

THE MYTH OF THE JEWISH EXILE FROM THE LAND OF ISRAEL

A Demonstration of Irenic Scholarship

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More than that of any other nation, Jewish identity is based on the *imaginaire* of a collective memory rather than on a common territory. I intend to examine here the sources of one myth that has had critical influence on the establishment of Jewish collective memory and modern Israeli identity. In doing so, I find myself treading a thin line. On the one hand, I am a Zionist loyal to awareness of the need for the existence of the State of Israel. On the other hand, I am deeply troubled by the price paid by the Palestinians for the fulfillment of this dream. Like many others, I desperately seek a fair solution that will minimize the pain and suffering for both sides.

I am presenting these remarks out of recognition that the historian—especially a historian who deals with his own culture—cannot evade the responsibility of clarifying the political, moral, and social significance of his research. I belong to the generation of Israeli historians who turned their back on Zionist historiography, which was characterized by the dominance of grand national narratives. My generation has preferred to cover itself in the warm, protective blanket of “professional history,” of scholarship free of ideological bias; and rather than

grand national narrative, we have preferred to deal with a multitude of smaller narratives. However, this newer approach does not mean that the professional study of history has ceased to serve political goals. Even as a “profession,” history is still a tool that advances national and particularistic agendas, and these do not provide the cultural and mental equipment needed for the establishment of an era of reconciliation and peace. For that reason, I prefer to assign another task to historical studies: to construct histories that educate toward self-criticism and the tolerance of conflicting national narratives.

The position that I would like to propose here is not post-Zionist. I do not wish to undermine the Zionist national narrative or to weaken it. However, I do wish to add a dimension of self-awareness to it, so that it will be more critical, more nuanced, more balanced. In this way, historiography can take an important step forward. In the past two hundred years, historical studies mainly have helped to shape national consciousness and national particularism—one may add national egotism. Historical studies must undergo a corrective transformation and serve to foster understanding among nations, rather than hatred. Thus, after shifting from monophonic national history to professional history, we should continue now into a new phase of polyphonic history. The study of history should cease to serve those who foment conflicts and become instead an instrument of reconciliation, understanding, and tolerance.

In order to achieve that aim, the change I am describing must take place in every rival camp. Therefore, I proposed to the organizers of this workshop that they bring an Israeli historian who takes a critical approach toward the historical narratives of Zionist nationalism together with a Palestinian historian who adopts a similar approach toward the founding narratives of Palestinian nationalism. Unfortunately, my wish could not be realized. Nevertheless, I am here, prepared to speak, because I have come to the conclusion that the duty of self-criticism is incumbent on the conqueror more than on the conquered. I hope that these remarks will foster parallel responses. It would be very disappointing if the only result of this internal Jewish criticism were the reinforcement of criticism from outside.

I

The myth I will examine is that of the exile of the Jews from their land as a result of the destruction of the Second Temple, and I will trace its vicissitudes and history. This myth is very common not only in Israel but also in the West. The national anthem of the State of Israel declares that the hope to live as a free nation in the Land of Israel is 2,000 years old. Belief that the establishment of the State of Israel put an end to a two-millennium exile is so widely shared that, in the first generation after the establishment of the state, Israelis liked to tag

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new events with the cliché, “for the first time in two thousand years.” Most Jewish tourists who go to Rome today visit the Arch of Titus, and they innocently believe that the figures bearing the Temple vessels are the Jews of Jerusalem, exiles in Rome, whereas in fact they are soldiers of the Roman legion marching in a triumphal parade. The Arch of Titus expresses a complex of images touching upon the beginning of the exile and the circumstances of its occurrence, the most important of these being the myth that the exile from the land dates from the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. The common assumption is that the Jews were uprooted from their homeland because of an intentional policy of victorious Rome. Thus the two events—destruction and exile—entered historical imagination and imagery as a pair. Just as Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the First Temple and exiled the inhabitants of Judaea to Babylonia, so also Titus was thought of as destroying Jerusalem and exiling the Jews from their land.

It is impossible to ignore the parallel between the myth of Jews driven from their historical homeland and the opposing myth: the abandonment of the land by the Palestinians. The common Zionist view presents the flight of the Palestinians from their settlements in the years 1947–48 as “leaving.” That word has moral and political consequences. In an article published in *Haaretz* (“On a Sin that We Did Not Commit,” September 17, 1998), the journalist Dan Margalit wrote: “If the Arabs left their homes—mainly on the initiative of their leaders, sometimes also urged by Israeli soldiers—the responsibility for the refugee problem lies first of all upon the Arab world and the Palestinian leadership.” Leaving is a voluntary act, indirectly implying that the land was forfeited; whereas exile is coercion and apparently does not infringe upon the exiles’ connection with the land or on their rights of ownership to it. The description of the flight of the Palestinians as “leaving” is meant to deprive them of the status of victim, to place the responsibility for their fate upon them or upon their leadership, and to justify refusal to allow them a right of return. In contrast, the description of the Jews’ departure as “exile” retains the image of victim, frees Jews of the responsibility for leaving the land for so long a time, and justifies their right to return to it today. The difference between leaving and being exiled is the difference between *denying the Palestinian right to return* and *granting the law of return* to Jews.

II

What is the source of the myth of exile from the land? What is the origin of the view that the emptying of the Land of Israel of its Jews after the destruction of the Second Temple was the result of intentional expulsion?¹ First, we need to

1. To my knowledge, this question has not been discussed previously in these terms in Jewish historical research, and that silence is puzzling. The Israeli novel-

ist A. B. Yehoshua has called for recognizing the political and moral consequences that derive, in his opinion, from the *abandonment* of the land by its Jewish inhabitants 1,500

clarify the manifest particulars. The dispersal of the Jews did not begin with the destruction of the Second Temple. The Book of Esther (3:8) describes the Jews as “a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy [the Persian emperor’s] kingdom.” At the end of the Second Temple period, Josephus Flavius flatly stated: “The Jewish nation is widely dispersed over all the habitable earth among its inhabitants.”² Philo even regarded the dispersal of the Jewish people among the nations of the earth as a blessing, and he compared the Jews’ dispersal to the Greeks’ establishment of colonies.³ The destruction of the Second Temple did not empty the land of its Jewish inhabitants—many had already been abroad for a very long time—and in any case there is no real historical basis for belief in a wholesale exile at the hands of Rome. The Romans, like any victorious army, customarily took prisoners, but they did not have a policy of exiling conquered nations from their lands. According to Josephus’s probably inflated figures, 1,100,000 people were killed in Jerusalem, including many pilgrims who had been trapped in the city since Passover. About 97,000 were captured. Many of these met their deaths in battle with animals and in circus entertainments. Others died of hunger. Still other prisoners were brought to Rome; some were sold in Libya for forced labor in mines. But otherwise, the Jews were left in place. They emigrated from the Land of Israel during the first centuries of the first millennium in a slow and gradual process, and not as the result of an intentional policy on the part of the Roman and Byzantine authorities.

