

Chapter II

Inspiration from Abroad: The Destruction of Jerusalem and the English Precedent

After its previous proliferation in the medieval and early modern periods, in England, the subject of the destruction of Jerusalem experienced a resurgence in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Prior to the Reformation, the destruction of Jerusalem was read predominantly as a narrative of the divine retribution suffered by the Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus; at the same time, it confirmed the supersession and glory of triumphant Rome.¹ Yet in early modern Britain, as Beatrice Groves notes, a subtle but significant shift occurred in the focus of the story. As the result of a new Protestant identification with post-biblical Jews and of the vision of a New Jerusalem to be built—in William Blake’s well-known phrase—in England’s green and pleasant land, “triumphalism” was replaced with an “uneasy empathy.”²

The unease of this identification originated in its ambivalence. As in Germany, the fall of Jerusalem was considered exhortatory, but the internal strife preceding it was recognized more specifically as an epitome of the plurality of dissent in seventeenth-century England—variously seen as conducive or as disruptive—and was thought to pertain to the building of the New Jerusalem of which the conflagration was the prerequisite and the promise. Most importantly, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple challenged the significance of a specific sacred space, which, with Catholic supersession, had been transferred to Rome; it envisaged instead the New Jerusalem as a universal spiritual space of which the individual could become a part.³

In early modern Britain, as Groves has shown, the Protestant re-interpretation of the fall of Jerusalem found expression across cultural production, in sermons and pamphlets, plays and puppet shows, travel writing and literature. Yet its arguably most influential, if indirect, articulation occurred in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667). As Groves suggests, in the religious epic poem, “the destruction of Eden—the apparent victory of the satanic forces—is not the end but the

¹ See Beatrice Groves, *The Destruction of Jerusalem in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6; see also p. 9.

³ See *ibid.*, p. 215.

beginning as it frees man from his idolatrous attachment to place and enables his pilgrimage to the true city, the New Jerusalem.”⁴

This new way of thinking about the destruction of Jerusalem brought with it—through the identification of Protestantism with Israel—not only a change in the attitude toward contemporary Jews;⁵ it moreover initiated the identification of London with the New Jerusalem and supported the notion of a sacred *translatio imperii* which culminated in Britain.⁶

In the eighteenth century, while not fully relinquishing the religious dimension, the romantic imagination took possession of the subject and developed it in predominantly two directions: as a manifestation of what Curtis Dahl has called the “School of Catastrophe,” which expressed the fascination with cataclysmic events;⁷ and toward the visionary creation of the New Jerusalem, which, in effect, is a variation on the early modern perspective described by Groves. Both appear to be very different in nature from the subsequent German engagement with the subject, and yet, the English tradition produced at least two works which must be considered distinct influences on the engagement with the destruction of Jerusalem in Germany. Henry Hart Milman’s *The Fall of Jerusalem* (1820) and George Croly’s *Salathiel* (1828) appeared within a decade of one another and both were translated into German almost immediately after their original publication.

The English Precedent

Beginning in the late eighteenth century, the romantic interest in the destruction of Jerusalem in England quite abruptly appears to have come to an end with a cluster of epic poems in the early 1820s. In Germany, as we have seen, and in all likelihood instigated to some extent by the English interest in the subject, it achieved prominence only in the following decades.⁸ Moreover, where in Germany the creative impetus manifested itself pervasively in oratorios, strongly influenced—as I have argued in the previous part—by Kaulbach’s monumental painting and its Hegelian historical and philosophical foundation, in England the

4 Ibid., p. 206.

5 See *ibid.*, pp. 151, 222.

6 See *ibid.*, pp. 174, 218.

7 Curtis Dahl, “Bulwer-Lytton and the School of Catastrophe,” *Philological Quarterly* 32.4 (1953): 428–42.

8 In Britain, too, emerged a proliferation of narrative fiction about the destruction of Jerusalem, such as G. A. Henty’s *For the Temple* (1888), Frank Cowper’s *The Forgotten Door* (1900), and H. Rider Haggard’s *Pearl-Maiden* (1901), which are, however, outside the scope of my book.

prevalent genres of engagement with the destruction of Jerusalem were the epic, and later the dramatic, poem as well as, eventually, narrative fiction.

Only one oratorio emerged from the earlier British engagement with the subject; and it did so effectively as part of the mentioned cluster. Apparently published and first performed in 1824, George Frederick Perry's *The Fall of Jerusalem*⁹—with a libretto by Edward Taylor—was based on what may have been one of the most successful and influential of contemporary adaptations of the historical episode in England, Henry Hart Milman's eponymous “dramatic poem” of 1820. Milman's *The Fall of Jerusalem* was of epic conception, though it appeared in the guise of a drama, which the author insisted “was neither written with a view to public representation, nor can [it] be adapted to it without being entirely remodelled and rewritten.”¹⁰

Already in 1781, “Jerusalem Destroyed” was set as the subject for the prestigious Seatonian Prize for sacred poetry at the University of Cambridge. The winning entry by William Gibson was published eponymously in the same year.¹¹ It was followed, almost two decades later, by Robert Southey's lyric poem “The Destruction of Jerusalem” (1798). Yet this poem engages with the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. After the publication of Milman's *The Fall of Jerusalem*, the year 1823, finally, saw the publication of two further epic poems on the subject. Charles Peers' *The Siege of Jerusalem* and John Church the Younger's *The Fall of Jerusalem*.¹² While neither of the latter poems is of significant poetic merit, both are interesting as re-workings of the historical narrative and because of the idiosyncratic elements added to it by their authors.

⁹ Dates associated with the production and first performance of this oratorio vary. A brief review in *The Harmonicon* claims that the oratorio was first performed on January 20, 1832 under the direction of the composer at the Hanover Square Rooms, see Anonymous, “Mr. Perry's New Oratorio,” *The Harmonicon* 10 (1832): 57. However, the title page of the British Library's copy of the published score, conjecturally dated 1824, includes reference to a projected performance in the same year: “Will be performed at the Albion Concert-Rooms, Moorfields, on Monday evening, June 7, 1824,” see George Frederick Perry, *The Fall of Jerusalem; a New Oratorio* ([London]: Z. W. Vincent, [1824]).

¹⁰ H[enry] H[art] Milman, *The Fall of Jerusalem: A Dramatic Poem*, new edn (1820; London: Murray, 1820), p. v.

¹¹ The prize was won by William Gibson whose entry was first published as *Jerusalem Destroyed* (Cambridge: J. & J. Merrill, 1781). See A. D. Harvey, “Elinor Shaffer and the Genesis of Coleridge's Non-Existent *The Fall of Jerusalem*,” *Notes and Queries* 56.3 (2009): 367–70, 369.

¹² Charles Peers, *The Siege of Jerusalem* (London: Murray, 1823) and John Church, *The Fall of Jerusalem; a Poem in Three Parts* (London: Printed for the Author by R. O. Weston, 1823).

Coinciding with the precarious existence of the English epic in the romantic period,¹³ the formation of this cluster of engagements with the destruction of Jerusalem, concentrated within a few years, is intriguing. In fact, the cluster—though largely unrelated—extended beyond national borders and there clearly was a contemporary awareness of its international dimension also in England. Referring to Milman's poem, the *London Magazine* (1820) added in a note:

An Italian author, Cesare Arici, of Brescia, has recently published a poem on the same subject—the *Gerusalemme distrutta*; and they have printed at Venice two Cantos of an inedited poem by the Count Florio, entitled *Tito, ossia Gerusalemme distrutta*, to convict the former of plagiarism. The subject of the destruction of Jerusalem had also been treated by a Neapolitan author, G. B. Lalli, under the title of *Gerusalemme desolata*.¹⁴

In fact, both Arici's and Florio's epic poems, the latter having been published posthumously, were unfinished and remained fragments.¹⁵ Giovanni Battista Lalli's epic was first printed already in 1629 and participates in a mostly religious discourse very different from either of the later renderings of the subject. These relatively well-known Italian publications, which were at least partially an influence also on the English engagement with the subject, were augmented in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries with a number of lesser known musical arrangements. However, it is highly unlikely that the majority of these oratorios and *drammi sacri* would have been perceived beyond their immediate Italian or even regional contexts.¹⁶

There is also no indication that Milman was familiar with either of the contemporary poems before his own effort was published. They had been printed, after all, only in the year before. Three years later, however, Charles Peers acknowledged that he knew of Arici's and Florio's work but that he had been able to procure a copy only of the latter.

Paradoxically, perhaps even more important to the cluster than these individual contributions was another epic poem that was in fact never written. Indeed, although no further epic engagements with their main focus on the destruction of Jerusalem appear to have emerged in England, the subject's unique appeal was variously emphasised by Samuel Taylor Coleridge whose fascination with the his-

¹³ See, e.g., A. D. Harvey, "The English Epic in the Romantic Period," *Philological Quarterly* 55.2 (1976): 241–59.

¹⁴ Anonymous, "Gleanings from Foreign Journals," *The London Magazine* 2 (August 1820): 209–12, 210.

¹⁵ Arici's poem was first published posthumously as volume six of his works, *Poesie e prose*, 6 vols (Brescia: Bettoni, 1818–19); Florio's text appeared, also posthumously, as *Tito, ossia Gerusalemme distrutta* (Venice: Alvisopoli, 1819). See Harvey, "Elinor Shaffer," 369.

¹⁶ See above, chapter I, note 177.

torical episode and its poetic potential dates at least to the early 1790s. In 1820, the year of the publication of Milman's epic, the poet and critic noted with regret in a letter to Thomas Allsop:

Alas! for the proud times when I planned, when I had present to my mind the materials as well as the Scheme of [. . .] the Epic Poem on what still appears to me the only one fit subject remaining for an Epic Poem, Jerusalem besieged & destroyed by Titus.¹⁷

In 1832 Coleridge is said to have reiterated his estimation of the singularity and significance of the destruction of Jerusalem,¹⁸ and even though the poet's plans never came to fruition,¹⁹ his engagement with the subject is nevertheless of crucial importance. Not least, because it spans almost the whole temporal range of the thematic cluster, beginning with Coleridge's first interest in the early 1790s and extending beyond its final manifestations into the 1830s—literally, a lifetime of enthrallment. But also because it reflects on theological as well as aesthetic and poetic issues rife in the liminal period between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which may, at least partially, also account for the emergence of the thematic cluster focused on the destruction of Jerusalem in England. Moreover, though Coleridge never composed his own epic on the subject, it has nevertheless been suggested by Elinor S. Shaffer that his lyrical ballad "Kubla Khan" (1797; 1816) is, in effect, another rendering of the narrative of the fall of Jerusalem.²⁰

Antecedents and the Beginnings of the Thematic Cluster in England: The Seatonian Prize

Since 1750 the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge has been awarding a prize endowed by the Reverend Thomas Seaton for the best sacred poem on a given subject. Topics predictably originate in a theological framework. But while wide-ranging, there nevertheless emerged temporally succinct patterns of clusters that were linked thematically. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

¹⁷ Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Thomas Allsop on March 20, 1820, in *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. L. Griggs, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956–71), V, 28.

¹⁸ See *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Table Talk*, ed. Carl Woodring, 2 vols (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), I, 289 (April 24, 1832); see also I, 441 (September 2, 1833).

¹⁹ See Elinor S. Shaffer, "Kubla Khan" and *The Fall of Jerusalem: The Mythological School of Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature 1770–1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) and Harvey, "Elinor Shaffer," 369.

²⁰ See Shaffer, "Kubla Khan" and *The Fall of Jerusalem*, p. 95.

centuries, reflecting contemporary hopes and anxieties, such a cluster was focused on the history of the Israelites, Christian and Jewish relations, and the end of times. The destruction of Jerusalem, itself the topic for the year 1781, was a subject relevant to a number of other themes and accordingly variously resurfaced.

William Gibson (1745–1821) invokes in his “Jerusalem Destroyed” (1781) the Spirit of Song as it manifested itself in the prophetic voice of Isaiah. He identifies as the subject of his epic poem “Heav’n’s just wrath, and sinning Salem’s woes” and, eventually, “Sion’s last sack, and Israel’s final fate.”²¹ In the context of the articulation of divine wrath in the historical event, the finality of the concluding phrase suggests Israel’s irredeemable destruction. Giving much prominence to the teknophagy of Miriam (Mary of Bethhezuba), the poet outlines in his first canto the alleged iniquities of the Jews and details the efforts of Titus to negotiate a peaceful solution to the conflict through Josephus. The imperator suggests to the Jewish historian that, were the previous offences of the Jews forgiven, “for ever may their nation last.”²² Yet their obstinacy toward Titus, as toward the deity, signifies the very opposite. The conciliatory initiative fails and the canto ends with the beginning of the Roman onslaught on the city. The second canto describes the heroic fight of two equal foes but insists, once again emphasizing the divine decree, that “heaven’s due vengeance sunk the scale of fate.”²³ The third and final canto commences with Titus’s intention to spare the Temple, which is thwarted by divine intervention which, in paraphrase of Matthew 23:37, is explained with the city’s recurrent defiant obstinacy toward God’s will:

Jerusalem! alas! alas! of old
Deaf to whate’er prophetic seers foretold,
Assailing all whom heav’n in mercy sent,
And murdering those that warn’d thee to repent!²⁴

The destruction of Jerusalem therefore supplies “a dread moral to mankind,”²⁵ which was a mainstay of Christian homiletic discourse. The epic poem concludes with a powerful inversion of the trope of the captive Israelites looking back to the destroyed city as it was employed some three decades later by Byron, but also by other writers, such as Arthur William Trollope and Charles Peers. In Gibson’s text, it is Titus who halts his horse; he “lingering looks behind” and, surveying the

²¹ William Gibson, “Jerusalem Destroyed” [1781], in *Cambridge Prize Poems* (Cambridge: Deighton and Sons, 1817), II, 67–105, 68.

²² *Ibid.*, 73.

²³ *Ibid.*, 84.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 103; see also Matthew 23:37 and Luke 13:34.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 104.

desolation, produces “generous tears”²⁶ which the poet praises above any heroic exploits:

More than the wreath, which binds the conqueror’s brow,
More true renown those trickling tears bestow;
Not all the achievements [*sic*] of heroic rage,
Like those bright drops, adorn the historic page!²⁷

In this fashion, Gibson reiterates the trope of Titus’s mercy and extols it as a manifestation of his humanity. At the same time, the human mercy of the emperor is implicitly contrasted to the mercy of God, which has finally been exhausted. The poet thus emphasizes the full weight of the divine judgment that befell Jerusalem but also the correlating scope of its sins, as outlined in the first canto.

In a final change of perspective, the epic poem sees the narrative voice, and with it the reader, remain in the space where Titus shed his tears as the Romans continue their march “t’wards Tyber’s shore; / Now lessen to the sight, and now are seen no more.”²⁸ The gradual disappearance of the Roman army toward an imaginary vanishing point with which the epic poem concludes may be meant as an allusion to the *translatio imperii* and foreshadow the fall of pagan Rome. More specifically, it leaves the reader alone to confront the desolation on their own and contemplate it as a moral lesson.

The prize-winning poem on the subject of “The Restoration of the Jews” of 1794 included—following upon one another—sections on the destructions of the First and Second Temples.²⁹ It was composed by Francis Wrangham (1769–1842), at the time a close acquaintance of Coleridge’s.³⁰ Wrangham’s brief reflection on the destruction of the Second Temple concentrates mainly on the “unnatural” transgressions against divine and human laws which provoked God’s wrath, including once again a veiled reference to Mary’s teknophagy.³¹

The destruction narrative, as a narrative of degeneration and depravity, is embedded in the restoration narrative within a soteriological framework that envisages with the redemption of the Jews also that of all other nations. The destruc-

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 104–5.

²⁸ Ibid., 105.

²⁹ Francis Wrangham, “The Restoration of the Jews” [1794], in *Musae Seatonianae: A Complete Collection of the Cambridge Prize Poems, from the First Institution of the Premium by the Reverend Thomas Seaton, in 1750, to the Year 1806*, ed. Isaac Reed, 2 vols (Cambridge: Hodson, 1808), II, 235–50, 239–42.

³⁰ See Harvey, “Elinor Shaffer,” 369.

³¹ See Wrangham, “Restoration of the Jews,” 240–1.

tion of Jerusalem becomes, in Wrangham's poem, a metonymy for the cycle of conflagrations visited upon the presumptuous earthly powers and their succession. Writing in 1794, at the beginning of the wars with revolutionary, and later imperial, France (1793–1815) and in all likelihood exposed to, if not influenced by, millennial beliefs, Wrangham extends his exhortation also to the British Empire:

And thou bethink thee, Albion, 'ere too late,
Queen of the isles and mart of distant worlds,
That thou like Tyre may'st feel some future day
Heaven's red right hand, and pay with blood the price
Of Afric's life-blood drain'd.³²

The explicit reference to Tyre, and not Jerusalem, indicates as its wider context the notion of the succession of empires which, in the poet's present, includes also Britain. Intriguingly, extending also the discourse on transgression, Wrangham introduces an abolitionist bias to his poem by identifying Britain's complicity in the slave trade as the Empire's fateful iniquity to rouse God's ire. This critical trajectory was later followed also by Agnes Bulmer and, if less explicitly, by William Lisle Bowles.

But the climax of the poem is the resuscitation of the Jewish people in contrast to the ephemeral arrogation of power of the conquerors of mankind, who, "Like woe-denouncing comets, blazed awile [*sic*] / In evanescent glory."³³ Compared to, but not alike to, the briefly triumphant hordes of historical conquests, Wrangham's vision of the rehabilitated Jews sees them converging from the far corners of the earth:

And see! They come! Survey yon sweeping band,
Countless as Persian bowmen, who beset
Freedom exulting on her Attic rock;
When Asia roused her millions to the war,
And sunk in all her pomp before the foe
Her vengeance fondly doom'd. With ranks as full,
But with more prosperous fates and purer joys
Than swell the warrior's breast, their destined march
The Hebrews bend, from where Hydaspes rolls
His storied tide; or cleave with holy prow
Th' Atlantic main, whose conscious surge reveres
It's buoyant load. No Spaniard plunderers they.
By gold allured to traverse new-found realms,
And plunge the wondering savage in the mine,
Where (guiltless then) the unsunn'd mischief slept;

³² *Ibid.*, 244.

³³ *Ibid.*

No mad crusaders, by the Roman priest
 Baptized Invincible, with impious zeal
 To combat Hali's turban'd race, and wade
 A second time to Palestine through blood.³⁴

The “sweeping band” of Jews is righteous, the internal strife of the Second Temple period a thing of the past, as is the Jewish faith. The purpose of these Jews, and their legitimation, is from God; theirs is a pure incentive, directed by the divinity, which—by inverting all the negative stimuli of earthly conquest: the Persians in Greece, the Spanish in Latin America, and the crusaders in Palestine—is characterized as pious, non-materialistic, and non-violent:

But call'd by God, or from the western stream
 Of Plata, or where Ganges pours his urn,
 In love-knit league they throng. To Salem's groves
 Messiah, erst their nation's deadliest hate,
 Guides the returning host; and high in air
 Floats their bright flag, the once-opprobrious Cross.³⁵

In accordance with Christian soteriology, it is the Jews' conversion, their acceptance of the Christian Messiah, and their fealty to the Christian symbol of the cross which allows their restoration to Jerusalem. Intriguingly, this Jerusalem is not identified in deference to Revelation as the New Jerusalem, but it is a return to the old city and its groves—an implicit acknowledgment of its erstwhile destruction but not an explicit reference to its rebuilding, possibly because Wrangham, too, may have envisaged the New Jerusalem in Britain after the rejection of its former iniquities.

In the following year, 1795, with “The Destruction of Babylon,” the subject for the Seatonian Prize was once again focused on catastrophe and destruction. Babylon is of course also Jerusalem's earlier nemesis and—in a moral sense—its other: it is the epitome of oriental excess and moral depravity. Identifications of nineteenth-century London with Babel, superseding earlier identifications with the New Jerusalem, became commonplace in the English imagination in terms of “the wealth, splendour and refinement of the modern metropolis,”³⁶ but also as “warnings of the dangers of hubris.”³⁷

³⁴ Ibid., 249.

³⁵ Ibid., 249–50.

³⁶ Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-century London* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 3.

³⁷ Ibid. See also Andrew Scheil, *Babylon under Western Eyes: A Study of Allusion and Myth* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), pp. 105–9 and *Babylon or New Jerusalem?: Perceptions of*

In 1795, Wrangham once again submitted a poem, but this time the prize was awarded to Arthur William Trollope's (1768–1827) entry. It is nevertheless instructive to read both efforts next to one another. While both poems approach their subject matter very differently, their common biblical context ensures some thematic coherence. Both, for instance, make reference to the Babylonian captivity of the Jews and to Belshazzar's feast with its prophecy of doom. Both also reiterate the notion of the succession of empires which is based on the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in the second book of Daniel and which, in an eschatological sense, introduces an apocalyptic perspective with the expectation of the final and eternal kingdom established by God (see Daniel 2:31–45). The difference between both is mainly, but significantly, in emphasis.

Wrangham never elaborates on the destruction of the First Temple, to which he had given much attention in his earlier poem, but devotes a stanza to the Babylonian captivity of the Jews and their yearning for Zion. The Persian emperor Cyrus the Great, who conquered Babylon and was to set the exiles free, is extolled by him as the instrument of divine vengeance and as "th' Anointed of the Lord" (see also Isaiah 45:1).³⁸ The fall of Babylon is attributed by Wrangham to its moral iniquities, treason, and abandon. Yet he also specifically mentions the blasphemous use of the treasure stolen from the First Temple at Belshazzar's feast and the subsequent warning of the *Mene tekel*, the writing on the wall. Ending his account of the destruction of the city with an invocation of Fancy and her pensive sigh, his vision of "moral drops" gathering in her eye forms the transition from the imagined ruin to the fall of successive empires, addressing both Rome and London.³⁹

In contrast to his earlier poem, where Wrangham admonished the British Empire for its contemporary transgressions, in his "The Destruction of Babylon," he invokes a historical perspective commencing with Roman Britain. The poet then elaborates a medievalist fancy extolling the Middle Ages as a period of vir-

the City in Literature, ed. Valeria Tinkler-Villani (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005). Documents of this fascination and its symbolic potential were books like Robert Mudie's *Babylon the Great: A Dissection and Demonstration of Men and Things in the British Capital* (1825) and its sequel, *London and Londoners, or, A Second Judgment of "Babylon the Great"* (1829), Harry Hawthorn's *A Visit To Babylon; with Observations Moral and Political* (1829) as well as George William MacArthur Reynolds's undated *The Mysteries of London Containing Stories of Life in the Modern Babylon*; but also artistic articulations, such as the paintings of John Martin. For Martin, see Amy Elisabeth Freund, *Babylon the Great: John Martin's Ancient Cities as Views of London* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

³⁸ Francis Wrangham, "The Destruction of Babylon" [1795], in Reed (ed.), *Musae Seatonianae*, II, 379–93, 384.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 391.

tue, a “blest age,”⁴⁰ whose return in the present he expects to subdue all feuds and divisions in “our triple realm.”⁴¹ The specter of civil unrest he raises is an implicit and exhortatory reminder of the internal strife of the Jews just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Trollope, employing the epic invocation of his muse, defined the emphasis of his poem very differently as focused on the mercy of God toward the repentant Jews of which the conflagration of Babylon is—in his work too—the result. Like Wrangham had embedded the destruction narrative of Jerusalem in the previous year within that of the restoration of the Jews, Trollope’s is simultaneously a narrative of the destruction of the imperial oppressor and of the transgressing Jews as well as of the latter’s restoration:

JEHOVAH’s mercies to His chosen seed
Repentant, and Chaldaea’s iron yoke
From Judah loos’d; with retribution just
And tenfold vengeance on th’ oppressor’s head,
And Babylon a desolated waste;
These are the muse’s theme.⁴²

While universally invoking “the muse” here, Trollope later identifies more specifically the “Spirit of Truth” as his guiding principle:

Spirit of Truth,

Conduct my steps, that strangers to the haunts
Of poesy would tempt the magic soil
Of fiction’s airy realm; and while I sing
Of deeds Almighty, let no fabled tale,
Or vision fancy-born, intrusive mix,
And taint the sacred current of my verse.
Yet what can fancy, tho’ on fearless wing
She spurn earth’s limits, and o’er nature’s verge
Thro’ worlds unnumber’d her creative eye
Range uncontroul’d? yet what can fancy add
To grace His name, whose lowest wonder soars
Beyond imagination’s loftiest flight,
Far as heaven’s concave, where enthron’d He sits
In majesty eternal, is uprais’d
Above His footstool this terrestrial globe.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid., 392.

