ermana alcance en días a la dicha su yja le dego sien libras esterlinas para su sustento y si al fin de sus días le dego [unreadable] de dega a mis yjos y esta es me [sic] volunta[d].

Mando, si acaso yo muriese en Jamaica, que en los primeros navios manden orden a Bayona para que se reparta una limosna general y otra a los onse meses.

Item: y así mismo por mi ermana Sara Narbaes que dios dé buena bejes.

Item: y casso lo que dios no premita algunos de mis yjos muriere antes de tomar estado, lo que le tengo apuntado en esta me [sic] testamento es me [sic] voluntad que seré parta entre los yjos por yguales partes = y esta es mi voluntad de que todo se oservará [sic] a la letra.

Item: y mi mujer Raquel Alvares le dejo mil y quinientas libras esterlinas y casso que no aya en mi caudal para el complimento destas mis mandas se bajará cado una pro ratta y que no se le pueda a dicha mujer tomar juramento ni otra quenta ninguna solo lo que ella dijere.

Item: primero de entregarse cossa alguna se procura cobrar lo que se me allare se me debe y entonses se dará a cada uno su parte.

Item: y dejo por mis alvaseas a mi querida mujer Raquel Alvares y mi yjo Abram Alvares y casso que por alguna bia tenga algún desaborimiento mi yjo con dicha mi mujer la dego a la dicha mujer Raquel Alvares sola la administrasión deste testamento = y encargo a mi amigo Y[esu] r[un]¹⁰⁵ Moseh Yeserun Cardoso la asista y anpare en lo que pudiere para aconsejarle lo que l[e] estubiere bien que semeara m[erce]d¹⁰⁶ de que estoi my sierto.

Item: y asimismo encargo y pido a dicha mi mujer que no se ponga por ningún modo con yjo ni yja ninguna para biber juntos por ebiter el que tengan disensiones si no es en casso que dicha mi mujer sea tan bieja podrá estar con alguna su yja para que la asita [sic].

Item: y es declarasión que lo que dejo a dicha mi mujer lo podrá degar a sus yjos a su voluntad sin que se la pueda oponer a cosa ninguna.

Item: así mismo dejo para ayuda de la serca sinco libras esterlinas digo la serca del entierro en que entram bente chelinas que ofresí a mucho tiempo que no sé si se pagaron que fue en tienpo de Meser Cardosa.

Item: y si acaso se allare más de mis bienes de lo que tengo testado no entrado en ellos las pocas joyas y plata que tubiere la dicha mimujer que es sola para ela sin que se le pueda pedir quenta ninguna [ing^a]

que al fin de sus días lo degará lo que restares a dichos mis yjos a su voluntad dego la cassa que tengo en esta punta que conpré a Jacob de Tores a miyjo Abram Alvares.

Item: y la parte del navio que tengo que se llama Joseh de que e soy [*sic*] capitan Jan Bruks se la dego a mi yjo Jaco Alvares y casso lo que dios no premita suseda algo a dicho navio partirar por yjuales partes la dicha cassa bien entendido que suseda esto antes del fin de mis días para que sean delles dos solos.

Y a digo que a de ser después de aber ajustado y pagado lo que se allaré que yo deba como las mandas que tengo hechas en este mi testamento y si faltare se podrán bender dicha cassa y el navio para el complimento dél y para que en todo tenga este mi testamento fuese [*sic*] y bigor lo firmo en presensia de los testigos abajo firmados y lo selle con mi sello en Puerto Real de Jamaica a antes de firmar declaro que enquanto a lo que digo de las casses [*sic*] y nabio que es mi voluntad que los dichos Abram a y Jacob Alvares per yguales partes estos se entiende después desea beren cunplido todas mis mandas y casso como digo atrás mi mujer Raquel Alvares tenga algún desaberimento a dos [*sic*] gusto con dicho mi muser [*sic*] le dego a dicho mi mujer albasa a ella sola y que se baya ajuntando todos mis bienes y estando juntos se ayan de repartier en la forma que dego que esta es me [*sic*] voluntad y lo firma y selle en presnsia de los testigos abajo firmado en Puerto Real de Jamaica ha: 20 de nobienbre de 1687.

David Alvares

Firmado y sellado ante nos.
Moses Jesarum Cardoso
Testes Jacob Mendez Guteres
Joseph Decosta Alvarenga

APPENDIX I:B:**TRANSLATION OF THE WILL OF DAVID BARUH ALVARES**

In the name of almighty God Amen.

I David Alvares declare, having made an account of what I possess in this island of Jamaica and outside of it, and in consideration of the uncertainty of life, being healthy of mind and of perfect judgment, I have found it fitting, with the aid of blessed God, to prepare these stipulations for the disposal of my property so that in my final days it may be completely fulfilled as my last will and testament presenting it before the required authority as if made in the presence of a notary. They are as follows:

First, I recommend my soul to almighty God so that he may have mercy on it and that my sins may be forgiven and I recommend my body to the earth to be interred among my brethren.

Next, I order the payment of all legitimate debts I may have after the validity of the claims have been verified.

To my son Abram Alvares, seeing that I already gave him five hundred pounds sterling when he married, I leave him another eight hundred pounds sterling.

And to my son Jacob Alvares I leave eight hundred pounds.

And to my daughter Rica Alvares, I leave for her dowry another eight hundred pounds sterling so that [her marriage] be with good people.

And to my daughter Judica Alvares I leave another eight hundred pounds sterling and in addition she [should] be given in my name a jewel [worth] two hundred pounds sterling on the condition that she marry with honest and god-fearing people.

And to my daughter Ester who is married to doctor Jacob Decastro I leave two hundred pounds on the occasion that she has her first son or daughter or immediately in case she is in need.

And to my daughter Sara, who is married to my nephew Jacob Lopes Tores, I leave another two hundred pounds [under] the same condition as my daughter [E]Ster [i.e. on the occasion of the birth of her first child].

And to my sister Esther de Aguilar I leave a hundred pounds sterling for herself and her heirs with the stipulation that if she were to have any single [unmarried] daughter it is my will that it be used to help with her dowry.

Likewise, I leave to one daughter of Francisco de Ledesma, [who is] called macho, two hundred pounds tornesas¹⁰⁷ for [his] first daughter that will be married.

And to my sister Sara Narbaes, the mother of my wife, who currently lives with me, I ask her emphatically that she always remain with my wife and in the case the day [shall come] that my said sister live as long as her daughter, I leave a hundred pounds sterling for her sustenance and if at the end of her days she give [unreadable] to leave for my sons and this is my will.¹⁰⁸

In case I should die in Jamaica, on the first vessels [leaving for France] an order should be sent to Bayonne for the distribution of general alms and again eleven months after my decease.

And similarly for [on behalf of] my sister Sara Narbaes, that God may grant her a good old age.

And in case, God permits one of my children to die before receiving their [share] of the estate that I have left to them, [then] on account of their death, my will is that their share be divided between my [surviving] children in equal parts and it is my will that this shall be observed to the letter.

And to my wife Raquel Alvares I leave one thousand and five hundred pounds sterling and in case there is not [enough] in my estate [*caudal*] for the fulfillment of these my directives then they [these amounts] should be prorated and [no other beneficiary] will be able to lay a claim on her portion whatsoever as has been stipulated.

Before [any bequest] is delivered and divided there must be an attempt to collect anything that is owed to me and then each [beneficiary] shall have their part.

And I appoint as my executors and guardians my beloved wife Raquel Alvares and my son Abram Alvares and in case there be acrimony [*desaborimiento*] [between] my son and my said wife [then] I declare my wife Raquel Alvares to be the sole administrator of this testament and I charge my friend Y^r Moseh Yeserun Cardoso to assist and support her however he can and to counsel her in what is good of which I am very sure.

And likewise, I charge and request that my said wife will not by any means be [i.e. live] with any son or daughter so as not to live together to avoid any dissention [unless] [if] my said wife [requires], in her old age, [she] may be with one of her daughters for assistance.

And I declare that what I have left to my said wife she may bequeath to any of her children by her own will without any possible opposition in any matter.

Similarly, I leave for the assistance in [erecting] a fence [*cerca*] around my grave five pounds sterling for the said fence at the [time of] burial that includes twenty shillings to be used at that time of which I am uncertain has already been paid to Meser Cardoso.

In the case that there be more property than [what has been listed] in my will, not including the aforesaid few jewels and silver, I give to my wife as a sole beneficiary whatever she may find without her having to account for it and that [this leftover property] should then be given to my children after her death according to her will.

I leave my house in this place [Port Royal] that I purchased from Jacob de Tores to my son Abram Alvares.

And my share of the ship called Joseh of which Jan Bruks [is the] captain I leave to my son Jaco Alvares and in case, God forbid, something happens to the said ship, then the said house should be divided into equal parts, if this occurs before the end of my days, so that there should be two [beneficiaries of my house].

And I declare that this should be undertaken after satisfying all of my debts as well as all the bequests made in this my will, and if there be a need, to sell the house and the [share] of the ship so that [these bequests] be fulfilled. And so that in all respects this my will has force and validity, I sign it in the presence of the below mentioned witnesses and I seal it with my seal in Port Royal Jamaica, but before signing it, I do declare that [if] the house and ship [are sold] then my sons Abram and Jacob Alvares should share [the proceeds] in equal parts being understood that [this should be done only] after all the above bequests are satisfied and in case my wife Raquel Alvares should be in any way disappointed and displeased, I appoint my said wife as sole executor of this my testament [so] that she may [be allowed to make an] inventory of my possessions that are to be divided according to my orders. This is my will signed and sealed in the presence of the below named witnesses in Port Royal Jamaica on 20 November 1687.

Signed and sealed in our presence
 Moses Jesarum Cardoso
 Witnesses Jacob Mendez Guteres
 Joseph Decosta Alvarenga

APPENDIX II:A: WILL OF ABRAHAM BARUH ALVARES¹⁰⁹

En el nombre del dio benditto Amen.

Yo Abraham Alvares estando enfermo pero en my entero juicio y perfeto conosimiento de que la vida es yncierta hago estos apuntamientos para que sirvian de my prostrera voluntad y testamento como sy fuera hecho ante escrivano con todos los requisitos necciari en ley a saber:

Primeramente: encomiendo my alma a dios que la crió y my cuerpo a la tierra para que sea enterrado entre mis hermanos judios en Legany [Liguanea] mando para obras de dho [dicho] entierro veinte livras esterlinas y otras veinte livras esterlinas para la sedaka.

Segunda: es my voluntad que de lo primero de my caudall sean pagadas todas mis deudas y después se cumplan todas las mandas que abajo espesefico que son las siguientes.

Tersera: es my voluntad se le dé a my hermano Jacob Alvares cien livras esterlinas.

y a my hermana Ester de Castro otras cien livras esterlinas.

y a my hermana Sara Lopes Torres otras cien livras esterlinas.

y a my hermana Rica Goncales otras cien livras esterlinas.

y a my hermana Judica Nunes otras cien livras esterlinas.

y a la señora mi tia Ester de Aguilar otras cien livras esterlinas.

y para cassar a su yja Judika de Aguilar otras cien livras esterlinas a su tiempo.

y a my primo Ishak de Aguilar otras cien livras esterlinas.

y para cassar a su yja Sarina de Aguilar otras cien livras esterlinas a su tiempo.

y a Mosseh de Aguilar cinquenta livras esterlinas para que busque su vida.

y a my sobrino Yshack Lopes Torres le dejo cinquenta livras esterlinas.

Quarta: es my voluntad que se den más duzientas livras esterlinas para el resto de mis parientes más necesitados todo a la direcsión y voluntad de mis alvaseas sean abaxo nombrados y juntamente para que de my cuadal cassen seis huérfanas las que mejor les pareciere ynclinándose más a los parientes y para ello dexo seis cientas livras esterlinas.

Y assimismo es my voluntad que escrivan a Bayona y remitan quinientas livras tornessas para que el siguiente viernes después de receuida la carta se den a los pobres ducientas y cinquenta en limosna general y las otras ducientas cinquentra livras a los once mezes mezes [*sic*] de my falesimiento y sy y dios fuere servido llevarme para sy el día que

me enternaren se repartan veinte y cinco livras esterlinas con pobres necentados y otras veite y cinco libras sterlinas a los ocho dias y otras veinte y cinco livras sterlinas al mes y otras veinte y cinco livras a los onze mezes y otro tanto a los mismos tiempos y my señor padre David Alvares que dios aya y juntamente.

Es my voluntad después que se aiga pagado todos mis devitos y mis mandas conforme se fuera haziendo de my estado se den se den[sic] cien livras sterlinas para cada hija de Pedro de la Borda marido de my prima pechicha, para su cassamiento y lo mismo a las hijas del hajan Ishack de Mercado de Bayona que dios aya que estuvieren solteras y más de lo arriva dando cien livra sterlinas a la señora my tía Ester de Aguilar y otras cien livras más a Ishak de Aguilar y assy más.

Es my voluntad lo que rendiere más my plantaje después de averse pagado todas mis mandas ariva en cinco años de tiempo se reparta a su neto rendimiento en huérfanas más allegadas a my y de más nessesidad para su cassamiento se que harán el ynforme posible dello en saberlo y al término de los dhos [dichos] cinco años lo que restase dexo la mittad de dho [dicho] my estado a my hermano Jacob Baruch Alvarez y la otra mitad a my sobrino Ishack Lopes Torres y en faltta de alguno dellos entrarán todas mis hermanas en todo lo que ubiere etedando [sic] yguals partes tanto de la parte de my hermano como de la de my sobrino sean todos ygualles como digo y dexo que mis alvaseas a my amigo y señor Mosseh Yesurun Cardoza y Jacob Lopes Torres para que se aposecionen de la plantaje y todo lo demás que contraré ser mio como sy fuera yo propio y cumplan my voluntad lo mejor que pudieren y para ello les doy poder absolutto a su voluntad de poder vender my plantaje negros y todo lo demás que tubiere como sy fuera yo mismo para hazer deshaser lo que mejor les pareciere y sy la pudiere conseguir como digo arriva lo estimara mchísimo [muchísimo].

En falta tienen el poder como digo y para cumplir my voluntad sino se pudieren conseguir los cinco años cassarán seis huérfanas más y la huna sea la hija de Diego Gomes Campos y las yjas de my primo Ishack Narvaes que dios aya cien livras esterlinas a cada una a su cassamiento

y el yjo otras cien livras esterlinas y lo que restaré después que sean cumplidas todas mis mandas se hará en la conformidad que tengo referido y por ser esta my postrera voluntad y que se siga todo a la de dicha mis alvaseas y dios les reciva la misma y encamine lo mejor para su santo servicio amen.

Lo firme de my mano y selle con my sello, oy, a 12 de la luna de Adar de 5453 años dela criación del mundo que son a 8/18 de feurero 1692/3 años. AB [Abraham Baruh].

firmado cellado y puplicado.

En precensia de los abajo
Charles Knight
Robert Wardlow
Lancelot Talbot

APPENDIX II:B:

TRANSLATION OF THE WILL OF ABRAHAM BARUH ALVARES

In the name of blessed God amen.

I Abraham Alvares being sick but of sound mind, knowing perfectly well the uncertainty of life, do make these provisions to serve as my last will and testament, done before a notary with all the necessary requirements by law, namely:

First: I recommend my soul to God who created it and my body to the earth so that it be buried among my Jewish brethren in Liguanea for which I bequeath twenty pounds sterling for burial expenses and another twenty pounds sterling to the sedaka [charitable confraternity].

Second: it is my will that, first of all, my debts are paid from estate and after all of these demands are satisfied then [my bequests] are [as] specified below.

Third: I will to my brother Jacob Alvares a hundred pounds sterling.
and to my sister Esther de Castro another hundred pounds sterling.
and to my sister Sara Lopes Torres another hundred pounds sterling.
and to my sister Rica Goncales another hundred pounds sterling.
and to my sister Judica Nunes another hundred pounds sterling.
and to my aunt señora Esther Aguilar another hundred pounds sterling.
and for the marriage of her daughter Judika de Aguilar another hundred pounds sterling at the time [of her marriage].
and to my cousin Ishak Aguilar another hundred pounds sterling.
and for the marriage of his daughter Sarina de Aguilar another hundred pounds sterling at the time [of her marriage].
and to Mosseh de Aguilar fifty pounds sterling so that he seeks his [aim in] in life
and to my nephew Yshack Lopes Torres I leave fifty pounds sterling.