“The exile from the land” after the destruction of the Second Temple is not a clear and evident historical fact. It is a story that reflects a world of images. Although the myth of expulsion serves the Zionist claim of renewed Jewish ownership of the land, Zionism did not initiate the claim. Rather, it is deeply rooted in ancient soil, and these ancient roots constitute a complex and twisted tangle. Since I cannot pretend to discuss all of the vicissitudes of the myth, I will limit myself to a modest and hesitant effort to explore its origin. The antiquity of the myth is indicated by the well-known critical remarks attributed to the Amora (talmudic sage) Rabbi Yoḥanan, who lived in the third century CE—remarks pre-

years ago or more: Yehoshua, “The Diaspora—the Neurotic Solution,” in *In Praise of Normalcy* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1980), 31–46. The only study known to me that deals with the meaning of the term *exile* in connection with the supposed expulsion of the Jews from the Land of Israel after the destruction of the Second Temple is that of Chaim Milikowsky, “Notions of Exile, Subjugation, and Return in Rabbinic Literature,” in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 265–96. Milikowsky argues—and his remarks are consistent with the central claim of the present paper—that in Tannaitic sources of the second and third centuries CE, the term *exile* had the mean-

ing of political subjugation and not a connotation of being driven from one’s land. For more about exile and its meaning in Jewish historical consciousness, see Yitzhak F. Baer, *Exile*, trans. Robert Warshaw (1936; New York: Schocken, 1947). See also Baer, “The Land of Israel and Exile in the Eyes of the Generations of the Middle Ages” [in Hebrew], *Measef Zion* 6 (1934): 149–61, and Amnon Raz-Krakotkin, “Exile within Sovereignty: Toward a Critique of ‘the Condemnation of the Diaspora’ in Israeli Culture” [in Hebrew], *Teoria Uviqoret* 4 (autumn 1993): 23–55.

2. Josephus, *Wars*, 7:3:3.

3. Philo, *Life of Moses*, II:23:2.

served in the Babylonian Talmud: "Our House has been destroyed, our Temple burnt and we ourselves exiled from our land."⁴ This sentence postulates a strong connection between the destruction and exile. As the discussion continues in the Talmud, the phrase is repeated anonymously in order to establish the guilt of Rome for exiling the Jewish people from its land: "The hands are the hands of Esau: this is the Government of Rome which has destroyed our House and burnt our Temple and driven us out of our land."⁵ This tripartite expression—the destruction of the House, the burning of the Temple, the exile of the people—appears three more times in the *Babylonian* Talmud, but in all four instances the words are attributed to the sages of the *Land of Israel*.⁶ Naturally the question arises as to how sages who were living in the Land of Israel could have expressed a complaint that the people had been exiled from its land. For were they not living in their land? Was the Galilee, their dwelling place, not regarded by them as a part of the land of the Jews?

When we examine what sources in the Land of Israel had to say directly, we discover a different picture. The combination of the destruction of the House, the burning of the Temple, and the exile of the people from its land is also found in midrashim from the Land of Israel. However, there they refer specifically to the *First Temple*.⁷ In general, in many sources, including Babylonian sources, we find that the connection between the destruction of the Temple and exile is associated specifically with the *First Temple*.⁸ The early sources from the Land

4. Gittin 56a. Most translations of Talmud here have been taken from the Soncino edition, online at come-and-hear.com (accessed July 18, 2005).

5. Gittin 57a. For additional information, see: Hans Joachim Schoeps, "Die Tempelzerstörung des Jahres 70 in der jüdischen Religionsgeschichte," in *Aus frühchristlicher Zeit* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1950), 144–83.

6. Brakhot 3a, spoken by a Tanna, Rabbi Yose Hagalili, and an Amora, Rav—that is to say, at the end of the second century, beginning of the third century: "R. Isaac b. Samuel says in the name of Rab: The night has three watches, and at each watch the Holy One, blessed be He, sits and roars like a lion and says: Woe to the children, on account of whose sins I destroyed My house and burnt My temple and exiled them among the nations of the world." Immediately afterward, a saying by Rabbi Yosei is presented, in which he tells about walking along the road and entering a ruin in Jerusalem, where he heard a divine voice "cooing like a dove, and saying: Woe to the children, on account of whose sins I destroyed My house and burnt My temple and exiled them among the nations of the world!" Here we have reuse of the expression attributed to the sages of the second and third centuries. However, one should note the differences between the anonymous saying in the Talmud and the three sayings attributed to Rabbi Yose. to Rabbi

Yohanan, and to Rav. In the three attributed sayings, the active factor in exiling the people is the Holy One, blessed be he, himself, or the "the scrupulousness of R. Zechariah b. Abkulas." In contrast, in the anonymous source, which is later, Rome explicitly bears the blame for the expulsion. In any event, the expression is repeated four times in the Babylonian Talmud and binds the destruction of the Temple with expulsion from the land.

7. Shir Hashirim Raba 7:8; Kohelet Raba 12:8; Tanhuma, Reeh, 15; Tanhuma, ed. Solomon Buber, Ki Tetse, 3. On one exception, see Tanhuma, Breshit, 7 and below.