⁴¹ Ibid., 393.

⁴² Arthur William Trollope, “The Destruction of Babylon” [1795], in Reed (ed.), *Musae Seatonianae*, II, 251–61, 251.

⁴³ Ibid., 251–2.

“Fancy,” evoked by Wrangham in his own version of “The Destruction of Babylon” as a morally informed inspiration of poesy, is deprecated by Trollope as inadequate to encompassing the divine plan of redemption.

Trollope’s insistence on “truth” as opposed to imaginative re-creation was extended only a few years later by Hannah Cowley in *The Siege of Acre* (1801). Cowley began her epic with an “Invocation to Truth in preference to the Muse.”⁴⁴ Rejecting the imaginative dimension of the muse, she asked: “Art Thou the Muse? Ah no! all Fiction she, / Celestial TRUTH! I seize the Theme from Thee.”⁴⁵ In a national epic celebrating the British defence of Acre against French troops in 1798, her insistence on “celestial truth” is significant in two ways. As A. D. Harvey suggests, Cowley’s shift in emphasis responds to the unease of introducing supernatural events in relation to well-known historical events.⁴⁶ More importantly, however, it not only validates her text about a contemporary occurrence of historical significance through the poet’s supposedly historicist approach but her indication of the celestial nature of this historical truth moreover situates the events at least implicitly within the wider context of the divine plan of redemption. Trollope’s insistence on the guiding “Spirit of Truth” in his epic on the destruction of Babylon similarly indicates the amalgamation of the eschatological and historical narratives in which both mutually confirm one another.

The narrative of Belshazzar’s feast is subsumed under the captivity narrative and that of the destruction of the First Temple, when Trollope in much abbreviated form recounts how the latter’s “sacred stores / Must grace th’ intemperate feast, whose riot rends / The victor’s palace.” The poet’s focus on the eschatological teleology through which the destruction of Babylon is viewed emerges also in his account of the captive Jews being led away from Jerusalem. The description of their wistful looks back toward the conflagration anticipates the perspective assumed by Byron two decades later in his poem on the destruction of the Second Temple by Titus and rendered so evocatively in Loewe’s musical setting:

From their country torn,
Torn from their native land, thy captive sons
And widow’d mothers drag the galling chain
Indignant; and, as Jordan’s banks along
The sad procession winds, their pensive bosoms
Beat; while with oft-reverted eye tearful
On Sion’s lessening hill they gaze, or print

⁴⁴ Hannah Cowley, *The Siege of Acre: A Poem* (1801; London: Wilkie and Robinson, 1810), contents page.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴⁶ Harvey, “English Epic,” 246–7.

With agonizing lip, while yet 'tis giv'n,
A last fond kiss on their parental soil.⁴⁷

Intriguingly, Trollope makes use also of other tropes associated with the destruction of the Second Temple rather than that of the First. The rationale for this conflation is probably to be sought in the notion of human sacrifice and Israel's straying to the idolatry of its neighbors. Yet it nevertheless appears almost as a type of Mary's teknophagy. The divine punishment to which Israel is subjected includes famine:

pale famine,
Parent of horrors, whose dread voice can still
The cries of nature in the mother's breast,
And nerve her lifted arm against her babe
Lisping for mercy.⁴⁸

The Jews' transgressions against divine law are implicitly aligned by Trollope with original sin through his use of Miltonic echoes:

Yet not at once
Pour'd God His whole displeasure, or forgot
His covenant with righteous Abraham made:
But oft His prophets rais'd to purge the mists
Of error from His people, to renew
Their broken faith, and in their souls awake
Repentance; or with warning voice denounce
Impending judgments, and severer woes,
Judea's loss and strange captivity,
The fruit of disobedience. Blind, perverse,
Deluded Israel! whom no ills endur'd,
Or fear of ills to come, can save from ruin.⁴⁹

The echo of the famous invocation of *Paradise Lost*—"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit / Of that forbidden tree"⁵⁰—situates not only Trollope's own effort within the tradition of the religious epic of which Milton's poem was considered the pinnacle. It moreover correlates the Jewish transgressions Trollope enumerates to universal sinfulness since the Fall. Jewish captivity—"the fruit of disobedience"—is implicitly compared to the loss of Eden. But at the same time, and this

⁴⁷ Trollope, "Destruction of Babylon," 254.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 253.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 253–4.

⁵⁰ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *John Milton*, eds Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 355–618, p. 356 (l.1–2).

is hugely important, Trollope thus subsumes the Jews under those that may be saved. The restoration after the destruction of the First Temple, so prominently figured in his epic about the destruction of Babylon, thus effectively becomes the type of the future restoration after the destruction of the Second.

The nuances of Jewish redeemability, and irredeemability, associated in the German oratorios on the destruction of Jerusalem with different tropes of Jewishness discussed in the previous chapter are of no concern to Trollope. He may emphasize the ruin that Israel may not be saved from, yet in the Miltonic echo is hidden the assertion that redemption is the ultimate objective of God's plan. Even though it is not made explicit in Trollope's epic, the vision is of the New Jerusalem—as in *Paradise Lost*. The interplay of destruction and destruction (of Babylon and of Jerusalem), as well as its vortical and vertiginous historical dynamic, is geared toward rebuilding and redemption.

Redemption is facilitated not only through God's "mercies," emphasised by Trollope in his own invocation, but by the sincere repentance of the Jews:

Deep repentance touch'd
Their souls, and keen remorse; in anguish sunk,
They mourn'd their past transgressions. By the side
Of Babylon's proud stream they sate, and wept
Thy fate, Jerusalem; while fond remembrance
Dwelt on thy glories past, and happier scenes
With present ills compar'd.⁵¹

It is both, this imaginary repentance and its divine acceptance, that propel the Jews on their eschatological trajectory:

Thou saw'st, O God,
Their tears unfeign'd; Thou saw'st their deep contrition:
Thine ear, still open to the sinner's prayer
Pour'd from the fulness of a wounded heart.
Accepted their repentance.⁵²

Like Wrangham, Trollope emphasizes that the destroyer of Babylon executed but God's bidding:

Thou forgav'st their sins,
And at Thy word the swift avenger comes,
Whose arm shall break th' oppressor's rod, and loose

51 Trollope, "Destruction of Babylon," 255.

52 Ibid.

The bonds of Judah, and his sons redeem'd,
To freedom and their native land restore.⁵³

Yet the poet's emphasis on divine intervention associates an uneasy foreshadowing of the destruction of the Second Temple which revokes the restoration of the Jews to their land and their freedom; and it is also, once again, an exhortation to his contemporaries.

Like Wrangham, both in the previous year and in his submission for "The Destruction of Babylon," Trollope develops from his vision of the destruction of the ancient imperial city an exhortation to Britain; and like in Wrangham's latter poem, it is predicated on the comparison of Babylon and Albion—a near anagram, which may explain the poet's use of "Albion" over and above the mythical connotations evoked by it:

Is this the once imperial Babylon?
This the proud mistress of the east? Become
A nameless waste, where scarce a ruin marks
Her ample site! Here, Albion, turn thy view;
Thou, who, like her, lift'st the aspiring head,
Learn wisdom from her fall: so may'st thou 'scape
A fate like her's.⁵⁴

In 1805, the Seatonian competition on the subject of "Christ's Lamentation over Jerusalem" (1805) was won by Charles Peers. His later epic poem on *The Siege of Jerusalem* (1823) may well have its origins in this earlier engagement with the biblical subject.⁵⁵ Much later, but arguably tying in with the cluster of engagements with the destruction of Jerusalem and in effect continuing the narrative of the destruction of Babylon as it had been conceived of by Trollope, the subject for the year 1824 was set as "The Building and Dedication of the Second Temple." The winning entry by John Overton was published two years later with the same title.

In 1817, also at Cambridge, though in a slightly different context, the Chancellor's Gold Medal was awarded to Chauncy Hare Townshend's (1798–1868) entry on the subject of "Jerusalem." Townshend's text, while poetically unremarkable, is interesting for the exclusively religious, eschatological rather than historical, trajectory it projects of Jerusalem—once again, like Pierson's oratorio—from the destruction of the First Temple to that of the Second to the building of the New Jerusalem.

⁵³ Ibid., 256.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 259.

⁵⁵ See Charles Peers, *The Siege of Jerusalem*, 2nd edn (1823; London: Murray, 1824), p. v.

In effect, were they rearranged, the various poems—like Pierson’s oratorio—narrate the sequential story of the destructions and rebuildings of Jerusalem to the vision of the New Jerusalem, even though this was never explicitly set as a subject—it may have been understood to be redundant, being subsumed under the heading of the destruction of the old city.

Incontestible Evidence of the Christian Faith: Milman

While Byron’s “On the Day of the Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus” from his *Hebrew Melodies* (1815) was clearly an inspiration for Carl Loewe, there is no particular reason to assume that he or any of the other German composers discussed in the previous part—nor Kaulbach—would have been familiar with Perry’s oratorio. The case is different with the composer’s source. Milman’s *The Fall of Jerusalem* was translated into German already in 1823 and it may well have been known to Nicolai and Loewe, and perhaps also to the artist.⁵⁶ Theodor Hell (pseudonym of Karl Gottlieb Theodor Winkler), writing for the Dresden *Abend-Zeitung*, claimed that the dramatic poem offered some of the best material for tragedy since Horace Walpole.⁵⁷ We may be reminded here of Coleridge’s enthusiastic appreciation of the subject. Intriguingly, Milman’s subtitle—*A Dramatic Poem*—was changed by the translator to: *Ein dramatisches Gemälde* (A Dramatic Painting), and one wonders if Kaulbach may have found some inspiration in the suggestion.

In its review of the German translation, the *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* insisted on the unsuitability of the historical episode for a dramatic rendering:

The subject does not seem to us particularly suited for a dramatic treatment, because what occurs—and this is predominant—cannot be made visible without injury to the senses and must mostly be narrated by persons who appear on the stage whose own actions are then impeded and whose mutual connection is hindered so that too little having the appearance of a drama will be achieved—and were it only to represent a painting.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ See Henry Hart Milman, *Der Fall von Jerusalem*, transl. A. F. Blech (Königsberg: Unzer, 1823). The dramatic poem received also scholarly attention in Germany with the publication of Carl Venatier, *Milmans Fall of Jerusalem* (Trebnitz: Maretzke and Martin, 1893).

⁵⁷ Th. Hell [i.e., Karl Gottlieb Theodor Winkler], “Das Recht des dramatischen Dichters an sein Werk,” *Abend-Zeitung* (Dresden) 14.125 and 126 (May 25 and 26, 1821): n. p. Hell himself had translated fragments of the dramatic poem already in the previous year: “Mirjams, der neubekehrten Christin, Gesang. Bruchst. aus d. dramat. Ged.: *Jerusalems Fall* (*The fall of Jerusalem*),” *Abend-Zeitung* 167 (July 14, 1820): n. p.

⁵⁸ T. Z., “Königsberg, b. Unzer: *Der Fall von Jerusalem*, ein dramatisches Gemälde von Milman. Aus dem Englischen von A. Blech. 1823,” *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* 192 (October 1823):

The translator's choice is thus presented as limiting the function and scope of what the poet had conceived of as a dramatic poem. The pictorial, it is suggested, is a reduction of the dramatic. By implication, that is, neither the pictorial nor the dramatic is considered adequate to encompass the subject fully. Considering his attempts to secure an oratorial accompaniment to his painting, Kaulbach may have had similar doubts about his own artistic effort.

No more favorable, if for different reasons, was the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*. Its assessment is interesting in particular because it reflects on contemporary translation practice and the book market. As in England, there was an acute awareness of international publications also in Germany and the reviewer was not entirely uncritical of the efforts made to introduce to the German reader in translation any work of some note in foreign parts.⁵⁹ Certainly, he considered the effort wasted in Milman's case:

Considering the frequently commended industry of the Germans and their zeal to appropriate to our mother tongue any work of foreign parts which has aroused any attention there, it is easily understood that occasionally works will be chosen which may, at the least, not be said to be an enrichment of our literature. This is also true of the present dramatic painting, whose subject is the destruction of Jerusalem.⁶⁰

The critic censured the inconsistency of Milman's characters and the lack of action in the dramatic painting, a point raised also in some of the English reviews of the poem. Altogether, however, *The Fall of Jerusalem* was received with much acclaim in Britain.

The publication of Milman's dramatic poem in at least two editions in 1820 may well have suggested to Coleridge to revisit his own earlier plans. Influenced

cols 89–91, 89: "Der Gegenstand scheint uns nicht sonderlich zu einer dramatischen Behandlung geeignet zu seyn, indem das, was geschieht—und diess ist das Überwiegende—ohne die Sinne zu verletzen, doch nicht sichtbar werden kann, und grösstentheils nur als Erzählung von Personen, die auftreten, in den Mund gelegt werden muss, welches dann wider ihre eigene Thätigkeit hemmt, und die gegenseitige Verknüpfung derselben hindert, so dass gar zu wenig zu Stande kommt, was einem Drama—soll es auch nur ein Gemälde vorstellen—ähnlich sieht."

59 For a similar criticism of literary translations, see Hermann Marggraff, "Die Entwicklung des deutschen Romans, besonders in der Gegenwart. Zweiter Artikel. Der deutsche Roman nach 1830," *Deutsche Monatsschrift für Litteratur und öffentliches Leben* 3.2 (1844): 97–116, 110.

60 Anonymous, "Königsberg, b. Unzer: *Der Fall von Jerusalem*. Ein dramatisches Gemälde von Milman. Aus dem Englischen von A. F. Blech. 1823," *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (Halle and Leipzig) 170 (July 1824): cols 526–8, 526: "Bey der oft gerühmten Betriebsamkeit der Deutschen und ihrem Eifer, jedes Werk des Auslandes, das dort irgend Aufmerksamkeit erregt, unsrer Muttersprache anzueignen, ist es leicht erklärlich, dass die Wahl mitunter auf Werke fällt, die wenigstens keine Bereicherung unserer Literatur genannt werden können. Diess gilt auch von dem vorliegenden dramatischen Gemälde, dessen Stoff die Zerstörung Jerusalems ist."

by the German Protestant theologian Johann Gottfried Eichhorn's *Commentarius in apocalypsin Joannis* (1791; Commentary on the Apocalypse of John), the English poet conceived of the Book of Revelation as a "grand prophetic drama" which was divided into three acts.⁶¹ The first act encompassed the fall of Jerusalem, the second the fall of Rome and the triumph of Christianity, and the third the coming of the New Jerusalem.⁶² Elinor S. Shaffer extrapolates from Coleridge's notes that his projected, but never written, epic "would have employed the historical events of the fall of Jerusalem to show the recreation of the ancient religious constitution of man in the new Jerusalem" and that it was to be based on "history interpreted in a symbolic way."⁶³

Kaulbach's approach, as discussed above, also incorporates a strong symbolic component, yet his secularized visual representation of the historical occurrence does not overtly suggest religious re-formation on a universal, soteriological scale, nor is this pursued in any of the oratorios discussed in the previous part. At the same time, though reminiscent of Holmes's comprehensively conceived libretto for Pierson's *Jerusalem* and derived from a German source, the order of equally weighted events outlined by Eichhorn and Coleridge reflects a trajectory that appears to be peculiar to the English context.

The eschatological synthesis of the destruction of Jerusalem, the triumph of Christianity and Israel's restoration, and, finally, the coming of the Heavenly Jerusalem, for instance, may be implicit in the trajectory of the Christians in Kaulbach's painting as they withdraw from the stricken city. Yet neither in the painting, nor in the oratorios it inspired, are any of the three stages given any narrative prominence but the first, that of the destruction of Jerusalem. In England, presumably largely because of the long-established Protestant identification with Israel, the restoration narrative and the manifestation of the New Jerusalem are much more important and the destruction of Jerusalem, as the first of the three "acts" of Revelation, frequently tends to be seen in context with, and as elucidation of, the other two.

In contrast to Pierson who emphasized that his oratorio did not include any *dramatis personae*, Milman appears to have been the first to have introduced a romantic entanglement (other than the historical relationship between Titus and Berenice), or actually two, to the literary representation of the destruction of Jerusalem. He creates in his dramatic poem two Beautiful Jewesses. His text may in this respect have been an inspiration for Martin Blumner. As in the German com-

⁶¹ Quoted from Coleridge's annotations in his copy of Eichhorn's commentary as transcribed by Shaffer, "*Kubla Khan*" and *The Fall of Jerusalem*, p. 17.

⁶² See *ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

poser's oratorio—whose title, *Der Fall Jerusalems* (The Fall of Jerusalem), echoes that of Milman's dramatic poem—Milman introduces two Jewish sisters who effectively exemplify Ecclesia and Synagoga. Miriam and Salome are the daughters of Simon bar Giora and their names, like those of Deborah and Mary in Blunner's oratorio, are aptronyms. Miriam associates the faith and innocence of the mother of Jesus and has converted to Christianity; Salome alludes to the young woman who danced for Herod Antipas and demanded the head of John the Baptist from him (Salome).

Salome adheres fiercely to a zealous Judaism, a characteristic reflected in her betrothal and marriage to Amariah, the fictitious son of John of Giscala, called John the Tyrant in Milman's dramatic poem. Salome's fanaticism manifests itself also in her threat to betray her sister for having intoned a Christian prayer in the Temple, a denunciation which would result in Miriam's death. In the end, she spares her sister and, after Amariah has been mortally wounded, is killed by him in recognition of their cause being lost.

Miriam has secretly been converted by her Christian lover, Javan, who has left Jerusalem and meets her at night outside the gates with food which she carries into the besieged city. She emerges as the central figure of the text in which she embodies the conversion paradigm which she asserts toward her sister but also toward the figure of the Old Man.

Though not explicitly identified as such, the Old Man in Milman's dramatic poem calls to mind the legend of the Wandering Jew as it was included by Kaulbach in his monumental painting. Yet although the Old Man is understood as paradigmatic of the Jews, as is Kaulbach's Ahasuerus, his fate appears to be tied not to the external curse cast upon Ahasuerus but rather to his own sense of guilt which is experienced by him ultimately as an internal curse. He is conceived as a bystander to Christ's passion who joined the crowd, shouting "crucify," but who now, decades later, believes. "I dare not disbelieve," he confides, "it is my curse, / My agony, that cleaves to me in death."⁶⁴ The compassionate Miriam seeks to reassure him: "Oh, not a curse, it is a gracious blessing—/ Believe, and thou shalt live!"⁶⁵ To which the Old Man responds with the affirmation of his Jewish faith: "I have lived a faithful child of Abraham, / And so will die."⁶⁶

In striking contrast to the immortal Ahasuerus, death is the Old Man's fate. Yet as Miriam indicates, this death is everlasting and is opposed to the Christian vision of the eternal afterlife of the redeemed: "For ever!—He is gone, / Yet he

⁶⁴ Milman, *Fall of Jerusalem*, p. 137.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 138.

looks round, and shakes his hoary head / In dreadful execration 'gainst himself."⁶⁷ The image of the Old Man with his hoary head is very similar to Kaulbach's Ahasuerus (and perhaps even more to Görres's libretto version), as is the indication of a spatial vector. Yet whether the artist would have been familiar with Milman's dramatic poem must remain conjectural.

Another, though superficial, similarity is the suggestion that the destruction of Jerusalem prefigures the Last Judgment. Kaulbach promotes in his monumental painting a largely Hegelian interpretation which, as Möseneder has shown, posits the progress of universal history as a universal judgment to culminate in the Last Judgment.⁶⁸ Milman, following the English tradition, invokes the destruction of Jerusalem as a type of the apocalyptic destruction of the world at the end of days:

Even so shall perish,
In its own ashes, a more glorious Temple,
Yes, God's own architecture, this vast world,
This fated universe—the same destroyer,
The same destruction—Earth, Earth, Earth, behold!
And in that judgment look upon thine own!⁶⁹

Milman's *Fall of Jerusalem*, as Jan-Melissa Schramm suggests, was next to Byron's *Cain* (1821) but "the tip of an enormous iceberg, of dramatic poems, epics, and novels inspired by the revolutionary anxieties and millenarian fervour of the 1810s and early 1820s."⁷⁰ The apocalyptic dimension of his dramatic poem is indicated by Milman already in his introduction where he suggests the comparative reading of Josephus alongside "the Scriptural prediction of the 'Abomination of Desolation' [i.e., Revelation]."⁷¹

Ultimately, however, the terror evoked with the image of the Last Judgment is mitigated in the text with the reassuring proclamation of their redemption to the faithful:

Even safe as we, by this still fountain's side,
So shall the Church, thy bright and mystic Bride,
Sit on the stormy gulf a halcyon bird of calm.
Yes, 'mid yon angry and destroying signs,

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ See Möseneder, "Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht," 119–20.

⁶⁹ Milman, *Fall of Jerusalem*, pp. 158–9.

⁷⁰ Jan-Melissa Schramm, *Censorship and the Representation of the Sacred in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 28.

⁷¹ Milman, *Fall of Jerusalem*, p. vii.