Fourth: it is my will that a further two hundred pounds sterling be given for the [benefit of] the rest of my relatives who are most in need at the discretion and will of my executors named jointly below. [And] for the support of the marriage of six [female] orphans, whomever seems the most in need, preferring my relatives among them, I leave six hundred pounds sterling.

And also it is my will that they should write to Bayonne and on the next Friday following the sending of this letter to remit five hundred pounds tornesas for these poor [of Bayonne] and two hundred and fifty [pounds] for general alms and another two hundred and fifty [pounds] eleven months after my death. And if it serves God to bring me to him [i.e. when I die], then on the day of my internment twenty five pounds sterling are to be distributed among the poor, and [also] that [another] twenty five pounds sterling be distributed to the poor eight days [after my death], and another twenty five pounds a month [after my death], and another twenty five pounds eleven months [after my death], and likewise at the same time for [in honor of] my father señor David Alvares who is together with God [i.e. deceased].

It is my will that after all my debts and demands are paid and satisfied from my estate, as has been done until now [i.e. as specified above], a hundred pounds sterling [should then] be given to each daughter of Pedro de la Borda husband of my youngest¹¹⁰ cousin, for her marriage and also for the single daughters of Hazan Ishack de Mercado of Bayonne who is together with god and I do [the same] as above in giving a hundred pounds sterling more and also [a hundred pounds] to my aunt Esther de Aguilar and another hundred pounds more to Ishak de Aguilar and thus more.

And is my will that [over the course of] five years all the yields of my plantation [be sold], after all my aforementioned debts be paid, [and] the proceeds should be distributed by her grandson¹¹¹ to give to the orphans most closely [related] to me, and who are most in need, for their marriages and they will do all that is possible to report on how this has gone when the said five years are over. I leave half of what remains of my said estate to my brother Jacob Baruh Alvarez and the other half to my nephew Ishack Lopes Torres and in their absence [i.e. if they die], all of my sisters [will become] equal parties to it, just as my brother and my nephew are complete equals. I declare and leave [appoint] as my executors my friend señor Mosseh Yesurun Cardoza and Jacob Lopes Torres to be in possession of my plantation and all the rest which is mine, as if it were myself, and may they fulfill my will as best they can. And to this end, I give them complete freedom to sell my plantation and negroes along with everything else as if it were me to do and undo as they wish with it. And if they could obtain it [the proceeds of the plantation within five years] they must comply with my will and if they are not able to obtain [the proceeds] within the five years they must make sure that the six orphans [mentioned above] will marry and that the daughters of Diego Gomes Campos and the daughters of my cousin Ishack Narvaes, who is with God, be given a hundred pounds sterling each on their [day of] marriage and another hundred pounds sterling to his son after the remainder of all of my demands have been satisfied in conformity with what I have said. And may this, my last will and testament be complied with in all

that has been said, [by] my executors and may God direct them in the manner most in keeping with his holy service amen.

I have placed my signature and sealed it with my seal, on the 12th of the lunar month of Adar 5453, year of creation of the world, that [corresponds to] 8/18 of February, the year 1692/3. AB

Sealed, signed, and publicized

In the presence of the undersigned [witnesses]

Charles Knight

Robert Wardlow

Lancelot Talbot

Notes

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¹See for instance Allan D. Meyers, "Ethnic Distinctions and Wealth among the Colonial Jamaican Merchants, 1685–1716," *Social Science History* 22, no. 1 (1998): 47–81.

²See Michael Pawson and David Buisseret, *Port Royal, Jamaica* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, repr. 2000), 165–172.

³For an estimate of the casualties see Pawson and Buisseret, *Port Royal*, 166 n. 10.

The number of Jewish casualties was reported in a correspondence from the ma'amad of London to the Jews of Safed in January of 1693; see Richard D. Barnett, "The Correspondence of the Mahamad of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation of London During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 20 (1964): 1–50, esp. 11 (hereafter "TJHSE").

⁴On Jewish taxation in Jamaica see George Fortunatus Judah, "The Jews' Tribute in Jamaica: Extracted from the Journals of the House of Assembly of Jamaica," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 18 (1909): 149–171 (hereafter "PAJHS"); Frank Cundall, "The Taxing of the Jews in Jamaica in the Seventeenth Century," *PAJHS* 31 (1928): 243–247; Joseph R. Rosenbloom, "Notes on the Jews' Tribute in Jamaica," *TJHSE* 20 (1964): 247–254.

⁵On the English conquest of Jamaica and the "Western Design" see Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1972, repr. 2000), 152. See also Pawson

and Buisseret, *Port Royal*, 7–24; and James Robertson, *Gone is the Ancient Glory: Spanish Town Jamaica, 1534–2000* (Kingston, JA and Miami, FL: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005), ch. 2. For a useful survey of the early English presence on Jamaica see Susan Dwyer Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640–1700* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 33–42.

⁶Pawson and Buisseret, *Port Royal*, 90, 140–141; Robertson, *Gone is the Ancient Glory*, 54.

⁷Pawson and Buisseret, *Port Royal*, 90.

⁸Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 179, n. 40

⁹“Census of Port Royal (1680),” CO 1/45, 96–107, The National Archives (TNA), Kew, England. I have also relied on the reproduction of the census figures in Eli Faber, *Jews, Slaves, and the Slave Trade: Setting the Record Straight* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1998), 53, 186. The census figures were earlier reproduced (with some slight disagreements) in Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 180. See also Pawson and Buisseret, *Port Royal*, 135. For an analysis of the 1680 census see Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 179.

¹⁰Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 177.

¹¹For an analysis of the political struggle between the privateers and planters see Pawson and Buisseret, *Port Royal*, 33–44 and Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 154–165.

¹²Edward (Ned) Ward, *A Trip to Jamaica: With a True Character of the People and Island* (London: J. How, 1700), 16. For Taylor’s remarks see David Buisseret, ed., *Jamaica in 1687: The Taylor Manuscript at the National Library of Jamaica* (Kingston: The University of the West Indies Press, 2010), 240.

¹³Pawson and Buisseret, *Port Royal*, 155–156.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 158–159.

¹⁵For a description of the earthquake see the often-cited narrative in Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica: or General Survey of the Ancient and Modern State of That Island II* (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), 141–144. See also the description in Pawson and Buisseret, *Port Royal*, 165–172. For a list of the contemporary accounts of the earthquake see Frank Cundall, *Historic Jamaica* (London: The Institute of Jamaica, 1915), 53–54. On the perception of the earthquake as divine retribution for the vice of Port Royal see Ward, *A Trip to Jamaica*, 15. See also, Matthew Mulcahy, “The Port Royal Earthquake and the World of Wonders in Seventeenth Century Jamaica,” *Early American Studies* 6 no. 2 (2008): 391–421.

¹⁶Pawson and Buisseret, *Port Royal*, 166 n. 10.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 166. See also an analysis of English building methods in Robertson, *Gone is the Ancient Glory*, 63.

¹⁸On the 1703 fire see Long, *The History of Jamaica II*, 144 and Cundall, *Historic Jamaica*, 60.

¹⁹On the early modern Portuguese trading nation within the Castilian Americas see Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean: Portugal’s Atlantic Diaspora and the Crises of the Spanish Empire, 1492–1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

²⁰See Irene A. Wright, “The Early History of Jamaica (1511–1536),” *The English Historical Review* 36, no. 141 (1921): 70–95, 77.

²¹Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea*, 151–174.

²²Robertson, *Gone is the Ancient Glory*, 19 n. 51.

²³J.W. Fortescue, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies*, vol. 5 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898) 48–49. See also the original document, “Petition of Jacob Jeosua Bueno Enriques (1661)” CO 1/15, no. 74, TNA, Kew, England. See also the reproduction of this text in Herbert Friedenwald, “Material for the History of the Jews of the British West Indies,” *PAJHS* 5 (1897): 45–101, esp. 65–66. This document is also reproduced in Zvi Loker, *Jews in the Caribbean: Evidence on the History of the Jews in the Caribbean Zone in Colonial Times* (Jerusalem: Misgav Yerushalayim, Institute for Research on the Sephardi and Oriental Jewish Heritage, 1991), 164.

²⁴Friedenwald, “Material for the History of the Jews,” 66.

²⁵On the expulsion of Jews from Portuguese Brazil see Arnold Wiznitzer, *Jews in Colonial Brazil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 128–142. For the Jewish Brazilian refugees' role in populating the Caribbean see Wim Klooster, “Networks of Colonial Entrepreneurs: The Founders of the Jewish Settlements in Dutch America, 1650s and 1660s” in *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism*, ed. Richard L. Kagan and Philip D. Morgan (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), esp. 37, where Klooster relates the travels of the Port Royal settler Benyamin Bueno de Mesquita.

²⁶Jacob A.P.M. Andrade, *A Record of the Jews in Jamaica from the English Conquest to the Present Time* (Kingston, JA: The Jamaican Times, 1941), 2.

²⁷“Annual Accounts (1676–1693),” LMA/4521/A/04/01/001–011, London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), London, England. Among those from Jamaica to settle in London and to receive financial support from the community was one “Abraham Alvares de Jamaica” in 1682, certainly not the same Abraham Alvares under discussion here.

²⁸Fortescue, ed., *Calendar of State Papers* 9, 258–259, 282–287.

²⁹On the Jews of the French Caribbean and the impact of the *Code Noir* see Mordechai Arbell, “Jewish Settlements in the French Colonies in the Caribbean (Martinique, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Cayenne and the ‘Black Code’),” in *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800*, ed. Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 287–313.

³⁰Fortescue, ed., *Calendar of State Papers* 7, 297–300. See also Faber, *Jews, Slaves, and the Slave Trade*, 49.

³¹Andrade, *A Record of the Jews in Jamaica*, 136.

³²Faber, *Jews, Slaves, and the Slave Trade*, 52–53 and Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 183.

³³Faber, *Jews, Slaves, and the Slave Trade*, 49.

³⁴Meyers, “Ethnic Distinctions,” 56.

³⁵Nuala Zahedieh, “The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica and the Spanish Contraband Trade, 1655–1692,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1986): 570–593.

³⁶Meyers, “Ethnic Distinctions,” 76.

³⁷Buisseret, *Jamaica in 1687*, 238.

³⁸On the role of Protestant dissenters in the English Caribbean and their connection with Jews see Natalie Zacek, “‘A People So Subtle’: Sephardic Jewish Pioneers of the English West Indies” in *Bridging the Early Modern Atlantic World*, ed. Caroline A. Williams (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 97–112.

³⁹Fortescue, ed., *Calendar of State Papers* 7, 145–147.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 268.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 366–367; Faber, *Jews, Slaves, and the Slave Trade*, 50; Friedenwald, “Material for the History of the Jews,” 51.

⁴²Fortescue, ed., *Calendar of State Papers* 11, 601–612, 614. See also Faber, *Jews, Slaves, and the Slave Trade*, 50.

⁴³Fortescue, ed., *Calendar of State Papers* 13, 583–596, 594.

⁴⁴Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 183 and see n. 47.

⁴⁵“Tombstone of Isaac Henriques Alvin (1663),” in *The Jews of Jamaica: Tombstone Inscriptions, 1663–1880*, ed. Richard D. Barnett and Philip Wright (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1997), 6 no. 16. Jamaica’s Jews appear to have only secured a deed for the property in 1736; see Barnett and Wright, eds., *Jews of Jamaica*, x.

⁴⁶Barnett and Wright, eds., *Jews of Jamaica*, 182–183.

⁴⁷For Taylor’s reference to a synagogue see Buisseret, ed., *Jamaica in 1687*, 240. Heath’s remarks are quoted from Mordechai Arbell, *The Portuguese Jews of Jamaica* (Kingston, JA: Canoe Press, 2000), 20.

⁴⁸Andrade, *A Record of the Jews in Jamaica*, 40.

⁴⁹On this religious and ritualistic dependence on Amsterdam see Gérard Nahon, “Amsterdam and the Portuguese *Nação* of the Caribbean in the Eighteenth Century” in *The Jews in the Caribbean*, ed. Jane S. Gerber (Oxford and Portland: Littman Library of Civilization, 2014), 67–83.

⁵⁰On Pardo in Curaçao see Isaac Emmanuel and Suzanne Emmanuel, *History of the Jews in the Netherlands Antilles I* (Cincinnati, OH: American Jewish Archives, 1970), 53–56 and 60–61.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 60–61.

⁵²Barnett and Wright, eds., *Jews of Jamaica*, 7 no. 22. This transcription is based on my reading of the Portuguese inscription from the original tombstone.

⁵³On Isaac de Castro Tartas see Elias Lipiner, *Izaque de Castro: o mancebo que veio preso do Brasil* (Recife: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco Editora Massangana, 1992). For De Castro’s denouncement of David Baruh Alvares see 155. On David Baruh Alvares in Brazil see José Antonio Gonsalves de Mello, *Gente da Nação Judeus Residentes no Brasil Holandês, 1630–54* (Recife: publisher not identified, 1979), 54. See also Egon Wolff and Frieda Wolff, *Dicionário Biográfico: Judaizantes e Judeus no Brasil, 1500–1808*, I (Rio de Janeiro: do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro, 1986), 22. I am grateful to one of the anonymous readers for this important reference.

⁵⁴de Mello, *Gente da Nação*, 54.

⁵⁵“Naturalization of David Alvarez (1678),” 1B/11/1/7 fol. 99, The Jamaica Archives and Records Department (JA), Spanish Town, Jamaica.

⁵⁶On denization in the British Atlantic see Jessica Roitman, “Creating Confusion in the Colonies: Jews, Citizenship, and the Dutch and British Atlantic,” *Itinerario*, 36 no. 2 (2012): 55–78, 60; Holly Snyder, “English Markets, Jewish Merchants, and Atlantic Endeavors: Jews and the Making of British Transatlantic Commercial Culture, 1650–1800” in *Atlantic Diasporas*, 50–74; and see also, James Homer Williams, “An Atlantic Perspective on the Jewish Struggle for Rights and Opportunities in Brazil, New Netherlands, and New York,” in *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West*, 369–393.

^{57a}“Tombstone of David Baruh Alvares (1692),” Barnett and Wright, eds., *Jews of Jamaica*, 13 no. 64. Both the English and Spanish epitaphs cite the date of his death as 8 November 1692. The day of his death on the Hebrew epitaph appears as 9 Kislev 5452, which would correspond to 30 November 1691 (ה'תנ"ב = 5452 = 1691). The Spanish epitaph repeats the erroneous 5452 Hebrew date. Barnett and Wright therefore read the year as ה'תנ"ג = 5453 = 1692, which is the correct year but the incorrect transcription. Also, as a result of this “correction,” David’s Hebrew day of death became 18 November 1692, the date that Barnett and Wright privilege as the actual day. Certainly the correct date is 8 November 1692, as it appears twice in both the English and Spanish—languages much better known among the presumably London-based stonemasons than Hebrew.

^{58a}“Naturalization of Rachel Alvarez (1696),” 1B/11/1/12 fol. 277, JA, Spanish Town, Jamaica. On the public role of Spanish-Portuguese women in the Western Sephardic Diaspora see Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld, “Sephardi Women in Holland’s Golden Age” in *Sephardi Family Life in the Early Modern Diaspora*, ed. Julia R. Lieberman (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011), 177–222. For the public role of white widows in colonial Jamaica see Trevor Burnard, “Inheritance and Independence: Women’s Status in Early Colonial Jamaica,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 48 no. 1 (1991): 93–114. And see Lucille Mathurin Mair, *A Historic Study of Women in Jamaica, 1655–1844*, ed. Hilary McD. Beckles and Verene A. Shepherd (Kingston, JA: The University of the West Indies Press, 2006), 149–189.

^{59a}“Tombstone of Rachel Baruh Alvares (1720),” Barnett and Wright, eds., *Jews of Jamaica*, 9 no. 35.

^{60a}“Naturalization of Abraham Alvarez (1684),” 1B/11/1/10a fol. 74, JA, Spanish Town, Jamaica.

^{61a}“Land Patent of Abraham Alvares (1685),” 1B/11/1/10a fols. 182–183, JA, Spanish Town, Jamaica.