8. Sifra, Behuqotai, 6:5: "and I laid the land waste." This is a good deed, so that the Jews would not say, since we have been exiled from our land, now the enemies come and find contentment on it, as it is said, 'and your enemies who dwell on it will be desolate.' Even the enemies who come afterward will not find contentment on it." Sifre, Numbers, ed. H. S. Horowitz, 47, no. 42: "Until they were exiled from their land, 'is there a number to his legions', when they were exiled from their land, 'a thousand thousands will lay it waste.'" Megillah 12a: "they said [to Ahasuerus]: from the day that the Temple was destroyed and we were exiled from our land, wisdom has been taken from us, and we do not know how to judge capital crimes."

of Israel are faithful to the tendency to relate the biblical prophecies of destruction to the *First Temple*, especially those that speak of abandoning the land and its becoming a wasteland.⁹

In other words, it seems that the triple expression—destruction of the House, burning of the Temple, exile from the land—originally (in the sources from the Land of Israel) referred to the *First Temple* and were applied to the *Second Temple* only in Babylonia.¹⁰ In the Tannaitic and early Amoraic sources, Rome is accused only of destroying the Temple, not of exiling the people from their land.¹¹ A broad historical and national outlook, one that viewed the "Exile of Edom" (Rome being identified with the biblical Edom) as a political result of forced expulsion, did not survive from this period. Nor would such a view have

9. Thus, for example, in the Tannaitic midrash, Sifra, we find the following interpretation of the rebuke in Lev. 26:32–33 ("And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen . . . and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste") as applying to the *First Temple*: "This is a very harsh decree for Israel, for when a person is exiled from his vineyard and from his house, in the end he will return, as though his vineyard and his house were not destroyed. You, you are not that way, but rather 'and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.' Why is this? Because you will not return in the end." These words cannot be applied to the time of the author of the midrash, for it cannot be imagined that a Jewish commentator would believe in the second or third century that the exiles from the land would not return in the end. His words can easily refer to the first exile and to the Ten Lost Tribes, according to the approach maintaining that the Ten Tribes would not return (Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:3).

10. This impression is strengthened by seeing the expression attributed to three different speakers in the Babylonian Talmud: to the Tanna, Rabbi Yose Hagelili, and to the Amoraim, Rav and Rabbi Yohanan. The logical conclusion seems to be that one should not regard these "quotations" in the Babylonian Talmud as an authentic and faithful report of the attitudes of the sages of the Land of Israel in the second and third centuries.

11. In most of the ancient sources, forced exile is not described. In *Mekhila de R. Yishma'el, Masekhta de-pisba*, ed. H. S. Horowitz, 51–52, we read: "You find in every place where the Jews were exiled that, as it were, the divine presence was exiled with them. They were exiled to Egypt, and the divine presence was with them. . . . They were exiled to Babylonia, and the divine presence was with them. . . . they were exiled to Edom, and the divine presence was with them, as it is said, 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Boz-

it were, the divine presence will return with them, as it is said, 'That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity' (Deut. 30:3). It does not say, 'return,' but 'will turn.' And it says, 'Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse' (Song of Songs 4:8). Does she really come from Lebanon? Rather she goes up to Lebanon, and what do we learn from 'Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse'? As it were, I and you were exiled from Lebanon, and I and you go up to Lebanon." The author of this midrash takes no pains to distinguish between the exile of Egypt, which was voluntary, and the exile of Babylonia, which was forced, nor does he make the exile dependent on the destruction. Perhaps, too, the Jewish move to identify the destruction of the *Second Temple* with that of the *First Temple* leaves an opening for hope that, just as the Babylonian exile lasted a short time and was terminated with a return to Zion, the same will happen after the destruction of the *Second Temple*. In this respect, the Jews were different from the Christians. The latter viewed the destruction as final. The view that the destruction and the exile were bound together and that both were perpetrated by Rome gradually became ensconced in Jewish sources as well. As time passed, the distinction between the first and second rebellions was blurred, and we find more and more references to the exile of the Jews from their land. In *Bamidbar Raba* 4:10, the following teaching is attributed to the Tanna Rabbi Natan: "The Jews are beloved, because everywhere they are exiled, the divine presence is exiled with them. They were exiled to Egypt, the divine presence was exiled with them. . . . they were exiled to Babylonia, the divine presence was exiled with them. . . . they were exiled to Eilam, the divine presence was with them. . . . they were exiled to Edom, the divine presence was with them." On these teachings, see Efraim E. Urbach, *The Sages, Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1979), 54–57. On the parallel Christian view of the reason for dispersion of the Jews—in order to disseminate the Old Testament among the gentiles—see St. Augustine, *Adversus Iudaeos (Tract against the Jews)*, 7:9.

been appropriate to the political reality and the conditions of Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel, which were certainly very well known to the members of that generation.

III

In Christian sources the situation is completely different. There, the exile of the Jewish people from their land occupies a central place. The exile has had four key meanings in Christianity. First, the status of the exile is for Christians identical to that of the destruction of the Temple: both were regarded as punishment for the crucifixion of Jesus.¹² Second, the exile reduced the Jews to the level of servants subordinated to the church, and their earlier legal status as citizens according to Roman law was abrogated. Third, the exile marked the end of the era of the Torah of Moses—the era of the Old Testament, which was connected to the Temple—and the beginning of the era of the New Testament, which no longer needed the Temple.¹³ Fourth, the exile confirmed the Jewish nation's loss of right to the Holy Land and established a new, alternative Christian claim to ownership.¹⁴

This image was born of the Christian view of the results of the Bar-Kokhba rebellion: the Romans prohibited Jewish settlement in and around Jerusalem, and there was a marked decline in the Jewish population of Judaea as a whole.¹⁵ The

rebuilding in the future. One approach regarded the biblical prophecy about the rebuilding of Jerusalem as a promise that would be fulfilled after the return of Jesus, his Parousia. At that time Jesus would establish an earthly Christian kingdom, the center of which would be Jerusalem, and it would last for a thousand years (hence the term *chiliasm*, from the prefix for “one thousand” in Greek). After that thousand-year reign, the kingdom of heaven would commence. Another approach regarded the messianic prophecies in the Bible as a promise for a heavenly Jerusalem and the kingdom of heaven, without promise of an actual return to the earthly Jerusalem. The Christian claim to ownership of the Holy Land was of course stronger among the proponents of the former approach, but members of both schools regarded the exile of the Jews from their land as a decided proof that they had been deposed as the beloved children of God.