O'er us the rainbow of thy mercy shines,
 We hail, we bless the covenant of its beam,
 Almighty to avenge, Almighty to redeem!⁷²

Against the backdrop of this soteriological promise, which typologically associates God's mercy after the utter destruction of the Deluge through the image of the rainbow,⁷³ the individual fate of the two Christian lovers emerges in Milman's dramatic poem with didactic intention as paradigmatic of the blessed fate of the faithful:

[C]hosen out,
 As we two are, for solitary blessing,
 While the universal curse is pour'd around us
 On every head, 'twere cold and barren gratitude
 To stifle in our hearts the holy gladness.⁷⁴

The passage implicitly continues the typological allusion to the Great Flood and the survival of the animals in Noah's Ark, of the male and the female, chosen like Javan and Miriam.⁷⁵

In his introduction, Milman explains that it was his "object to show the full completion of prophecy in this great event."⁷⁶ The Reverend's ulterior motive, however, was to exploit the instructive potential of his dramatic poem and its historical basis. He asserted that he could not imagine "that the public mind [. . .] can be directed to so striking and so incontestable an evidence of the Christian faith without advantage."⁷⁷ The poetic form and aesthetic value of his text, no less than "the interest of a dramatic fable," he considered felicitous vehicles of his didactic intentions.⁷⁸

Milman's religious and aesthetic objectives responded to anxieties variously acknowledged in contemporary discourse. John Campbell of Carbrook, for instance, noted in his *Observations on the Antichristian Tendency of Modern Education* (1823) with some relief his reassurance that Milman's works, including *The Fall of Jerusalem*, "require no antidote and no restriction as to the period of perusal." To the contrary:

72 Ibid., pp. 160–1.

73 See Genesis 9:12–13.

74 Milman, *Fall of Jerusalem*, p. 156.

75 See Genesis 7:2–3.

76 Milman, *Fall of Jerusalem*, p. vii.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.

It is a token for good, when the imagination is directed for gratification to subjects which are in accordance with Christian faith, and to such aspects of these subjects as are calculated to enkindle and fan the flame of Christian feeling.⁷⁹

Various reviews of Milman's dramatic poem concur. The *British Review*, for instance, asserted that

at a time in which so many efforts are made to sap the faith of the people, the Fall of Jerusalem, with its concomitant circumstances, as related by Josephus, may be advantageously adduced as a striking corroboration of the truth of the Gospel.⁸⁰

The American *Christian Spectator* similarly acknowledged that the present time was characterized by an "inundation" with poetry of very mixed quality and covering a wide range of subjects.⁸¹ The critic moreover felt the need to justify the poem's subtitle by explaining that "The Fall of Jerusalem is styled a dramatic poem; but it is as far removed from the regular English drama, as those most hostile to productions of this nature would desire";⁸² indeed, he praises Milman for having dedicated "all the fervour of his genius, and the strength of his mind, as auxiliary to christianity [sic]."⁸³

Whereas Milman's *The Fall of Jerusalem* was reviewed favorably by most critics, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* denounced the dramatic poem as "laboured and cumbrous."⁸⁴ Some critics intriguingly found issue in particular with the figure of Miriam. While the *Christian Spectator* described the young woman as "a tender but heroic minded maiden, who is supported amid all the dangers and horrors [sic] of the siege by evangelical faith,"⁸⁵ for other critics, equally motivated by their Christian faith, the character of Miriam smacks nevertheless too much of the eternal Eve. In a review of Milman's *Belshazzar* (1822), another dramatic poem published two years after the poet's earlier effort, the *British Critic* confided retrospectively that

79 John Campbell of Carbrook, *Observations on the Antichristian Tendency of Modern Education, and on the Practicability and Means of its Improvement* (Edinburgh: Brown, 1823), p. 53n.

80 Anonymous, "Art. XVIII.—The Fall of Jerusalem. A Dramatic Poem. By the Rev. H. H. Milman," *The British Review* 15 (1820): 365–77, 376.

81 Anonymous, "The Fall of Jerusalem, a Dramatic Poem; by the Rev. H. H. Milman," *The Christian Spectator* 2.12 (December 1820): 637–47, 637.

82 Ibid., 639.

83 Ibid., 647.

84 Anonymous, "Lyndsay's Dramas of the Ancient World," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 10.49 (December 1821): 730–40, 731.

85 Anonymous, "Fall of Jerusalem," 640.

[i]n the Fall of Jerusalem, we were never completely reconciled to the under-plot of love, in spite of the beauty of its conception. The destruction of the holy city, to produce its most striking effect, should have been allowed to stand alone in all its mighty singleness of terror.⁸⁶

Sensing an ever so slight but nevertheless undesirable resemblance with French drama, the critic perorated:

It is not in the school of the French stage that Mr. Milman has put on his buskins: nevertheless, it is to the French school that we should principally have looked for the introduction of Miriam. Mr. Milman, it is true, has thrown off the hoop and lappets under which she would have ambled, and the Monsieur and Madame which she would have lisped in feminine rhyme under the direction of a Parisian bard: yet we cannot but wish, however pure and graceful she has come out of his hands, that he had avoided her altogether.⁸⁷

The *British Review* glibly observed in the same vein: "A mere amorous tale is not purified from its grosser elements by its scene being laid in the Holy Land."⁸⁸ Yet the critic has more to say about female characters, giving voice to traditional Pauline misogyny and the allegation that ideal women are not suitable for dramatic representation. Miriam, he asserts,

is described as simple, honest, and artless; and though *we* cannot forget, what both Javan and Mr. Milman seem to do, that "the fairest creature is a fallen creature," she forms no unpleasing picture of those maidens of Palestine whom we figure to ourselves joining in the sacred dances, or chanting the praises of the Son of Jesse, or "Jesse's Lord," to the melodies of the lute and harp. She wants, however, that strength of character, that mental, or moral, or even intellectual energy, which the character of the heroine of a piece seems to require. All that is striking and picturesque in character, Mr. Milman has been obliged to bestow upon the worst part of his actors. Indeed, we have long been of the opinion, that *goodness* is a very unromantic attribute. St. Paul's description of what women ought to be is singularly unpoetical. Modesty, tenderness, sobriety, and "shame-facedness," are very bad materials for a heroine.⁸⁹

Miriam's "half-crazy" sister Salone appears, in a dramatic sense, much more interesting to the critic; she "forms a far more striking portrait than the gentle, modest heroine of the poem."⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Anonymous, "Art. III. Belshazzar; a Dramatic Poem. By the Rev. H. H. Milman," *The British Critic* 18 (1822): 152–60, 153.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁸⁸ Anonymous, "Art. XVIII.—The Fall of Jerusalem," 366.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 371.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 367.

At the same time directing a gibe at Byron, the *British Review* moreover notes: “We have been more than once so deceived by pretended Hebrew melodies, which had nothing Hebrew but the name, that we were not certain that ‘The Fall of Jerusalem’ might not be some misnomer of the same kind.”⁹¹ The critic elaborates: “To write poetry which deserves the name of sacred, something of the spirit, as well as the language, of the ancient bards and prophets of Palestine is requisite. Here it is that certain modern writers of Hebrew melodies so egregiously fail.”⁹² About Milman, he concedes, however, that he cannot be accused of this fault: “His poem is really Jewish.”⁹³ What exactly makes it so, and what this means, remains unsaid. Moreover, considering the critic’s deeply antisemitic stance, it is in any case a question whether the alleged authenticity of the dramatic poem as “Jewish” is really intended to recommend it to the reader; he complains that

almost every thing connected with the Jews is unpoetical, and our prejudices combine with classical taste to excite a feeling the very reverse of romantic, whenever we attempt to bring our fancy into contact with their peculiarities as a nation.⁹⁴

The critic doubts for this reason (i.e., it’s pervasive Jewishness) the suitability of the subject for poetic treatment, which he otherwise asserts: “It is true that abstractedly considered, no event whatever, in the whole page of history, inspired or profane, seems better adapted to become the ground-work of a dramatic, or even epic poem, than that which our author has chosen.”⁹⁵

By that time, the epic poem tentatively envisaged by the critic had, apparently, already been completed, though Charles Peers’ *The Siege of Jerusalem* was not published before 1823. Another, much shorter, epic poem by John Church the Younger appeared in the same year, and the following year, 1824, saw the performance of Perry’s oratorio based on Milman’s dramatic text.⁹⁶ Like an afterthought to this the-

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 366.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 367. The reviewer of the German translation of Milman’s dramatic poem who did not appreciate the poet’s effort nevertheless observed his predilection for hymns and noted with approval that these had at least been crafted in what he calls the oriental spirit; yet he simultaneously criticized that they were frequently cluttered with exaggerated imagery, which, according to contemporary stereotypes, was precisely one of the markers of oriental poetry, see Anonymous, “Königsberg, b. Unzer: *Der Fall von Jerusalem*,” 527.

⁹⁴ Anonymous, “Art. XVIII.—The Fall of Jerusalem,” 367.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ In 1824, the Welsh poet Ebenezer Thomas, better known as Eben Fardd (1802–63), won the Welshpool *eisteddfod* (competitive festival of the arts) with his *awdl* (long poem, ode) “Dynystr Jerusalem” (The Destruction of Jerusalem), which, by extension, should also be seen as a part of

matic cluster, two substantial poetic texts, a dramatic poem by William Lisle Bowles and an epic poem by Agnes Bulmer reasserted in 1832 and 1834, respectively, the eschatological trajectory by contextualizing the destruction of Jerusalem with the apocalyptic vision of the New Jerusalem. Almost midway between these poetical engagements with the subject, in 1828, appeared a novel by George Croly which, while implicitly tied to the eschatological trajectory, nevertheless developed the subject at a tangent by transposing it into narrative fiction of an adventurous bent and by focusing in particular on the Ahasuerus figure.

An Almost Irresistible Appeal to Poetical Appropriation: Peers

Less explicitly didactic than Milman and eschewing the innovative use of the dramatic poem, Charles Peers (d. 1853), the Seatonian Prize winner of 1805, published his own epic engagement with the destruction of Jerusalem in 1823. Peers claims that his *The Siege of Jerusalem* (1823) was completed before Milman's dramatic poem was published and asserts that "[t]he coincidence in the choice of a subject was entirely accidental."⁹⁷ Yet, as mentioned before, he acknowledges to have been familiar with the fragmentary publication of Daniele Florio's *Tito, ossia Gerusalemme distrutta* (1819), referring to the posthumous publication of two of the altogether five cantos at the hands of Quirico Viviani, who notes in his dedication to the poet's nephew Francesco Florio that they were composed already in 1770.⁹⁸

Viviani's express purpose was to respond to Cesare Arici's effort published earlier in the same year 1819 and to show that the poet from Brescia was not the only Italian to have addressed the subject.⁹⁹ Viviani also announced his intention to prepare the publication of the whole of Florio's *Tito* but nothing seems to have come of this.¹⁰⁰ Arici's *Gerusalemme distrutta* likewise remained a fragment. Its

the thematic cluster; for the text, see Eben Fardd, "Dynystr Jerusalem" [1824], in *Gweithiau Barddonol*, ed. Howell Roberts (Bangor: Douglas, 1873), pp. 46–59.

⁹⁷ Peers, *Siege of Jerusalem*, p. vi.

⁹⁸ Daniele Florio, *Tito, ossia Gerusalemme distrutta* (Venice: Alvisopoli, 1819), p. vi. Peers notes also his unsuccessful attempt to locate another relevant Italian text with the title *Giovanni di Ghiscala*, see Peers, *Siege of Jerusalem*, p. vii. He probably had in mind Alfonso Varano's tragedy *Giovanni di Giscala tiranno del tempio di Gerusalemme* (1754) which, a century later, was to inspire Giovanni Gaetano Rossi's opera *Giovanni di Giscala* (1855) composed to a libretto by Alfonso Cavignari.

⁹⁹ Florio, *Tito*, p. vi.

¹⁰⁰ Viviani added shortly afterward the publication of another manuscript section, see Daniele Florio, *La celebrazione della Pasqua: Episodio inedito del Tito; ossia della Gerusalemme distrutta* (Udine: Mattiuzzi, 1823), yet no further contemporary publications of Florio's epic are known.

initial six cantos were published in 1819 as volume six of his *Poesie e prose*, but though the poet declared his intention of finishing his epic on the destruction of Jerusalem, his early death in 1836 prevented its completion.

Neither Florio's nor Arici's texts appear to have been translated into German. Yet they were nevertheless known also in Germany. In order to refute any claims of plagiarism, both were compared in 1820 in a supplement to *Jahrbücher der Literatur*.¹⁰¹ While Florio's *Tito* seems to have elicited no further critical interest in Germany, Arici's epic was described somewhat later in the century by Julius L. Klein as one of a number of "monuments of the exhaustion of the epic genre."¹⁰² Accordingly, neither Florio's nor Arici's epics seem to have had any significant influence on literary engagements with the destruction of Jerusalem in Germany.

In spite of the poet's acknowledgment, Peers' *The Siege of Jerusalem* also appears not to have been influenced to any significant degree by Florio's *Tito*. Asserting the general historical accuracy of his epic poem—for which he mainly consulted Josephus and Tacitus as well as Lightfoot, Prideaux, Calmet, Harmer, and the *Universal History*¹⁰³—Peers explains his introduction of some "fictitious circumstances" with his intention of "relieving the reader's attention from the unbroken monotony of war" and of "exhibiting the customs and manners of the hostile nations."¹⁰⁴

The epic poem commences with a lengthy enumeration of alleged Jewish iniquities and sins culminating in the crucifixion. They provide the justification for the retribution meted out upon the Jews by the divine Father. Evoking the apocalyptic dimension of the occurrence, the poet elaborates a comparison of the cataclysmic event with Armageddon which, in turn, it is suggested to prefigure.¹⁰⁵ Much space is given to the celebration of Passover (Book II), but the ritual is denounced as hypocritical. Jewish internal discord is contrasted to Roman unity under a strong leader in what may be a veiled reference to civil unrest—such as the Peterloo Massacre of 1819—during the regency period in Britain.

101 See Anonymous, "Literarische Notizen: Italienische Literatur," *Anzeige-Blatt für Wissenschaft und Kunst* 10 (1820): 1–12, see especially 7–9.

102 Julius L. Klein, *Geschichte des Dramas* (Leipzig: Weigel, 1869), IV, 106: "Denkmale von Erschöpfung des epischen Genres."

103 The texts Peers refers to are presumably John Lightfoot, *A Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles* (1645), which includes *A brief survey of the contemporary Story of the Jews and Romans*; Humphrey Prideaux, *The Old and New Testament Connected, in the History of the Jews and Neighbouring Nations* (1716–18); Abbé Antoine Augustin Calmet, *Great Dictionary of the Holy Bible* (1725); Thomas Harmer, *Observations on Various Passages of Scripture* (1776); and *An Universal History, from the Earliest Account of Time* (1736–50).

104 Peers, *Siege of Jerusalem*, p. vi.

105 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Through the invocation of Psalm 137, the destruction of the First Temple and the Babylonian Exile are implicitly alluded to, but in contrast to the first destruction, the future is negated in relation to the second. With the High Priest Matthias, Peers introduces a figure who represents Jewish insight and conscience and who warns his compatriots of the impending doom. With reference to Lamentations, Matthias talks about Jesus and Jewish guilt and calls for the Jews to see the errors of their ways:

Mock not, if I speak
Of one, as King rejected and disdain'd,
Whom yet miraculous and mighty signs
Proclaim'd a Prophet of no mortal cast.¹⁰⁶

The High Priest more specifically refers to Jesus's prophecy, a topic Peers already dealt with in 1805 in his prize-winning Seatonian poem:

Such was He, whose voice,
Twice twenty seasons since, proclaim'd this woe,
And worse, to come—our people led again
(The few who 'scape) to far captivity—
Our Temple sack'd, our bulwarks in the dust.
That hour, perchance, is near, and this the foe
Ordain'd for vengeance: yield, while yet ye may.¹⁰⁷

To which Simon bar Giora responds with defiance, embodying the archetype of the stubborn Jew:

Of thine ill auguries
Let those who may, interpret; we nor heed
Prophet nor prophecy; denied, disdain'd
Of the whole nation, save a simple few
Of easy faith, he fell without regard,
And so shall end his senseless oracles.¹⁰⁸

Instead, the notion of a political Messiah is proffered by John of Giscala in a demagogic harangue:

he yet will come,
The mighty conqueror, the lord of war,
The great Messiah, whose resistless arms

106 Ibid., p. 54.

107 Ibid., p. 55.

108 Ibid., p. 56.

Will build anew the strength of Judah's throne,
Hurl back the ruin she has wrought, on Rome,
And gather all the nations to our sway!¹⁰⁹

This false hope and expectation of another Messiah is contrasted with the prospect of exile evoked by Matthias. The Jews, he warns, would "go forth to pine / In heathen realms, famish'd and shelterless!"¹¹⁰ and, reminiscent of the trope employed by Trollope and Byron, "yet the tear-swoll'n eye / Would oft revert to Sion."¹¹¹

Emphasizing the utter hopelessness of the Jews, the epist in addition offers a comparison to Troy:

Sad was their transit o'er th' Egean wave,
Who view'd the ruin that enwrap thy walls,
Long-leaguer'd Ilion! when the victor Greek
Fired all their city—yet not all forlorn,
Outcast, or hopeless; o'er the deep they bore
Their household deities, with high presage
Of a new empire and a nobler name.
Not so with these Sion's sad fugitives!
No angel sent, as erst, to soothe the sigh
Of the lone mother in the wilderness.¹¹²

In contrast to Troy, from whose destruction ensued the creation of the Roman Empire, and in contrast also to the destruction of the First Temple which was followed by the divinely sanctioned return of the Jews to Jerusalem, restoration is denied to the Jews after the destruction of the Second Temple.

It is only in the conclusion of the epic poem attributed to the "pale Genius" of the destroyed city, and following on the description of the "Moslem's shrines" which are said to "Pollute the ground by God's own footsteps press'd,"¹¹³ that the restoration of the debased city is envisaged as it was foretold by Ezekiel and in Revelation:¹¹⁴

"[. . .] Hath God forgotten? Shall his heritage
Lie thus for ever in the spoiler's power?
The land that erst with milk and honey flow'd,
Whose stones were iron, and her mountains brass,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 111–12.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 83.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 84.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 221.

¹¹⁴ A note of the author refers the reader to these two biblical books, see *ibid.*, p. 261.

Still groan untill'd?"—No—let the heathen mock
 Thy desolation, they, their glory shorn,
 Shall never wake again to brighter hopes,
 Of new dominion: thou, thy days fulfill'd,
 Lion of God! shalt rouse thee from thy trance.¹¹⁵

The vision of restoration is also extended to the Jewish people:

The same [i.e., God's archangel] will lead thy wandering remnant home
 From every region of their wide exile;
 Rebuild thy throne on the everlasting rock;
 And o'er a new and nobler Temple shed
 Imperishable glory, light, and peace!¹¹⁶

Against this background of utter destruction and the envisaged eventual transfiguration of Judaism, Peers, like Milman, introduces the figure of the Beautiful Jewess. Sapphira, the daughter of the repentant High Priest Matthias, who is murdered by the Zealots, is in love with Hazor, the leader of the Idumeans. They marry among the din of war and eventually he, like Amariah in Milman's dramatic poem, is slain. Sapphira—like another Antigone—makes her way to Titus to beg him to allow her to bury Hazor and to give his permission for the Idumeans to leave.¹¹⁷ The young Jewish woman then returns to the stricken city, where she fades away and dies.¹¹⁸

Like Trollope and Cowley, Peers ostentatiously rejects fiction and fancy; instead, he claims for his epic poem the spirit of the prophets inspired with divine truth, as Kaulbach did as well with the prominent inclusion of the prophets in his painting. Peers' epic account of the post-biblical historical event is thus elevated to an almost scriptural level:

For of no fiction now is need to sing—
 Of hell-born spirits warring round the wall—
 Of magic spells—the dear idolatry
 Of nations wakening from their Gothic trance,
 When the sweet minstrel struck th' Ausonian lyre
 To hallow'd chivalry and feats of arms—
 Nor if a muse yet linger'd 'mid the bowers
 Of green Sorrento or the Tuscan vale,
 Should I invoke her aid; but rather call
 Those that in elder age, beside the marge

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 222–3.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

¹¹⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 161.

¹¹⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 165.

Of streams once vocal to prophetic bards,
 Breathed inspiration—for the city of God,
 E'en in her shame and ruin, claims the meed
 Of genuine verse; nor needs fond fancy's art
 To grace th' authentic record of her fate.¹¹⁹

The significance of Peers treating the subject of his poem not merely as history but developing its soteriological dimension was not lost on the *British Review*. "On the contrary," it emphasized,

he treats it, as one who knows it to be a transaction of the most unequivocal importance to his faith, one of those many signs and wonders and mighty deeds, which were wrought by the hand of the Almighty Providence, and by which he is able to ascertain the impregnable safety of that religion, which is the ark of his eternal hope.¹²⁰

The implication is that the poet's approach is anticipated to inspire a similar personal faith also in his readership, whom the critic expects to be fully knowledgeable about the historical events: "what inquiring Christian is unacquainted with the pages of Josephus, delightful as they must ever be."¹²¹

And yet, the historical dimension and its historiographical propagation—invoked by the critic with the notion of the pleasing perusal of *The Jewish War*—is given significance by Peers exclusively in relation to human remembrance and the continued transmission of the exhortatory value of the historical occurrence with soteriological significance:

Such was thy fall, proud city, once a queen
 Among the nations, on thy mountain throne.
 Such was thy fall; depicted in the page
 Of faithful story, and in marble wrought;
 Which nor the havoc of barbarian hands,
 Nor more destroying time, hath yet effaced.
 Still, and scarce harm'd, amid the mouldering piles
 Of Roman greatness, shows the trophied arch
 With the sad record of thy ruin graven;
 The martial pageant, and the sacred spoils,

119 Ibid., p. 132.

120 Anonymous, "Art. VIII.—The Siege of Jerusalem: A Poem; By Charles Peers, Esq.," *The British Review* 21.42 (1824): 161–83, 181.

121 Ibid., 183. The reviewer levels scathing criticism at the English translator of Josephus: "notwithstanding the glaring injury which they have sustained from being *done into English* by William Whiston."

Conqueror and captive, in their pride and woe.
Such was thy fall!¹²²

With the historiographical narrative wrought in marble the epist refers to the reliefs adorning the Arch of Titus. The triumphal arch was erected by the emperor's brother and successor Domitian in commemoration of his victory and of his triumph in Rome. The inner faces of the arch are decorated with two panels of reliefs which show Titus as *triumphator* (on the north inner panel) and the spoils from the fall of Jerusalem, including, most prominently, the menorah (on the south inner panel). As the poet adds in a note, the triumphal arch was still, and continues to be, extant among the ruins of Rome as "one of the most entire specimens of Roman antiquity."¹²³ It is thus, next to its historiographical immortalization, a material monument to the destruction of Jerusalem which endures even after the destruction of Rome itself as an eternal reminder. Implicitly, it therefore simultaneously affirms in the poem also the fall of pagan Rome.

Peers refers to the practice of artistic commemoration where it is evoked as giving expression to personal, rather than historical, horror also in his rendering of the Mary of Bethzuba episode.¹²⁴ Mary's teknophagy occurs in his epic poem, untypically, after the destruction of the Temple; perhaps as an indication that with the fanum the last vestiges of Jewish morality vanished. As the unnatural mother shows the Zealots the "mangled infant,"¹²⁵ the poet invokes the "painter's art" for the representation of the horror of this scene:

The painter's art,
From their entrancement, and pale ashy hue,
Might have combined each element to form
A group of horror.¹²⁶

Prior to Kaulbach's rendering, the Mary of Bethzuba episode had in fact been represented only infrequently in the visual arts since the medieval period,¹²⁷ in

¹²² Peers, *Siege of Jerusalem*, p. 216.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ For medieval representations of Mary of Bethzuba, see, e.g., John of Damascus, *Sacra Parallela* (9th century), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, Grec 923, fol. 227r. See also the *Neville Book of Hours* (c. 1325–1350), British Library, London, MS Egerton 2781, fol 190r; see Kathryn A. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and their Books of Hours* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 131, 134, who also mentions a tradition of Byzantine and Romanesque works. See also Jacob van Maerlant's *Rijmbibel* and the appended

contrast to the similarly gruesome subject of Count Ugolino and his sons derived from Dante's *La divina comedia* which became popular in the latter half of the eighteenth century.¹²⁸ Both deal with cannibalism or, more specifically, teknophagy but the former may have been considered too ghastly according to sensibilities expressed, for instance, by the German art historian Johann Joachim Winkelmann who admonished artists, particularly painters, that they should avoid such scenes and rather leave them to be portrayed by poets.¹²⁹

In its review of *The Siege of Jerusalem*, the *Monthly Review* emphasized that the subject of the destruction of Jerusalem was “associated in our bosoms with themes of high and celestial import” and, highlighting that Peers’ epic poem was the first of its kind, added that “its unfabled incidents [are] interesting [to] us not through the spell of fiction, or the illusions of fancy, but by the sacred potency of Divine truth.”¹³⁰ This—as we have seen, and will see again—is a trope frequently evoked in representations of the destruction of Jerusalem. Further elaborating on the religious dimension and echoing earlier reviews of Milman’s dramatic poem, the *Monthly Review* enthused:

Considered also as a remarkable fulfilment of the prophecy of our Lord, and an example of one of the most awful vicissitudes in the annals of human affairs, what subject could have been better selected for poetic narrative than the memorable siege of Jerusalem.”¹³¹

The *British Review* similarly expressed its wonder at the previous lack of epic engagements with the subject whose aptness it justifies with its potential of strengthening the Christian faith:

Among the variety of important events which have occurred upon the theatre of the world, it seems remarkable that the Siege of Jerusalem should have so long remained unsung. It is a subject so grand in its character, so full of incidents deeply pathetic, so intimately con-

Die Wrake van Jerusalem (1332), Museum Meermanno, The Hague, Westreenianum MS 10. B. 21. The full page illumination by Michiel van der Borch on fol. 152v includes a representation of Mary of Bethzeuba, see, e.g., Claudine A. Chavannes-Mazel, “The Jerusalem Miniatures in Maerlant’s *Rijmbijbel* 10 B 21 and in the Hornby Book of Hours. Questions of Context and Meaning,” *Quaerendo* 41 (2011): 139–54. For early modern responses to the Mary of Bethzeuba episode, see, e.g., Vanita Neelakanta, *Retelling the Siege of Jerusalem in Early Modern England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2019), chapter 1.