^{62a}“Tombstone of Abraham Baruh Alvares (1693),” Barnett and Wright, eds., *Jews of Jamaica*, 13 no. 62. Like his father’s tombstone, there are inconsistencies in the dating between the Spanish, English, and Hebrew epitaphs. Both the English and Spanish cite the date as 22 February 1693. In Hebrew the date is displayed as 26 Adar I ה'תנ"ג = 5453 = 4 March 1693. The Spanish epitaph repeats this day, and Barnett and Wright privilege it as the correct day. Again, it is my view that the Spanish and English are more reliable than the Hebrew and therefore take 22 February 1693 to be the true day of Abraham’s death. Abraham records the day that he drafted his will as 12 Adar 5453 = 18 February 1693, which would be consistent with either the February or March dates.

⁶³*ha-yakir[.] zaken[.] nikhbad[.] u-nesu'a[]panim*. On sepulchral art and epitaphic convention in the Western Sephardic Diaspora see Michael Studemund-Halévy, “The Persistence of Images: Reproductive Success in the History of Sephardi Sepulchral Art” in *The Dutch Intersection: The Jews and the Netherlands in Modern History*, ed. Yosef Kaplan (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 123–147.

^{64a}“Tombstone of Moses de Lucena (1692),” Barnett and Wright, eds., *Jews of Jamaica*, 6 no. 17.

⁶⁵For the early history of nonoperative freemasonry see David Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland’s Century, 1590–1710* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

1988). The symbol of a crossed pickax and shovel appears often in the eighteenth-century iconography of freemasonry; see examples in W. Kirk MacNulty, *Freemasonry: Symbols, Secrets, Significance* (London: Thomas & Hudson, 2006), 84, 98, 202.

⁶⁶On the Jewish involvement in early nonoperative freemasonry in the Americas see Samuel Oppenheim, “The Jews in Freemasonry in the United States before 1810,” *PAJHS* 19 (1910): 9–11; David S. Katz, *Sabbath and Sectarianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1988), 161–162; and Marsha Keith Schuchard, *Restoring the Temple of Vision: Cabalistic Freemasonry and Stuart Culture* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2002), 547.

⁶⁷For more on Jewish mysticism and messianism in the colonial Americas and its relationship to sepulchral art see Laura Arnold Leibman, *Messianism, Secrecy and Mysticism: A New Interpretation of Early American Jewish Life* (London and Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2012), 123–180.

⁶⁸Taylor’s full description is found in Buisseret, ed., *Jamaica in 1687*, 297–305. It is also found in Pawson and Buisseret, *Port Royal*, 151–154.

⁶⁹Buisseret, ed., *Jamaica in 1687*, 303. Emphasis mine.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

⁷¹For a description of the symbol of shovel and its association with Royal Arch freemasonry see Albert G. Mackey, *A Lexicon of Freemasonry* (London: Richard Griffin & Company, 1860), “Royal Arch,” 298–301 and “Shovel,” 317. Here the shovel is described as “One of the working tools of a Royal Arch Mason. The working tools of this degree are the crow, pickaxe and shovel.”

⁷²Buisseret, ed., *Jamaica in 1687*, 238, 284.

⁷³“*ish zadik v-yashar[,] pizer natan le’evyonim[,] hod ve-hadar po’alo u-zidkato ‘omedet le’ad.*” This transliteration is based on the tombstone itself, since there are errors in the Hebrew epitaph as it appears in Barnett and Wright, eds., *Jews of Jamaica*.

⁷⁴For tombstone iconographic convention in the Puritan Atlantic and English mortuary tradition—particularly the “triumph of death” and “symbols of resurrection”—see Allan I. Ludwig, *Graven Images: New England Stonecarving and its Symbols, 1650–1815* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), 77–109.

⁷⁵See for instance *takanot me-ha-bevrah kadisha gemilut hasadim* (Amsterdam, 1742), RB140 Box 2:5, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, New York.

⁷⁶“Tombstone of Esther Baruh Alvares (1690),” Barnett and Wright, eds., *Jews of Jamaica*, 15 no. 74.

⁷⁷See Snyder, “English Markets,” 53–54.

⁷⁸“Memorandum of the Jews of Jamaica (August, 1692),” CO 137/2, 112 ii, TNA, Kew, England. See also Faber, *Jews, Slaves, and the Slave Trade*, 282 n. 35.

⁷⁹On the trading profile of Jews in the colonial English Atlantic see Snyder, “English Markets,” 50–74.

⁸⁰“Census of Port Royal (1680),” CO 1/45, 102, TNA, Kew, England.

⁸¹*Ibid.* Faber, *Jews, Slaves, and the Slave Trade*, 186.

⁸²Barnett and Wright, eds., *Jews of Jamaica*, 15 no. 74, “*ha’isha ha-zenu’ah ve-ha-nikhbedet.*”

⁸³Trevor Burnard, “European Migration to Jamaica, 1655–1780,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 53 no. 4 (1996): 769–796, 792. For more on the West Indies as a

community of white transient sojourners rather than permanent settlers see Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 3–33.

⁸⁴Pawson and Buisseret, *Port Royal*, 136.

⁸⁵Burnard, "European Migration," 772. See also Robert V. Wells, *The Population of the British Colonies in America Before 1776: A Survey of Census Data* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 201.

⁸⁶For the fear of "clandestine marriage" in the Castilian Americas see Patricia Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico: Conflicts Over Marriage Choice, 1574–1821* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), 96–157. For the English context see Eve Tavor Bannet, "The Marriage Act of 1753: 'A Most Cruel Law for the Fair Sex,'" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30 no. 3 (1997): 233–254.

⁸⁷For the fear of "clandestine marriage" among the Jews of Amsterdam see Yosef Kaplan, "The Threat of Eros in Eighteenth-Century Sephardi Amsterdam," in *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2000), 280–300. See also Matt Goldish, "Passion at the Periphery: The Contexts of a Clandestine Converso Conjunction," *Zutot* 1 (2001): 124–132. For communal regulations against "clandestine marriage" in Curaçao see Emmanuel and Emmanuel, *History of the Jews* II, 565, 578–579, 602, 611.

⁸⁸See Stanley Mirvis, "Sephardic Family Life in the Eighteenth-Century British West Indies," doctoral dissertation, The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 2013, 66–71. For converso marriage patterns see Haim Beinart, "The Conversos in Spain and Portugal in the 16th and 18th Centuries," in *Moresbet Sepharad: The Sephardi Legacy* II, ed. Haim Beinart (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1992), 60; see also David M. Gitlitz, *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 244–246.

⁸⁹On consanguine marriage in England at the start of the eighteenth century see Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 18–33. Compare to the figures in Mirvis, "Sephardic Family Life," 71–76.

⁹⁰Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea*, 76.

⁹¹On the history of the Jews in France during the early modern period see Gérard Nahon, "From New Christians to the Portuguese Jewish Nation in France," in *Moresbet Sepharad: The Sephardi Legacy* II, 336–364.

⁹²Gérard Nahon, "The Portuguese Jewish Nation of Saint-Esprit-Lès-Bayonne: The American Dimension," in *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West*, 255–267.

⁹³See David Graizbord, "Becoming Jewish in Early Modern France: Documents on Jewish Community Building in Seventeenth-Century Bayonne and Peyrehorade," *Journal of Social History* 40 no. 1 (2006): 147–180.

⁹⁴Nahon, "From New Christians," 343. For an example of Jewish attempts to openly proselytize the Judeoconverso population of early modern France see the Spanish letter of Immanuel Aboab in Cecil Roth, "Immanuel Aboab's Proselytization of the Marranos: From an Unpublished Letter," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series, 23 no. 2 (1932): 121–162, esp. 143.

⁹⁵Listed in order probated: “Will of David Alvares (1693),” lib. 7 fol. 130, Island Records Office (IRO), Twickenham, Jamaica; SC-234, American Jewish Archives (AJA), Cincinnati, OH. “Will of Joseph Dacosta Alvarenga (1700),” lib. 9 fol. 102 IRO; SC-233 AJA. “Will of Joseph Ydana (1706),” lib. 11 fol. 37, IRO; SC-13279 AJA. “Will of David Lopes Narbona (1707),” lib. 11 fol. 77, IRO; SC-8675, AJA. “Will of Moses Yeshurun Cardoso (1726),” lib. 17 fol. 104, IRO; SC-1609, AJA.

⁹⁶Joseph Dacosta Alvarenga to London; David Alvares and Moses Yeshurun Cardoso to Bayonne.

⁹⁷Some wills mention more than one connection to the broader Diaspora.

⁹⁸“Will of Moses Yeshurun Cardoso (1726),” lib. 17 fol. 104, IRO, Twickenham, Jamaica; SC-1609, AJA, Cincinnati, OH.

⁹⁹“Will of Jacob Yeshurun Cardoso (1752),” lib. 28 fol. 227, IRO, Twickenham, Jamaica. Will not included in the collection of the AJA.

¹⁰⁰On Daniel Israel Lopez Laguna see, Meyer Kayserling, “The Jews in Jamaica and Daniel Israel Lopez Laguna,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 12 no. 4 (1900): 708–717. See also Ronnie Perelis, “Daniel Israel López Laguna’s ‘*Espejo fiel de vidas*’ and the Ghosts of Marrano Autobiography” in *The Jews in the Caribbean*, 319–328. And see Ruth Fine, “Los Psalmos de David de Daniel Israel López Laguna,” *Caliope: Journal of the Society for Renaissance and Baroque Hispanic Society* 17, no. 1 (2011): 177–197.

¹⁰¹“Will of Daniel Israel Lopez Laguna (1723),” lib. 16 fol. 32, IRO, Twickenham, Jamaica; SC-6566, AJA, Cincinnati, OH.

¹⁰²“Will of Diego Luis Gonsales (1726),” lib. 17 fol. 94, IRO, Twickenham, Jamaica; SC-4140, AJA, Cincinnati, OH.

¹⁰³The transcription and translation of the wills of David and Abraham Baruh Alvares are based on the original documents found in the collection of the IRO. The AJA holds typescript transcriptions of both wills and a partial translation of David’s wills (no translation was made of Abraham’s). Both transcriptions of these complicated texts in the AJA contain considerable errors in the Spanish, and the partial translation of David’s will is in many parts incorrect. In transcribing the wills I have attempted to interfere with the original text as little as possible. I have, however, made a few interventions to make them more accessible to Spanish readers: I have separated the many fused words (typical of period), spelled out abbreviated words, added some punctuation, applied my own line spacing, and added accents where necessary. I have also not kept the arbitrary capitalizations of words as they appear in the original document, and I have underlined the names of individuals in both the transcription and translation for ease of comparison. I have intervened more in the English translations to make them as idiomatic as possible. I am deeply grateful to James Nelson Novoa, Ronnie Perelis, and Ioram Melcer, who reviewed these transcriptions.

¹⁰⁴“Will of David Baruh Alvares (1693),” composed 20 November 1687 and probated 25 April 1693. Lib. 7 fol. 130, IRO, Twickenham, Jamaica. SC-234, AJA, Cincinnati, OH.

¹⁰⁵Appears in the original as “Y.”

¹⁰⁶Appears in the original as “M^d.”

¹⁰⁷“*Tornesas*” refers to a form of early modern French currency.

¹⁰⁸The implication here is that the hundred pounds for living expenses should be rolled into Abraham’s inheritance if David’s wife and sister die before using it.

¹⁰⁹“Will of Abraham Baruh Alvares (1693),” composed 8 February 1692 and probated 23 August 1693. Lib. 4 fol. 171, IRO, Twickenham, Jamaica; SC-234, AJA, Cincinnati, OH.

¹¹⁰“*Pebicha*.” I have translated this as “youngest,” though the meaning in Spanish is unclear.

¹¹¹Presumably referring to Ishak de Aguilar.

“God Loves the Hebrews”: Exodus Typologies, Jewish Slaveholding, and Black Peoplehood in Antebellum America

MICHAEL HOBERMAN

Particularizing the Hebrew Bible

For all of his personal achievements, Judah Benjamin was the target of a spectacular array of disparaging remarks during his eventful career as an American legislator and Confederate statesman. Owing in part to the response it is reputed to have evoked from him, none of these insults was more memorable than Ohio Senator Benjamin Wade’s 1853 comment that “the senator from Louisiana” was “an Israelite with Egyptian principles.” Had he actually made the triumphalist retort that some historians have attributed to him—that his ancestors were receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai while Mr. Wade’s were “herding swine in the forest of Great Britain”—it would have been a witty rebuttal of Wade’s small-minded antisemitism.¹ While such a response would hardly have addressed the issue that had motivated Wade’s attack in the first place—Jewish complicity in the institution of slavery—its popularity spoke to a troubling actuality that derived from America’s long-standing devotion to scriptural precept: The Bible was no less a record of particular histories than it was a compendium of common theological precepts. Where white Christians were concerned, the Hebrew Bible supplied a range of versatile typologies. Those who existed outside the Anglo-Protestant fold, on the other hand, could neither be encompassed by those typologies nor expected to endorse them.

While Benjamin’s alleged response hinted at one particularistic reading of the Hebrew Bible, a range of African American invocations of the same text delivered yet another set of ethnically specific implications. Thus, as Henry Highland Garnet asserted in his address to an antislavery convention in Buffalo in 1843, enslaved blacks understood that they had no recourse, “like the children of Israel, to make a grand exodus from the land of bondage.” Although the circumstances of their own captivity, including their desperate need for articulate and charismatic leadership, were similar to those of the Israelites in Exodus (and, perhaps as

well, though to a significantly lesser degree, to those of the seventeenth-century Puritan refugees from Anglican oppression who had been fond of imagining their own plight as a flight from Egyptian slavery), blacks in America faced “Pharaohs on both sides of the blood-red waters” that surrounded them.² African American readings and invocations of the Hebrew Bible paid little or no heed to prevalent white Protestant interpretations of such scriptures but, instead, engaged texts like Exodus on historically circumscribed and culturally particularistic terms that served their needs. The Bible that African Americans read and recited, like the one that Jews had brought with them to the New World, bore a superficial resemblance to the one that white Protestants treasured, but its various narratives were used to strengthen ancestral commitments and claims, eschewing the universalistic dialectics of the nation-state. As Mark Noll points out, while blacks may have “believ[ed] wholeheartedly in biblical typology,” they certainly “did not find its fulfillment in the legendary events of United States history.”³

Because its extended and even proto-novelistic treatment of the experience of bondage, enslavement, exile, leadership, rebellion, and mass flight has appealed to so many people in so many historical contexts, Exodus has long been a touchstone for debates over what constitutes the “proper” interpretation and ownership of Hebraic narratives. Not surprisingly, as the antebellum slavery crisis intensified, both Jews and African Americans would find ample cause to assert their discrete claims over the story and its pertinence to their own histories. For that matter, as modern-day assessments of the Exodus story within the American context have noted its tribally conceived Jewish readings and its strong thematic resonance with black experiences in the New World, one of the most salient implications surrounding the story has escaped notice: its detachment, during the first half of the nineteenth century, from the Protestant master narrative that had originally endeared it to early Americans and infused the founders’ conception of the American nation-state. How that shift in the meanings and deployments of Exodus occurred, as well as the significance of its having occurred in the first place, is the subject of this essay.