15. Rivka Fishman-Ducker, “The Bar-Kokhba Rebellion in Christian Sources,” in *The Bar-Kokhba Rebellion: Recent Studies* [in Hebrew], ed. Aharon Oppenheimer and Uriel Rappaport (Jerusalem: Yad Yitshak Ben-Tsevi, 1988), 233–42. On Christian sources describing the prohibition against Jewish settlement in Jerusalem and its surroundings and on the theological meaning of that prohibition, see Oded Irshai, “Constantine and the Jews: The Prohibition against Entering Jerusalem—History and Hagiography” [in Hebrew], *Zion* 60.2 (1995):129–35.

very mention of the Roman decree in Christian sources shows a polemical bias: the decree permitted depiction of the Jews not only as a defeated nation from the political and military point of view but also as a nation driven out of its domain. The crushing of the Bar-Kokhba rebellion was regarded by the Church Fathers as the final blow in the destruction of the Second Temple system, establishing a direct connection between the Jews' sin (the crucifixion of Jesus) and their punishment (the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the nation from its land). In the context of Christian polemics, Justin Martyr was apparently the first, in the mid-second century, to attribute religious significance to the removal of the Jews from Jerusalem.¹⁶ He saw that step as part of a divine plan to end the regime of Ancient Israel and repopulate the Holy City with the New Israel, the Christians. With the second coming of Jesus, Jerusalem would become finally Christian, and Jesus would rule there with the faithful. According to Justin, the admonition of Leviticus 26:41 had been fulfilled: “I will bring them into the land of their enemies.” Similarly, the prophecy of Isaiah 1:7 had come true: “Your country *is* desolate, your cities *are* burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it *is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers.”

These prophecies had come to pass not only because of the crucifixion but also because of the continued rejection of Jesus' message by the Jews, who cursed those who believed in him. The historical event to which the words of Justin refer is not the destruction of the Temple but rather the Bar-Kokhba rebellion, which he witnessed, and he alludes to the prohibition imposed by the Romans upon Jews dwelling in Jerusalem.¹⁷ Tertullian also found particular significance in Bethlehem, along with Jerusalem, being emptied of Jews by the Roman decree, since Bethlehem was the city where the redeemer was supposed to be born. This too was a fulfillment of the prophecy, “Your country *is* desolate, your cities *are* burned with fire.”¹⁸ Tertullian's argument that the Jews' continuing dispersion—the emptying of the land—was punishment for the crucifixion is also found in the writings of Eusebius and Jerome.¹⁹ In his commentary, the latter interprets the prophecy of Zephaniah 1:15–16, “That day *is* a day of wrath,” as referring to the destruction in his own day of “the fortified cities of Judea and the high corners of Judea, which were destroyed unto the dust.”

16. Martyr, *Dialogue*, 79, 127; Heid, *Chiliasmus*, 46–47.

17. Martyr, *Dialogue*, 100. The citation from Sifra presented above, n. 8, “Even the enemies who come afterward will not find contentment on it,” appears to be directed against the making of Jerusalem into a Roman city, but it could also be directed against these Christian hopes.

18. Tertullian, *Adversus Iudaeos*, chap. 13. See also Wilken, *Land Called Holy*, 74.

19. Eusebius, *Theophania*, 4:20; St. Jerome, *Commentary on Zephaniah*, 1:15.

12. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3:5; Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 135–38.

13. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 4:22; 7:26; 8:69. Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 1:6. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* [in Hebrew], trans. David Rokeah (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2004), 40, 127, and n. 600. In the Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 116a-b, this argument is placed in the mouth of a Christian “philosopher”: “From the day that you were exiled from your land, the Torah of Moses was taken away and a different Torah was given.” A similar opinion, according to which the commandments of the Torah were given only for those living in the Land of Israel is found in Sifre to Deuteronomy 43, ed. Louis Finkelstein, 102: “Even though I exile you from the land to outside of the land, be excellent in the commandments, so that when you return, they will not be new to you.”

14. Robert L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Stefan Heid, *Chiliasmus und Antichrist-Mythos. Eine frühchristliche Kontroverse um das Heilige Land* (Bonn: Borengasser, 1993), 41–47; Peter W. L. Walker, *Holy City, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990). In the first centuries CE, two schools arose among the Church Fathers regarding the Land of Israel and its

IV

Was an opposing Jewish position formulated? A simple and forceful Jewish answer should have been available: "Here we dwell, we, our elders, our wives, and our children, in Caesaria and in Sepphoris, in Tiberias and in Usha, and even in Lydda and in Eshtamoa. We did not leave our land, and our heritage has not been given to strangers." Such an answer was not made, but understanding the neglected possibility can help explain a change in the name of the country in the Tannaitic literature of the second century. Whereas earlier the country had usually been called "Judaea," the appellation "Eretz-Yisrael" (the Land of Israel) now became common in rabbinical literature. In the Bible, the "Land of Israel" refers to the Kingdom of Israel, as distinct from the "Land of Judaea" which refers to the Kingdom of Judaea. Calling the two kingdoms by the same name, Eretz-Yisrael, brought with it a change in territorial extent, for the country now comprised not only Judaea but also the coastal plane, the central mountains, the Galilee, and perhaps even part of Transjordan. In this way, the refugees from Judaea made the Galilee their country—a part of Eretz-Yisrael—and thus sought to overcome the feeling that they were refugees in their own land. This move may also have been a Jewish answer to a parallel move in the opposite direction by the Romans, who used the name "Syria Palestina" after the Bar-Kokhba rebellion with the intention of obscuring the Jewish character of the country. For its part, Christian propaganda continued to use the old name of the country, Judaea, so as to represent the removal of the Jews from Jerusalem and its environs as a general expulsion of the Jews from their land.²⁰

The vast majority of references on the part of the sages of the Mishnah to the Land of Israel date from after the Bar-Kokhba rebellion, which is also when most of the *halakhot* (Jewish laws) relating to love of the land and the religious duty of settling it were also born. Isaiah Gafni has pointed out that the custom of bringing dead people for burial in the Land of Israel emerged around the time of Rabbi Judah HaNasi.²¹ "Eretz-Yisrael" is therefore an apologetic term expressing Jewish struggle not only against the new name "Palestina" but also, at least after the fact, against the claim, made in Christian propaganda, that the Jews had been exiled from their land. These struggles form an instructive context in which to consider the saying of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai: "When a person is exiled from Judaea to the Galilee or from the Galilee to Judah, this is not called exile."²² If

20. On the meaning of the concept "the Land of Israel" in biblical literature, see Sara Japhet, *Beliefs and Opinions in the Book of Chronicles* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1977), 307–33.