¹²⁸ See, e.g., Aida Audeh, “Dante’s Ugolino in 18th-Century France: Reynolds, Fuseli, Flaxman and the Students of J.-L. David,” in *Heroines and Heroes: Symbolism, Embodiment, Narratives and Identity*, ed. Christopher Hart (Kingswinford: Midrash, 2008), pp. 38–55, esp. pp. 43–55.

¹²⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 48.

¹³⁰ Anonymous, “Art. V. The Siege of Jerusalem: a Poem. By Charles Peers, Esq.,” *The Monthly Review* 105 (September 1824): 30–9, 31.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

nected with the record of revealed truth, so admirably calculated to bring shame upon the doubts of the infidel, and to build up the sincere Christian in the firm belief of his most holy faith, as apparently to make an almost irresistible appeal to poetical appropriation.¹³²

The *British Critic* likewise acknowledged the universal familiarity with the destruction of Jerusalem: "Its importance on the completion of our Saviour's prophetic denunciation, and the stupendous instances of divine power and vengeance by which it was accompanied, have made it familiar to every one."¹³³ Yet the critic was not convinced of the commensurate poetical value of Peers' effort. He accused the poet of "want of thought" and alleged that the epic poem's "tediousness will prevent it from obtaining many readers";¹³⁴ indeed, he foresees that, though it may be "possessed of some merit," *The Siege of Jerusalem* and similar works, will "soon be borne down by their own weight into the waters of oblivion."¹³⁵

Intriguingly, the same critic affirms the "superiority" of Milman's poem, "in which the tediousness of continued narrative is avoided by the reciprocation of dialogue, and the introduction of choral odes."¹³⁶ In this sense, the review appears to reflect on the contemporary dynamic shift in reading practice and reader expectations which increasingly prioritised dialogic representations, in dramatic poems no less than embedded in narrative fiction.

Once again, the frequently reiterated observation that contemporary poetry was proliferating with the work of "myriad of poetasters,"¹³⁷ the *New Monthly Magazine* lamented correspondingly that "[t]he bulk of the reading public are satisfied with the *floating* literature of the day," but noted appreciatively that within this "definition an Epic poem in nine books cannot, we fear, be comprised."¹³⁸ The *Monthly Review* asserted more boldly that Peers' epic poem was of "unequivocal and real merit,"¹³⁹ while the *British Review* was more careful to elaborate the moral dimension of the epic poem and insisted that "a sentence of comparative worthlessness" should be pronounced "upon every attempt to advance the boundaries of literary gratification, except under the presiding and controlling influ-

132 Anonymous, "Art. VIII.—The Siege of Jerusalem," 165.

133 Anonymous, "Art. III. The Siege of Jerusalem. By Charles Peers, Esq.," *The British Critic* 20 (December 1823): 592–6, 593.

134 *Ibid.*, 596.

135 *Ibid.*

136 *Ibid.*, 594.

137 Anonymous, "Art. V. The Siege of Jerusalem," 30.

138 Anonymous, "The Siege of Jerusalem. A Poem. By Charles Peers, Esq.," *The New Monthly Magazine* 9 (1823): 318.

139 Anonymous, "Art. V. The Siege of Jerusalem," 31.

ence of morality and religion.”¹⁴⁰ Indeed, the critic contended that the “unexampld number of both writers and readers” required caution and vigilance. He explained that to exercise

this constant vigilance is especially necessary in regard to poetical composition, which may influence the principles through the powerful medium of the imagination, and from which so much advantage or injury must necessarily arise.¹⁴¹

The critic deduced from this also the moral responsibility of his profession and maintained that reviewers “should aim, not merely to develop the literary excellencies or defects of a poem, but to exhibit its moral beauty and deformity” and to demonstrate “how far it is calculated to subserve or to injure the interest of truth and virtue.”¹⁴² Peers’ effort he credits with “possessing and communicating a high tone of moral thought and feeling.”¹⁴³

Though completely ignored by critical opinion, the same moral objectives might also be attributed to the third text in the cluster of poems engaging with the destruction of Jerusalem in the early years of the third decade of the nineteenth century. Yet otherwise, its author might more justly be classified as one of the “myriad poetasters” denounced by the *New Monthly Magazine*.

Obscure Closure to the Cluster: Church the Younger

Self-published by the author for a relatively small number of subscribers, John Church the Younger’s *The Fall of Jerusalem* (1823) presumably never attracted any wider attention.¹⁴⁴ The short epic poem is nevertheless of interest for some of the idiosyncratic interpretations it offers, although—commensurate with the text’s relative obscurity and the imminent dissolution of the thematic cluster—they did not become productive in other poetic engagements with the destruction of Jerusalem.

Church added an epigraph to his title which links the destruction of Jerusalem as a sign of god’s rejection of the Jews to the notion of their restless wandering, which is otherwise expressed in the Ahasuerus legend: “My God will cast them away because they did not hearken unto him, and they shall be wanderers

¹⁴⁰ Anonymous, “Art. VIII.—The Siege of Jerusalem,” 161.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 162.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 163.

¹⁴⁴ See John Church, *The Fall of Jerusalem* (London: Printed for the Author by R. O. Weston, 1823).

among the nations.”¹⁴⁵ It is likely that the epist, another clergyman, was cognizant of the implications which, only a few years later, found more focused articulation in George Croly’s *Salathiel*.

In Church’s epic poem, unique among literary engagements with the historical occasion of this period, Titus is a Christian. The poet follows in this a medieval tradition and turns the war between Jews and Romans effectively into a war between Jews and Christians.¹⁴⁶ Like Milman and Peers, he situates his epic in contemporary apocalyptic discourse:

A sight like this was never seen before,
A sight so horrid shall be seen no more,
Till the last trump shall wake the slumb’ring dead,
And bid them rise from out their clayey bed;
Till Jesus’ blood-cross’d banner be unfurl’d,
And God’s avenging fire shall strike the world,
When fearing men and fiends shall dread the hour,
But all shall own the Saviour’s mighty pow’r,
Till Jews and Romans shall like friends arise,
And take their flight together through the skies;
There lost to anger and the love of fame
Shall join to bless the Tri-une’s sacred name;
Or like their native cities, burning go,
And sink for ever to eternal woe.¹⁴⁷

Jerusalem is addressed with the very first word of the poem,¹⁴⁸ which, following the established pattern, introduces the reader in its first part to the holy city’s alleged iniquities. The much less conventional second part of the epic poem commences with a fantasy based on Revelation which imagines the enthroned Christ: “See how he shines! the wondrous great God-man.”¹⁴⁹ The apocalyptic imagery is further extended by the juxtaposition of this vision with the Jewish rejection of Christ and the ensuing cataclysm:

145 See Hosea 9:17.

146 Church, *Fall of Jerusalem*, p. 9. For the medieval tradition of representing Titus as a Christian, see, e.g., Kara L. McShane and Mark J. B. Wright, “Introduction,” in *The Destruction of Jerusalem, or Titus and Vespasian*, eds Kara L. McShane and Mark J. B. Wright (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2021), pp. 1–29, p. 18 and Andrew Zissos, “The Flavian Legacy,” in *A Companion to the Flavian Age of Imperial Rome*, ed. Andrew Zissos (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), pp. 487–512, p. 491: “Medieval belief in the conversion of Vespasian and Titus to Christianity was surprisingly widespread.”

147 Church, *Fall of Jerusalem*, p. 80.

148 See *ibid.*, p. 3.

149 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

To save e'en Jews his precious blood was spilt;
 But they, perverse, his promis'd ransom scorn'd,
 And lost in sin, to sin their safety pawn'd.
 Now comes the tainting force of sin's harsh breath,
 War, famine, murder, slavery, and death.¹⁵⁰

As in Peers' epic, Titus interacts in Church's *The Fall of Jerusalem* with Jews. In this case, the familiar stereotypical configuration of the old Jewish father and young daughter is reiterated by the poet. Titus, as in Peers, shows mercy to them as he finds the old Jew close to death and the beautiful maiden lamenting his fate. Untypically, the old Jew is not depicted as stiff-necked and stubborn but beseeches Titus to act as a guardian for his daughter Jezra after his imminent death. The dying father's acquiescence in effect condones and authorizes also Titus's spiritual guardianship over Jezra. Typically, the young woman in this way is set up to embody the conversion paradigm which she indeed fulfils.

As Gibson correlated the mercy of Titus and of God, demonstrating the exhaustion of the latter, Church also contrasts human and divine mercy. Yet he, other than Gibson, shows the latter to be never-ending. It is invoked by the epist as Jezra, wandering around the Roman camp, gazes at the doomed city and at the Temple,

Beneath whose concave she so of hath knelt,
 Warm'd by that mercy angels never felt:
 Angels ne'er felt?—nay, reader, do not pause,
 What sav'd us from the curse of broken laws?
 For what did Jesus undertake our cause?
 For what did Jesus take a mortal form?
 For what did Jesus bear each angry storm?
 For what did Jesus tread our earthly road?
 For what did Jesus bear our heavy load?
 For what did Jesus sweat, did Jesus sigh?
 And oh! for what did Jesus groan and die?
 To save fall'n man from gaping hell—and prove
 The strength of mercy and his saving love;
 Redeeming love, to angels e'en unknown,
 Redeeming mercy, ne'er to angels shown:
 'Twas this that Jezra's pious bosom fill'd,
 'Twas this that ev'ry rising passion still'd;
 'Twas this, when at the altar's foot she lay,
 Cheer'd her young soul, and bade her fears give way;
 'Twas thoughts of this, and happy days gone by,
 That now made Jezra roll her languid eye.¹⁵¹

150 Ibid., pp. 34–5.

151 Ibid., pp. 64–5.

In analogy of this praise of redeeming mercy, the young Jewish woman seeks to invoke once again the mercy of Titus by warning him that the fall of the Temple would mean her death. Eventually, Jezra ensures the literal truth of her assertion by walking into the burning edifice.¹⁵² To Titus, she leaves a letter from which it emerges that she has converted to Christianity. Referring to herself in the third person, she writes:

No more she'll point thee to thy heav'nly home;
No more the mercy of thy God she'll show,
And tell what Jesus suffer'd here below.¹⁵³

Mercy appears here as a concept that, inspired by the divinity, emerges as the basis of human interaction which, as exemplified by Jezra's death, follows nevertheless a higher imperative which submits it to God's wisdom which is not always discernible to mere mortals. In this way, even the punitive destruction of Jerusalem can become a manifestation of divine mercy.

Church's treatment of the destruction of Jerusalem appears to have been the final contribution to the main cluster of epic engagements with the subject in England in the third decade of the nineteenth century. In response to the expanding market for literary production and changing reading habits and practices, the epic mode—perhaps because it suffered, as suggested by Klein, from “exhaustion”—was subsequently largely supplanted with narrative fiction. Yet the epos never faded completely in the nineteenth century.¹⁵⁴ The tension between both genres, manifest in the dichotomy between Milman's and Peers' efforts, became once again evident about a decade later in the nearly simultaneous publication of William Lisle Bowles' dramatic poem and Agnes Bulmer's extensive epic, both of which privilege even more clearly than the earlier texts the trajectory from typological destruction to universal restoration.

Afterthoughts to the Cluster: Bowles and Bulmer

Following like an afterthought on the cluster of poetic engagements with the destruction of Jerusalem, the subject was revived about a decade later in two poetic texts which focused on the expectation of the New Jerusalem in substitution for

¹⁵² See *ibid.*, pp. 67, 72.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁵⁴ See, e.g., Herbert F. Tucker's expansive exploration of the epic in Britain during the long nineteenth century, *Epic: Britain's Heroic Muse, 1790–1910* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

the destroyed city and simultaneously suggested the succession of empires to culminate in Britain's spiritual resurgence. They as such exemplify the wider trajectory that is archetypal of the English engagement with the subject and which largely informed also Pierson's oratorio. Yet Bowles and Bulmer—like Wrangham and Trollope in their Seaton Prize-winning poems of 1794 and 1795, respectively—at the same time challenge the redemptive status of Britain in an almost prophetic vein by exhorting it to mend its ways. Bowles' *St John in Patmos* is another dramatic poem; Bulmer's *Messiah's Kingdom* is a "typological epic" of exceptional breadth, which privileges, in the words of Herbert F. Tucker, "the virtues of interpretation over those of story."¹⁵⁵

Religious Poetry in an Iron Age

The English focus on the comprehensive trajectory from the destruction of Jerusalem to the coming of the New Jerusalem was articulated explicitly in *St John in Patmos* (1832) by the Reverend William Lisle Bowles (1762–1850).¹⁵⁶ First published pseudonymously, this dramatic poem describes the exile of the supposedly inspired author of the biblical Book of Revelation in the Aegean island of Patmos as well as the visions he recorded in this book. It includes references to the destruction of Jerusalem and the apocalyptic certainty of a New Jerusalem associated with the Last Judgment.

Initially published under the pseudonym "One of the Old Living Poets of Great Britain" in response to a challenge issued by the *Edinburgh Review* which maintained that Britain's great poets had all fallen silent,¹⁵⁷ the earliest reviews of the dramatic poem speculate about the identity of the author, which was, however, soon revealed.¹⁵⁸ The *Athenæum*, correctly divining the name of the pseudonymous author, was less than enthusiastic about the poem. Pointing to the intrinsic dangers of versifying, and expanding on, Scripture, it alleged caustically that "[t]he oldest of living British poets has not the power to expound in verse the meaning of those dark but glorious visions."¹⁵⁹

155 Ibid., p. 284. See William Lisle Bowles, *St. John in Patmos: A Poem* (London: Murray, 1832) and Agnes Bulmer, *Messiah's Kingdom: A Poem. In Twelve Books* (London: Rivington, 1833).

156 See Bowles, *St. John in Patmos*.

157 See *ibid.*, p. [v].

158 See Anonymous, "VIII. St. John in Patmos: a Poem. By one of the old living poets of Great Britain, etc.," *The Monthly Review* 3.1 (September 1832): 119–30.

159 Anonymous, "Our Library Table," *Athenæum* 241 (June 9, 1832): 368.

While other critics were also skeptical about the endeavor of versifying the Apocalypse, their assessment of Bowles' effort tended to differ from the unequivocal dismissal expressed by the *Athenæum*. The *Gentleman's Magazine* enthused that "[a] subject more worthy the pen of the poet can hardly be conceived," though it, too, cautioned that "we should tremble to see it in the hands of one who did not unite a deep and awful sense of the realities upon which he was engaged with the highest qualities of the art by which it was to be illustrated and adorned."¹⁶⁰ Yet it credits the poetic effort of Bowles with meeting these criteria fully.

The *Monthly Review* opined that "the gift of Divine inspiration" was necessary for explaining the apocalypse in poetry and that the endeavor was otherwise "most hopeless";¹⁶¹ it noted that the poet "has felt the necessity of mixing earthly interests and feelings with the sublime scenes," but attested in contrast to the *Athenæum* that Bowles "shadows [them] forth with great delicacy of taste and execution from the Revelations."¹⁶²

The *Christian Remembrancer*, finally, referring to Bowles as "our Magnus Apollo,"¹⁶³ went even further and insisted that with regard to his *St John in Patmos* "no man, of the least religious feeling, can rise from its perusal without being sensible of having been improved in both his religious and moral conceptions."¹⁶⁴

In 1836, the second edition of Bowles' poem was published. Reminiscent of earlier responses to religious poetry, such as Milman's *The Fall of Jerusalem* as well as Peers' *The Siege of Jerusalem*, reviews once again reveal unallayed Christian anxieties of being entrenched and embattled in the modern age. The *British Critic* wonders "[h]ow any man, in this utilitarian, this rail-road, this steam-engine, this truly *iron* age, can have heart to write poetry."¹⁶⁵ In its pages, Bowles' poem was reviewed alongside Thomas Dale's "The Church's Lament for St John" (1836),¹⁶⁶ because otherwise "their sweet, and devotional, and gentle strains could have little chance, we fear, of a fair hearing in this hour of turbulent polemics."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁰ Anonymous, "St. John in Patmos, a Poem. By One of the old Living Poets of Great Britain," *The Gentleman's Magazine* 102 (1832), *Supplement*: 619–21, 620.

¹⁶¹ Anonymous, "VIII. St. John in Patmos," 120.

¹⁶² Anonymous, "St. John in Patmos. By one of the old Living Poets of Great Britain, etc.," *The British Magazine* 1 (June 1, 1832): 373–6, 373.

¹⁶³ Anonymous, "Art. III.—St. John in Patmos; a Poem. By One of the Oldest Living Poets of Great Britain," *The Christian Remembrancer* 14 (1832): 465–8, 465.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 466.

¹⁶⁵ Anonymous, "Religious Poetry," *The British Critic* 19 (1836): 520–2, 520.

¹⁶⁶ For Dale's poem, see Michael Wheeler, *St John and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 15–16.

¹⁶⁷ Anonymous, "Religious Poetry," 520.

Nevertheless, doubts were also voiced once again about the ability—and the authority—of the poet to add to the inspired words of the Apocalypse and to disrupt its cohesion. The *New Monthly Magazine* opined that “the sublime imagery of the Apocalypse has imparted a nervous energy and force to this recent poem,” but that “[a]s a whole it is unequal, and we cannot but think the plan of breaking the continuity of the divine vision vouchsafed to the beloved apostle detrimental to the general effect.”¹⁶⁸

In a review of a sermon by Bowles which refers to John biding his time to be the last of the apostles to give testimony of the divine plan of redemption, the critic summarizes Bowles’ argument that “[t]he solemn AMEN appended to his [i.e., John’s] gospel shows, that he did not think it necessary to add another word; therefore none should be supplied by human TRADITION.”¹⁶⁹ John the Evangelist was commonly conflated with John the Divine nearly to the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁰ The latter was the scribe of the Book of Revelation, which similarly concludes with a firm “Amen.”¹⁷¹ Bowles must have been aware of the contradiction to this sense of closure constituted by his earlier poem, yet nevertheless decided that his effort, which he noted was seminal, was also worthy. As he explained in the preliminary matter to the first edition of his poem, implicitly alluding to the millenarian frenzy of the time:

The subject is peculiarly in unison with the aspect of the times; but it seems extraordinary that it should not, long since, have engaged the attention of the poet, when it unites picturesque description, the most sublime and awful imagery, and the most elevated and sacred interest.¹⁷²

In the dramatic poem, John is visited in his exile in Patmos by a mysterious Stranger, an angelic figure, as transpires later. The Stranger facilitates the visions of John as they are described in the Book of Revelation. Yet, as indicated by the poet’s critics, these visions are embedded not only in the descriptions of John’s life in Patmos and—apparently according to a medieval legend—of his missionary success among the island’s population of convicts, but they are also disrupted by the narrative of the Stranger and other visions experienced by John which correlate to the apocalyptic trajectory of his inspired book but which are not scriptural.

¹⁶⁸ Anonymous, “St. John in Patmos. By the Rev. W. L. Bowles,” *The New Monthly Magazine* 48 (1836): 233–4, 233.

¹⁶⁹ Anonymous, “St. Peter and the Keys,” *The Church of England Quarterly Review* 2 (1837): 260–2.

¹⁷⁰ See Wheeler, *St John and the Victorians*, pp. 10–11.

¹⁷¹ Revelation 22:21.

¹⁷² Bowles, *St. John in Patmos*, p. viii.

The horrors of the fall of Jerusalem are recounted by one of the convicts converted by John who used to be a Roman soldier. Pedanius is based on the eponymous Roman cavalryman described by Josephus, who was praised by Titus for grabbing a Jewish warrior by the heel and carrying him into the Roman camp;¹⁷³ yet the poet elaborates a new narrative in relation to Pedanius, according to which the body of a baby that was starved to death is thrown from the walls of Jerusalem into the path of his horse. When in the confusion of the battle the distraught mother rushes from the gates and beseeches him to protect her, the Roman takes her and the dead baby out of the fray, in analogy to Pedanius' feat as described by Josephus. From afar—once again enacting the familiar gaze backward toward the stricken city—they see the glow of the burning Temple.¹⁷⁴

The famished mother is cast by the poet as an antitype to Mary of Bethzuba, who is not mentioned in the dramatic poem at all; the young Jewish woman—a Beautiful Jewess whose appearance, if not her moral stature, is diminished, but not obliterated, by her suffering—arouses the reader's pity and compassion:

Her infant she had taken from the ground,
To lay in her bosom, while the tears
Fell on its folded hands; but when she saw
Still its wan livid lips, and the same glare
Of its dead eyes, she turn'd away her face,
Half-looking down, half-rais'd to heav'n, and shed
Her tears no more: one hand, as thus she sat,
With fingers spread, held fast her infant's arm,
O'er its right shoulder, while its arid lips
She drew, in vain, towards her open breast.¹⁷⁵

Rather than a symbol of Israel's iniquity, like Mary of Bethzuba, the image, which is also an antitype to representations of the Madonna, suggests the withering of the Jewish faith. This symbolic potential is further enhanced when Pedanius and the unnamed Jewish woman fly past the grave of Lazarus. The suggestion is that they forego the promise of resurrection and the life everlasting offered through Jesus. Eventually, they marry according to Jewish law, which indicates the continued adherence of the woman to the religion of her fathers; unable to follow the now void law, the Roman joins a band of robbers. Cognizant of Pedanius' transgressions, the woman finally turns insane and, dying, wistfully exclaims: "OH! JERUSALEM, JERUSALEM!"¹⁷⁶ The episode is calculated to emphasize the

¹⁷³ See Josephus, *Jewish War*, pp. 349–50 (6.2.8).

¹⁷⁴ See Bowles, *St. John in Patmos*, pp. 57–8.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

eternal loss of Jerusalem and the annulation of the old covenant, but also the continuous attachment of the Jewish woman to her superseded faith, in contrast to Pedanius who, as a gentile Christian, is assured of his redemption in the New Jerusalem.