To begin, I attend to the broader history of Exodus within the American historical context and to how and why distinctions should be drawn between the narrative’s universalistic and particularistic

applications. Subsequent sections address two sets of particularistic readings of Exodus during the antebellum period: first, how the narrative was deployed by Jews (both in the North and in the South) in the debate over slavery; and second, how free African American orators and pamphleteers applied its lessons to the plight of their enslaved kin. I conclude by considering the influence that these readings have exerted over black/Jewish relations in the modern era. The emergence of Exodus as a narrative that invited particularized meanings for marginalized ethnic groups during the debate over slavery prefigured the development during the twentieth century of interethnic rivalries and competitive claims to the mantle of American democracy. Paradoxically, nineteenth-century configurations of a particularized Exodus also underlay the long history of attempts to forge a common bond between African Americans and Jews during the post–World War II period. In his recent remarks at the 2015 White House seder, President Obama invoked that very idea of a shared history of separate oppression, applying particularistic language as he asserted that the Exodus story “inspired Jewish families to hold fast to their faith ... [and] inspired young Civil Rights leaders as they marched across an Alabama bridge in search of their own Promised Land, a century ago.”⁴

Exodus Politics: From Master Narrative to Fragmented History

Recent scholarship on Hebraic republicanism offers insight into why pre-Civil War Americans who lacked knowledge of contemporary political theory were both willing and able to engage in sophisticated debates about citizenship, liberty, and national identity. A near-universal familiarity with the rise and fall of the Israelite kingdoms, heroes, and villains made it possible, as Eran Shalev writes, for Americans “to come to terms with civic humanism through the use of well-known Old Testament structures, narratives, forms, and metaphors.”⁵ It is worth noting that a perceived white Protestant hegemony, however, lent most of these Hebraic-inflected debates a strictly abstract tenor. The operating assumption within the Hebraic republicanism that applied in a Protestant-dominated nation was that the Bible’s rendition of Jewish history constituted a universalistic, authoritative, but intrinsically figurative guide to political and even ethical behavior. The Hebrew Bible bore few if any immediate implications for the obligations attendant upon the

lineal or tribal inheritances of a Protestant constituency, whose ancestors had indeed not been on Mount Sinai when the Ten Commandments were first issued. Not only were Anglo-Americans not descended from the men and women of the Hebrew Bible, they frequently argued that the laws of that Bible had been abrogated by the principles of the New Testament. Accordingly, their readings of the Hebrew Bible rarely stipulated anything other than symbolic interpretations of its most important political lessons.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the small but increasingly visible Jewish minority, as well as the large number of African Americans who notably preferred the Hebrew Bible over the New Testament, reminded Bible-readers of all religious persuasions that a sacred text such as Exodus could also be interpreted and deployed selectively as an instrument for singling out, chastening, or uplifting separate but culturally contiguous segments of the population. The growing frequency of such readings by the mid-nineteenth century suggests that the nation's inadvertently pluralistic makeup was diminishing the sorts of universalistic typologies that had dominated readings of the Hebrew Bible in America since the Puritan era. As a compendium of universally applicable typologies, the Hebrew Bible had served the nation's Protestant majority well for centuries, even when its readership vehemently disagreed, as it often had, as to how to interpret those typologies. A common text whose meanings frequently were universally imposed by Christians, the Hebrew Bible reliably focalized myriad debates throughout the colonial and early republic periods. As Mark Noll asserts, "It would be hard to imagine a nation more thoroughly biblical than the United States between the American Revolution and the Civil War."⁶ While political and social disagreements among Protestants were rarely settled through imaginative recourse to the episodes from ancient Jewish biblical history, even their most widely divergent symbolic interpretations did not detract from Anglo-Americans' sense of kinship with one another. If nothing else, Anglo-Americans took their common ancestry, as well as their mutual fate, for granted. Protestants' widespread familiarity with the Hebrew Bible warranted and provided endless interpretive fodder for what Andrew Murphy refers to as "the confident assumption that God was providentially interested in the American political experience."⁷ As a text whose strictures and narratives often demanded to be applied differently and pointedly to discrete constituencies, its rendering as a newly

particularized Hebrew Bible would be just another reminder that the nation was composed of people of disparate and competing interests, ancestries, and religious precepts.

Exodus served as a reference point on the subjects of freedom, enslavement, and political liberation, as Michael Walzer and a host of other scholars have shown.⁸ By necessity, its lessons had been generally applied as extrapolations of abstract moral principles, as opposed to familial precepts. In the case of Jews, however, who were widely understood to be lineally descended from the biblical Israelites, Exodus was applied not merely as an object lesson in politically just behavior but as a basis for establishing the moral obligations incumbent upon a covenanted and ethnically identified and historically constituted people. Ultimately, the plight of enslaved African Americans—a people whose separate identity was plainly visible to all Americans—would also inspire readings of Exodus that seemed to be at odds with the standard figurative extrapolations of its content and universalistic implications to a republican American context. Like that of the Jews, but on much larger and more visible scale, African Americans' separate identity as an ethnically distinct and historically oppressed minority called forth particularistic readings of Exodus that challenged the dominant tendency among both abolitionist and proslavery Americans to rely upon universalistic interpretations of biblical typologies. For many abolitionists, the Exodus story substantiated the ethical wrongness of slavery. Where both Jews and African Americans were concerned, however, it also functioned as a narrative of separateness and peoplehood. Such narratives ran counter to the long-standing assumptions of a vested Anglo-Protestant majority, whose interests had been well served for centuries by readings of the Bible that ignored or glossed over such culturally specific meanings, even when they differed as to its moral or theological implications. Because it was "fundamentally a religious war fought over how to interpret the Bible," the Civil War itself would foreclose all possibility of renewing any universalistic ownership over the Hebrew scripture that may once have dominated the American context.⁹

As such, the Hebrew Bible's application in a newly emergent political context that, for better or worse, included both African Americans and Jews as actual demographic, if largely disempowered, constituencies, was multifaceted and at odds with the more frequently applied and

universalistic biblical typologies to which Americans had long been accustomed. In the presence not only of flesh-and-blood Hebrews but also of African Americans whose own cultural contiguity and nationhood were being formed in the crucible of slavery, Hebraic republicanism took on a different cast. What Eran Shalev describes as “vivid early nineteenth-century renditions of the American New Israel” became “subdued, mellow, and less frequent” because the most salient readings of the Hebrew Bible now spoke to the plight of a minority constituency whose members dwelled as outsiders in the midst of that New Israel.¹⁰ Ideas of peoplehood and heritage, as opposed to principles and ethics, underlay the nascent discourse. Whether they applied to slaveholding Jews or to enslaved African Americans, such particularistic invocations of Exodus in the context of the slavery debate constituted an inadvertent admission that America could no longer be configured as the sole preserve of an Anglo-Protestant majority. Shalev argues that when the “American Zion” became “first and foremost a black Zion,” classical Hebraic republicanism had run its course.¹¹ I would argue that this shift occurred as a result of Americans’ growing awareness that the Hebrew Bible had intrinsic and autonomous applications apart from and transcendent of long-standing universalistic Protestant parameters. The chastisement of “Egyptian Israelites” such as Judah Benjamin, like the growing prevalence of a “black Zion” in the midst of the American New Israel, was an indication that the Hebrew Bible did more than merely affirm the Protestant mission.

Israelite Slaveholders, Israelite Abolitionists: Exodus as a Guide to Jewish Action

Exodus was one of several historical texts that shaped American attitudes toward and beliefs about Jews. Attention to the Jewish presence in America and to Jewish relations with the Christian majority had always stipulated careful attention to the Hebrew Bible because early American Protestants thought about everything in biblical terms. Seventeenth-century Puritan sermons on the establishment of a New Israel in New England and eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century polemics on the virtues of republican government were heavily informed by resourceful and inspired readings of the Hebrew Bible. If and when Jews were on hand, their actions and behaviors were inevitably viewed through this

biblical lens. The Book of Exodus supplied non-Jews and Jews alike with what seemed like an obvious reference point on the subject of slavery. Whether Jews kept slaves or were opposed to slavery (or, as was often the case, were strategically indifferent on the question), they were expected to be careful readers and interpreters of Exodus because it was understood, after all, to be the story of their own enslavement and liberation. Protestant abolitionists who paid any heed to Jewish affairs were scandalized at the prospect of Jewish slaveholding. As one antislavery pamphlet put it in 1853, since Jews had been “the objects of so much mean prejudice and unrighteous oppression ... they more than any other denomination ought to be the enemies of *caste* and the friends of *universal freedom*.”¹² It was, as David Brion Davis puts it, “a disturbing thought ... that many ... Jews found the path to their own liberation and affluence by participating in a system of commerce that subjugated another people to dishonor, coerced labor, and degradation.”¹³ Such readings continue to resonate. Modern-day American Jews, many of whom are “descended from Russian Socialists who came ... with ideas of class and economic equality and who identified with blacks,” writes Sue Eisenfeld, cannot help but find “the idea of Jews fighting or rooting for the South ... bewildering.”¹⁴

In fact, among Jewish readers alone, the story of the Israelites’ liberation from bondage evoked sharply divergent interpretations. These all imposed narrowly Jewish implications in place of pre-existing Hebraic republican formulations because despite their occasional adoption of “a Protestant vocabulary [Jews] ... read the Bible differently.”¹⁵ As historian Leonard Rogoff recently wrote, Southern, mostly Reform, Jews found ways to read Exodus not as a prohibition against African American enslavement but as an entitlement to Southern sovereignty as well as an endorsement of Jewish triumphalism.¹⁶ As proslavery advocates frequently argued, Exodus itself did not specifically prohibit the practice of slavery—it merely warned against the unjust enslavement of God’s Chosen. In the North, where recent immigrants from Germany and elsewhere in Central Europe had helped to re-infuse both Reform and Orthodox Judaism with liberationist principles and practices (and abolitionism itself enjoyed relative popularity within the Protestant majority), Exodus was more commonly understood as constituting a rejection of black slavery, particularly where Jews were concerned. In other

words, Exodus was more pliable to nineteenth-century American Jews than it appears to be to present-day readers. It was the story's specifically Jewish implications that dictated its interpretation by Jews on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line. Abram Dittenhoefer's decision to become an abolitionist—to adapt the antislavery cause to Jewish precedent—came about because of words that had been spoken by and about a *fellow Jew*. As he put it, "It struck me with great force that the Israelite Benjamin, whose ancestors were enslaved in Egypt, ought not to uphold slavery ... in free America."¹⁷ Dittenhoefer's abolitionism, in other words, was inspired by his sense of a particularly Jewish obligation to redeem the errant behavior for which Benjamin Wade had reprimanded his Louisiana coreligionist.

On both sides of the slavery divide, how Exodus was applied (by both Jews and gentiles) to the question of Jewish slaveholding in the context of antebellum America was a function of its embodiment of particularly Jewish principles. The notion of the Jews (and, eventually, of enslaved blacks) as a distinct people, a people whose common heritage of suffering and redemption marked them as strangers in a strange land and, by virtue of that, ethnically united to one another, was central. According to this particularistic reading of Exodus, the lesson of history was that primary allegiance was owed to one's own people—to the "Israelites" of Wade's formulation. The Hebrew enslavement in Exodus was primarily a representation of the communal experience of oppression, an experience that in turn demanded a form of filial piety and group loyalty. Jewish readings of Exodus did not necessarily condemn slavery per se but endorsed the notion of oppressed (or formerly oppressed) people's retaining the memory of their suffering ancestors. In fact, some nineteenth-century American Jews insisted so strongly on this particularistic reading of Exodus (and on negating any universalist challenge to it) that, as Rogoff writes, "they drew sharp racial lines between Hebrews and Africans," angrily rejecting abolitionist comparisons between Moses and the enslaved blacks' would-be liberator, Abraham Lincoln.¹⁸ Lance Sussman, whose argument is featured in a recent *New York Times* article on Civil War-era Passover observances, concurs. For antebellum Jews, as Sussman puts it, Exodus said "that God freed the Hebrew slaves because God loves the Hebrews," not to "send Moses out to become the William Lloyd Garrison of the ancient free world." Southern Jews saw Exodus

as appearing to uphold a view of the Jews as God's Chosen People, for whom special consideration (for instance, freedom from enslavement by *other* peoples) was warranted. Some Jews, such as South Carolina poet Penina Moïse, even found occasion to celebrate God's love for the Israelites on their journey "through the desert" to be predictive of a Confederate victory.²⁰ Conveniently enough, even in their Jewish disregard and dismissal of Protestant Hebraic republican typologies, such readings were entirely commensurate with the popular conception of "freedom as autonomy," an idea that, as Francois Furstenberg explains, established the liberty of the empowered majority to enslave the "abject" minority in post-Revolutionary America.²¹

In the abolitionist view, on the other hand, if the Exodus narrative demanded anything of the Jews, it would have been the respect of one people whose nationhood had been conceived in iniquity for another whose group identity was being forged in a similar crucible. Among Northern Jews, Exodus might be read as demanding a higher moral standard from Jews. Perhaps other Americans could buy and sell slaves, but Jews, whose history could be presumed to have sensitized them to such things, were expressly forbidden by their own Bible to engage in slaveholding because their very origin and dignity as a people lay in their collective acts of resistance to subjugation. According to the particularistic formulation of Exodus promulgated by Jews who opposed slavery, the five thousand Jewish slaveholders, who composed one-quarter of the South's Jews (and amounted to 0.2 percent of all slaveholders),²² were betrayers of their own historic code. Hence Dittenhoefer's reaction to Wade's pointed condemnation of Judah Benjamin, whose sting followed from its invocation of the perceived hypocrisy in Benjamin's violation of Jewish principles.

Whether such readings were applied by Protestants who sought to fortify their stance on slavery or by Jews in defense of Jewish positions on slavery, invocations of Jewish law and historical precedent had to relinquish Protestant conceptions of Hebraic republican principles in favor of a focus on particular practices. In antebellum America, the most noteworthy case of Protestants' soliciting Jewish approval on slavery involved proslavery advocates who sought to establish biblical sanction for the institution. Aside from Benjamin himself, who defended slavery from a legal and economic standpoint but had little interest in calling

undue attention to his Jewish heritage—much less in invoking any specifically Jewish claims for the justness of slavery—the most illustrious Jewish public figure to be associated with slavery was New York's Rabbi Morris Raphall. In his January 1861 sermon, delivered in the immediate aftermath of South Carolina's secession and three months in advance of the firing on Fort Sumter, Raphall argued that because "Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, [and] Job" were slaveholders, the modern-day practice of chattel slavery could not fairly be condemned by modern-day Jews like himself.²³ It was abolitionism, Raphall argued, that was unsanctioned by biblical precedent. Raphall counseled Southern slaveholders to be more humane in their practice, but he saw no evidence anywhere in the Hebrew Bible of a general prohibition or condemnation of slavery.

It is worth noting, nonetheless, that the one reference to the Book of Exodus Raphall made in his entire forty-page sermon constituted one of the few occasions on which he reprimanded Southern slaveholders. In the spirit of biblical literalism that had inspired his discourse, Raphall's reading of Exodus argued that slaves ought not to be kept in bondage for more than six years and that a child born to slaves ought not inherit his or her parents' enslavement.²⁴ The Raphall sermon, whose intention had been to instill some rabbinical rigor into a debate that had lacked Jewish specificity, made its greatest contribution by means of such legalistic turns and was an expression of its author's "exasperation at anyone who could read the Bible in any other way."²⁵ Knowing as he did that a great many of his readers would be Southerners or Southern sympathizers, very few of whom were Jewish, the British-born scholar was eager to uphold the biblical-era Jewish example as indicative of wider implications that would justify slavery in principle as a right of all sovereign peoples. At the same time, the texts and language he cited pertained mostly to the Hebrews, and his expertise had been called upon in the first place because, as a rabbi, he was expected to possess a specific knowledge and expertise in *Jewish* law. He had, as he put it, "been requested by prominent citizens of other denominations" to undertake such an examination of *the* source.²⁶ He was well aware that had he not been a Jew or a rabbi—had he not been someone who was ancestrally implicated by the Bible's teachings, in other words—his opinions on its pertinence to slavery would have been of no importance to gentiles.

As the historian Bertram Korn points out, Raphall's "sermon aroused more comment and attention than any other sermon ever delivered by an American rabbi," including several outspoken rebuttals by both Jewish and non-Jewish abolitionists.²⁷ The most severe critique of the Raphall sermon came from the Polish-born Hungarian Jewish revolutionary Michael Heilprin, who invoked his own Jewish identity as intrinsic to his objection to the idea of any Jewish sanction for slavery: "Being a Jew myself," he wrote, "I felt exceedingly humbled, I may say outraged, by the sacrilegious words of the Rabbi. Have we not had enough of the 'reproach of Egypt?'" he continued. "Must the stigma of Egyptian principles be fastened to the people of Israel by Israelitish lips themselves?"²⁸ Whether he was doing so on purpose or inadvertently, Heilprin was directly echoing Benjamin Wade's criticism of Judah Benjamin's "Egyptian principles." Benjamin's particularly Jewish violation of what Heilprin framed as a universal moral prohibition against slavery was worse, in other words, for reflecting so negatively on Jewish rectitude.