21. Isaiah Gafni, "The Bringing Up of the Dead for Burial in the Land—Outlines of the Origin of a Custom and Its Development" [in Hebrew], *Catbedra* 4 (1977): 113–30;

and Gafni, *Land, Center, and Diaspora: Jewish Constructs in Late Antiquity* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

22. Midrash Shmuel 8:35, as cited in Efrayim Elimelech Urbach, "From Judea to the Galilee," in *From the World of the Sages* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2002), 330–46.

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai found it appropriate to say such a thing, then surely claims had been made that the Galilee and Judaea were separate lands.

V

Still, the tendency of Jews to leave the country increased during the following centuries, and perception that the destruction of the Temple and the suppression of the Bar-Kokhba rebellion had created an irreversible process of renewed exile became progressively deeper. When we consult later collections of midrashim—dating after the composition of the Talmud (around 500 BCE)—we find that for the first time in Jewish sources the claim is made that Rome not only destroyed the Temple but also expelled the Jews from their land: "The assembly of Israel said to the Holy One Blessed be He, Master of the universe, You saw that wicked Esau was going to come and destroy the Temple and exile Israel from their land."²³ This statement clearly regards Esau (that is to say, Rome) as responsible for the exile of Israel at the time of the Second Temple's destruction. The following legend should be included among the group of late midrashim that make Rome responsible for the exile of the people from their land:

Adrianos [Hadrian], the King of Edom, since he had conquered the entire world, went to Rome. He said to the people in his palace: I want you to make me a god, since I have conquered the entire world. They said to him: You have not yet ruled over His city and His house. He went, and he was successful, and he destroyed the Temple and exiled Israel and returned to Rome. He said to them: I have already destroyed His house, and I burned His Temple, and I have exiled His people. Make me a god.²⁴

This midrash, it would appear, has internalized the late Christian image of the pagan Roman Emperors Vespasian, Titus, and Hadrian, who underwent "Christianization" and rehabilitation in the fourth century because they punished the Jewish crucifiers of Jesus. The Jewish author of the midrash attributes to Hadrian (or Titus) not only the destruction of the Temple and the exiling of the Jews; he also regards the emperor's deification as the result of these acts.²⁵ In this example

23. Esther Raba 3:5 and a parallel text in Midrash Tehilim 10:6: "The Assembly of Israel said to the Holy One, blessed be He, Master of the Universe, You saw that the evil Esau has come and that he will destroy the Temple in the future and exile the Jews from their land and chain them in yokes. . . . He [Esau] will come and take orphans and widows and incarcerate them in prison."

24. Tanhuma, Bereshit, 7.

25. On the change that took place after the fourth century in the attitude of the Jews toward the question of exile can be seen in the reuse of the saying originally attributed to Rabban Yohanan Ben Zakai. In Tosefta, Baba Qama, 7:3, the following opinion is presented in his name: "Why were the Jews exiled to Babylonia more than all the other lands? Because the House of Abraham the Patriarch is from there. Here is a parable, to what is this similar? To a woman who was bad to her husband. Where does he

and many like it, one may see evidence of a great change that took place in the fourth and fifth centuries in Jewish consciousness of the exile. For the first time, we witness a Jewish assertion that the people had been exiled from its land, and the reference is no longer to the distant Babylonian exile. Jewish authors are now dealing directly with contemporary Christian claims and are defending, in a newly Christian context, the idea of Jews continuing to be the Chosen People.

The historical question that we must ask in light of this change is whether it reflects only an internal or “natural” Jewish tendency to adopt the biblical conception that ties destruction to exile, or whether a dialogical process—one that reflects absorption of an external time framework—is observable. I wish to advance the claim that the change involves Jewish acceptance of Christian historical time, which, in the fourth and fifth centuries, was already accepted by the majority in the Roman world. The Christianization of the Land of Israel by Constantine in the fourth century brought Jews to consider that Christians were correct in claiming that the Holy Land was progressively slipping from Jewish hands and that a new exile, the “Exile of Edom,” had begun. In Jewish consciousness, the Christianization of the Roman empire came to be seen as the emergence of Edom as a single political and religious entity, and this identification helped

send her? To her father's house.” These words of Rabban Yoḥanan Ben Zakai have no connection to the destruction of the Second Temple and exile from the land, and their whole intention is to explain why the major part of the Jewish diaspora in his day was specifically in Babylonia. However, in the Babylonian Talmud, Pesaḥim 87b, this idea is presented in a different manner. Within a group of sayings attributed to Amoraim of the third century (Rabbi Osha'ya, Rabbi Ḥiyya, Rabbi El'azar)—sayings that praise the existence of the Jewish center in Babylonia as an alternative to that in the Land of Israel (“the Holy One blessed be He did a favor to the Jews when He scattered them among the nations . . . the Holy One blessed be He knows that the Jews cannot bear the cruel decrees of Edom, and therefore he exiled them to Babylonia”)—we also find the following saying: “Rabbi Yoḥanan said, “[the Holy One blessed be he did not exile the Jews to Babylonia except] because he sent them to their mother's house. As when a man is angry at his wife, where does he send her? To her mother's house.” Here the Tanna Rabban Yoḥanan Ben Zakai, of the first century, becomes an Amora, Rabbi Yoḥanan, of the third century, and the woman is sent to her mother's house rather than her father's house. The similarity between the two sayings remains, but the context has changed. In the Talmud, the words are said in order to show that Babylonia was the preferred refuge for the Jews of the Land of Israel, who suffered from the subjection of Rome, and they are very appropriate to the situation in the third century. In this whole group of sayings, there