The Stranger, too, has experienced the destruction of Jerusalem, but he contextualizes it toward John in contrast in relation to the divine plan of redemption and exults in the creation of the Church from the city's ashes:

'So the fair city of Jerusalem
 'Perish'd: but, lo! CHRIST'S HOLY CHURCH shall
 'rise—
 'Rise from its ashes—yea, is risen now—
 'Its glorious gates shall never be cast down,
 'Till He, the KING OF GLORY, shall appear.
 'He, founded it upon a Rock—a Rock,
 'Which time, the rushing earthquake, or the
 'storm,—
 'While earth endures—shall never shake!¹⁷⁷

The emphasis on the rise of the Church of Christ is similar to Milman's conclusion. But in line with its wider subject and with the Book of Revelation, Bowles's dramatic poem enquires moreover into "What things shall be *HEREAFTER*."¹⁷⁸

Alluding to Psalm 137 and its implicit connotations of Jewish restoration after the destruction of the First Temple, the Stranger recounts:

"I sat
 "Upon a stone of fall'n Jerusalem,
 "'Sat down and wept, when I remember'd thee,
 "'O Sion,' and thy Temple, and thy sons
 "Scatter'd in the wide world—scatter'd or dead."¹⁷⁹

The "hereafter" that emerges after the cataclysm for the remnant of the Chosen People is dire. Yet the Stranger prophesies also the fall of Rome in the "hereafter":

"Hark! The Barbarian trump: Jerusalem
 "Shall be aveng'd, and those of distant days,
 "Pond'ring the fate of empires, there shall come
 "To muse upon the fragments of her might,
 "Her ancient glory pass'd as morning clouds,

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 29–30.

"And tremble for the judgments of the Lord
 "In all the world!"¹⁸⁰

Indeed, in another vision imparted to him by the Stranger, John sees from a mountain the succession of empires—of Greece and of pagan Rome, but also of Catholic Rome:

It is the Imperial Mistress of the world,
 ROME—ROME—now Pagan; but a pow'r unknown
 Shall rise, and, throned on those seven hills—
 When Cæsars moulder with their palaces—
 Shall hold dominion o'er the prostrate world,
 Not by their glitt'ring legions, but the pow'r
 Of cowed Superstition, that shall keep
 Kingdoms and kings in thrall—till, with a shout,
 A brighter Angel, from the heav'n of heav'ns,
 As ampler knowledge shoots her glorious beams,
 Shall open the Lamb's book again, and night,
 Beck'ning her dismal shadows, and dark birds,
 Fly hooting from the day-spring of that dawn.¹⁸¹

Reflecting old Protestant interpretations of papal Rome as the New Babylon, the Reformation is extolled by the poet in the imagery of the Book of Revelation. The apocalyptic biblical vision is in this way mapped onto historical events. Underlying the trajectory is the notion of a religious *translatio imperii*. This is further elaborated when John's final vision in the succession of empires is of England:

From that far isle, amid the desert waves,
 Back, like the morning on the darken'd east,
 To lands long hid, in ocean-depths unknown,
 The radiance of the Gospel shall go forth,
 And the cross float triumphant o'er the world.¹⁸²

The vision presents Britain effectively as a New Jerusalem from which the word shall go forth in its missionary efforts.¹⁸³ The *Christian Remembrancer* proudly noted: "The downfall of Rome is shadowed forth, and England pointed out as the spot from whence the Asiatic Churches are destined, once more and for ever, to receive their 'first love,' the pure Gospel of Christ!"¹⁸⁴ Yet the Christian critic

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 91.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 129.

¹⁸³ See Isaiah 2:3.

¹⁸⁴ Anonymous, "Art. III.—St. John in Patmos," 467.

chose to ignore the severe criticism and the debilitating doubt to which the poet subjects this vision. A cloud suddenly hides London and John cries out:

Ah! The PALE HORSE and rider! the PALE
HORSE
Is there! Silence is in the streets! The ark
Of her majestic polity—the CHURCH—
The TEMPLE OF THE LORD!—I see no more.¹⁸⁵

In response to John's increasing terror, the Stranger ties the vision of Britain and its hereafter with awful ambiguity to the imagery—and to the prophecy—of the apocalypse:

Pray that her faith preserve her: the event
Is in His hands, who bade his angels sound
Their trumps, or pour the avenging vials out.¹⁸⁶

The ambiguity of the Stranger's words suggests that the final judgment on whether London shall be the New Jerusalem or a reiteration of the Old Jerusalem and its cataclysmic fall is yet to come.

Prayer and Literary Diligence

In the year after the pseudonymous publication of Bowles' dramatic poem, Agnes Bulmer (1775–1836) published *Messiah's Kingdom* (1833). Bulmer had a strong Methodist background,¹⁸⁷ and her text ranges from the Garden of Eden to the epist's own day. The *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* attested to the female author "high moral courage in assuming the character of a guardian of truth in times of great moral relaxation"¹⁸⁸ even while it rejected charges that Methodism showed "a lack of devotion to the muses."¹⁸⁹ To the contrary, quoting from another contemporary review,¹⁹⁰ the critic disparaged current responses to literary produc-

¹⁸⁵ Bowles, *St. John in Patmos*, p. 130.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 130–1.

¹⁸⁷ For a detailed appreciation of Bulmer, see Andrew O. Winckles, *Eighteenth-Century Women's Writing and the Methodist Media Revolution* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019), pp. 211–45.

¹⁸⁸ Anonymous, "Messiah's Kingdom, a Poem. By Agnes Bulmer," *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* 57 (May 1834): 357–76, 360.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 375.

¹⁹⁰ See Anonymous, "The Philosophy of the Moral Feelings. By John Abercrombie," *The London Literary Gazette* 872 (October 5, 1833): 629–30.

tion according to which “poetry is declared to be a drug”;¹⁹¹ a process which he compared to, and suggested to be, “a conspiracy of the utilitarians.”¹⁹² The review from the *London Literary Gazette* from which the critic quoted, lamented in a reiteration of the familiar trope the current state of literature. It denounced

the excesses which disgrace the national literature, when hardly any thing but furious invective, extravagant satire, or gross scurrility, will go down with the readers of the periodical prints; when offensive personality and licentious anecdote form a sure passport to public favour, and a writer, to succeed, has only to be insolent—it is not wonder that we see few works issue from the press that will survive the interest of the passing moment.¹⁹³

As from earlier reviews of Milman’s dramatic poem and Peers’ epic, there emerges a pervasive sense from the review of Bulmer’s *Messiah’s Kingdom* in the *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* of the perception that literature of artistic merit and moral value was increasingly rare and that there was an obligation of making these worthy texts known for the benefit of society.

The Methodist critic insisted that while “[t]he severe and uncompromising spirit of Revelation, forbidding all approach to fictions, however palpable, from the obvious fear of truth itself being corrupted by fable, has been deemed unfavourable to such an appendage,”¹⁹⁴ such a narrow view was to be rejected. As in the discussion about Bowles’ corresponding effort of finding poetic expression for the biblical book, the critic vindicates Bulmer’s endeavor “because of its subservency to the interests of diviner truth.”¹⁹⁵ He attests to Bulmer that her epic poem was “no less a matter of prayer, than of literary diligence”¹⁹⁶ and, bridging all denominational strife, maintains that her effort may “be relished by every section of the church of Christ.”¹⁹⁷

Bulmer structured her extensive epic poem in twelve books according to the principle of analogies in typological juxtaposition. The first half of the epic rephrases the scriptural narrative from its beginnings to the crucifixion and then, pivoting on Book VII which is dedicated to the Acts and the Apocalypse, its second half expounds ecclesiastical history commencing, in Book VIII, with the fall of Jerusalem. In the two concluding books, the epoist projects the succession of empires to the emergence of England at the end of Book XI and the beginning of Book XII.

¹⁹¹ See Anonymous, “Messiah’s Kingdom,” 357; the critic cites from Anonymous, “The Philosophy of the Moral Feelings,” 629.

¹⁹² Anonymous, “Messiah’s Kingdom,” 357.

¹⁹³ Anonymous, “Philosophy of the Moral Feelings,” 629.

¹⁹⁴ Anonymous, “Messiah’s Kingdom,” 362.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 376.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 359.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 376.

The epic poem finally concludes with a reflection on Earth and Time which is subtitled “THE THEATRE FOR THE DISPLAY OF THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS”¹⁹⁸ and which culminates in the triumphant assertion: “MESSIAH, ever bless’d, shall all creation own.”¹⁹⁹

Confirming the contemporary desire to articulate fully the narrative of religious poetry in a scriptural vein, the *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* claims that *Messiah’s Kingdom* is “a rich repository of Hebrew melodies.”²⁰⁰ While previously denied to Byron, the same praise was, albeit in a more ambivalent manner, also bestowed on Milman’s dramatic poem by another critic. The claim is clearly intended to suggest the power and authority of Bulmer’s text, as well as its linguistic aptness for the depiction of the historical occurrence as an eschatological event. “Jerusalem’s last terrible overthrow,” in particular, was invoked by the *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* more specifically as an example of “the transcendent descriptive powers” of the author.²⁰¹ In terms of its theological import, the argument of Book VIII, which focuses on the destruction of Jerusalem, contextualizes the historical occurrence in the familiar eschatological trajectory:

The obstinate rejection of Messiah by the Jews avenged, and their fearful imprecation fulfilled, in the destruction of their city and temple, and in their own unparalleled sufferings. God’s especial care over his people, and his providential interpositions for their deliverance in seasons of general calamity and judgment. The dissolution of the Jewish polity, and consequent abolition of the Mosaic ritual, a dispensation of mercy, as well as of justice; removing entirely the typical and representative system, and thus making room for the reality which it prefigured.²⁰²

Book VIII includes moreover “The Glory, Fall, and Restoration of Jerusalem. A Lyric Episode,” which is an ode in two parts,²⁰³ the latter of which concludes with “Prophetic annunciations of the renewed glory and prosperity of Jerusalem, on the repentance of Israel, and their embracing Christ as the Messiah.”²⁰⁴ As in most of the other texts originating in the English tradition, here too, the restoration of the Jews, a concern already of the Seatonian Prize competition, is a crucial expectation because, according to millennial beliefs derived from the Book of Revelation, the conversion of the Jews precedes the Second Coming.

¹⁹⁸ Bulmer, *Messiah’s Kingdom*, p. 477.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 486.

²⁰⁰ Anonymous, “Messiah’s Kingdom,” 365.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 368.

²⁰² Bulmer, *Messiah’s Kingdom*, p. 260.

²⁰³ See *ibid.*, pp. 273–304.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

In the initial lament on the rejection of Jesus by the Jews and the resulting destruction of Jerusalem, the epist bemoans Jewish blindness to the divine plan of salvation:

Ah! how thine [i.e., Jerusalem's] eyes were closed! Thou wouldst not see
The wing of Mercy spread to shelter thee!²⁰⁵

The trope of Jewish blindness to the new truths of the Christian faith is frequently reiterated in texts engaging with the destruction of Jerusalem, as we have seen also in the previous part. It can be traced to the apostle Paul²⁰⁶ and informed the medieval iconography of the personifications of Ecclesia and Synagoga as type and antitype with Synagoga often represented as blindfolded.²⁰⁷ The trope is picked up again by Bulmer in the conclusion to the second part of the ode, where the promise of Jewish restoration also entails the restoration of Israel's spiritual vision as anticipated by the apostle Paul:

WHEN Israel, wilder'd long, shall understand
The prescient Spirit's counsel to the wise,
And to celestial truth unveil their long-closed eyes.²⁰⁸

The typological structure of the epic poem is made explicit in relation to the destruction of Jerusalem:

TYPE of a world destroy'd, prelusive sign
Of Guilt's excision from the peace Divine,
By Heaven set forth, devoted Salem lies
Yet mercies from the depths of judgment rise,
Jehovah's ways man's labour'd thoughts transcend,
By wisest means he works the noblest end,
And still inscrutable in counsel shines,
While power and love effect his vast designs;
While justice vindicates his awful throne,
And truth and goodness make his nature known.²⁰⁹

The historical dimension of the occurrence is of no real relevance to the poet who elaborates its soteriological significance instead. It is extolled in emulation of Pauline doctrine as the punishment of Israel and the admittance of pagan proselytes to the Christian faith; the destruction of the Temple, too, is interpreted in this con-

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 265.

²⁰⁶ See 2 Corinthians 3:13–16.

²⁰⁷ See LCI (1994), IV, col. 232.

²⁰⁸ Bulmer, *Messiah's Kingdom*, p. 304.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 271–2.

text as the removal of the implications of Jewish chosenness and the confirmation of the universal significance of the redemptive sacrifice of Christ:

'Twas he [i.e., Jehovah], incomprehensible, who fought
 Against offending Israel, and brought
 The Gentiles to his fold: He scourged their crime,
 And swept aside that institute sublime
 Which shadow'd mercy's mystery to the world;
 His glorious house from Zion's height he hurl'd,
 His ploughshare o'er her desolations drove,
 Sent forth her unbelieving sons to rove
 As outcasts from his face. 'Twas Wrath Divine,
 For guilt's rejection of the grace benign,
 Messiah's slighted love. 'Twas Mercy, too,
 Whose hand the ceremonial sign withdrew;
 Hid types and shadows obsolete; declared
 The mysteries of that elder age, prepared
 But as the vestibule of Glory's shrine,
 Abolish'd now by ordinance Divine;
 Proclaim'd the temple's sanctities complete,
 The pale removed, the radiant mercy-seat
 To all accessible, who plead the grace
 Messiah purchased for a guilty race;
 Renounce the righteousness of self and pride,
 And only live through Him who for their ransom died.²¹⁰

In analogy to the universalizing interpretation of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in the early modern period noted by Groves,²¹¹ Bulmer asserts the universalization of sacred space and of the new Christian Israel in *Messiah's Kingdom*.

Bulmer's epic poem at the same time also reaffirms the notion of the succession of empires which, as in Bowles' dramatic poem and already in Wrangham's Seatonian Prize-winning epic poem, culminates in Britain. In Book XI, as summarized in the argument, "Britain, emancipated from its thralldom, made the depository of scriptural truth" and "[b]y her twofold emancipation from heathenism and from Popery, laid under imperative obligation to communicate the blessings of the gospel to all mankind."²¹² The imperative of the Great Commission of Pauline doctrine has, in the succession of sacred empires, devolved to Britain:

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 272.

²¹¹ See Groves, *Destruction of Jerusalem*, p. 18.

²¹² Bulmer, *Messiah's Kingdom*, p. 372.

Britannia, haste! on wings of mercy fly!
 Salvation to a ransom'd world dispense;
 Unfold the treasures of Omnipotence;
 Fulfil the high behest, the charge assign'd,—
 Evangelists! discipling all mankind,
 Send forth thy consecrated sons to claim
 The purchased nations in Messiah's name!²¹³

Yet in Book XII Britain's redemptive potential is very much qualified, again like in Wrangham, Trollope, and Bowles. Bulmer castigates the British exploitation of India and, even more scathingly, the violation of Africa and the persistence of slavery:

Benighted, wandering, snared, enslaved, despoil'd,
 Through rugged paths her sable sons have toil'd,
 The prey of Avarice, the scoff of Pride,
 The common brotherhood of man denied;
 Leagued with the beasts, to brutal labours doom'd,
 By tortures, scourges, chains, and deaths consumed;
 From home, from country, friends, and kindred torn,
 By pirate bands to ruthless bondage borne,
 From stranger isles to lift the imploring cry,
 To Him, who, touch'd with mortal misery,
 An earnest of approaching vengeance pours,
 In storm and tempest on those heaving shores;
 Who shakes his curses from the whirlwind's wing,
 Bids murmuring thunders threats of judgment bring;
 By blasting flames of livid lightning shows,
 How fierce his wrath against oppression glows.²¹⁴

To this imprecation and the implicit threat of God's wrath, the poet opposes the invocation of Britannia's goodness and faith which should transcend Britain's worldly power:

BRITANNIA! more than warrior trophies, gain'd
 When hostile blood the field of conflict stain'd;
 More than thy navies, though in gallant pride
 Throughout the world in every port they ride;
 More than thy power, thy commerce, or thy gold,
 Shall truth and righteousness thy name uphold;
 And more than scrolls of long ancestral race,
 Those patriot pleaders shall thy senate grace,

²¹³ Ibid., p. 403.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 426.

Who dare, with warm benevolence replete,
 The darkling frown of Mammon's brow to meet;
 Who, generous, fired with philanthropic zeal,
 Arouse the world for Afric's wrongs to feel;
 To feel the holy rights of nature stain'd,
 The great Creator in his work profaned;
 And kindle, while that Heaven-affronting crime
 Remains to blot the heraldry of time,
 A temper'd flame of stern, reproofing light,
 To show the darkness of that world of night.²¹⁵

As in Book XI, the epist's exhortation transitions into another imperative to carry the light of true Christian faith into the world.

The point was belabored also by the *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* in an exposition which illustrates very well the process in which British imperialistic certainties were sustained by religious fervor. It moreover brings with George Croly a writer into play who will be of further significance to this enquiry. With reference to the Methodist theologian Adam Clarke and, as indicated, the Reverend George Croly, the critic affirms that Great Britain "is made to assume [. . .] an importance rivalling that of ancient Judea."²¹⁶ The texts the critic presumably has in mind are Croly's *The Apocalypse of St John* (1827) and the chapter "The British Empire" in his *The Life and Times of His Late Majesty King George the Fourth* (1830), from which he quotes extensively.²¹⁷ Intriguingly, ignored by the critic, where Bulmer castigates the British exploitation of the Indian subcontinent, Croly exults that "[o]f all revolutions of power," the British dominion "was the happiest for India" and that Britain, "like a mighty minister of good" assuaged the "chaos" in the subcontinent.²¹⁸

With respect to Africa whose violation was denounced by Bulmer in no uncertain terms, Croly once again has a very different outlook. He claims in unmitigated colonialist parlance:

The diffusion of the arts and knowledge of Europe among a people not yet perverted by the atrocities of the slave-trade; a better system of morality, the spirit of law, and of Christianity, would be the gifts of British intercourse: a vast multitude of the human race would be elevated in their rank as social beings.²¹⁹

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 427.

²¹⁶ Anonymous, "Messiah's Kingdom," 361.

²¹⁷ See *ibid.*, 370–1; see George Croly, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (Philadelphia: Littell, 1827) and *The Life and Times of His Late Majesty King George the Fourth* (London: Duncan, 1830), esp. pp. 390–1, 413–14.

²¹⁸ See *ibid.*, pp. 394–5.

²¹⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 399.

The Reverend maintains that with its anti-slavery legislation, “England was disburdened of a weight of crime.”²²⁰ Using biblical imagery which evokes the chosenness of Israel as a type of that of England, Croly envisions that “England’s [religion] will be the wand that struck the waters from the rock, and filled the desert with fertility and rejoicing.”²²¹ In logical progression and articulating colonialist objectives as manifestations of Britain’s implicit chosenness, Croly eventually concludes, as quoted by the *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*:

[T]he most illustrious attribute of this unexampled empire is, that its principle is Benevolence! that knowledge goes forth with it, that tyranny sinks before it, that in its magnificent progress it abates the calamities of nature, that it plants the desert, that it civilises the savage, that it strikes off the fetters of the slave, that its spirit is at once “glory to God, and good-will to man!”²²²

Croly’s enthusiastic praise of the British Empire all but sets it up as the Kingdom of God. So do the poets discussed in this chapter. Despite their criticism of the political and economic as well as religious transgressions they note, there is a pervasive sense of Britain’s destiny as the latest, and last, of the empires that succeeded one another since biblical times.

Bowles, too, was familiar with Croly, whom he considered “one of the most splendid Poets of the age.”²²³ Yet in his preface he acknowledges that he became aware of Croly’s book on the apocalypse too late for consideration in his dramatic poem. But he also is quite clear that his own conclusions differ distinctly from those of Croly, though both, as Bowles emphasizes, made use of Edward Gibbon’s *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1777), “turning the infidel into a witness for the truth.”²²⁴

Bulmer’s criticism of the transgressions of the British Empire in *Messiah’s Kingdom*, prefigured already in Wrangham and Trollope, is much more concrete than in Bowles’ *St John in Patmos*, though his image of Britain being lost in the fog with the Pale Rider (Death) about is not only more poetic but arguably also, with the apocalyptic scenario it associates, more effective than Bulmer’s extended enumeration of British contraventions against the divine will. Both texts are far removed from the destruction of Jerusalem which, though given some prominence in each of them, is ultimately no more than the pivotal moment on which the elaboration of the vision of the New Jerusalem hinges. It is, however, also the

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 404.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 410.

²²² Ibid., pp. 413–14.

²²³ Bowles, *St. John in Patmos*, p. viii.

²²⁴ Ibid.

type for the destruction to be expected if Britain—as the new Israel and, possibly, the New Jerusalem—were not compliant with the divine will that it should carry the light into the world.

As such, providing an afterthought to the cluster to which they are otherwise hardly related anymore, Bowles' and Bulmer's poems are also very different from the next text to be discussed. George Croly's *Salathiel* precedes both poems. If these texts are like an afterthought to the cluster, the novel goes off on a tangent. Though to some extent sharing the thematic preoccupation of the cluster and presumably inspired by it, *Salathiel* is not really a part of it. The trajectory typical of the texts of the cluster toward the New Jerusalem, Jewish restoration, Christian resurgence, and the succession of empires culminating in Britain, while certainly of interest to Croly, does not inform his novel. The author's choice to write narrative fiction implies not only a different intended readership, but suggests also different means and objectives. With its main focus on Ahasuerus, perhaps following the implicit suggestion of Milman with the Old Man in his *The Fall of Jerusalem*, the novel may take its inspiration from the cluster but transforms it into something new which then itself becomes seminal for a re-configuration of the engagement with the destruction of Jerusalem. The model elaborated by Croly brings elements of myth and legend to the fore; it is laced with adventure, and its Christian meaning is indirect and insinuated, but for that not necessarily less effective. *Salathiel* exemplifies the adaptation of the historical occurrence to the form of the novel which is designed to reach a broader, and socially more diverse, potentially less educated, readership than either the epic or the dramatic poem.

The Shift from the Epic to Narrative Fiction: Croly

Arguably, the most influential literary engagement with the legend of the Wandering Jew was the anonymously published *Salathiel* (1828) by George Croly (1780–1860). The novel was widely disseminated across Europe. Its significance accrued to *Salathiel* not only because its popularity prompted the proliferation of narrative engagements with the subject of the destruction of Jerusalem but also because, following the example of Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart's lyrical rhapsody "Der ewige Jude" (1783; "The Wandering Jew"), it promulgated the association of the legendary figure of Ahasuerus with the historical occurrence.

In his preface, establishing the authenticity fiction of his own effort, Croly situates his novel vaguely within the plethora of literary representations of the Wandering Jew. He is clearly aware of the German preoccupation with the subject, but at the same time articulates his doubts not only about the veracity of its products but also, more generally, about German idealism:

A number of histories have been invented for him [i.e., the Wandering Jew]; some purely fictitious, others founded on ill-understood records. Germany, the land of mysticism, where men labour to think all facts imaginary, and turn all imagination into facts, has toiled most in this idle perversion of truth. Yet those narratives have been in general but a few pages, feebly founded on the single, fatal, sentence of his punishment for an indignity offered to the Great Author of the Christian faith.²²⁵

Perhaps not surprisingly, the author's derisive reference to German idealism was omitted by his German translators. Though his own effort preceded Kaulbach's engagement with the subject by about a decade and found articulation in another medium, the monumental painting's Hegelian substratum would presumably have incurred Croly's censure as well. Conversely, while it is likely that the artist would have known, or at the very least have known of, Croly's novel, it nevertheless seems doubtful that *Salathiel* should have been a model for Kaulbach. The artist's approach to the figure of the Wandering Jew bears little resemblance to that of the Irish writer.²²⁶

Whereas Salathiel is represented as a Prince of the tribe of Naphtali and throughout his first-person narrative retains his nobility, Kaulbach's Ahasuerus is defined by the terror he experiences as he flees the conflagration. Perhaps more significantly, the supersessionist impetus of Croly's *Salathiel* is rather muted, which is striking, given the author's ecclesiastical background and the wider context in which his novel originated. Ordained in 1804, the Anglican minister earned his livelihood mainly by the pen, before becoming rector of St Stephen's in the London ward of Walbrook in 1835.²²⁷ Croly was a prolific writer who regularly contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine*, yet *Salathiel* is generally considered his most important literary work.