Although Biblicism itself was not intrinsic to arguments like Heilprin's, whose opposition to slavery was "primarily a function of ... European political and religious experiences," his argument was firmly rooted in a tradition of Jewish collectivity.²⁹ For Heilprin, Exodus was one of several foundational stories of the Jewish people. Adherence to what he took to be its spirit was an important basis for a Jewish case against slavery. Heilprin disliked what he viewed as Raphall's appropriation and tainting of Jewish tradition, which is why he spoke of himself "as a Jew" having been "humbled" by the sermon's publication. His own invocation of Exodus, while hardly forming the basis for his condemnation of slavery, conformed to the general pattern by which speakers alluded to the narrative's specifically Jewish implications. Heilprin's critique of Raphall's sermon was rooted in a particularistic notion of Jews as a people apart whose discrete history ought to have inured them against any dulling of principles that were believed to have originated in their own historical struggle. Heilprin's pronouncement made it seem as though proper attention to Exodus would cancel any Jewish doubts as to the injustice of African American slavery from a Jewish perspective. Although his and other Jewish abolitionist readings of the Hebrew Bible stipulated less literalism than Raphall's interpretation had, they clearly favored a sort of exceptionalism that held Jews to a higher moral

standard on the basis of that Bible and its historical significance to them. The particularism of such readings was posited on notions of the Jews as a people apart. It was this exact aspect of the Exodus story (along with other narratives from the Hebrew Bible) that would also inspire so many African Americans to adopt it as the chronicle of their own experience.

Blacks in the American Egypt: the African American Exodus

Particularistic readings of the Exodus story were hardly restricted to Jews. As Mark Noll puts it, “By the time of the Civil War, there existed a substantial history of African American biblical commentary on slavery.”³⁰ Thus, when pre-Civil War African Americans sang about their struggles in Egypt’s land or looked forward in their orations to the day when “the wise legislator of Israel” would lead them away from it, they were actually invoking their own “nationhood.” “By appropriating the story of Exodus,” writes Albert Raboteau, “black Christians articulated their own sense of peoplehood.”³¹ The Exodus narrative offered

an organizing principle for the unification of a people in the midst of oppression.

To antebellum Americans who opposed slavery, applying the history of Jewish enslavement in Egypt to the situation of African Americans in Southern bondage seemed perfectly natural, given the centrality of the Bible as a common reference point and repository of narrative motifs.

As Eric Sundquist notes, the story itself has a unique history in this respect and operates as “the principle paradigm for the African-American passage to freedom, [and] a



Design for the seal of the United States inspired by the Passover story as originally proposed by Franklin, John Adams and Jefferson from a drawing by Benson J. Lossing.
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

signal instance of cultural identity forged from the union of different histories.”³² Indeed, blacks in the American South had lacked a common heritage until they experienced the Middle Passage and enslavement. The injustice of their treatment at the hands of slave traders, slaveholders, and the institutional apparatuses of slavery and racism, as well as their own principled and unified resistance to such demeaning treatment, was exactly what gave rise to their birth as a distinct people.

Moreover, because African Americans had been enslaved by people who used their own religious heritage and Enlightenment ideologies as bases for bogus claims to moral superiority, their own ascendancy as a people was all the more dignified by contrast. The African American struggle for freedom and equality, as W.E.B. DuBois and Ralph Ellison (among others) would later argue, was a fight to make good on the principles outlined in the American founding documents. As Eddie Glaude Jr. describes its impact and legacy among blacks, “Exodus politics can be thought of as a form of criticism that pressures a given society to live up to its ideals ... an appeal to principles announced at the nation’s inception that somehow have been compromised by the choices of people.”³³ For those who sympathized with their plight, as well as in many of their own minds, nineteenth-century African Americans were uniquely poised to act the part of America’s Israelites. This nascent “topsy-turvy typology that rendered white Americans as Egyptian taskmasters, and blacks as liberty-seeking Israelites” discomfited many whites and would lead, as Eran Shalev points out, to the eclipse of the Hebraic republican idea of the “New Israel” as an operative American ideological principle for generations to come.³⁴

African American speakers had been referring to the Exodus story since at least the earliest part of the nineteenth century, during a period of widespread religious awakening whose changes had affected them no less profoundly than they had whites. “Slaves did not,” however, “consider the Bible’s narratives to be foreshadowings of national realities.”³⁵ As rising numbers of black ministers, lay leaders, and individuals solidified a distinctly African American Christianity, both vernacular and literary forms of black expression formulated the Exodus story, reflecting the unity of an oppressed people, the justness of a benevolent but angry God who acted in their behalf, and the eventual triumph of good over evil. In 1808, Philadelphia’s Absalom Jones, an African American minister,

preached a sermon on the occasion of the abolition of the slave trade whose invocation of the Exodus story centered on the idea of God's redemption of oppressed peoples. In Jones's formulation of the story, it was the unifying experience of "*affliction*"—of the "privation of liberty," by "vigilant and rigorous masters"—that laid the foundation for God's intercession in behalf of the enslaved Hebrews.³⁶ "In this condition," Jones argued, "thus degraded and oppressed, they passed nearly four hundred years," calling down God's redemption not only through their suffering but through their collective experience of that suffering. The deliverance of the Israelites, like the pending liberation of blacks in present-day America, had only been the first instance of God's "appear[ance] in behalf of oppressed and distressed *nations*" (my italics).

As Jones asserted, it was the mutual ancestry of such nations that stood as a key component of God's eagerness to come to their rescue:

The Jews, after they entered the promised land, were commanded, when they offered sacrifices to the Lord, never to forget their humble origin; and hence, part of the worship that accompanied their sacrifices consisted in acknowledging, *that a Syrian, ready to perish, was their father*: in like manner, it becomes us, publicly and privately, to acknowledge, that an African slave, ready to perish, was our father or grandfather.³⁸

Notions of this sort ran directly counter to the prevailing Anglo-Protestant Hebraic republicanism of the period, which did not invest itself in questions of lineage or origin but, instead, derived its typologies from creedal and strictly symbolic conceptions. As Jones and other black speakers framed it, the Jews' and the African Americans' experiences of oppression had been stipulated by their respective racial separateness, and God's sympathy for their plight had been a function of their status as outsiders and as a recognizably nation-like polity. By contrast, the long-standing New Israel formulas that had been framed by the Puritans and their nineteenth-century Protestant legatees had been somewhat precariously posited on a universalistic and theologically articulated Christianity that always had to maintain a wariness lest its practitioners overstate their Hebraic enthusiasms and verge into the "more or less insular and somewhat nationalistic doctrines of the children of Israel."³⁹ Jones's particularistic reading of Exodus understood the status of African

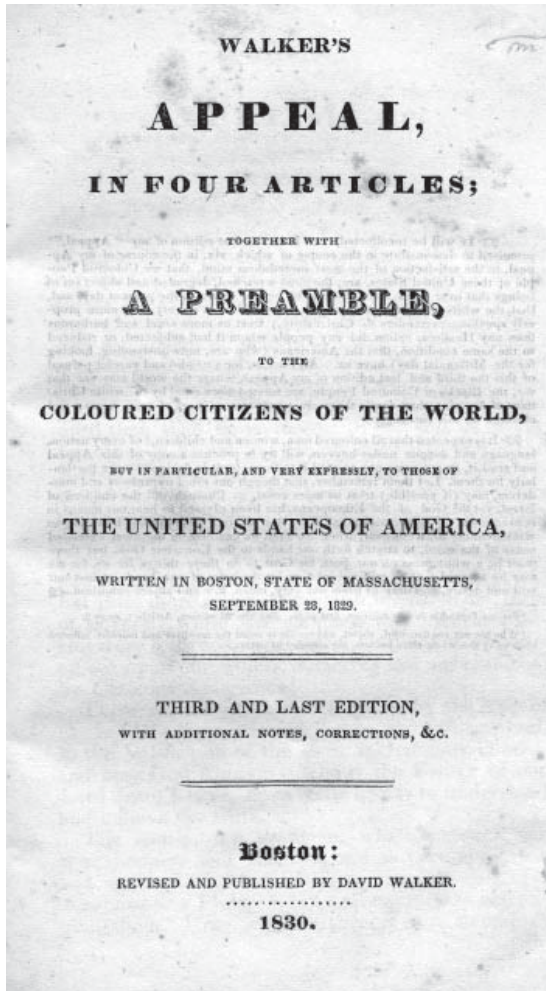
Americans to be contiguous with God's original protection of the ancient Jews. The Hebraic republicanism that was adhered to by American Anglo-Protestants, on the other hand, was entirely dependent on the considerably more abstract notion of a "renewed covenant with God."⁴⁰ This, in turn, rested on an ambitious and often problematic suspension of disbelief, since it wasn't the ethnic oneness—much less the persecuted status of New Englanders or Americans—that united them to one another or distinguished them in God's eyes, after all, but a common belief in rarefied Calvinistic doctrine.

Jones's and other African Americans' reading of Exodus, as represented by the reference in the spiritual "Go Down, Moses," to "*my people*," was built on an assumption of a direct correlation of Hebrew and African American nationhood. In the service of this formulation, rhetorically nimble and interpretively incisive African American readers of Exodus were able to note the relative mildness of the story's depiction of slavery in applying its narrative to their own people's historical distinctiveness. It was entirely possible to portray the villainous slaveholders of old as *less* depraved than masters of American plantations and the situation of enslaved blacks as more dire than that of the ancient Hebrews. In doing so, blacks were simultaneously held up as comparable to the biblical Hebrews and, at the same time, depicted as far more desperate and therefore all the more unified in their destiny. The African American orator Daniel Coker, who would eventually leave America to participate in the colonization of Sierra Leone, included a comparative reading of the Hebrew and black narratives in his 1810 "Dialogue Between a Virginian and an African Minister," in which the minister supplied the more reasoned interpretation of Exodus. As the slaveholding Virginian cited a biblical mandate for the keeping of slaves, the minister responded—first, in such a way as to maintain a parallel between enslaved blacks and Hebrews, and second, to negate that very parallel for rhetorical effect:

The Israelites were not sent by a divine mandate, to nations three hundred miles distant, who were neither doing, nor meditating any thing against them, and to whom they had no right whatever, in order to captivate them by fraud or force; tare them away from their native country, and all their tender connections; bind them in chains and fetters; crowd them into ships, and there murder them by thousands, for want of air and proper exercise; and then doom the survivors and their posterity to bondage and misery forever."⁴¹

In Coker's formulation, which Mark Noll marks as "one of the earliest and theologically profound" of African American readings of the Hebrew Bible,⁴² every word and sentence announced the strong likeness between American blacks and ancient Hebrews. At the same time, his entire conception was built around a negative comparison that superseded that very likeness. Coker's parallel structure, which introduced the word "not" initially and then deployed it silently throughout the remainder of the sentence, ensured the comparison of blacks to Jews, but its rhetorical force lay in upending that comparison and conferring the greater share of national distinctness to the former.

Within the African American discourse on Exodus, the idea of competing national narratives—of rival claims to the particularistic mantle of Hebrew enslavement and liberation—was central. In the preamble to his incendiary 1830 *Appeal*, for instance, David Walker invoked the sufferings of "the Israelites in Egypt, the Helots in Sparta, and ... the Roman Slaves" as having been "no more than a cypher" in comparison to those of America's blacks.⁴³ Throughout history, other disadvantaged peoples had at least been treated, as Walker described it, as "men." "The Indians of North and South America," he wrote, like "the Greeks—the Irish, subjected under the king of Great Britain—the Jews, that ancient people of the Lord—[and] the inhabitants of the islands of the sea" had all benefitted from such stature. Only African Americans, as Walker explained, had been denied their humanity.⁴⁴ To prove his case, the pamphleteer relied heavily, as Coker had, on the example of the Israelites depicted in Exodus. Not only had their sufferings under the Pharaohs been milder than those of the blacks in America; the Hebrews had actually experienced moments of prosperity and even acceptance under the Egyptian yoke. Jacob's son Joseph had been second only to the Pharaoh in his ability to wield power. While African Americans were prevented by stringent laws from "marrying among the whites" (not that Walker would have "cared a *pinch of snuff* to be married to any white person"), Joseph had been invited to marry "Asenath the daughter of the Potipherah priest of On" and, generations later, Moses himself had been suckled by the Pharaoh's own daughter. "Israel had the most fertile land in Egypt," Walker pointed out, but Africans in America (who in their pigmentation happened to resemble the Egyptians more closely than they did the Israelites) were "held up as descending originally from



David Walker's Appeal.
(Courtesy Wilson Special Collections Library, University
of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

the tribes of *Monkeys* or *Orang-Outangs*.”⁴⁶ If the Bible was useful as a guide to political circumstances, and if the historical oppression of a people constituted the strongest evidence of that people’s uniqueness, Walker’s pamphlet argued, African Americans had by far the greatest claim to such recognition. In the context of such extensive and perverse Christian hypocrisy, African Americans’ resemblance to the Israelites of old constituted powerful evidence not of the Bible’s pertinence as the

basis for a universal creed but of its highly particularistic and historically specific repudiation of such falsehoods.

Rival Particularisms: Jews, African Americans, and the Contemporary Legacy of the Exodus Story

The story of the Israelites' servitude in and escape from Egypt has offered an almost irresistibly simple appearance of common cause whose literary enchantments ensured a range of confounding implications. Because Exodus seemed to suggest a "natural" resemblance between the situations of Jews and African Americans, its deployment as a common text may actually have been more of an impediment to mutual understanding or sympathy than an aid. Expectation and assumption have often outrun actuality. If nineteenth-century Jews and African Americans had given extended consideration to one another's existence and to the idea of Exodus as a text whose symbolic power linked their histories to one another, they might well have anticipated the unpredictable "intermixture of empathy, anxiety, and hostility"⁴⁷ that has characterized several ensuing generations of fraught Jewish-black relations in the United States. As Robert Philipson writes, "Exodus is integral to both cultures, yet its interpretation and place within ethnic discourse varie[d] according to religious and political ideology."⁴⁸ Divergent and even contradictory readings of Exodus have long mitigated its utility as an urtext for relations between African Americans and Jews. Exodus has been posed as a central point of reference when the "black-Jewish question" is addressed, but what, exactly, is revealed by its centrality? Attention to how the story first became a contested narrative during the antebellum debates over slavery offers insight into how and why the story continued to haunt Americans through and beyond the twentieth century. Its articulation immediately preceding the Civil War as the narrative of two people's separate nationhood foretold of a wider tendency in American readings of a Bible whose original uses as a single master narrative would be overruled by the ascendancy of competing minority narratives.

Antebellum Jewish and African American applications of Exodus and other biblical texts participated in and reflected the gradual eclipse of the universalistic and typological Hebraic republicanism that had once stood as the sole interpretive lens for reading the Hebrew Bible

in America. The consequences that this eclipse bore for the members of the white Protestant majority can still be felt today, as religious and cultural pluralism has long since supplanted the New Israel ideology in the minds of many Americans. Even such ostensibly inclusive notions as the “Judeo-Christian tradition” are only tentatively ventured in the public sphere by an ever-shrinking minority of would-be conservators of the Western canon. Nonetheless, in the absence of the Protestant presumptions of former days and at a time when large numbers even of biblically inclined Americans have grown to embrace both the full enfranchisement of Jews, African Americans, and a host of other minority populations along with the principles of religious tolerance, competing claims to the mantle of the Exodus story continue to complicate social relations in the United States. In no instance has this been truer than in the relationship between African Americans and Jews, especially since the upheavals of the 1960s. As distinctive Jewish and African American narratives and biblical interpretations played a mutual hand in reducing the dominance of white Protestant Hebraic republicanism in nineteenth-century American discourse, they can be said to have helped normalize and legitimize an ascendant cultural and religious pluralism. But the promulgation of these particularistic Bible readings also contributed to the sowing of discord between two of the nation’s most vocal and visible minority constituencies. Jews’ and African Americans’ mutual fondness for a single Hebraic narrative has occasionally constituted a textual and spiritual basis for unity and from time to time offered an inspiration for powerful political alliances. At the same time, a range of historical circumstances have rendered “the black-Jewish” question one of the most vexing of America’s cultural quandaries, and both groups’ claim to the Exodus story has only complicated matters between them.