is no mention of a new exile. All the speakers refer to the longstanding situation of the Jewish diaspora and to the centrality of Babylonia within it. Rabbi Yoḥanan's saying is “recycled” once again in Shir Hashirim Raba 8:9 on the verse, “If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver.” Here a great change is evident: “Israel said to the Holy One blessed be He: Master of the Universe, we are a ‘wall’ and we will erect commandments and good deeds like a wall . . . ‘then I was in his eyes as one who found peace’ (Song of Songs, 8:10). Why? Because all the nations of the world turn to Israel and say to them: If so, why did He exile you from his land and why did He destroy the Temple? And Israel would answer them: we are like the daughter of kings who went away from her father's house to celebrate a holiday. In the end she returns home in peace.” Here we find the first effort to respond to the Christian argument that exile from the land indicates the withdrawal of God's love from the Jews. The Jewish answer makes new use of Rabbi Yoḥanan's saying: this time it is not a rebellious woman, but a woman beloved of her husband. The unusual Hebrew expression *לעשת רגל רדופים*, which appears here, implies that she is driven to return to her parents and tell them of her happiness upon celebrating the holiday. The second change introduced in the original saying of Rabban Yoḥanan Ben Zakai is, “In the end she returns home in peace.” This phrase alludes to the messianic hope for the future, which here plays an apologetic role in the Jewish answer to Christian criticism.

create an equation between the destruction of the Jewish state by Rome and the exiling of the Jews from their land. Here, as in many other matters, Jewish polemics in the first centuries CE do not explicitly deny the “facts” affirmed by Christians, though different interpretations, more suitable to Jewish needs, are of course suggested.

In the fourth and fifth centuries, the distinction between the revolt that led to the destruction of the Temple and the later Bar-Kokhba rebellion came to be blurred in the historical memory of Jews and Christians alike. Augustine distinguishes between two stages in the divine plan to deprive the Jews of their chosen status.²⁶ First, they were to be subject to Rome, even before Jesus was born: thus Augustine understands the verse, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come” (Gen. 49:10). That is to say, first Judah will lose the political scepter, and then Shiloh—Jesus—will come. Indeed, Jesus was born after the last Hasmonaean king was deposed and Herod was made king of the Jews. That date, 37 BCE, was, in Augustine's view, the beginning of the subjection of the Jews. What, then, was the punishment of the Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus, if they had already lost their political liberty? Augustine's answer is: exile from the land. Exile, not loss of political sovereignty, was the punishment for the crucifixion.

VI

From this time on, Jews no longer challenged the myth of exile from the land or 70 CE, the date of the destruction of the Second Temple, as the exile's commencement. This acceptance reflects the adaptation of Jewish apologetics to the Christian conception of time without agreeing to the actual content of Christian claims. The two religions regarded the destruction of the Temple as a formative event but disagreed about its meaning. The discussion was about meanings, not about facts. Perhaps it was convenient for the Jews to prefer the picture of expulsion from the land to that of abandoning it, for only an expulsion with national and catastrophic dimensions was worthy of a national, messianic, sweeping remedy. The messianic image of the return to Zion could promote the adoption and internalization of the Christian conception of time, for the Jewish messianic narrative, like the narrative of the destruction, was precisely parallel to the Christian narrative, although it reversed the signs.

In other words, conceiving of the destruction of the Second Temple as the beginning of a new exile made it possible for the Jews to turn their historical time into messianic time. In the mythic understandings of cyclical and typological time that were prevalent in early Christianity and in Judaism, the establish-

26. St. Augustine, *City of God*, 18:45–46.

ment of a historical starting point for exile made it possible to posit a mythical-messianic point of return toward which all of history strove. Christians expected that the Parousia of Jesus would return them, as it were, to their point of departure in time and place—to Jerusalem in the first century CE. But equally, medieval Jews looked forward to the advent of a messiah who would restore them to conditions of that same point in time and place, Jerusalem in the first century.

This conception also inspired one of the most famous medieval Jewish calculators of the end of days. In the thirteenth century, Rabbi Moses Ben Nahman (Nachmanides) determined that the duration of the exile had to be exactly identical to the length of time that the people had dwelt in their land: “I calculated the years of Israel’s dwelling in the Land, and I saw that they are equal to the number of years that Israel will be exiled from it, for this is as they said: ‘measure for measure.’”²⁷ The historical event that, in his view, determined the transition from dwelling in the Holy Land into living in exile was the destruction of the Second Temple. According to his reckoning, in 1358 the duration of the exile would be equal to the time of dwelling in the land, and the messiah would come then.

Regarding the degree to which Jews internalized Christian concepts in understanding the exile, it is possible to present much evidence from liturgical poetry, historiography, foundation narratives, and religious thought. One example that seems to me particularly fraught with meaning is found in the work of Solomon Ibn Verga, *Shevet Yebuda* (*The Scepter of Judah*). Ibn Verga was among the Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492, and he wrote his work in the 1520s. At the beginning of his book, by means of an imaginary discussion between King Alfonso and a Christian scholar called Tomas, Ibn Verga dedicates an extensive discussion to the destruction of the Jewish state and to the exile. The Jewish author places the following explanation in the Christian’s mouth:

And the reason why the Temple was destroyed—I will tell my Lord, because what happened to it is what happened to our Savior, because Jesus came to atone for the sin of Adam and he accepted death, and the Temple also was meant to atone for the sin of Israel, and it was burned upon them.²⁸

For his part, the king proposes another explanation. According to him, God’s intention in any event was to exile the Jews from their land, and since he did not want the Temple to fall into the hands of foreigners, he destroyed it. Of course, both of these arguments serve Jewish apologetics. Tomas’s argument places the Temple on a level equal to that of Jesus. Just as Jesus was crucified to atone by his death for the sins of mankind, so too the Temple was burned down to atone

27. Nachmanides, *Sefer Hageula*, in *Kitvei Rabeinu Moshe Ben Nahman*, 1:294–95.

28. Shlomo Ibn Verga, *Shevet Yebudah*, ed. Yitzhaq Baer (Jerusalem: Mossad Biyalik, 1947), 45.

for the sins of the Jews. Ibn Verga’s idea that the Temple had a function similar to that of the crucified Jesus recalls the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the sacrifice of Jesus is compared to the sacrifices on the altar. Jesus is the high priest who sacrifices himself, and in his sacrifice he atones for all eternity, in contrast to the animal sacrifices in the Temple, where the atonement was temporary. Ibn Verga places the burned Temple on a level equal to that of the crucified Jesus and by so doing gives the atonement of the destroyed Temple eternal validity. Ibn Verga thus became an authentic spokesman for many Jews in the Middle Ages, who regarded the expulsion from their land as an event establishing their identity in this world and promising their messianic goal. The consciousness of Jewish suffering in exile tallied well with the consciousness of suffering in the Christian passion. However, in Christianity, the sharp transition from the passion to the resurrection took place in three days, human days; whereas in the Jewish consciousness of time, the transition from exile to redemption is measured in terms of the divine day, a thousand years or more.