The transgression of Salathiel, the Ahasuerus figure in the novel, originates in the circumstances of his time rather than in individual malice and exaggerated religious zeal. It is, as will be discussed in more detail below with reference to Croly's theological writings, a soteriological necessity which reflects the inexorable trajectory of supersession. Having been cursed, Salathiel flees Jerusalem but decades later, after a life of adventurous journeys, returns to the city to join its defenders during the Roman siege. A formidable and prudent warrior in the battlefield, Salathiel is nevertheless a loving husband and father. In a review of the novel's first German translations, the Prince of Naphtali was favorably described

²²⁵ [George Croly], *Salathiel: A Story of the Past, the Present, and the Future*, 3 vols (London: Colburn, 1828), I, vi.

²²⁶ For sources for Kaulbach's Ahasuerus figure, see Möseneder, "Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht," 123–6, who does not mention *Salathiel*.

²²⁷ For Croly's biography, see DNB (1888), XIII, 135–6.

as an “indefatigable fighter for his fatherland”; revealing an intriguing imaginary of the Jews, the anonymous reviewer emphasized:²²⁸

Salathiel is the true Israelite, fiery in every sense, prudent, intrepid, of strict moral conduct, an affectionate husband and father, zealous in his faith and the ceremonial service, but also implacable, pusillanimous, and obstinate.²²⁹

Politically, Croly's Salathiel matures into a moderate who actively seeks to negotiate with the Romans in the best interest of his nation. Yet any efforts at reconciliation are thwarted by a mysterious stranger who incites the Jews against the Romans with prophetic fervor. It is, in Croly's novel, this demonic figure who eventually carries the destructive fire into the Temple.²³⁰

While clearly situated within the historical framework elaborated by Josephus, Croly's narrative of the siege and fall of Jerusalem is developed imaginatively and is embedded in a convoluted amalgamation of elements of adventure fiction and gothic writing, including—against the dramatic backdrop of the heroic landscape and scorching sun of the Holy Land as well as terrifying tempests—the stock elements of love and murder, abductions and reunions, and even a pirate episode. In addition, it also creatively incorporates in much imaginative detail the portents described by the ancient historian; such as the ghostly battle in the air; and, before the city's final destruction, a vision of the First Temple in the roiling clouds of a terrifying thunderstorm as well as their sudden dispersal as a sign of the impending cataclysm, which is accompanied by the voices of the Elohim as they leave the doomed edifice on Mount Moriah.²³¹

To these, Croly added further supernatural elements, which included in addition to his immortal Ahasuerus figure the abovementioned appearance of the demonic prophet and the apparition of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, King of the Seleucid Empire, who severely persecuted the Jews of Judaea and Samaria in the second century BCE. In the novel, the (un-)dead king is described as “one of those spirits of the evil dead, who are allowed from time to time to re-appear on earth in the body.”²³² He prophesies to Salathiel the destruction of Jerusalem²³³ and, during

228 [84.], “Romanenliteratur,” *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung* 5.71 (March 12, 1830): 282–4, 283: “rastlosen Kämpfer für sein Vaterland.”

229 Ibid.: “Salathiel ist der echte Israelit, in jedem Sinne feurig, klug, unerschrocken, von streng moralischem Wandel, ein zärtlicher Gatte und Vater, eifrig in seinem Glauben und dem Ceremoniendienst, aber auch verfolgungssüchtig, verzagt und verstockt.”

230 See [George Croly], *Der ewige Jude: Eine historische Novelle der Vorzeit*, ed. and transl. Ludwig Storch, 3 vols (Stuttgart: Frankh, 1829), III, 281.

231 See *ibid.*, III, 273.

232 [Croly], *Salathiel*, I, 99.

233 *Ibid.*, I, 104–7.

the final hours of the Roman siege, returns to show Salathiel how his prophecy is about to come to pass.

As Salathiel probes his unworldly wisdom, Epiphanes discloses to him the future of the Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple as a history of universal rejection and abjection. Without any explicit reference to Christianity, the suggestion nevertheless is that this abjection is the manifestation of the divine punishment of Jewish transgression:

But, one grand hope was still to be given; they cast it from them. Ages on ages shall pass, before they learn the loftiness of that hope, or fulfil the punishment of that rejection. Yet, in the fulness of time, shall the light break in upon their darkness. They shall ask, Why are we the despised, the branded, the trampled, the abjured of all nations? Why are the barbarian and the civilised alike our oppressors? Why do contending faiths join in crushing us alone? Why do realms, distant as the ends of the earth, and diverse as day and night,—alike those who have heard our history, and those who have never heard of us but as the sad sojourners of the earth,—unite in one cry of scorn? And what is the universal voice of nature, but the voice of the King of nature?²³⁴

The passage establishes not only the exceptionalism of the Jewish fate as one ordained by divine providence but reads moreover like an abstraction of the fate attributed in Christian legend to Ahasuerus. The collective of the first person plural suggests to the reader the metonymic nature of Ahasuerus-Salathiel's wanderings. As with his own transgression, Salathiel is thus portrayed not so much as a culpable individual but as part of a transgressive collective.

Yet the undead king also gives articulation to a future hope. This, once again, is not explicitly tied to Christianity but is clearly meant to evoke the vision of Christian fulfilment. Saying that now—i.e., during the Roman siege—Mount Moriah was “a sight of splendid evil,” Epiphanes adds:

But upon that mountain shall yet be enthroned a Sovereign, before whom the sun shall hide his head, and at the lifting of whose sceptre heaven and the heaven of heavens shall bow down! To that mountain shall man, and more than man, crowd for wisdom and happiness. From that mountain shall light flow to the ends of the universe; and the government shall be to the Everlasting!²³⁵

There is no direct evidence situating *Salathiel* in the context of the Christian mission to the Jews, whose aim was not just the conversion of the Jews but their restoration to Palestine as “an essential precursor to the second coming.”²³⁶ Instead,

²³⁴ Ibid., III, 294–5.

²³⁵ Ibid., III, 296.

²³⁶ Thomas J. Kelley, “‘Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come!’: The Writing and Thought of Edward Nangle, 1828–1862,” in *Protestant Millennialism, Evangelicalism, and Irish Society, 1790–2005*, eds

its eponymous protagonist is an enlightened character who, after his initial transgression, is shown to develop an affinity with Christian precepts and frequently comes close to conversion—and yet, always recoils. As such, Salathiel offers a potentially flawed identification figure. Yet as his lot is an unhappy one, which his contemporary co-religionists supposedly share with him, the suggestive power of the novel is perhaps even more persuasive for the almost visceral desire finally to take the inexplicably deferred redemptive decision with him.

At one point, imprisoned by the Romans together with other Jews, among whom he encounters a group of Nazarenes, Salathiel is impressed with the calm conviction and strong faith of the Christians, with their humility and self-denial, and with their power of preaching, their enthusiasm, and their sincerity. The conversion paradigm is embodied in the novel by Salathiel's brother-in-law, the erstwhile commander of the fallen fortress of Masada, who is the captives' spiritual leader. Before Eleazar is martyred, he enjoins on Salathiel to preserve himself:

Salathiel, you are not fit to die; pray that you may not now sink into the grave. You have fierce impulses, untamed passions, of whose power you have yet no conception. Supplicate for a length of years; rather endure all the miseries of exile; be alone upon the earth—wear, wild, and desolate: but pray that you may not die, until you know the truths that Israel yet shall know. Let it be for me to die, and seal my faith by my blood. Let it be for you to live, and seal it by your penitence. But live in hope.²³⁷

Eleazar effectively offers a redemptive reading of Salathiel's curse which construes it as an indispensable reprieve, a purification in penitence, a blessing even, so as not to forego salvation.

Offering a caution against impatience and an illustration of the dangers besetting Salathiel on his path to redemption, the dead Eleazar later appears to his kinsman to save him from the temptation of restoring Judah as its King,²³⁸ a temptation which mirrors the dichotomy between political and spiritual conceptions of messianism and, ultimately, the third temptation of Jesus when Satan shows him "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them."²³⁹ Prompted by Elea-

Crawford Gribben and Andrew R. Holmes (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 99–118, p. 103. For the influential London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, founded in 1809 and operating worldwide since the following decade, see William Thomas Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews: From 1809–1908* (London: London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, 1908).

²³⁷ [Croly], *Salathiel*, III, 164.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, III, 266–7.

²³⁹ Matthew 4:8; see also Luke 4:5–8. The nexus between the third temptation of Jesus and the political and spiritual conceptions of the messianic mission has, for instance, been proposed by George S. Barrett in *The Temptations of Christ* (Edinburgh: MacNiven and Wallace, 1883), p. 147.

zar's spirit, Salathiel resists the temptation. It is a choice which asserts his free will but at the same time also initiates his trajectory toward redemption.

And yet Salathiel is aware that there is "an influence hanging over" him which forces his destiny.²⁴⁰ It is the same divine "influence" holding sway also over the Jews as a nation. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple is accordingly firmly attributed to divine providence and Salathiel keenly feels that the city "was not to be saved."²⁴¹ The iniquities perpetrated by the Jews according to Josephus are given little attention in Croly's novel. They appear to be incidental to the doom of the city preordained by the Lord. Simon bar Giora and John of Giscala consequently hardly play a role in *Salathiel* and, in fact, are said at one point to have been reduced to mere shadows of themselves: "yet the memory of their mischiefs survived with a keenness aggravated by the public discovery of the miserable insignificance of the instruments."²⁴²

As noted with some wonder in a review of the earliest German translations of the novel, the originator of Salathiel's curse is never indicated, which presupposes the reader's familiarity with the legend of Ahasuerus as the narrative's point of departure.²⁴³ After setting the trajectory of the narrative, the curse is hardly mentioned anymore, although—as observed before—Salathiel variously notes that his life appears to be determined by an unseen external force. It is only at the very end of the novel, when the flames engulf the Temple and Salathiel faints next to the miraculously unscathed Holy of Holies that the words of the curse reverberate once again in his mind.

In a short epilogue, Salathiel acknowledges that he is doomed to remain the same while all the world around him changes. In very broad strokes, he sketches the intervening centuries to the present; how he was motivated successively by revenge, the mysteries of nature, human fame, and materialism, but also by more noble aspirations: Continuously striving in an almost Faustian manner for knowledge, Salathiel prompts the discovery of the New World, is present at the invention of the letterpress, is acquainted with Michelangelo and Raphael, and kneels in awe at Luther's pulpit.²⁴⁴ The Wandering Jew is thus sketched as a spirit of unrest who is in effect the whip of progress.

Salathiel was originally published anonymously. It is nevertheless instructive to consider next to it some of the in the widest sense theological writings of the author, who contributed to the contemporary "premillennial frenzy" of Anglican

²⁴⁰ [Croly], *Salathiel*, III, 198.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, III, 101.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, III, 98.

²⁴³ [84.], "Romanenliteratur," 283.

²⁴⁴ See [Croly], *Der ewige Jude*, III, 284–6.

theologians.²⁴⁵ Croly's exposition of *The Apocalypse of St John* (1827), published just before *Salathiel* and mentioned by Bowles, is especially significant in this context because in it the minister offers a typological interpretation of the destruction of Jerusalem. Not in itself original, as we have seen in the preceding discussion, this nevertheless explains his interest in the subject and the rationale of his fictional engagement with the apocalyptic scenario and its salvific import, which is innovative. It may also, to some extent, shed light on his conception of the Jews and of the figure of Salathiel in particular.

Croly believed that the apocalypse was approaching apace and that the French Revolution stood "as the last great event before it."²⁴⁶ More specifically, elaborating on the old Protestant identification with Israel, he argued that, "as Judæa was chosen for the especial guardianship of the original Revelation; so has England been chosen for the especial guardianship of Christianity."²⁴⁷ From this analogy, like Wrangham and Trollope as well as Bowles and Bulmer, he extrapolates the destruction of Jerusalem as a warning to his contemporaries. Croly's particular concern is the assertion of Protestant supremacy and the purge of popery. He alleges that whenever Catholicism insinuated itself into the English polity, decline and defeat were the result. Elaborating on the fall of Jerusalem as a type of the imminent apocalypse, Croly insists that a "striking analogy subsists between the ancient Jewish corruptions and the Romish [i.e., of the Roman Catholic Church]."²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ See Kelley, "Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come!," p. 103.

²⁴⁶ Croly, *Apocalypse of St. John*, p. 4.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. v. Croly expanded on this notion in *England, Fortress of Christianity* (London: Hatchards, 1837) in response to the "calamitous year" of 1829, p. 6, in which Roman Catholics were allowed membership in Parliament; the pamphlet was widely disseminated and endorsed in Protestant circles, as, e.g., in an anonymous review in Charlotte Elizabeth's *The Christian Lady's Magazine* 7 (1837): 569–70, which emphasized its affordability and enthused: "yea from the core of our inmost heart, God speed it to every corner of the land!" Yet Croly's arguments did not remain uncontested. S. O. argued in "Relation between the Old and New Testaments: A Critical Commentary and Paraphrase on the Old and New Testament and the Apocrypha. By Patrick, Lowth, Arnald, Whitby and Lowman," *The Christian Examiner and Religious Miscellany* 39 (1845): 116–29 against the nationalistic appropriation of the Jewish notion of exclusivity as proffered in Croly's *Apocalypse*, saying that "[u]ndoubtedly there is much power in the belief that a nation has an exclusive mission, and its statesmen and soldiers are not only promoting their own success, but the glory of God. But we need not go back to Moses for the true source of the nation's power and the true fidelity of the citizen. Christianity has principles of its own to apply to every interest of life, to the race and nation as well as to the individual," 128; more importantly, the author contends that Christian supersession did not signify the rejection of Judaism, but its inclusion and assimilation into Christianity; and Christianity, he understands to transcend the nation state, see 129.

²⁴⁸ Croly, *Apocalypse of St. John*, p. 308.

As scriptural evidence for his typology, Croly cites the Sixth Seal in the Book of Revelation,²⁴⁹ which he explains as follows:

Our Lord's prediction of the fall of the Jewish polity and nation employs a force of language not to be accounted for even by the unequalled calamities [*sic*] of the Jews, except it were intended as the type of some infliction adequate to the crimes or the purification of a world. And that it was thus typical is substantiated by the almost verbal repetition of our Lord's prophecy in this Seal.²⁵⁰

It was, presumably, his apocalyptic bent of mind which sustained Croly's fascination with the destruction of Jerusalem, which he continued to articulate in different contexts.

When David Roberts, whose own pictorial version of *The Destruction of Jerusalem* was briefly discussed in chapter I (see Figure 11), published the sketches he made during his tour of the Holy Land and the Middle East in 1838–40, Croly contributed the historical and descriptive text to the first volume of the handsome publication on *The Holy Land* (1842)²⁵¹—apparently against the wishes of the artist, who described Croly as “[a]n arrogant prelate who just writes and does as he likes with little regard to the subjects.”²⁵²

The narrative Croly created corresponds to his earlier exposition of the apocalypse and effected a contextual reconfiguration of the sketches which was presumably not to the artist's liking. As Amanda M. Burritt observes, “Croly's tone of evangelical preaching did not sit well with Roberts, who generally preferred a more descriptive and non-emotive prose.”²⁵³ From Roberts's journal emerges a clear sense of the perception of the Holy Land from an artist's perspective and that “he distinguished between the Holy Land of faith and the physical reality he encountered.”²⁵⁴

For Croly, the Holy Land was defined by its palimpsestuous simultaneity which was informed by its historical continuum in the salvific trajectory of divine providence and by its topological and typological significance within this trajec-

249 See Revelation 6:12–17.

250 Croly, *Apocalypse of St. John*, p. 64. For the words attributed to Jesus, see the gospels of Luke 19:41–4, Mark 13:1–8, and Matthew 24:1–8.

251 See David Roberts, *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia: After Lithographs by Louis Haghe from Drawings Made on the Spot*, ed. George Croly, 6 vols (London: Moon, 1842–49).

252 Quoted from Debra N. Mancoff, *David Roberts: Travels in Egypt and the Holy Land* (San Francisco, CA: Pomegranate Communications, 1999), p. 117.

253 Amanda M. Burritt, *Visualising Britain's Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), p. 108.

254 *Ibid.*, pp. 91–2.

tory. Through these, it was embedded in the biblical narrative, and vice versa. In the very first sentences of his introductory historical section to *The Holy Land*, Croly extols the history of the Jews as

the most characteristic, the most important, and the most sublime, in the world. For, to this people alone were given the primitive knowledge of the Almighty; the trust of preserving it unstained while the earth was bowed down in idolatry; and finally, the magnificent privilege of dispensing it, in the appointed time, through all the families of mankind.²⁵⁵

It is this understanding of the soteriological role of the Jews, their chosenness, which explains the nobility of Salathiel in Croly's earlier novel. Yet no less significant is the author's demarcation of "the appointed time," which denotes the end of this "privilege," wilfully forfeited by the Jews in accordance with divine providence.

Croly acknowledges that "the history of the Jews establishes, on the most solid grounds, the three truths most important to human knowledge:—the Being of a God, a Perpetual Providence, and a Moral Government of the world."²⁵⁶ On the basis of these truths, he extrapolates the future trajectory of "the Jew," whose redemption is possible only with a complete renewal: "The Jew will be restored, but it is as the human frame will be restored; he will return from the moral grave, with a nature fitted for a new and higher course of existence."²⁵⁷

The developmental analogy of the collective to the individual—akin, perhaps, to phylogenesis and ontogenesis—is extended by Croly also to the articulation of the supersession. "[T]he career of the nation," he maintains, "from its commencement to its close, will be found to bear a distinct analogy to the career of human life; the succession of Judaism and Christianity, to paternal discipline; and the history of the world itself, to the progress of crime and conversion in the soul of man." Croly concedes that "Christianity has yet to complete its course," but insists that "Inspiration declares the triumphs of the future, with a voice as firm and as distinct as that in which it ever pronounced the calamities of fallen Israel."²⁵⁸ The fulfilment of Christianity will also be the fulfilment of Israel: "The dawn of its unending day will be the restoration of the exiles of Judah."²⁵⁹ The millenarian expectation of the restoration of Israel, as indicated in the Sixth Seal of the Book

²⁵⁵ Roberts, *Holy Land*, I, 1.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 28.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 30.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 29.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

of Revelation,²⁶⁰ is interpreted by Croly in his *Apocalypse* as referring to the Christian Church, for “[t]he Christians, the successors of those to whom the promises were given, are called the ‘Israel of God’.”²⁶¹ It is, therefore, another confirmation of the supersession and the trajectory toward the fullness of time, but also of the complete annihilation of Judaism, which, according to Croly, has run its course and has been sealed with the destruction of Jerusalem.

The first volume of *The Holy Land*, illustrated with lithographs produced by Louis Haghe after Roberts’s original drawings, includes various views of Jerusalem. The historical perspective established through Croly’s introduction suggests a palimpsestuous reading of the images. They achieve their true significance then primarily in correlation to their significance for the gospel narrative. The destruction of Jerusalem, prophesied by Jesus, functions effectively as an extension to, and confirmation of, the gospel narrative. It is also, as emerges from Croly’s description of “Jerusalem from the South” (see Figure 13), a linking device, which reaffirms the continuous impact of God’s intervention. The author emphasizes that

[t]he horrors of the Roman siege, as narrated by Josephus, proverbially form the most overwhelming collection of the images of suffering by famine, popular fury, and national despair, that were ever combined to make the fall of a people fearful to its own age and memorable to every age to come.²⁶²

That the reading public chose to follow Croly’s evangelical exposition and superimposed it on the sketches, contrary to the artist’s intention, is indicated by contemporary reviews. Responding to successive instalments of the publication venture, the anonymous reviewer for the *Art-Union*, for instance, following Croly’s emphasis on prophecy and miracle as “the especial instruments of the Divine government among this extraordinary people,”²⁶³ exulted that *The Holy Land* “in a manner surpassingly beautiful illustrates the prophecies and miracles—the indestructible citadels of Christian Hope.”²⁶⁴ He simultaneously insisted that “no description can ever make us feel so profoundly the utter desolation of the land as this pictorial history.”²⁶⁵ The emphasis on the contemporary desolation signifies not only an articulation of orientalist stereotypes of decay, which simultaneously elevates and imbues with mystery the artist’s “arduous and really perilous enterprise of traversing the deserts, amid which the sites of many of them [i.e., the

260 Revelation 7:4–8.

261 Croly, *Apocalypse of St. John*, p. 67.

262 Roberts, *Holy Land*, I, 41.

263 Ibid., I, 2.

264 Anonymous, “The Holy Land, Egypt, Arabia & Syria,” *Art-Union* 4 (1842): 15.

265 Anonymous, “Roberts’s Sketches in the Holy Land,” *Art-Union* 6 (1844): 113.

Holy Cities] must be sought”;²⁶⁶ the “utter desolation” of the Holy Land moreover ultimately originates in the rejection of Christ by the Jews and the divine punishment visited on them, of which the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple was the culmination but not the conclusion. Pulling all the threads together, the critic enthuses that *The Holy Land*

sets before us as facts of yesterday, the events described in the New Testament; and illustrates the invincible truths of the Old. The objects described by the pencil of Mr. Roberts, are bound up in association with things most sacred; they are scattered throughout lands wherein our religion was first preached; and where had prevailed the older rites of the Jewish nation, of whom Dr. Croly says, “In language astonishing for its vividness, awful for its divine indignation, and appalling for its historic reality, we see their successive sufferings; first, in the pestilences and famines of the land; then in the captivity; then in the Roman invasion, and the horrors of the siege, and finally in the great dispersion; the whole prediction, like some vast picture in the skies, giving us, at a glance the portraiture of those most powerful changes and deep calamities, which for three thousand years have gone on beneath, realizing on the surface of the world.”²⁶⁷

Croly’s contribution, cited here in evidence of the writer’s “impressive eloquence”²⁶⁸ and once again emphasizing the pivotal significance of the destruction of Jerusalem, was extolled by the critic as having been written by one of the most “accomplished scholars of the age”²⁶⁹ and offering “a volume of thought in a few pages.”²⁷⁰

Croly’s appreciation of the Jews, it should be noted, is purely historical in his commentary to *The Holy Land*. In contrast to his novel, which solicits the reader’s empathy with its Jewish protagonist, in later years, Croly was very clear that any sympathy with contemporary Jewry was misplaced. In a pamphlet of 1848, the churchman vehemently opposed the civil and political emancipation of the Jews in England because he insisted on the fundamentally Christian character of the English polity and of Parliament as a “Council of Christianity.”²⁷¹ In this context, Croly rails against the “childish sentimentality” recently “excited for the Jews.”²⁷²

266 Anonymous, “Holy Land, Egypt, Arabia & Syria,” 15.

267 Ibid. For the extended quotation from Croly’s text, see Roberts, *Holy Land*, I, 8.

268 Anonymous, “Holy Land, Egypt, Arabia & Syria,” 15.

269 Anonymous, “The Publications of Mr. F. G. Moon,” *Art-Union* 6 (1844): 63.

270 Anonymous, “Sketches in the Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt and Nubia,” *Art-Union* 4 (1842): 287.

271 George Croly, *The Claims of the Jews Incompatible with the National Profession of Christianity* ([London]: Seeley, 1848), p. 13. For the context of the debate about civil and political equality of the Jews in Britain, see, e.g., Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (1992; Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), pp. 51–101 and, for the “leading anti-emancipationist” George Croly, p. 59.