As Eric Sundquist suggests, “The refashioning of the Exodus in African American culture, from the slave spirituals through the liberating leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., lies at the heart of the black-Jewish question.”⁴⁹ His assertion is irrefutable, but this “heart,” whatever it consists of, is an inscrutable one, and the “question” is one that only yields more questions. While Exodus recounted the birth by ordeal of a distinct people, whether of the Hebrews in the wilderness of Sinai, Puritans in New England, nascent Americans in the thirteen colonies, aspiring citizens of a sovereign Confederacy, or enslaved blacks in the

American South, its irresistible moral implications ensured that its every retelling invited other people to apply its teachings across a range of historical contexts and to use it as a guide for proper human action in all spheres. Likewise, the story's grand narrative of righteous action in the face of an unjust and brutal majority—its endorsement of freedom from bondage and its positing of a just God who acts in behalf of *all* oppressed peoples—prompted readers to internalize the story's message of group solidarity and to read its moral implications as uniquely applicable to their own communal histories. As a result, the "guidance" that its careful reading ought to supply toward a nuanced consideration of black-Jewish relations is, by necessity, given more significance than most minds are prepared to comprehend. Exodus constitutes a salient metaphor through which we *ought* to be able to understand the black-Jewish relationship, but the metaphor has always been an unwieldy one. Attention to its divergent and sometimes mutually exclusive implications may offer provisional insight into what Robert Philipson refers to as a hopelessly "tortured and misdirected dialogue" between African Americans and Jews that has always been predicated on both people's exile, disempowerment, and lack of agency.⁵⁰

If nothing else, the story's staying power over the years derives from its pertinence to an ideological and discursive context that privileges both the discrete histories of its many separate peoples and, at the same time, upholds the notion of their common fate as members of the same national polity. Exodus vindicates outsiders and historically oppressed constituencies, but its narrative of triumph over adversity and of divine sanction for the liberation of those peoples has proven so appealing to so wide a range of Americans that few have been willing to relinquish their claims to its particularistic resonance with their stories. Until the middle decades of the nineteenth century and within the framework of Protestant Hebraic republicanism, arguments over the Exodus story had been strictly theological in their implications and consensual in their ramifications, since even the most vociferous proponents of the New Israel typologies had no interest in identifying themselves directly with the despised Jews, and the majority of white Protestants sought at least provisional unity in the face of perceived outside threats. As the slavery issue reached its denouement with the coming of the Civil War, however, and as both Jews and African Americans sought and found

opportunities to speak and write about the Exodus story within the context of an already dramatically bifurcated United States, the reality of a Bible that could and did bear different messages for different peoples became impossible to ignore.

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Notes

¹Benjamin Kaplan, "Judah Philip Benjamin" in *Jews in the South*, ed. Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 75–88. The historian Bertram Wallace Korn discounts the accuracy of the Benjamin retort on several bases, including the fact that there are several extant versions of it. For instance, some renderings of Benjamin's response substitute the "forests of Scandinavia" for those "the forests of Great Britain." A similar remark was made by Benjamin Disraeli during a debate with the Irish Member of Parliament Daniel O'Connell that was first publicized in 1835. It is clear that Disraeli's retort to O'Connell's anti-Jewish slur had been uttered in a similar spirit to the one that would have inspired Judah Benjamin: "Yes, I am a Jew," the British parliamentarian is reported to have said, "and when the ancestors of the right honorable gentleman were brutal savages in an unknown island, mine were priests in the Temple of Solomon." For more on the alleged Benjamin retort, see Robert N. Rosen's *The Jewish Confederates* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), 456. On the Disraeli speech in comparison with Benjamin's remark, see Max J. Kohler, "Judah P. Benjamin: Statesman and Jurist," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 12 (1904): 84.

²Henry Highland Garnet, "An Address to the Slaves of the United States of America, Buffalo, NY, 1843," (p. 3), <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=etas> (accessed 29 September 2015).

³Mark Noll, "The Image of the United States as a Biblical Nation, 1776–1865" in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History*, ed. Nathan Hatch and Mark Noll (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 48.

⁴Stephanie Butnick, "Passover at the White House," *Tablet Magazine* (6 April 2015), <http://tabletmag.com/scroll/190120/passover-at-the-white-house> (accessed 29 September 2015).

⁵Eran Shalev, *American Zion: The Old Testament as a Political Text from the Revolution to the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 17.

⁶Noll, "The Image," 39.

- ⁷Andrew Murphy, "New Israel in New England: The American Jeremiad and the Hebrew Scriptures," *Hebraic Political Studies* 4, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 155.
- ⁸Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).
- ⁹Mark Noll, *God and Race in American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 43.
- ¹⁰Shalev, *American Zion*, 180.
- ¹¹*Ibid.*, 184.
- ¹²Quoted in Bertram Wallace Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961), 15.
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- ¹⁴Sue Eisenfeld, "Passover in the Confederacy," *New York Times*, 17 April 2014, http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/04/17/passover-in-the-confederacy/?_r=0 (accessed 29 September 2015).
- ¹⁵Leonard Rogoff, "Who Is Israel? Yankees, Confederates, African Americans, and Jews," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 64, nos. 1 & 2 (2012): 35.
- ¹⁶*Ibid.*, 27–52.
- ¹⁷Abram J. Dittenhoefer, *How We Elected Lincoln: Personal Recollections of Lincoln and Men of His Time* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1916), 5.
- ¹⁸Rogoff, "Who Is Israel?" 39.
- ¹⁹Sussman interview, quoted in Eisenfeld.
- ²⁰Rogoff, "Who Is Israel?" 33.
- ²¹François Furstenburg, "Beyond Freedom and Slavery: Autonomy, Virtue, and Resistance in Early American Political Discourse," *Journal of American History* 89, no. 4 (March 2003): 1296.
- ²²More than three quarters of the approximately 150,000 Jews in America were residents of the Northern states. See Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 112. In addition, an estimated 7,000 Jews are believed to have fought in the Union Army, while 3,000 are likely to have served the Confederacy ("The Jewish Americans," director David Grubin, PBS Home Video, 2008. disc 1, episode 1, chapter 5, 0:30:40). As Bertram Korn writes, however, because Jews were habitually cautious in their expression of political opinions, it is difficult to assess the number of committed Jewish adherents of the abolitionist (or proslavery) cause: "The Jews were as thoroughly divided as the American population itself. It is possible, however, that we should discover that there were fewer Jews than other Americans, proportionately, at the extreme wings of the controversy." Korn, *American Jewry*, 16.
- ²³Morris Raphall, *A Bible View of Slavery* (New York: Rudd and Carlton, 1861), 28, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t6k076d64;view=1up;seq=7> (accessed 29 September 2015).
- ²⁴*Ibid.*, 31.
- ²⁵Mark Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 3.
- ²⁶Raphall, "Bible View," 16.

²⁷Korn, *American Jewry*, 17.

²⁸Michael Heilprin, "Michael Heilprin Replies to Dr. Raphall," *New York Daily Tribune*, 15 January 1861, reprinted in Morris Schappes, ed., *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654–1875* (New York: The Citadel Press, 1950), 419.

²⁹Jayme Sokolow, "Revolution and Reform: Antebellum Jewish Abolitionists," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 9, no. 4 (1984): 184.

³⁰Noll, *The Civil War*, 64.

³¹Albert Raboteau, "African Americans, Exodus, and the American Israel," in *African American Christianity: Essays in History*, ed. Paul E. Johnson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 9–17; anthologized in *Strangers and Neighbors: Relations Between Blacks and Jews in the United States*, ed. Maurianne Adams and John Bracey (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 61.

³²Eric J. Sundquist, *Strangers in the Land: Blacks, Jews, Post-Holocaust America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 96.

³³Eddie S. Glaude Jr., *Exodus! Religion, Race, and Nation in Early Nineteenth-Century Black America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 111.

³⁴Shalev, *American Zion*, 181–182.

³⁵Noll, "The Image," 49.

³⁶Absalom Jones, *Thanksgiving Sermon, Preached January 1, 1808: On Account of the Abolition of the American Slave Trade* (Philadelphia: Fry and Kammerer, 1808), 9.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 10.

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹Gordon Schochet, "Introduction: Hebraic Roots, Calvinist Plantings, American Branches," *Hebraic Political Studies* 4, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 101.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴¹Daniel Coker, *A Dialogue Between a Virginian and an African Minister* (Baltimore: Joseph James, 1810), 22. Accessed it digitally through Early American Imprints.

⁴²Noll, *The Civil War*, 69.

⁴³David Walker, *Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles: Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America* (Boston: 1829): 3, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/walker/menu.html> (accessed 29 September 2015).

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 11, 10, 13.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁷Sundquist, *Strangers*, 3.

⁴⁸Robert Philipson, *The Identity Question: Blacks and Jews in Europe and America* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), xii.

⁴⁹Sundquist, *Strangers*, 5.

⁵⁰Philipson, xviii.

We Called Him Rabbi Abraham

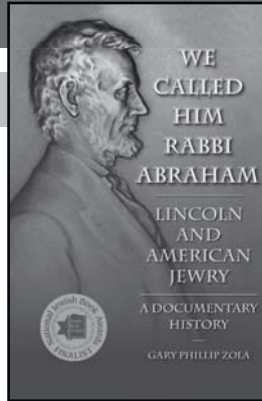
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BOOK REVIEWS

Richard Damashek, *A Brand Plucked from the Fire: The Life of Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman* (Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2013), 660 pp.

Herman E. Schaalman is one of the most distinguished Reform rabbis of twentieth-century America, someone who has lived the century with all its accomplishments and tragedies. In April 2015 he turned ninety-nine years old; he lives with his wife Lotte, who recently turned one hundred. Richard Damashek, a retired English professor, now provides an appraisal of Schaalman's extraordinary life.

A comprehensive account of Schaalman's life and philosophy was overdue; Damashek's book, *A Brand Plucked from the Fire: The Life of Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman*, has filled that void. The task was not easy, since Schaalman has hardly published any of his thoughts, with the exception of *Hineni: Here I Am*, published when he was already more than 90 years old.¹ Due to the lack of written sources, Damashek's biography heavily relies on interviews with Schaalman, his wife Lotte, as well as family members, friends, and colleagues. These interviews allow deep insight into the life and philosophy of Schaalman beyond the public rabbinic figure.

Herman E. Schaalman was born in Munich, Germany, in 1916. In 1935 he moved to Berlin and enrolled in the famous *Lehranstalt (Hochschule) für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*. After a few months he, along with four other students, happened to be awarded a fellowship from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio. This group of young rabbinic students, whom Schaalman refers to as "the gang of five," would play a significant role in Reform Judaism in the decades to come. In addition to Schaalman, it included W. Gunther Plaut, Alfred Wolf, Wolli Kaelter, and Leo Lichtenberg. (Damashek is currently working on an article that will follow up on this constellation.²)

In late 1935 the five boys left for the United States, a ticket to freedom and survival. After Schaalman's graduation he became the rabbi of Temple Judah in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1941, where he, within a short period of time, became a respected Reform rabbi. In 1949 he moved to Chicago, where his career gained momentum. First he initiated the successful Reform summer camp movement, was later elected chair of two

important committees of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), and finally became CCAR's president in 1981. He also served as rabbi of the prestigious Emanuel Congregation of Chicago from 1956 to 1986.

It is not only Schaalman's career that is outstanding, but also his religious and philosophical thinking. Over the last several decades he became increasingly aware of the centrality of the Holocaust, which he thought should be recognized as "the basis for a major revision of Judaism" (492). According to Schaalman, after the Holocaust the Jewish perception of God had to change because God did not intervene in the mass murder of six million innocent people. To the question, "Where was God during the Holocaust?" Schaalman offers an astounding answer from his close friend Emil Fackenheim (1916–2003), who was also a refugee from Nazi Germany: "God was in the camps suffering with his people," (393). In Schaalman's reasoning, God has to be understood as a "suffering god," a god who makes mistakes, who can fail and who is not the king of his people but rather its fellow. Likewise astounding is Schaalman's concept of the covenant. Even if he admits that there is a unique covenant between God and the Jewish people, he also claims that the Jewish people had failed to fulfill God's expectation so that God entered into a second covenant, but now with Christians. This understanding is the basis for Schaalman's manifold activities in interfaith dialogue. "One of the lessons Schaalman derived from the Holocaust," Damashek writes, "was that positive interfaith relations were critical to Jewish survival and to creating a more harmonious world" (144).

The most interesting aspect of the book, however, is how Damashek describes the impact of Schaalman's German background and the centrality of the Holocaust. Whereas in many biographies of immigrants their lives before immigration play only a marginal role, Damashek understands Schaalman's German background as crucial to his life's path. He not only dedicates a significant part of the book to Schaalman's German years but shows the influence of his early life experiences on his thoughts and deeds after his immigration to United States. Damashek traces Schaalman's claim that the Holocaust requires a reconsideration of Judaism and the Jewish relation to God back to Schaalman's German or refugee background. His argument is backed by the fact that the few other American rabbis who aligned with Schaalman on these questions

shared the same background. Refugees from Nazi Germany, Damashek argues, spearheaded many significant changes in the Reform movement and comprised the most powerful group in Reform Judaism's organizational structure during the 1980s.

Even though the life of Schaalman deserves an empathetic approach, a more critical assessment would have been appropriate. Damashek is a close friend of the Schaalman family and an admirer of the rabbi. Thus Damashek expresses his "desire to give back to him [Schaalman] a small portion of the great gift he has given me: his learning, his inspiration and his love" (xix). With such an approach a critical stance is hardly possible. Regarding Lotte Schaalman's life at the side of her husband, Damashek's uncritical approach is even irritating. When Herman downplayed Lotte's frustration about a failed university education by "reminding her that she had touched the lives of so many people and now had two accomplished children, and three grandchildren," Damashek comes out in Herman's support by stating: "One of her most significant achievements is that she has devoted her life to helping her husband become the superb rabbi he is." Although this line of thinking may have been acceptable for their generation, it is an utterly outdated understanding of gender relations today, to put it mildly.

Furthermore, since Damashek seeks to show every aspect of Schaalman's manifold activities, the book is rather fragmented, which becomes obvious by the huge number of chapters and subchapters. It is clear that Damashek wanted to display the abundance of personal reflections and stories derived from his interviews with Schaalman. This approach proves problematic; the book sometimes appears to be more a collection of many small stories than the presentation of one bigger, more comprehensive story. In addition, many redundancies could have been removed with better copyediting.

Notwithstanding these minor shortcomings, Richard Damashek's biography of Herman E. Schaalman is a great work of research and writing on a remarkable personage, whose thinking is still progressing and who continues to live an active life, dedicated to his wife, his family, and the future of Judaism.

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history at the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture at Leipzig University, where he focused on Jewish reactions to the challenge of emigration from Nazi Germany from 1933 until 1938. He is currently working on his second book about the life and times of the German American rabbi, Joachim Prinz (1902–1988).

Notes

¹Herman E. Schaalman, *Hineni: Here I am Am* (Jersey City, NJ: Ktav Publishing, 2007).

²Pauline Dubkin Yearwood, “Chronicling a Firebrand,” *The Chicago Jewish News*, 28 January 2014, <http://chicagojewishnews.com/2014/01/28/chronicling-a-firebrand/> (accessed on 24 September 2015).

Hasia R. Diner, *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 247 pp.

In *Roads Taken*, Hasia R. Diner tells the stories of peddlers: itinerant Jews who took to the roads of America, as well as nations around the world, selling their wares to non-Jews who knew little of Judaism, yet still welcomed these strangers into the most private of spaces, their homes. It is an important and fascinating read that employs the metaphor of “the road” to organize a much broader discussion of peddler life—its complex dimensions and impact, both in Jewish history and the development of the nations where peddlers lived and worked. At once, Diner has captured more than a generation’s worth of historiographic debate just as she presses into important new lines of inquiry.

The book is organized into five chapters, as well as an introduction and conclusion. Rejecting a strict chronological frame, Diner uses the road metaphor to focus analysis on a single theme that includes primary source evidence across both time and place. In the first chapter, “Road Warriors,” Diner tells stories of the peddlers’ migration from Europe. Her focus on immigration trumps the usual historian’s focus on time and place. In *Roads Taken*, one’s status as an aspiring peddler means more than the year of one’s travel or one’s ultimate destination. Chapter two, “Road Runners,” introduces peddlers to their new worlds and the lives they created. Diner follows with “Along the Road,” a dramatization of the complex relations between immigrant Jewish peddlers and the native-born, non-Jewish Americans they served. Chapter four, “Road

Rage,” chronicles the real threats faced by peddlers and the challenges they needed to endure for their livelihood. The last chapter, “The End of the Road,” examines the lives of peddlers after they decided to move on from their arduous occupation.

Roads Taken should be required reading for all first-year graduate students in American Jewish history because it captures the most important historiographic insights of the last two generations just as it presses the field forward in important new ways. Reminding us of the import of social history, developed some fifty years ago as an antidote to the academy’s emphasis on political history, Diner opens with the assertion that *Roads Taken* “tells a story about a mass of ordinary people who in their ordinariness made history” (ix). Hers is an exploration of the everyday, of men and women who eked out a living traveling door to door in unfamiliar terrain, or remained at home in support of those who did.