Further, in Jewish literature of the Middle Ages, the juxtaposition of the Jewish and the Christian images of exilic time placed the two on a collision course. Their unification of the conception of mythic time allowed Jews to level an accusation against Christians entirely parallel to the accusation leveled by Christians against Jews. Just as Christians claimed that the Jews had crucified Jesus and thereby deserved the punishment of exile, so Jews claimed that the Christians—whom Jews identified with mythical Edom—had exiled the Chosen People from the Promised Land and thereby deserved their future punishment: the messianic revenge that would precede the Jews’ final redemption. Fixing the destruction of the Temple as the beginning of the exile thus created a reverse symmetry between Jewish and Christian time, making the historical reality of the period between crucifixion/destruction and Parousia/redemption merely temporary.

In this way, in the Middle Ages, Jewish memory of the destruction of Jerusalem changed from elegy to complaint and harsh resentment—no longer against Rome, which had disappeared from the world and been uprooted from their hearts, but against Rome’s heir and new representative: the church. The reception of the myth of exile from the land played yet another role in the Middle Ages: it explained and justified the status and existence of the Jews in European Christian society. For both Christians and Jews, it was convenient to anchor the Jewish presence in Christian Europe with the argument that the Jews there were direct descendants of the exiles from Jerusalem, as if the diaspora had been created by a single explosion in 70 CE that led to the establishment of communities in various places in the world. Thus, for example, in the fourth century Orosius, reviewing the data found in Josephus regarding 90,000 Jews taken captive in Jerusalem, concluded that these prisoners—who, according to him,

were scattered all over the world—were the founders of the Jewish diaspora in general.²⁹ The German chronicler and bishop, Otto von Freising, continued this process in the twelfth century by adding a zero to the statistic given in Josephus: according to von Freising, the total number of Jews in the world at his time was 900,000.³⁰ The exiling of the Jews from Jerusalem determined not only the boundaries of the Jewish diaspora but also its dimensions. A traditional belief of the Jews of Spain attributes the establishment of the Jewish communities in the Iberian Peninsula to the exiles driven from Jerusalem by Titus.³¹ Similarly, in *The Book of Josiphon* it is told that the exiles of Titus settled in Italy.³² In the *Scroll of Abima'atz* as well, which was written in Italy during the eleventh century, the author describes his ancestors as the founders of the Italian Jewish community in the following words: “My ancestors were exiled, they came with the exiles, who were exiled from Jerusalem . . . with the exile, which Titus commanded, from the city crowned in beauty, and they settled in Oria, and there they gathered, they grew in Torah, and they excelled in [good] deeds.”³³

This tradition was also known in Germany. In an Ashkenazi service of penitential prayers (*slibot*), a tradition is presented regarding Rabbi Amitai, Rabbi Shefatya, and Rabbi Yosefya “whom the evil Titus exiled with the rest of the exile which was expelled from Jerusalem.” They instituted the prayer “*Vehu rabum*” (“and he is merciful”) and ordered that it be recited throughout the diaspora.³⁴ In this prayer, the connection between sin and destruction, the humiliation of exile and the expectation of redemption, is expressed powerfully:

29. Orosius, *Historia adversum Paganos*, VII, 9.7. A Jewish version speaks of 900 ships (in another version, 3,000), upon which the exiles sailed away from the land. See Yehuda David Aizenshtain, *Otsar Midrashim* (New York: Y. D. Aizenshtain, 1915), 436.

30. Yoḥanan Levi, “Josephus the Physician,” in *Worlds Meet* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1969), 229.

31. Abraham Ibn Daud, *Sefer Haqabala*, ed. Gerson D. Cohen (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967), 58, 71. In *Seder 'Olam Zuta* (found in Adolf Neubauer, *Seder Habakhamim veqorot hayamim* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1888], 71), we find: “Vespasian came and destroyed the House and exiled Israel and many households of the House of David and Judah to Aspamia, which is Spain.” In Joseph Cohen of Avignon, *'Emeq habakba*, ed. Meir Letteris (Cracow: Faust's Buchhandlung, 1895), 13–14, this tradition is applied to Hadrian and the Bar-Kokhba rebellion: “Those remaining [in Jerusalem after the destruction of the Second Temple] were exiled by Hadrian to the land of Spain, and they are those ‘exiled of Jerusalem’ who dwell in Spain until this day. . . .” How-

ever, when Cohen fixes the date of the composition of the Mishnah by Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, he puts it at the Hebrew calendar date of 3949, which is 199 CE. “This is the one-hundred-twentieth year after the exile of Judea from its land.” That is to say, he sets the beginning of the exile at the time of the destruction of the Temple. Similarly, he writes about the date of the composition of the Jerusalem Talmud: “About two-hundred years after the exile of Judea from its land” (15).

32. David Flusser, ed. *The Book of Josiphon* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1981), 1:432.

33. *Megilat Abima'ats* [in Hebrew], ed. Benyamin Klar (Jerusalem: Sifre Tarshish, 1974), 12.

34. *Sefer Hamanbig* [in Hebrew], ed. Yitzhak Raphael, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kuk, 1978), 1:102 (with additional bibliographical data). Also cited in *Megilat Abima'ats*, 45–46. And see Henri Gross, *Gallia Judaica* (Amsterdam: Philo, 1969), 74–75. Gross mentions there a parallel Christian story, on which see Hans Lewy, “Imaginary Journeys from Palestine to France,” *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1.3 (January 1938): 251–53.