272 Croly, *Claims of the Jews Incompatible*, p. 14.

He polemically insists that “this sympathy is totally unfounded” and declares categorically: “*There is no Jewish religion in the world.* The religion of Moses expired 1,800 years ago; it has never been revived, and can never be revived. Judaism, since that day”—he means the destruction of the Temple—“is a phantom.”²⁷³ Denying to Judaism the very right to exist, Croly advocates a strict supersessionism:

Providence, which made Judaism only for a temporary purpose, formed it dependent on localities, and thus limited its duration. From the building of the first Temple, the national existence was bound up with the Temple, and the city of the Temple. Sacrifice, and the solemnization of the great festivals, all essential to the national religion, could be held only in Jerusalem. When Christianity came, Judaism was to cease. But this great result was not to be left to the common changes of time, or the general impulses of man. The Temple was ruined, and Jerusalem was given over to the heathen; and from that hour, the Jew has never been able to offer sacrifice, to solemnize any one of the great festivals, or to perform any part of the public ceremonial inseparable from pure Judaism. The Temple was essential to them all; but a mosque stands upon Mount Moriah!²⁷⁴



Figure 13: Louis Haghe, after David Roberts, “Jerusalem from the South,” in David Roberts, *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia: After Lithographs by Louis Haghe from Drawings Made on the Spot*, ed. George Croly (London: Moon, 1842), I, facing p. 41; British Library, London (10027.aa.22.). (With kind permission.)

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

The final observation, which echoes a similar claim in his introduction to *The Holy Land* and is reminiscent also of Peers,²⁷⁵ cements the finality of the destruction of Judaism and reiterates the palimpsestuous perception of the Holy Land, visible in the presence of the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Roberts's views of Jerusalem (see, e.g., Figure 13). Rabbinic Judaism, the attempt to reinvent Judaism after the loss of its cultic center and to project it into the future, is to Croly no more than a desperate farce. While he does not explicitly refer to the concept of a Jewish mission, as it was concurrently developed in German Reform Judaism, discussed in more detail in chapter V, it is nevertheless likely that he would have seen this simply as another blasphemous attempt to try to breathe life into the alleged phantom.

For Croly, the finality of the fall of Judaism does not correspond to the finality of the punishment of the Jewish transgression. He asks: "But why has the punishment of a transgression, committed 1800 years ago, been visited beyond the punishment even of Idolatry; and lasted, not only to 'the third and fourth generation,' but through ages which seem to be endless?" The reason, he offers, is that "the Jew is not punished for the ancient crime of his fathers, but for his own. Their crime was the rejection of the Gospel 1800 years ago. His crime is the same rejection at this hour."²⁷⁶

If only implicitly, "the Jew" as he is described here appears to mirror the very Ahasuerus figure of myth and legend that was censured by Croly in his preface to *Salathiel*. The apparent tolerance in his earlier novel may then also have been more specifically a strategy to insinuate Christian values to a Jewish readership. In this light, Salathiel's homage to Luther at the end of the novel, reflecting also Croly's own Protestant fervor, may be read as a subtle call for conversion: "Israelite as I was, and am—I did involuntary homage to the mind of Luther. At this hour, I see the dawn of things, to whose glory the glory of the past is but a dream."²⁷⁷

When Salathiel ends his narrative, he establishes an intriguing parallel between the vagaries of his thoughts and his roaming far and wide which he reinterprets as a "pilgrimage," thus giving meaning to it and, implicitly, suggesting its telos in conversion: "But I must close these thoughts, as wandering as the steps of my pilgrimage. I have more to tell; strange, magnificent, and sad. But I must await the impulse of my heart."²⁷⁸ Salathiel's emphasis on "the impulse" of his heart is ambiguous. It is overtly linked to his narrative effusions but indirectly

²⁷⁵ See Roberts, *Holy Land*, I, 29.

²⁷⁶ Croly, *Claims of the Jews Incompatible*, p. 18.

²⁷⁷ [Croly], *Salathiel*, III, 305.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, III, 305–6.

also to the notion of conversion on whose brink the wandering Jew so frequently has been. A future narrative, prompted by the “impulse” of his heart, may thus be expected to be, finally, of his conversion and the sublimation of his Jewishness.

In line with his interpretation of the Book of Revelation, Croly attributes the apparent contemporary decline of England and the Empire to the weakening of Protestantism, of which the suggestion to allow “the Jew” to take political responsibility is palpable proof to him. Croly concludes:

We must reject the Jew. In the first place, because he pronounces our Lord a deceiver, and our faith a fabrication. In the next, because his race, during their long sojourn in England, have established no claim to public distinction. And lastly, because, from the very nature of their tenets, they must be auxiliaries to every assailant of the Church of England.²⁷⁹

The nobility attributed to Salathiel in Croly’s earlier novel has been replaced with stereotypes of the intractable Jew, of dual loyalty, and even an essentialist enmity.²⁸⁰

Croly considered the welfare of England and the Empire a gauge of the supposedly pernicious incursion of Catholicism and thus a continuous process. The analogy to the cycle of transgression, punishment, and renewal of the covenant, which is the pattern of the interaction of Israel with its God in the Old Testament, is clearly intended; and it is an exhortation to his compatriots. Croly considers the suffering of the Jews a result of their intractability and indignantly exclaims: “Who can wonder at their sufferings?”²⁸¹

David Roberts’s painting of *The Destruction of Jerusalem* was briefly discussed in chapter I. It may well be that the artist’s creative engagement with the destruction of Jerusalem, on which he worked from 1847–49,²⁸² was inspired by his reluctant collaboration with Croly. Yet if so, the painting appears to offer a revision of the evangelical approach superimposed by the Anglican minister on the artist’s earlier sketches from the Holy Land. The eschatological dimension elaborated by Croly in his commentary was eschewed by Roberts. As discussed in chapter I, his historical painting of *The Destruction of Jerusalem* does not make any obvious theological claims. Like Byron, whose poem about the historical occurrence seems to have been a more immediate inspiration for Roberts, the artist rather captures a strange wistfulness in contemplation of the terrible beauty of the conflagration. It appears to be historicized and simultaneously divested of

²⁷⁹ Croly, *Claims of the Jews Incompatible*, pp. 39–40.

²⁸⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 32, 37.

²⁸¹ See *ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁸² See James Ballantine, *The Life of David Roberts, R.A., Compiled from his Journals and Other Sources* (Edinburgh: Black, 1866), pp. 165–6.

any specific religious consequence, which is also reflected in Roberts's omission of the paraphernalia frequently associated with the iconography of the destruction of Jerusalem, such as the menorah and other spoils from the Temple.

As Anderson observes, Croly's novel was the first to introduce a nationalist Jewish perspective which shows his Ahasuerus figure "fighting for the independence of Israel as a homeland" and appears to have engendered a succession of narratives tying the figure of the Wandering Jew to the destruction of Jerusalem.²⁸³ Attesting to the popularity of Croly's novel also in Germany, two independent translations into German, by A[madeus] Kaiser (b. 1804) and by Ludwig Storch (1803–81),²⁸⁴ appeared, as mentioned before, already in the year after its publication.²⁸⁵ Both translators offer brief reflections on the text's idiosyncracies. While Kaiser seeks to situate *Salathiel* in relation to other literary engagements with the Ahasuerus legend,²⁸⁶ Storch discusses the genre of the historical novel in implied comparison to historical painting.

Implicitly asserting the realist mode of pictorial representation and appropriating it to the novel in what appears to be an attempt to vindicate the popular genre, Storch likens *Salathiel* to a canvas on which poesy designs her creations as faithful imitations of continuously shifting and changing life. The skilful distribution of light and shadow helps the writer to shape his "painting" as a perfect whole—the literary model Storch refers to is of course Walter Scott whom he acknowledges as the creator of the "genuine" historical novel. Yet to Storch the historical distance of Scott's novels, reaching no further back than to the Middle Ages, lets them appear still sufficiently connected to his present to facilitate an easy understanding. He implies that the imaginative power necessary to sketch "with bold strokes of the brush the painting of the life of a time almost two thousand years in the past" is much greater but no less absorbing.²⁸⁷ Having made this case for the appropriation of unfamiliar material by the author of the histori-

²⁸³ See Anderson, *Wandering Jew*, p. 189.

²⁸⁴ See [George Croly], *Salathiel, oder Memoiren des ewigen Juden*, transl. A. Kaiser, 4 vols (Leipzig: Taubert, 1829) and [Croly], *Ewige Jude*, transl. Storch. For Storch see Ludwig Julius Fränkel, "Storch, Ludwig," in ADB (1893), XXXVI, 439–42.

²⁸⁵ See Ronen, "Kaulbach's Wandering Jew," 249. As Croly's novel was first published anonymously, Storch is named as editor. A prolific writer, Storch continued to have an interest in Jewish subjects and later published a novel in four volumes on Shabbatai Tsvi, entitled *Der Jakobsstern: Messiade* (Frankfurt a. M.: Sauerländer, 1836–38).

²⁸⁶ In his afterword, Kaiser mentions Franz Horn, Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, Wilhelm Müller, Jean Paul, Aloys Schreiber, August Wilhelm von Schlegel, and Joseph Görres, see [Croly], *Salathiel, oder Memoiren*, IV, 193.

²⁸⁷ [Croly], *Ewige Jude*, I, vii: "[M]it kühnen Pinselstrichen das Lebensgemälde einer Zeit zu entwerfen, die fast zweitausend Jahre hinter uns liegt, [ist] darum nicht weniger interessant."

cal novel, he then nevertheless claims that the text in hand, while recreating a period of almost two millennia ago, is in fact anything but unfamiliar. The “pictorial” realism attributed by Storch to the novel is complemented by an imaginary realism which is based on the perceived truths of the Christian belief system:

The painting of this work has not been taken from any soil that is alien to us, though we never strode on it ourselves; these creations do not originate in a time alien to us, though eighteenhundred years are between it and ours; for yet a strong magnet has drawn all the nations of Christianity to them, because they are the soil and the time of the young Christian faith, sprouting fresh and strong. To whom should be alien the land where of yore the Saviour walked; his predecessors, the prophets, the Baptist, the kings of Israel; and his successors, the holy apostles?²⁸⁸

What emerges very clearly from this effusion is the imaginary nature of the topography and of the period described, which appears to be determined entirely by the *dramatis personae* of the Bible and Christian eschatology. It was another thirteen years until Roberts’s *The Holy Land* was to appear. As discussed above, this too contributed to the same imaginary, reconciling it with geographical realism, not least through Croly’s evangelically informed commentary. It is only against the background of this pervasive scriptural imaginary, which would moreover have been very much informed by “real” paintings of the biblical figures and the eschatological narrative, that the more specifically “historical” elements of *Salathiel* are seen to play themselves out and to be imbued with significance.

Kaiser, who similarly felt the need to justify the historical distance of the novel by citing the example not only of Scott but also of Elijah Fenton’s *Mariamne, An Historical Novel of Palestine* (1825),²⁸⁹ makes a similar point:

The author chose the fatherland of the religion of Christ, *the* consecrated soil, for the home of his creation, to which the eye of Christendom is still turned with awe.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Ibid., I, viii: “Das Gemälde dieses Werkes ist nicht von einem uns fremden Boden genommen, wenn wir selbst auch nicht auf demselben gewandelt, diese Gebilde sind keiner uns fremden Zeit entsprungen, wenn auch achtzehnhundert Jahre zwischen ihr und der unsrigen liegen; denn ein starker Magnet hat noch alle Völker der Christenheit zu ihnen hingezogen, weil sie der Boden und die Zeit des jungen frisch und kräftig aufkeimenden Christenglaubens sind. Wem wäre das Land fremd, wo einst der Heiland, seine Vorgänger, die Propheten, der Täufer, die Könige Israels, und seine Nachfolger, die heiligen Aposteln gewandelt?”

²⁸⁹ Elijah Fenton, *Mariamne, An Historical Novel of Palestine*, 3 vols (London: Whittaker, 1825).

²⁹⁰ [Croly], *Salathiel, oder Memoiren*, IV, 189–90: “Der Verfasser wählte das Vaterland der Christusreligion, *den* geweihten Boden zur Heimath seiner Schöpfung, dem das Auge der Christenheit noch immer mit Ehrfurcht zugewendet ist.”

He emphasizes, moreover, that Salathiel's narrative covers the period of his natural life expectancy and therefore lacks the expression of mounting despair generated by his inability to die. Yet the destruction of Jerusalem is identified by Kaiser as the turning point—hence, though the translator does not explicitly say so, the reiteration of the curse as it flashes through Salathiel's mind. The significance this extends to the historical episode is explained by Kaiser, as it was done by Storch, with reference to the art of painting:

Only with the destruction of Jerusalem, with the annihilation of the sovereignty of the Jewish nation, begins his true misery, and up to this point Salathiel provides us through his narrative with a painting of his times. But then, after death has scorned him, commence his wanderings and he remains perpetually the representative of the Jewish people that endures, as does he; and, expelled from the land of his fathers, restlessly wanders across the globe, without finding peace; and whose gaze is turned towards the Promised Land, as his is towards the conciliatory beyond.²⁹¹

Storch mentions the desperate struggle of the Jews to free themselves from the oppressive Roman rule. Yet he takes pains to emphasize that at the time both peoples had already internally disintegrated and, terminally sick, were heading for their demise. The antisemitic element so prominent in many of the German engagements with the subject is conspicuously absent from Croly's novel. Yet it was arguably inserted by Storch. When he maintains that the egotism of "the Jewish" character emerges from the novel, only thinly disguised by fanaticism and bigotry, he appears to suggest the persistence of this trait, consistent with contemporary stereotypes, into his own day.²⁹² This not only seems to reveal the translator's underlying antisemitism, in contrast also to Kaiser, but in fact indicates a trope which was to resurface in later debates about Ahasuerus.

The author's decision to use the figure from Christian myth as his protagonist and narrator is critically interrogated by Storch.²⁹³ His concern is obviously the challenge to verisimilitude inherent in the mythical figure of the Wandering Jew. While the translator excuses his author's poor judgment in this instance with the innovative nature of the novel, it is worth noting that in Germany none of the

²⁹¹ Ibid., IV, 192: "Erst mit Jerusalems Zerstörung, mit der Vernichtung der Selbständigkeit des jüdischen Volkes, beginnt sein wahres Elend, und bis dahin giebt uns Salathiel mit seiner Geschichte das Gemälde seiner Zeit. Dann aber, nachdem ihn der Tod verschmäht hat, beginnen seine Wanderungen, und er bleibt fortwährend Repräsentant des jüdischen Volkes, das, gleich ihm, fortbesteht, und vertrieben aus dem Lande seiner Väter unstät über den Erdball wandert, ohne den Frieden zu finden, und dessen Blicke nach dem gelobten Land gerichtet sind, wie die seinen nach dem versöhnenden Jenseits."

²⁹² See [Croly], *Ewige Jude*, I, x.

²⁹³ Ibid., I, xi.

subsequent narrative fictions about the destruction of Jerusalem, which began to proliferate since the 1840s and which are discussed in chapters IV and V, includes the figure of Ahasuerus.²⁹⁴ As suggested by Storch's criticism, one reason for this may have been conceptual considerations.

Narrative fiction about the destruction of Jerusalem, in particular the novel, commenced in Germany in the late 1830s and began to proliferate in the second half of the century. In contradistinction to Croly's otherwise very influential *Sala-thiel* and other strains of the adaptation of the legend of the Wandering Jew in narrative fiction,²⁹⁵ none of these texts included an Ahasuerus figure, presumably because of its supernatural quality. They are, however, replete with manifestations of the Beautiful Jewess who is mostly represented as an exemplar of the conversion narrative. As such, the figure appears also—possibly in the wake of Milman—in all of the dramatic poems and plays discussed in the concluding section of this chapter.

In Germany, the *paragone* was also invoked by the influential poet and critic Wolfgang Menzel in a more general sense in a reflection on the contemporary novel.²⁹⁶ Writing in 1838, the author somewhat rashly maintained: "It has long since been established that poesy should not vie with painting, because it can present to the imagination only sequentially what the painter's picture can display to the eye in one moment."²⁹⁷ Menzel seems to assume that both media are in effect capable of conveying the same content, regardless of their different means of articulation; but they are set apart by the different sequentiality of perceiving the information they offer. This is derived from Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's influential treatise on the interrelation of the visual arts and poesy, *Laokoon: oder über die Grenzen der Malerey und Poesie* (1766; *Laocoon: or, The Limits of Poetry and Painting*).²⁹⁸ Yet to Lessing the sequentiality of poesy is not a

294 The only exception I am aware of is Anna Freiin von Krane, *Das Siegesfest der sechsten Legion* (Cologne: Bachem, [1915]), which I discuss in digression III.

295 See Mona Körte, *Die Uneinholbarkeit des Verfolgten: Der Ewige Jude in der literarischen Phantastik* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 2000), pp. 95–129.

296 For the contemporary significance of Menzel's conception of the novel, see Hartmut Steinecke, *Romantheorie und Romankritik in Deutschland: Die Entwicklung des Gattungsverständnisses von der Scott-Rezeption bis zum programmatischen Realismus*, 2 vols (Metzler: Stuttgart, 1975), I, 56–7.

297 W[olfgang] M[enzel], "Die Romane," *Deutsche Viertel-Jahresschrift* 1.2 (1838): 92–137, 110: "Es ist schon eine alte Lehre, daß die Poesie nicht mit der Malerei wetteifern soll, weil sie nur nacheinander der Einbildungskraft vorzuführen vermag, was das Bild des Malers in einem Moment dem Auge darstellt."

298 See Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon: or, The Limits of Poetry and Painting*, transl. William Ross (London: Ridgway, 1836), p. 177; see also Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laokoon: oder über*

disadvantage, as claimed by Menzel, because its prerogative is the representation of “progressive actions”,²⁹⁹ nor can, according to Lessing, the content of a painting and a literary text ever be quite the same, because the objects of visual representation are bodies in space while poesy describes actions in time.³⁰⁰

In his appreciation of Croly’s *Salathiel*, Storch sought to reconcile both aspects and suggested that the literary text, with the different means at its disposal, nevertheless created a comprehensive painting of the period in which it was set. The “painting” is thus still considered the desired result, but—as Menzel also suggested—it can be achieved in different ways. In his theoretical exposition of the novel, Menzel similarly elaborates frequent comparisons between the historical novel and historical painting.³⁰¹ With regard to the “historical” genre, Menzel is critical of both contemporary painting and the contemporary novel and censures in particular the supposed pedantry of proliferating details which, he argues, by indifferently attributing meaning to a plethora of details in fact dissipates any meaning.³⁰² Instead, he insists that the artist—painter and writer alike—should not stifle the imagination with too much detail.³⁰³ With reference in particular to painting, he contends that this practice subverts the advantage of the visual art of presenting a consistent and coherent narrative to the eye in one moment.

Before the rise of the historical novel in the wake of Scott, the prevalent model of the novel in Germany prioritized in the idealist tradition the individual. Its main subject was, as maintained by Hegel, the conflict of the individual with reality—as in Goethe’s enormously influential *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795–96).³⁰⁴ The historical novel confronted this model with a different conception of the protagonist. Instead of their individuality and personal development, its main focus shifted to the mediation of history through the protagonist.³⁰⁵ History was

die Grenzen der Malerey und Poesie, new expanded edition, ed. Karl Gotthelf Lessing (Berlin: Voß, 1788), p. 176.

299 See Lessing, *Laocoon*, pp. 148–52, and, for the quotation, p. 149; see also Lessing, *Laocoon*, pp. 152–55, and p. 152: “fortschreitende Handlungen.”

300 See Lessing, *Laocoon*, p. 151; see also Lessing, *Laocoon*, p. 154.

301 See M[enzel], “Romane,” 105, 109–11. As Steinecke notes, contemporary conservative literary criticism, influenced by Lessing’s ideas, censured the pictorial quality of some historical novels, see *Romantheorie und Romankritik*, I, 47–8.

302 See M[enzel], “Romane,” 111. Lessing makes a similar point more generally, castigating in poesy “the love of delineation” and in painting “allegorical display,” Lessing, *Laocoon*, p. xvii; see also Lessing, *Laocoon*, p. [v]: “die Schilderungssucht [. . .] die Allegoristerey.”

303 See M[enzel], “Romane,” 110–11.

304 For Hegel and his implicit reliance on the model provided by Goethe, see Steinecke, *Romantheorie und Romankritik*, I, 54.

305 See *ibid.*, I, 35.

accordingly no longer conceptualized as the product of the actions of illustrious individuals but as a much more complex interaction of divergent forces.³⁰⁶ A corollary of this development was the revaluation of verisimilitude and realism, which reflects a more pervasive shift in the perception of, and relation to, reality.³⁰⁷ The persistent prevalence of idealist thought in Germany, derided by Croly in the preface to his *Salathiel*, meant that the historical novel never achieved the same significance in this country as in other European literatures.³⁰⁸ It also meant that the historical novel was frequently predicated on an idealist conception which sought to obliterate the more unsavory aspects of reality.³⁰⁹

By the end of the 1830s, the novel was perceived to have deteriorated. Giving voice to prevalent critical opinion, it is described by Menzel as entertainment, mostly addressed to the “weaker” sex and younger readers³¹⁰ and its writers are to him an inferior sort of poets.³¹¹ The critic derides the novel as an ephemeral “fashion product”³¹² which is replete with mannerisms and false pathos;³¹³ he castigates in particular the proliferation of “factory”³¹⁴ products with insipid and morally questionable love plots.³¹⁵ Menzel perceives in the novel the same impetus toward degradation that was traditionally attributed also to genre paintings for their focus on non-heroic material of quotidian experience. While genre painting in an academic sense occupied one of the lower rungs of artistic genres, historical painting with its moral and heroic subjects occupied its apex. In literary production, the heroic traditionally was the province of the epic, which was considered to transcend the common and quotidian while the novel appeared as realistic and sober.³¹⁶ Menzel maintains that the disorganization of metric poesy led to the emancipation of prose;³¹⁷ he moreover alleges that the epic character of the novel increasingly turned toward the dramatic (dialogue),³¹⁸ a point already made by one of the British reviewers of Milman’s *The Fall of Jerusalem*.³¹⁹

306 See *ibid.*, I, 34.

307 See *ibid.*, I, 44, 49–51.

308 See *ibid.*, I, 52.

309 See *ibid.*, I, 139–40, 162.

310 See M[enzel], “Romane,” 92: “das schwächere und jüngere Geschlecht.”

311 See Steinecke, *Romantheorie und Romankritik*, I, 6–7.

312 See M[enzel], “Romane,” 92: “Modeartikel.”

313 See *ibid.*, 111.

314 See *ibid.*, 110.

315 See *ibid.*, 117–18.

316 See *ibid.*, 94–5.

317 See *ibid.*, 92.

318 See *ibid.*, 132.

319 See Anonymous, “Art. III. The Siege of Jerusalem,” 594.

As the epic supposedly disintegrated,³²⁰ the historical novel emerges for Menzel in a parallel hierarchy as the only serious contender in narrative fiction for lofty subjects, rather than drama, which he considers to be too limiting:

Heroic poems have become increasingly rare in our time and are not very popular because, almost without exception, they are only more feeble imitations of the better older ones, which date back to a time in which the novel did not yet exist. Many historical, and also political, subjects have been treated in drama and in this manner, as Schiller in particular proves, have produced a great effect; and yet, its form is too constrained for a more comprehensive painting [. . .]. The novel, in contrast, is perfectly suitable for the comprehension of larger paintings from our history and, through them, to elevate and excite the audience.³²¹

Menzel suggests as improvements in particular for the historical novel the articulation of patriotic sentiments,³²² and the engagement with religion and culture.³²³ He attributes to it the potential of elevating its readership and of filling it with enthusiasm.³²⁴ “The historical paintings,” Menzel is still talking about novels,

offer a new stimulus in opposition to that triviality and lead from the chimaeras of a sullied imagination back to the firm ground of truth and reality. At the same time they tie to the poetic also the political interest, which has become so predominant in our times, and they are suited better than any other form to imprint political lessons in examples, patriotic memories, and great inspiring ideas.³²⁵

That the author’s political imagination is curbed by historical truth, to which the writer of historical fiction is committed, is considered by the critic a wholesome corrective.