Diner advances the historiography of Jewish women, even as she acknowledges that the story of peddlers remained male-dominated. Men could not travel the roads, alone, and maintain any sort of family life without women assuming more and different responsibilities at home. Even more fascinating, Diner explores issues of gender in the interactions between peddlers, who were almost always Jewish men, and their customers, who were almost always non-Jewish women. Pieced together, this is a story of men and women, in a number of places, acting in different ways for various reasons. It’s a challenging narrative that Diner handles well.

The book employs a transnational analysis to Jewish history as well, focusing largely on peddlers in the United States but offering comparisons to those who sold their goods in places such as England, Ireland, and Argentina. Diner backs the exceptionalist thesis in American Jewish historiography, affirming that the United States proved different and better for Jews than other places. Within the United States, Diner also explores the import of regionalism: Did it matter, for example, if a peddler worked in the deep South or the more urban North in the years leading to the Civil War? Diner concludes that the peddlers’ vocation often trumped regional, or even national, differences.

There is little to critique. In its innovative approach, *Roads Taken* intends to ask more than it answers. That said, questions surrounding causation remain complex and invite further analysis. As Diner wrote in

the introduction, “This book tells the history of no single place or time” (xiv). By distilling the chapters by theme, with less regard for chronology or locale, Diner invites a host of more specific community studies that would test her larger conclusions. Even as she asserts “the Jewish peddler experience proved remarkably consistent around the world and across time,” it would be interesting to learn about particularities and whether they would challenge any of the larger theses (4).

It is surprising that it has taken this long for a scholarly treatment of peddlers, since, as Diner explains, so many American Jews trace their roots to this occupation. Yet historians, until now, have not been given a framework to understand peddling and assess its significance in the development of Jewish life. Diner’s is a work of great originality and creativity, taking her topic and infusing it with meanings that prove, at once, obvious and insightful.

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Ava F. Kahn and Adam D. Mendelsohn, eds., *Transnational Traditions: New Perspectives on American Jewish History* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 2014), 304 pp.

In the past decade, scholars of the humanities have observed a “transnational turn,” in which they pay particular attention to the movement of peoples, technologies, institutions, and ideas across national boundaries. Jewish historical research offers an obvious home for transnational studies, and recent monographs have used the methodology of transnational history to reframe and problematize the fundamental categories of Jewish historical research.

Ava F. Kahn and Adam D. Mendelsohn’s *Transnational Traditions: New Perspectives on American Jewish History* extends this important scholarship, which heretofore has focused mainly on trends outside of the Atlantic Jewish world and/or on the late-nineteenth and twentieth

centuries. Without losing the careful analysis of local contexts, this collection of transnational Jewish historical writing attempts to analyze the stories of Jews in the United States by integrating their experiences with those of Jews in other countries. The contributing authors use “transnational” in two distinct ways: as a term that is distinct from that of the “migrant” and as an explanatory phrase to discuss economic, religious, social, institutional, and cultural linkages that crossed disparate borders and boundaries. They make several important arguments—namely that American Jews helped to shape aspects of Jewish life elsewhere; that multiple, nuanced, overlapping strands helped to connect Jews in the Diaspora; and that place of origin continued to play a significant role in shaping American Jewish life long after those Jews had settled in the United States. Taken together, the eleven chapters demonstrate that an examination of patterns across national boundaries allows insight into understanding historical shifts in American Jewish life and differences between Jewish life in the United States and elsewhere.

The editors divided the book into four thematic sections, the first of which examines the ways in which religious, family, and commercial linkages in the mid-nineteenth century anglophone Jewish world shaped and were influenced by America. In his case study of three brothers whose careers took place on three continents, Mendelsohn tells the story of an emerging international market for Jewish ministers. The brothers’ experiences highlight both the similarities in religious and cultural trends across national borders and the distinct influences of the local on these developments. Kahn’s examination of the connections among developing Jewish communities along the late-nineteenth-century Pacific Rim challenges the common understanding that California’s Jewish community thrived because of the influx of Jews from Eastern Europe or other parts of the United States. Instead, she shows that the Jewish community there prospered because it attracted migrants from the antipodes during the early Gold Rush period. It was economic impulse, not religious freedom, that brought those migrants. Finally, in her case studies, Suzanne D. Rutland teases out shifts in Jewish trading networks across the Pacific Rim over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The two chapters in the second section of *Transnational Traditions* are particularly interested in multidirectional economic opportunities and demonstrate that continued relationships with one’s place of origin

could provide some kind of financial advantage in one's place of settlement. In her study of Jewish immigrant banks and bankers, Rebecca Kobrin shows how Jewish immigrant bankers sold ship travel tickets on installment, depended on multilingual agents, and transferred money overseas. According to Kobrin, immigrants participated in the American economy by focusing on specific needs related to connections that crossed the Atlantic. Eric Goldstein's examination of the multidirectional nature of immigrant life focuses on the markets for Yiddish print culture in the United States and Imperial Russia. Contrary to extant assumptions, he shows that late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century immigrants often imported Yiddish reading material to Russia rather than the reverse.

In the third section of the anthology, the contributing authors analyze identity construction among transnationals. Interested in the term used to categorize Jews during the first wave of significant nineteenth-century immigration, Tobias Brinkmann questions the meaning and usage of the term, "German Jews." Brinkmann draws on diverse political, linguistic, religious, and cultural factors to tease out both how immigrants fashioned themselves and how others understood them. In her study of the "Gypsy Jews" of New York City's Little Rumania, Lara Rabinovitch teases out a very different process of identity construction. Her "Gypsy Jews" took on both imagined nationless identities and supratransnationalism, an act of self-understanding that could work well within a specific immigrant context. Finally, Jonathan Goldstein uses the Olmert family to study the Jews of Harbin, China. Harbin's actors did not desire a life for themselves in the United States. Instead, they wished to remain in a Russified environment.

The final section of the book is devoted to migrants who journeyed to the United States, Argentina, and Israel, often, though not always, motivated by ideological impulses. In her study of Jewish colonists in the United States and Argentina, Ellen Eisenberg shows that Jewish colonists were most successful if they shared occupational backgrounds and similar regional origins. Joan Roland's contribution looks at Bene Israel immigrants in the United States and Israel. Roland finds that those who originated from villages in India were more likely to settle in Israel, whereas those who were from cities tended to immigrate to the United States. She also finds that their receptions differed in Israel and

in America, as did the ways in which they negotiated their identities in their new homes. The final contribution, by Kahn, uses the sources of American leftist Zionist communities to study the young American Jews who founded kibbutzim in Israel and the challenges they faced to their American practices and ideals.

Transnational Traditions is a significant addition to the scholarship on American Jewish history and complements existing work on transnationalism. The contributions highlight the diversity of Jewish experiences and the multidirectional movement of people, trade, and ideas. They also integrate American history with the history of Jews on several continents. It is surprising that a book that offers such a nuanced portrait of multiple connections would mostly overlook gender. Despite that omission, however, the anthology has many strengths and will be very useful for students of American history, Jewish history, and transnational studies.

Robin Judd is an associate professor of Jewish and European history at The Ohio State University. The author of Contested Rituals: Circumcision, Kosher Butchering, and Jewish Political Life in Germany, 1843–1933, she now is working on a new book project, Love at the Zero Hour: Jewish Brides, Soldier Husbands, and Strategies for Reconstruction, 1943–1955.

Adam D. Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race: How Jews Sewed their Way to Success in America and the British Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 297 pp.

Adam Mendelsohn's *The Rag Race* is a masterpiece. It is not the equivalent of a garment cut out from a pattern, but rather an original. It is a history of the Jews in the "rag trade"—from the collecting, patching, and reselling of rags in early nineteenth-century London and New York; to the development of garment workshops making new ("ready-made") garments for sale; to the modern industrial production, distribution, and selling of garments in the late nineteenth century. It is the story of Jews in London and New York—the two primary English-speaking centers for Jews, as well as for the garment industry. Appropriately, *The Rag Race* won the 2015 National Jewish Book Award in the category of American Jewish Studies.

With self-deprecating humor, the term “rag trade” persists to this day in reference to the clothing industry. Originally, however, it referred to itinerant collectors who bought or otherwise acquired rags and used, worn, or torn garments and repaired them as best they could—or used them to make “new” clothes—and resold them. The title of this book thus has a double meaning. It can mean the intense competition (race) that has characterized the garment industry from its very beginnings to the present, competition that put—and still puts—continuous downward pressure on workers’ incomes. It can also mean the Jews who so dominated this activity that in early nineteenth century England they became popularly known as the rag “race” (i.e., ethnicity).

The Rag Race is an exhaustive comparative history with extensive citations to the literature. Fortunately, the citations are placed as end notes, as they comprise one-sixth of the book’s pages. With Mendelsohn’s skillful use of the language, what could easily have been a tedious scholarly tome is in fact a very lively read. It is accessible and valuable to the novice as well as the scholar.

The introduction and conclusion provide clear summaries of the book for a reader short on time. The meat of the book, however, is in the eight substantive chapters tracing the history of London and New York Jews in the garment industry over the course of the nineteenth century. The first two chapters describe what to the naïve observer would seem a disorganized, highly competitive “rag” market in the decades prior to the U.S. Civil War, including the within-industry connections between the two cities. This is followed by chapters on the maturation of the industry, from manufacturing through retailing, in the antebellum American South and West, in England, and in the British overseas colonies (with a particular emphasis on Australia).

The large demand for military uniforms during the U.S. Civil War spurred the ready-to-wear clothing industry. While Jewish contractors prospered, antisemitism targeting them as “war profiteers” also increased. The final substantive chapter brings the story to the postbellum period, with the spread of the Singer sewing machine, the movement of production from small workshops to factories, the development of department stores and retail chains, and the growth of Jewish firms in New York and elsewhere. The spread of standardized sizes in menswear and the falling cost of transportation facilitated these developments.

The story closes toward the end of the nineteenth century, before the mass immigration of Eastern European and Russian Jews to the United States and, to a lesser extent, to England. Yet from its inception, the garment industry was well suited for the Jewish immigrants who settled in London and New York over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was an industry in which small firms had a comparative advantage, requiring entrepreneurship (enterprise, decision-making skills) but very little capital for entry, with little government regulation—although more so in England than in the United States. It became an “ethnic niche” where the Jews in London’s East End and New York’s Lower East Side helped each other find employment, learn the skills (in making and marketing garments), and establish businesses. They especially helped the immigrants—first from Central Europe and then Eastern Europe/Russian Empire—adjust to their new countries.

This reader would have welcomed an additional chapter covering the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on the impact of these Jewish immigrants on the industry, and perhaps another on the post–World War II decline of the garment industry and its Jewish presence—not just in London and New York City but in England and the United States in general.

Like Andrew Godley,¹ Mendelsohn notes two characteristics of British and American Jews. One is that Jewish entrepreneurship was more prevalent in this industry (and in general) in the United States than in Britain. The other was that, while Jews were economically more successful in both countries than natives and other immigrants arriving at the same time, as measured by occupation and earnings, the American Jews were more successful than their British counterparts. The American Jews escaped sooner than the British Jews from the harsh conditions in low-wage jobs, advancing more quickly into higher-paying occupations, and their children were less likely to follow them as workers in garment manufacturing. Their children who stayed in the industry tended to be in professional occupations—managers, accountants, lawyers—rather than laborers.

When it comes to social phenomena, description is always easier than explanation. Mendelsohn and Godley attribute the more rapid economic improvement of Jews in the United States than in Britain to several factors. Greater economic opportunities for Jews in the United States were provided by the less rigid social structures in business, finance, and

education and by the lesser extent of discrimination (antisemitism) and government regulation. The more rapid economic growth in the United States in this period also undoubtedly provided an environment more conducive to economic advancement, particularly for a population with entrepreneurial talents, even among those who were not entrepreneurs. While Jews more than other immigrants did not expect to return to their countries of origin and hence invested more in their new host country, it is not obvious if this had a differential impact on American and British Jews. Many British Jewish immigrants continued their journey westward to North America. Might this have influenced the lower rate of economic success among those who remained?

The book closes with the often-asked question: Did the Jews make the garment industry or did the garment industry make the Jews? *The Rag Race* argues compellingly that both are correct.

Barry R. Chiswick is professor of economics and international affairs, department of economics, George Washington University. He received the IZA Prize in Labor Economics from the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA, Bonn, Germany) for his pioneering studies of the economic adjustment of immigrants, and he received the Marshall Sklare Award from the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry (ASSJ) for his extensive research on the skills and economic status of Jews in the United States.

Notes

¹Andrew Godley, *Jewish Immigrant Entrepreneurship in New York and London, 1880–1914: Enterprise and Culture* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2001).

Deborah Dash Moore, *Urban Origins of American Judaism* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2014), xvii + 185 pp.

Deborah Dash Moore's *Urban Origins of American Judaism* is a collection of lectures that Moore presented at Stetson University in 2012. Divided into three chapters, titled "Synagogues," "Streets," and "Snapshots," Moore's study portrays cities as having made American Judaism what it is today—that is, cities have been central to the "branding" of American Judaism, to use the commercial language of the urban milieu. And if cities have played this integral role, none has done so more than

New York. That starring role of a singular city comes through in Moore's study. After 1820, New York became both the nation's biggest city and its biggest Jewish city. It would become the largest Jewish city in history and the world, with more Jews living in New York than in any European city (53). "As New York became the unofficial capital of American Jews, Jewish history in the United States acquired a powerful focal point" (13). Other American cities with respectable Jewish histories—Charleston and Atlanta in the South; the Midwest's Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Chicago; Los Angeles and San Francisco—have also been significant in American Jewish history, but the story of Jews (and *Judaism*) and New York is unlike that of any other city. There was a time, after all, when the two were nearly synonymous, and to call something, "a little too New York" was to invoke a euphemism for "a little too Jewish."

Moore is not overly concerned with these less-complimentary aspects of Jewish urbanism. For much of American Jewish history, Jews' urbanism brought to mind their miserable poverty and purportedly dishonest business practices. Yet, writing at a time when urban living represents progressive and ecological values, Moore's study expresses contemporary support for urbanism. In *Urban Origins*, cities are presented far less as ghettos than as centers of opportunity. Moore writes that, "Jews saw in urban space opportunities both to preserve traditions and to devise new patterns of living" (2). Although Jews living in cities prior to the mid-twentieth century did not experience urban living as a choice they determined by actively weighing pros and cons, Moore's book recalls that cities have often been beneficial for Jews and Judaism.

In her first chapter, Moore shows how synagogues announced a Jewish presence in the city, asserting both difference and commonalities with the surrounding culture. One example is San Francisco's Sherith Israel's stained glass windows, built after the 1905 earthquake, which depict Moses descending with the Ten Commandments to give them to Israelites. However, Moses is descending not from Sinai but from El Capitan, a famous mountain in Yosemite, combining Jewish and Californian cultural touchstones. "Synagogues acknowledged a Jewish urban presence and invited Christians to reflect on their own faith and willingness to accommodate non-Christian believers," Moore writes (9). In early American history, the very presence of a synagogue was interpreted as a sign of the city's openness, as some colonial towns, such as Boston, were unwilling to accommodate non-Christians.

By the early twentieth century, several urban settings had given Jews the confidence to view themselves as different from mainstream society and to present themselves that way architecturally. To that end, Jews adopted Moorish-style architecture for their synagogues. No longer seeking to blend in to the cityscape by utilizing popular Christian architectural models, Jews instead presented themselves as a distinctive part of the social fabric of American cities. Christians began to accept Moorish as the Jewish architectural style. As Saskia Coenen Snyder has argued for the European Jewish context, Moorish architecture had a separating function, “reaffirming the foreignness of Jews and their connection to a different nation.” Synagogue architecture declared Judaism’s self-confidence and its values of distinctiveness.

Politics and regional culture also influenced the face of urban synagogues. The Progressive Era had a large effect on early-twentieth-century synagogue architecture. Like other civic buildings of the time, synagogues were built in the neoclassical style. Temple Sinai in Chicago embraced neoclassicism as emblematic of its commitment to Chicago, its dialogue with Christians, and its service to the working classes. On the West Coast, the Wilshire Boulevard Temple promoted an emotionally expressive Judaism, mixing styles that would have been familiar to Los Angelenos, including Art Deco, Southwestern, and Romanesque, with narrative biblical murals to adorn the sanctuary. Through its architecture, the Wilshire Boulevard Temple let visitors know that Judaism did not require abandoning the charms of Hollywood.