Because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people, a shame to all around them. . . . Open your eyes and see the desolation of the city, upon which your name is called. . . . Show a propitious sign and gather in our dispersed people from the four corners of the earth, let all the nations acknowledge and know that you are the Lord our God. . . . Look upon our affairs, for our pains are great, and the sorrows of our hearts. Have mercy, O Lord, upon us in the land of our imprisonment, and do not pour your wrath upon us. . . . O Lord, look upon the meagerness of our honor among the nations.³⁵

According to a French version of the legend of the expulsion, Vespasian had three ships loaded with exiles from Jerusalem and launched them into the sea with no oars. One of the ships reached Bordeaux, the second came to Arles, and the third to Lyons.³⁶ A third version—another German one—states that the three sages reached Spain, Italy, and Africa respectively.³⁷ The myth of the expulsion from the land therefore helped in the establishment of local consciousness in the new Jewish communities of Europe. The myth was a vital component in explaining the *translation* of Jewish life from the ancient center of the Land of Israel to new centers in Europe, and in this respect it followed parallel Christian traditions concerning the transfer of the relics of saints from the Holy Land in the East to the new Christian centers in the West. However, the Christian legends were content with the transfer of relics to the West, whereas the Jews presented themselves as living relics, authentic representatives of the old Jerusalem. The Jewish “holy community” (*quehila quedosha*) regarded itself as the local embodiment of the Jerusalem of the Land of Israel, whereas the Christian *civitas sancta* regarded itself as the earthly embodiment of the heavenly Jerusalem.³⁸

Medieval Jewish apologetics, willingly and thus paradoxically, adopted an ancient Christian myth as a kind of foundation myth for their own local communities.³⁹ The myth that the Jews were exiled from their land after the Second Temple's destruction allowed the Jewish communities of Europe to see themselves as miniature Jerusalems and to weave messianic hopes for the future, when

35. Yom-Tov Lippmann Mülhausen, *Sefer Hanizzabon* (1644; Jerusalem: Center of Jewish Research, 1983), sig. 281, offers the verse, “But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity” (Ps. 78:38), as a refutation of the Christians' claim that the Jews were in exile as punishment for their sin.

36. Avraham Berliner, *Selected Writings* [in Hebrew], 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1969), 1:66.

37. Moshe Hershler, ed., *Siddur R. Shlomo miGarmaiza* (Jerusalem: Hemed, 1971), 127–28.

38. Alfred Haverkamp, “‘Heilige Städte’ im hohen Mittelalter,” in *Mentalitäten im Mittelalter: Methodische und*

inhaltliche Probleme, ed. Frantisek Graus, Vorträge und Forschungen, vol. 35 (Sigmaringen, Germany: J. Thorbecke, 1987), 119–56.

39. Avraham Grossman, “The Myth of the Founders in the Jewish Diaspora in the Middle Ages and Its Historical meaning,” in *Myth in Judaism: History, Thought, Literature* [in Hebrew], ed. Moshe Idel and Ithamar Gruenwald (Jerusalem: Mercas Zalman Shazar le-toldot Yisrael, 2003), 123–43, esp. 135–37. Grossman presents sources that even indicate a tendency to attribute the antiquity of the Jewish settlement in Ashkenaz to exiles from the First Temple.

the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple would be accompanied by the people's return to their land. The nature of the ancient calamity was endowed with outlines for the desired future restoration: since the redemption would include the wholesale return to Zion, the calamity also included wholesale exile from the Holy Land. The great surprise that Jewish apologetics enshrines a memory whose source is Christian and anti-Jewish is explained by the function of that memory in forming the self-consciousness of the Jews in Christian Europe. The argument made by Ibn Verga was that all the Jews of Spain were descendants of the royal tribe of Judah: "In the destruction of the Second Temple, there was a Roman emperor who ruled over the entire world, and from Jerusalem and the towns he took forty thousand households from the tribe of Judah, and ten thousand from the tribe of Benjamin and from the priests, and he sent them to Spain, which was under his rule in those days." (By contrast, most of the Jews who came to France were from the tribe of Benjamin; in other words, France received second-rate merchandise.)⁴⁰ Recall the title of Ibn Verga's work: *The Scepter of Judah*. His claim was that the Jews of Spain were all descended from kings, the *crème de la crème* of Jerusalem.

The tendency to regard the Jews of Europe as descendants of the exiles from Jerusalem also had a positive judicial consequence, from the Jewish point of view, for it permitted legislators and those who drafted royal privileges to anchor the judicial status of the Jews in ancient rights that, supposedly, had been granted to the besieged Jews of Jerusalem by Titus or Vespasian. Yoḥanan (Hans) Levi, in an article on Josephus the Physician, asserted that "all the rights given to the Jews by the Christians [in the Middle Ages] originated in *ab excidio Hierosolymae*," which is the title of a book by Pseudo-Hegesippus.⁴¹

This attitude persists down to the present day, though with adaptations. I began this paper by pointing out the centrality of the myth of expulsion to the Zionist self-image. I want to conclude by suggesting the centrality of the myth in the formation of Western-Christian consciousness and also in the shaping of its stance toward the Zionist enterprise today. The success of Zionism in attaining sympathy and even considerable support in the West is based to no small degree on the Western view that there is an immanent connection between the exile of the Jews and the birth of Christianity. The return of the Jews to Zion is grasped in Christian consciousness as a natural historical process in an age of growing

reconciliation between the two religions. Thus, an old concept of historical time, shared by Christians and Jews throughout the last two thousand years, helped to create a justification for—an understanding of the necessity of—the Jewish return to Zion.

But this return deeply affected a third party, the Muslim world as a whole and the Palestinian Arabs in particular, who do not share the Judeo-Christian *Weltanschauung* of time. Beyond the conflicting territorial interests, there is also a deep gap between Muslims and Judeo-Christians in their perception of mythical time. But that is another story.

40. Ibn Verga, *Shevet Yebudah*, 34.

41. Yoḥanan Levi, "Josephus the Physician," 282. Levi's article was first published in English in 1937–38. Close to the time of its appearance, a remarkably similar article was published by Guido Kisch: "A Talmudic Legend as the Source for the Josephus Passage in the *Sachsenspiegel*," *Historia Judaica* 1 (1938/39): 105–18.

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