For Hasidim, Moore observes, an entire city neighborhood becomes a sacred space through the use of mitzvah mobiles. When Menachem Mendel Schneerson ascended to the leadership of the Lubavitch Hasidim in 1951, he introduced American urban religious innovations. With the goal of finding secular Jews and reigniting their Jewish souls, Lubavitch young men took to crowded city sidewalks, starting in the 1970s, and offered passersby Jewish literature and an opportunity to perform Jewish ritual. Their “Are you Jewish?” query has become part of the urban religious experience in many cities, fulfilling Rabbi Schneerson’s vision of a spiritual army performing outreach in the city and combatting not only the city’s secularism, but the specifically Jewish experience of assimilating into the mainstream.

Moore’s chapter on streets is further testament to the idea that New York has a special role in American Judaism, although observations here apply to other cities, as well. In New York, streets amplified Jewish political

expression and decisions about religious observance, such as whether Jewish shop owners would keep a store open on holidays or the Sabbath. That Jews felt free to publicly express themselves on city streets bespoke a confidence that Jews had never taken for granted in other countries. But streets also offered a kind of referendum on the acceptability of American Jews and Judaism. When funerals were held in the streets, as in the case of Orthodox rabbi Jacob Joseph's 1902 funeral, a mob erupted as Irish workers at a printing press and Irish policemen began beating up mourners. At other times, Jews used public funerals to enhance their image. At the 1909 public funeral of Yiddish poet Jacob Gordin, the funeral took inspiration from non-Jewish funerals, with floral wreaths, an open coffin, and vendors selling buttons with the poet's image. The writer Sholom Aleichem's funeral on 15 May 1916 was the largest funeral procession New Yorkers had ever seen, and it became another instance of how Jewish funerals affirmed the importance of Jews to New York.

City streets were sites of both cooperation and conflict, as well as places for Jews to establish Jewish consumer practices. Immigrant neighborhoods hummed with Jewish commerce: the selling and purchasing of kosher food, holiday-appropriate clothing, and ritual items. This also meant that Jewish practices in city streets reached the consciousness of non-Jews, who became more aware of the rhythms of Jewish life, such as which evenings Jews walked to synagogue in their holiday best. As a result, young Jewish boys, especially, were frequently the targets of bullying. Streets also became important as Jews left cities for suburbs, leading to pilgrimages back to specifically Jewish streets and neighborhoods, allowing Jews to continue to enjoy the street's spirit and to be inspired by it. Walking these old streets—whether on the Lower East Side, Miami, or in Jewish Los Angeles—allowed visitors to reclaim what had been rejected.

The last chapter, "Snapshots," makes a point that is often implicit in Moore's book: Although photographs are often seen as representations of the truth, they are in fact full of artificiality. Just as the photographer chooses her subject and how to portray it, American Jews—and those who narrate their history—have made choices about what to place in the foreground and what to leave out of the shot. Cities have been given a prominent place in this history, but that does not mean that town and country are absent. Nonetheless, the urban view of the American Jewish

past is the one we are most used to watching—in our minds, on the big screen, in museum exhibits, and in books about American Jewish history.

Ironically, as Moore explains, photographs of immigrant Jews that were taken during the period of mass migration were often shot by non-Jews. These non-Jewish photographers used the denizens of the crowded Lower East Side to help launch a documentary tradition of photography. Both Lewis Hine and Jacob Riis used photographs of Jewish immigrants to advance their causes (for Riis, it was better housing for the poor; for Hine it was more restrictions on child labor). Moore observes that these photographs “prodded American Jews to produce accounts that would become part of American Judaism’s distinctive history” (114).

The history of these early-twentieth-century photographs is particularly revealing of American Jewish sensibilities. Riis’s *Talmud School in Hester Street Tenement* and his *Ludlow Street Hebrew Making Ready for Sabbath Eve In His Coal Cellar* show Jewish men and boys in miserable urban conditions. Moore observes that these photographs often evoke pride in contemporary Jews, as they provide evidence of humble beginnings and the progress that Jews have since made. Since the late 1960s, when notions of Jewish power and wealth shifted, American Jews have needed these images, and the origin stories they inspire, to feel rooted in a narrative of overcoming disadvantage.

Photographs are, in part, responsible for establishing the urban origins of American Judaism, or as Beth Wenger has written, of making sites such as the Lower East Side “a primary site of Jewish memory and a physical space for the invention of Jewish identity in America” (Moore, 132). But the ambivalent qualities of photography are also influential, and Moore explains them through Alfred Stieglitz’s famous 1907 photograph, *The Steerage*. Photographs seem to represent the truth, but this famous photograph reveals how the misinterpretation of a photograph leads to fiction. Stieglitz, who was an American-born son of wealthy German Jewish immigrants, sought to produce a new American art that was “openly critical of the aggressive commercialism, hypocritical moralism and empty conventionality of the reigning culture” (147). To Stieglitz, the mass migration of impoverished Jews to work in factories was part of this crass commercial America. But on a 1907 trip across the Atlantic, having tired of his first-class cabin company, Stieglitz wandered toward steerage class and gazed upon an arresting scene.

To later viewers of the photograph, the scene appeared Jewish: Among the mostly female crowd in steerage, a figure in a shawl with stripes resembles a religious Jew in a prayer shawl. As Moore notes, the fact that the ship was on its way *to* Europe (at a time when only 7 percent to 15 percent of Jewish immigrants returned to Europe) makes it unlikely that Stieglitz's photograph actually portrays Jews. The urban origins of American Judaism have primed viewers to see Jews even when they are not there.

It is not Moore's primary goal, but her book does point to the fact that it was often wish as much as fact that undergirded these urban origins. Jews have *wanted* to see their roots in America as urban. Urbanism has fit American Jewish self-perceptions and values. But in ending her book with the departure of Jews to the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s, Moore shows readers that they will also have to take seriously the reality of suburbia as a home—and an origin—for more recent developments in American Judaism.

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Dan J. Puckett, *In the Shadow of Hitler: Alabama's Jews, the Second World War, and the Holocaust* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2014), xiv + 326 pp.

We might assume that during the 1930s and 1940s, many Southerners would connect Nazi racial ideology and American beliefs in white racial supremacy and segregation as different but related forms of prejudice. Dan J. Puckett's research on Alabama's Jewish elites and organizations "in the shadow of Hitler," however, concludes that the only group to closely link Nazi persecution and Jim Crow was Alabama's African Americans. Meanwhile, some white Alabamans contrasted Germany's barbarism with their own benevolent paternalism.

Puckett shows that the 1931 case of nine African Americans known as the Scottsboro Boys, arrested for the rape of two white women, served to divide Jews and African Americans in Alabama. The communist-sponsored International Labor Defense (ILD) sent two New York Jewish lawyers to Scottsboro to defend the case, and for many white Alabamans, this reinforced the conclusion that behind every Northern Jew was

a communist or communist sympathizer. The ILD got involved in another Alabama case—the murder of a white Tuscaloosa woman in 1933. In this case mobs lynched two of the three African American defendants, and some news articles blamed the ILD for the violence.

The intensity of such early events forced rabbis and other Jewish representatives into a bind. Disregarding previous guidance from within his congregation to leave the “Negro question” alone, Benjamin Goldstein, a leftist Northern-trained rabbi of a Montgomery Reform temple, publicly supported the Scottsboro defendants and was ousted in April 1933. Other liberal voices chose to remain silent, either to protect their positions or to protect their congregations against potential outbursts of antisemitism. Rabbi Goldstein’s successor, Eugene Blachschleger, served as an “ambassador” to the gentiles of Montgomery, with the corollary that he avoided challenging beliefs in white supremacy.

Puckett (8, 110) leaves ambiguous the balance between those Jews who consciously refrained from potentially damaging challenges to racial codes and those who simply were not inclined to challenge them. Either way, Alabama’s twelve thousand Jews could speak out and mobilize against Nazi persecution of Jews in Germany without much concern. An implicit coalition of moderate Alabaman Jews and moderate-to-liberal non-Jews denounced Germany and sought constructive outlets for action at home despite the presence of conservative, antisemitic, and racist forces. This is the focal point of the book.

Perhaps the most striking gentile critic of both Nazi Germany and domestic antisemitism was Grover C. Hall, editor of the *Montgomery Advertiser*. In 1936 he wrote, but did not publish, a very long editorial with a very long title lambasting both Germany and domestic antisemites for the double standard they applied to Jews, above all, for assuming collective Jewish racial characteristics and seeing Jews as masterminds behind both communism and capitalism. Hall believed that antisemitic violence “could happen here.”

Hall tellingly chose to sit on “The Egregious Gentile” (the beginning of his title), fearing, he said later, that it would be ignored. Or perhaps it would have generated the wrong kind of reaction? After *Kristallnacht* a much larger percentage of Alabamans and Americans was critical of Germany, and the *Advertiser* ran the editorial, grabbing national attention. Alabama Senator Lister Hill read it into the *Congressional Record*,

and the *Advertiser* printed thirteen thousand copies. When Hall died in 1941, Alabama's Jewish communities lamented the loss of a friend.

Hill, whose mother was born into a German Jewish family, helped constituents bring relatives to the United States and to Alabama, as did U.S. Representative John Sparkman. At the local level, Jews and non-Jews worked to resettle immigrants and refugees in appropriate locations and jobs, with mixed success. One chapter on antisemitism and racism during the war samples unattractive elements of the climate in Alabama, strong enough to worry Jewish elites and officials, but not to prevent constructive Jewish action. One is left wondering just how typical Alabama was of Southern states.

Alabama's Reform congregations tended to be non-Zionist, while Conservative and Orthodox groups were Zionist. They fought early and often, but less so over time. Both sides could agree on certain common goals, such as denouncing Nazi persecution, working to liberalize immigration and settle refugees at home, and pressing the British to open Palestine to Jews seeking to escape Europe. To be sure, their larger political goals remained mostly unfulfilled, but shared aspirations and common efforts helped to diminish suspicions and barriers. By the time Israel came into being, the anti-Zionist camp was almost deserted.

This is a carefully researched study well worth reading. Puckett's material is most interesting where he highlights the experiences of individuals, not the wrangling among local Jewish organizations. And it should be noted that the book is not without flaws. Each chapter is topical, but "Alabama's Jews and Nazism" is very broad. Other narrower topics—such as the refugee crisis, the press and the Holocaust, the war, and antisemitism and racism during the war—overlap considerably, with some repetition as a consequence.

The more detailed topical chapters break down the material by city or region. These subheadings may work well for Alabama readers sensitive to local differences and eager to find out more about particular individuals or congregations, but it is less satisfying for those looking for statewide tendencies or changes over time. If local traditions and institutions were so important and differences so substantial, it might have been better to divide the book into full chapters on each area—micro-histories of those cities and towns with a substantial Jewish population. That would have given the local focus more continuity.

Richard Breitman, distinguished professor emeritus at American University, is the author or co-author of eleven books. His FDR and the Jews, co-authored with Allan J. Lichtman, won a 2013 National Jewish Book Award in American Jewish Studies.

Zohar Segev, *The World Jewish Congress During the Holocaust: Between Activism and Restraint* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 240 pp.

If book titles are supposed to signal to readers a work's subject matter, then Zohar Segev appears to have dedicated a monograph to historicizing the wartime efforts of a visible international Jewish organization, the World Jewish Congress (WJC). The WJC often makes appearances in the well-established literature concerned with Anglo-American responses to the Holocaust, and here its leaders—particularly founding President Stephen S. Wise—are often made subject to searing criticism for a combination of naiveté and willful indifference to Jewish suffering and for deflecting criticism of the Roosevelt administration's passivity. The topic of Holocaust rescue is a rather well-worn one, dealt with in great detail by scholars over the last forty years, including David Wyman, Deborah Lipstadt, William Rubinstein, Monty Penkower, Henry Feingold, and too many others to list. Although little to no new evidence has surfaced to change the basic premise that there is little the West (and its Jews) could have done to save more of European Jewry, the issue continues to percolate in public consciousness, evidenced by the recent furor generated by Richard Breitman and Allan Lichtman's *FDR and the Jews*.¹ As Yehuda Bauer has analyzed in a recent survey article, this persistence of public interest "has clear contemporary political implications" that reflect "current Jewish-Israeli and Jewish-American" concerns about Israeli security.²

Other than positing a more reasonable yardstick for the behavior of the WJC, it is not clear what Segev seeks to achieve by wading into these long-running disputes. An Israeli historian whose previous work has focused on the transformation of American Zionism in the 1940s, Segev does not engage directly with much secondary literature beyond a handful of passing footnotes, leaving it to the reader to determine the significance of his thick description of the WJC. What Segev does very lucidly is explain why the WJC and its top leadership, Wise and Nahum Goldmann, sought to "moderate [American Jews'] political

demands, curtail overt protests and engage instead in covert activities of which the broad Jewish community remained unaware” (7). The author goes to great lengths to detail the yawning gaps between the WJC’s public rhetoric and action behind the scenes, revealing, for instance, how the WJC engaged in a small rescue operation of children through Lisbon, Portugal, that it never publicized (134–158). Ultimately, the author contends the WJC’s relatively moderate behavior on rescue and on Palestine stemmed from “structural constraints within the American political system” as well as fears about playing into Nazi propaganda sensationalizing the “Jewish” war (40, 103–104). In fact, the kernel of such arguments was already evident in Segev’s first monograph, *From Ethnic Politicians to National Leaders*, which covers some of the same ground as parts of this book.³

Once he breaks out of the straightjacket fashioned from the Holocaust and American Zionist contexts, Segev manages to raise fresh questions. The author’s innovative fourth chapter goes furthest in advancing his self-proclaimed goal of broadening the academic study of the postwar Jewish world beyond the founding of the State of Israel (225–226). Here, the WJC becomes less reduced to two charismatic leaders and less confined to the American domestic arena. As a result, Segev provides one of the best existing accounts of how the WJC sought to reinvigorate Jewish life in postwar Europe, maintain a *raison d’être* separate from the Zionist movement, and encourage the development of Jewish collective identity in the Diaspora. While he exaggerates the extent to which such efforts distinguished the WJC in the postwar Jewish world, the author provides, for example, a useful survey of the work of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, the WJC’s research arm that helped to pioneer the academic study of the Holocaust and to shape postwar transformations in international criminal law.⁴ The broadening of context allows Segev to recount the importance of Jacob and Nehemiah Robinson, Lithuanian-born brothers who have attracted recent scholarly attention for their work on Jewish reparations from Germany and international refugee law, among many other topics.⁵

Ultimately, Segev should be congratulated for his exhaustive empirical approach. He has made more use of internal WJC records and related material at the American Jewish Archives and Central Zionist Archives as they relate to Jewish behavior and thought during World War II than any other study of which I am aware. Still, by returning to such

familiar ground, his study ultimately confirms the extent to which questions about Holocaust rescue have been fully exhausted.

One final observation must be reserved for the many errors, mostly typographical but some grammatical, that the publisher, De Gruyter, allowed to slip into the book's text, footnotes, and bibliography.

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Notes

¹Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

²Yehuda Bauer, "Roosevelt, American Jews and Rescue Attempts," in *The Individual in History: Essays in Honor of Jehuda Reinharz*, ed. ChaeRan Freeze, Sylvia Fuks Fried, and Eugene Sheppard (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2015), 239–251.

³Zohar Segev, *From Ethnic Politicians to National Leaders: American Zionist Leadership, the Holocaust and the Establishment of Israel* [Hebrew] (Sedeh-Boker: Ben-Gurion University, 2007).

⁴Boaz Cohen, *Israeli Holocaust Research: Birth and Evolution* (New York and London: Routledge, 2012); Mark Lewis, *The Birth of the New Justice: The Internationalization of Crime and Punishment, 1919–1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁵Ronald W. Zweig, *German Reparations and the Jewish World: A History of the Claims Conference*, 2nd ed. (London: Frank Cass, 2001); Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Rotem Giladi, "A 'Historical Commitment'? Identity and Ideology in Israel's Attitude to the Refugee Convention 1951–4," *The International History Review* 37, no. 4 (2014): 1–23.

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