320 See also Steinecke, *Romantheorie und Romankritik*, I, 37, 146.

321 M[enzel], “Romane,” 126: “Heldengedichte sind in unserer Zeit immer seltener geworden und wenig beliebt, weil sie fast ausschließlich nur mattere Nachahmungen der bessern alten sind, die aus einer Zeit stammen, in der es noch keinen Roman gab. Das Drama hat viele historische, auch patriotische Stoffe verarbeitet und dadurch, wie namentlich Schiller beweist, große Wirkung hervorgebracht; allein seine Form ist zu eng für umfangreichere Gemälde [. . .]. Der Roman hingegen eignet sich vollkommen, größere Bilder aus unserer Geschichte aufzufassen und das Publikum dadurch zu erheben, zu befeuern.”

322 See *ibid.*, 126.

323 See *ibid.*, 128.

324 See *ibid.*, 126.

325 *Ibid.*, 124: “Die geschichtlichen Gemälde bieten jener Trivialität gegenüber einen neuen Reiz dar und führen von jenen Phantastereien einer befleckten Phantasie zum festen Boden der Wahrheit und Wirklichkeit zurück. Zugleich knüpfen sie an das poetische Interesse auch das in unserer Zeit so sehr vorherrschende politische an und eignen sich besser als jede andere Form, politische Lehren in Beispielen, vaterländische Erinnerungen und große begeisternde Ideen einzuprägen.”

Accordingly, Menzel criticizes that the historical novel in the tradition of Scott imposes modern views on the past,³²⁶ which has of course remained a significant characteristic of the historical novel to the present day.³²⁷ Menzel maintains that

[w]hosoever depicts times which were excited by ideas should also penetrate into these ideas and show us in which ways they modified themselves in the struggles of the time, on the peculiar level of education of the time, and according to differences in status, age, and sex.³²⁸

More specifically, the critic accuses Scott of inverting German Romanticism, by which he maintains the Scottish writer was inspired. He nevertheless credits Scott with having enabled modern readerships to look beyond love stories and family sagas “into the immeasurable panorama of universal history.”³²⁹ European readerships, he claims, were “for the first time confronted through the *belles lettres* with the fate of whole nations and of famous historical persons,” and he concludes: “This is a grand result.”³³⁰ The historical novel is therefore a genre which, he hopes, will prove its resilience.³³¹ And, of course, it did.

In this context, it is instructive to consider another contemporary voice on the correlation of the novel and the epic. Articulated a few years later, in 1844, Hermann Marggraff—the brother of the previously mentioned art historian Rudolf Marggraff—represents a more progressive approach than Menzel’s.³³² Menzel’s “Die Romane” offered in fact a conservative revision of his own earlier politicization of the novel.³³³ His earlier criticism had strongly influenced the view of the *Junges Deutschland* (young German) movement that the novel should repre-

326 See *ibid.*, 109.

327 For the interplay between history and fiction in the historical novel, see, e.g., Brian Hamnett, *The Historical Novel in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Representations of Reality in History and Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 32 and esp. chapter 5.

328 M[enzel], “Romane,” 128: “Wer Zeiten schildert, die von Ideen aufgeregt waren, soll auch in diese Ideen eingehen und uns zeigen, wie sie sich in den Kämpfen der Zeit, auf der eigenthümlichen Bildungsstufe der Zeit und nach der Verschiedenheit des Standes, der Jahre, des Geschlechts und des Temperaments modificirten.”

329 *Ibid.*, 110: “in das unermeßliche Panorama der Weltgeschichte zu blicken.”

330 *Ibid.*: “Das europäische Publikum wurde zum Erstenmal durch die Unterhaltungsliteratur mit den Schicksalen ganzer Völker und berühmter historischer Personen beschäftigt [. . .]. Das ist ein großes Resultat.”

331 See *ibid.*, 125.

332 For Marggraff and his contextualization within the young German movement, see Steinecke, *Romantheorie und Romankritik*, I, 136–7.

333 See *ibid.*, I, 42, 58–9, 126.

sent a mirror image of society and that the historical novel therefore needed to elaborate a meaningful relation between the past and the present.³³⁴

Marggraff, a prominent proponent of the *Junges Deutschland*, indicates a shift which occurs in literary production with the emergence of narrative fiction. Confirming Menzel's earlier observation, he notes that the contemporary period has little interest in epics or dramatic poetry.³³⁵ He attributes this primarily to a change in reading habits, which he feels to have become more pragmatic, distanced, and rational.³³⁶ In addition, Marggraff emphasizes the flexibility and adaptability of the novel. He specifically highlights its unlimited potential for discursive expansion, which he considers the basis for its continuous self-rejuvenation.³³⁷ As such, the novel has, in his estimation, initiated the dissolution of both the epic and the drama.³³⁸ Its "tasteful but formless hybridity" mirrors in the critic's view that of the contemporary individual.³³⁹ To Marggraff, another attraction of the novel is that it appears to him more democratic and capable of evading censorship more easily than the drama.³⁴⁰

Like Menzel, Marggraff characterizes the novel in contradistinction to the epic, which, he maintains, it has superseded:

At its highest peak, the epic is an expression of the sublime and of greatness; it magnifies the figures of the characters acting in it to the colossal and superhuman, brings the mysterious and marvellous to bear, and moves Heaven and Hell. The epic is based on ancient or at least archaic cognizance, the novel in contrast achieves its apex precisely where it corresponds most perfectly to the modern awareness; consequently, like modern cognizance per se, it can in no way agree with the colossal contours and gigantically elongated and extended characters favoured by the epic. Yet, even less admissible is [to the novel] the meddling in human affairs of gods, half-gods, demons or angels and devils, which the epic in particular requires.³⁴¹

334 See *ibid.*, I, 73, 121.

335 See Hermann Marggraff, "Die Entwicklung des deutschen Romans, besonders in der Gegenwart. Erster Artikel. Der deutsche Roman vor 1830," *Deutsche Monatsschrift für Litteratur und öffentliches Leben* 3.2 (1844): 58–67, 58. See also Hermann Marggraff, "Die Entwicklung des deutschen Romans, besonders in der Gegenwart. Zweiter Artikel. Der deutsche Roman nach 1830," *Deutsche Monatsschrift für Litteratur und öffentliches Leben* 3.2 (1844): 97–116.

336 See Marggraff, "Entwicklung des deutschen Romans," 59: "wohin zweckt Das ab? in welchem Verhältnisse steht Das zu mir? was nutzt es mir?" For the shifting demographics of the consumption of literature, and in particular the novel, see Steinecke, *Romantheorie und Romankritik*, I, 4–6.

337 See Marggraff, "Entwicklung des deutschen Romans," 59.

338 See *ibid.*, 106.

339 *Ibid.*, 59: "ein, zwar geschmackvolles, aber formloses Mischprodukt."

340 *Ibid.*, 59–60.

341 *Ibid.*, 61: "Das Epos ist auf seiner höchsten Höhe Ausdruck der Erhabenheit und Größe; es verlängert die Gestalten der in ihm auftretenden Personen ins Kolossale und Übermenschliche, zieht das Mysteriöse und Wunderbare mit ins Spiel und setzt Himmel und Hölle in Bewegung.

It is thus the realism, or verisimilitude, of the novel which determines its suitability to engage with modern life.³⁴² Hence Storch felt the need to justify Croly's focus on the mythical figure of Ahasuerus; at the same time, the presence of Ahasuerus in epic poems seems to be a manifestation of the mysterious and marvelous that is congenial to the genre. Mona Körte notes that in the epic of the nineteenth century, Ahasuerus is no longer the guiding principle of the history of religion and of the church, but of universal history; she moreover observes that, as initiated with Croly, the epic was increasingly ousted by the novel.³⁴³

Marggraff was less enthusiastic about the future of the novel than Menzel. To his mind, because addressed to a broad readership across social divisions, the historical novel avoids anything so profound that it might disturb the pleasure of reading;³⁴⁴ the critic maintains that the novel has been stagnating and, echoing Menzel, that it has been degraded by the proliferation of set pieces.³⁴⁵ Marggraff moreover, like the reviewer of Milman's *The Fall of Jerusalem* in *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, censures in particular translations as a "nuisance"³⁴⁶ which sustains the proliferation of mediocre texts.

With regard to the historical novel, Marggraff concedes that this has the potential to be at least an "innocent, tasteful reading matter which combines entertainment with intellectual pleasure."³⁴⁷ Menzel, less cerebral but more emotional, claimed that, whereas the historiographer "speaks only to reason," the writer "can charm the eye, rouse the heart."³⁴⁸ This sentiment was elaborated in more

Das Epos beruht auf antiker oder wenigstens urzeitlicher Anschauung, der Roman dagegen erreicht gerade da seine Höhe, wo er dem modernen Bewußtsein am Vollkommensten entspricht; daher verträgt er sich, wie die moderne Anschauung überhaupt, auf keine Weise mit den kolossalen Umrissen und den ins Riesenhafte gedehnten und gestreckten Gestalten, welche das Epos liebt, noch weniger aber duldet er jene Einmischung von Göttern, Halbgöttern, Dämonen oder Engeln und Teufeln in menschliche Angelegenheiten, wie gerade das Epos sie braucht."

342 For shifting conceptions of realism in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century, see Steinecke, *Romantheorie und Romankritik*, I, 38, 44, 46, 49–51, 139–40, 162.

343 See Körte, *Uneinholbarkeit des Verfolgten*, p. 94.

344 See Marggraff, "Entwicklung des deutschen Romans," 106.

345 See *ibid.*, 107–8.

346 *Ibid.*, 110: "Unwesen."

347 *Ibid.*, 107: "unschuldige, geschmackvolle und Vergnügen mit geistigem Genusse verbindende Lektüre."

348 [Menzel], "Romane," 127: "Jener [i.e., the poet] kann das Auge bezaubern, das Herz fortreißen, wo dieser [i.e., the historiographer] nur zum Verstande spricht." Herbert F. Tucker notes that on the other hand the defamiliarization implicit in the verse form of the epic "opened up other paths [of access to historical alterity] that were quite different from those maintained by workaday prose norm," *Epic*, pp. 19–20.

detail by Menzel's and Marggraff's contemporary Hermann Kurz.³⁴⁹ In the afterword to his historical novel *Schiller's Heimathjahre* (1843; Schiller's Years at Home),³⁵⁰ the writer maintained that there "remained something insoluble between history and its representation,"³⁵¹ and it was here that he saw the relevance of historical fiction, which alone he considered able to illuminate these large areas of darkness, not frivolously, but "in the service of history."³⁵² Implicitly evoking, once again, a pictorial metaphor, Kurz attributed to historical fiction the task of "lending to [the historian's] grey outlines colour and life"; as such, it was, to him, a "necessary companion" to historiography that was able to fill its "gaps."³⁵³ Aware of the derogatory perception of the novel as mere entertainment, the writer clarified that he did not mean "romantic entanglements" but nothing less than the "representation of life."³⁵⁴ Understanding his own age in the civilizational optimism of the nineteenth century to be the culmination of previous centuries, Kurz saw in historical fiction a vehicle of cultural self-reflection,

so that our own time—which appears to be predestined to encapsulate once again, and to conclude, tempestuously or tranquilly, yet in any case vigorously, the desires and movements of so many centuries at once from that summit at which it has arrived—may survey in clarity the past and in its mirror comprehend the future.³⁵⁵

To Kurz, the writer of historical fiction therefore is in effect a "clairvoyant historiographer."³⁵⁶

349 For Kurz, see Steinecke, *Romantheorie und Romankritik*, I, 148–9.

350 See Hermann Kurtz [sic], *Schiller's Heimathjahre: Vaterländischer Roman*, 3 vols (Stuttgart: Franckh'sche Buchhandlung, 1843). This edition was not accessible to me; subsequently, I quote the writer's afterword from Hermann Kurz, "Nachwort," in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Paul Heyse, 10 vols (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1874), IV, 216–31.

351 Ibid., IV, 216: "zwischen der Geschichte und ihrer Darstellung [bleibt] etwas Unauflösliches liegen."

352 Ibid., IV, 217: "Hier bleibt denn ein großes dunkles Gebiet zu durchforschen, in das kein anderes Licht zu dringen vermag als das Licht der Poesie [. . .] im Dienst der Geschichte."

353 Ibid.: "seinen grauen Umrissen Farbe und Leben zu leihen [. . .] als ihr [i.e., historiography's] nothwendiger Genosse" and ibid., IV, 218: "Er [i.e., the poet] hat ihre Lücken auszufüllen."

354 Ibid.: "Nicht um romantische Verwicklungen handelt es sich, sondern das Leben soll dargestellt werden."

355 Ibid.: "auf daß unsere Zeit, die bestimmt zu sein scheint, das Wollen und die Bewegungen so vieler Jahrhunderte noch einmal zusammenzufassen und stürmisch oder friedlich, aber jedenfalls kräftig zu Ende zu führen, von dem Gipfel, wo sie angelangt, die Vergangenheit klar überschauen und in ihrem Spiegel die Zukunft erkennen möge."

356 Ibid.: "wird der Dichter zum hellsehenden Geschichtschreiber."

Epic Survival and the Ahasuerus Debate

None of the Seatonian Prize winners seem to have had any impact on German literature.³⁵⁷ However, they explain the context for Milman and Croly, both of whom chose different genres which reflected the attrition of the epic mode and the rise of more dialogic and, eventually, narrative forms. It is, in this context, perhaps symptomatic that Coleridge never wrote the epic about the destruction of Jerusalem he envisaged. And yet, contrary to Menzel's and Marggraff's prophecies of doom, the epic did not really vanish from the literary scene of the nineteenth century, neither in Germany, nor in Britain. In fact, in relation to the self-assertion of the too early lamented epic, in the 1830s—only a few years after the publication of the two translations of *Salathiel*—Germany saw a fierce debate about the ideological import of the literary resurgence of the figure of the Wandering Jew. This renewed the literary focus on epic poetry even as it may at the same time have had an impact on narrative representations of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Goethe, that indefatigable catalyst of the literary imagination in Germany, recounts in Book XV of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1830; *From my Life: Poetry and Truth*) his plan for an epic poem about Ahasuerus that remained unfinished (1774–75).³⁵⁸ Published posthumously in 1836 as “Der ewige Jude” (The Wandering Jew), the epic fragment appeared in the very year in which Kaulbach was commissioned to paint the destruction of Jerusalem and has been said to have kindled wide-spread interest in the figure of Ahasuerus.³⁵⁹ Following Goethe's posthumous intervention, the Wandering Jew made his appearance most significantly in Berthold Auerbach's *Spinoza: Ein historischer Roman* (1837; *Spinoza: A Historical Novel*) and in Julius Mosen's epic poem *Ahasver* (1838; *Ahasuerus*).³⁶⁰

Among the numerous reviews elicited by the latter was a critical appreciation by Karl Gutzkow. This, in turn, provoked what has been called the *Ahasver-Streit* (Ahasuerus debate),³⁶¹ which—commencing in 1838—gave further prominence to

357 Tucker also ignores the Seatonian Prize poems, see *Epic*.

358 See Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Werke*, vol. 26: *Dichtung und Wahrheit. Dritter Theil* (Stuttgart and Tübingen: Cotta, 1830), pp. 302–6.

359 See Paul Lawrence Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question: Revolutionary Antisemitism in Germany from Kant to Wagner* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 194. This was preceded by Carl Friedrich Göschel's anonymously published *Ueber Göthe's Faust und dessen Fortsetzung. Nebst einem Anhang von dem ewigen Juden* (Leipzig: Hartmann, 1824).

360 For context, see Anderson, *Wandering Jew*, pp. 218–20.

361 See Horch, *Auf der Suche nach der jüdischen Erzählliteratur*, pp. 46–8 and, more recently, Jonathan Skolnik, *Jewish Pasts, German Fictions: History, Memory, and Minority Culture, 1824–1955* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014), p. 33.

the figure of the Wandering Jew. Indeed, as Kathrin Wittler has observed, the figure of Ahasuerus was at the time one of the most popular literary subjects in Germany.³⁶² It is more than likely that Kaulbach, too, would have followed the debate; as would have contemporary writers, and in particular those writers working on Jewish themes and engaged in the emancipation debate, which had been linked by Gutzkow to the figure of Ahasuerus.

Gutzkow, whose conflicting views about Jews have frequently been remarked upon,³⁶³ was a leading figure in the *Junges Deutschland* movement. Steeped in the antisemitic stereotypes of his time, he nevertheless was a vocal supporter of Jewish emancipation and was friends, among others, with Auerbach and Salomon Ludwig Steinheim, the polymath and emancipationist whose libretto to Ferdinand Hiller's oratorio on *Die Zerstörung Jerusalems* was discussed in chapter I of this book.

Auerbach's *Spinoza* was to some extent a response to Gutzkow's earlier novella *Der Sadducäer von Amsterdam* (1834; *The Sadducee of Amsterdam*), which focuses on the historical Uriel Acosta (also da Costa) and his ultimately futile struggle to break free from restrictive Judaism and engage in free thought. The novella has been described as a "commentary on the 'Jewish Question' in 1830s Germany" and as an exposition of the "conflict between 'universalism' and 'particularism'," ³⁶⁴ which ultimately envisages the annihilation of Jewish particularity.³⁶⁵ The young Baruch Spinoza is mentioned as a minor figure that embodies hope for a Jewish future outside the confines of Judaism.

Auerbach's treatment of the Jewish theologian and philosopher a few years later sees him achieve what was denied to Gutzkow's Acosta.³⁶⁶ After extricating himself from the suffocating Jewish past, and after testing and rejecting non-Jewish alternative identification patterns, Spinoza eventually gains his individual freedom.³⁶⁷ In the novel's final chapter, entitled "Redemption," the philosopher experiences a vision of the dying Ahasuerus who recognizes in Spinoza not only his own redeemer, and that of the Jews, but of all humanity.³⁶⁸ Yet Spinoza's freedom and his redemptive potential are predicated on the "exorcism" of Ahasuerus, on his annihilation and that of the obsolete Jewish legacy he embodies.³⁶⁹

³⁶² See Wittler, *Morgenländischer Glanz*, p. 374.

³⁶³ See, e.g., Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question*, pp. 29–30.

³⁶⁴ Skolnik, *Jewish Pasts, German Fictions*, p. 33.

³⁶⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 35.

³⁶⁶ For Auerbach's *Spinoza*, see, e.g., *ibid.*, pp. 25–7, 31–4.

³⁶⁷ See Florian Krobb, *Selbstdarstellungen: Untersuchungen zur deutsch-jüdischen Erzählliteratur im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2000), p. 39.

³⁶⁸ See Berthold Auerbach, *Spinoza: Ein historischer Roman*, 2 vols (Stuttgart: Scheible, 1837), II, 299–300.

³⁶⁹ See Krobb, *Selbstdarstellungen*, p. 39.

The novel has been described as a “productive continuation” of Gutzkow’s novella, but was moreover significantly influenced by the so-called Spinoza debate provoked by Goethe’s “Prometheus” (1789), for which the poet had abandoned his Ahasuerus project and on which he reflected in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* immediately following on the outline of his plan for “Der ewige Jude.”³⁷⁰ This proximity may have suggested to Auerbach not only to recast Spinoza as “precursor of the eighteenth-century German-Jewish Enlightenment” and as agent of “an exemplary German-Jewish cultural synthesis,”³⁷¹ but, more specifically, also to confront him with the figure of Ahasuerus.

When Mosen’s epic poem appeared in the following year, Gutzkow published a review in two parts in which he criticized attempts of re-interpreting the legend of the shoemaker of Jerusalem and, more specifically, of instrumentalizing the figure in the struggle for Jewish emancipation.³⁷² He denounced in particular the tendency of turning Ahasuerus into a martyr and attributing him with a mission. Effectively confirming the allegorical validity of the legend with its historical vindication, he maintained: “Ahasuerus, as is well known, is Jewry itself, and the legend of his sorrowful immortality contains a prophecy made *post eventum*.”³⁷³ More specifically, Gutzkow claimed that Ahasuerus’s crime was not really against Christianity but consisted, in fact, of the most base lovelessness: “He offended not as a Jew, but as an egoist and opportunist.”³⁷⁴

As in his earlier novella, Gutzkow once again attacked Jewish particularism:

The Jews were not damned to wander across the earth because they were not Christians, but because they lacked the stirrings of moral, noble, beautiful, human feeling, because they lack[ed] love, because they with the despising mocking spirit of this race sneered at misfortune. They committed a crime, not against Christianity, but against humanity!³⁷⁵

³⁷⁰ See Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit. Dritter Theil*, pp. 307–9. See also Skolnik, *Jewish Pasts, German Fictions*, pp. 34–5.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 35–6.

³⁷² See Karl Gutzkow, “Julius Mosens Ahasver. I.,” *Telegraph für Deutschland* 2.124 (August 1838): 985–91 and “Julius Mosens Ahasver. II.,” *Telegraph für Deutschland* 2.128 (August 1838): 1017–22. For Gutzkow and Mosen, see Anderson, *Wandering Jew*, pp. 216–20.

³⁷³ Gutzkow, “Julius Mosens Ahasver. I.,” 986: “Ahasver ist bekanntlich die Judenschaft selber, und die Sage von seiner traurigen Unsterblichkeit enthält eine *post eventum* gemachte Prophezeiung.”

³⁷⁴ Translation quoted from Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question*, p. 197. See also Gutzkow, “Julius Mosens Ahasver. I.,” 987: “Was er verbrach, verbrach er nicht als Jude, sondern als Egoist und Eventualitätsmensch.”

³⁷⁵ Translation quoted from Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question*, p. 197. See also Gutzkow, “Julius Mosens Ahasver. I.,” 987: “O und nicht darum wurden die Juden verdammt, zu irren auf der Erde, weil sie nicht Christen waren, sondern weil ihnen die moralische, edle, schöne, menschliche Regung des Gefühls, weil ihnen die Liebe abging und sie im schnöden, witzelnden Parti-

Gutzkow's attempt to separate the fate of Ahasuerus from its religious context is indeed a modernization of the legend inasmuch as it effectively introduces notions of modern biological antisemitism into the debate: What the writer seems to suggest is that the Jews were not condemned for remaining Jews, as suggested by Croly, but for being Jews in the first place, the kind of Jew, that is, who is represented by Ahasuerus.

Consequently, Ahasuerus's literary resurgence was sarcastically criticized by Gutzkow as confirmation of the continued validity of the figure's allegorical potential, resulting—as implied already by Storch in the foreword to his translation of Croly's *Salathiel*—from the perpetuation of “Jewish” traits:

This is the modern Ahasverus [*sic*] as he still constantly trades and haggles among us, as he jeers in literature, dissolving the organic. This is the disgusting, self-reinforcing part of Judaism, that part which is always celebrating itself, this is Ahasverus who has now in our poems transformed himself into a great man and a missionary of the future.³⁷⁶

For Gutzkow, this modern Ahasuerus embodies Jewish inassimilability and represents the Jew “precisely in his incapacity to have a mission.”³⁷⁷ In short, he is everything that still hinders emancipation.³⁷⁸

The German writer instead offered a plan of his own for a “modern” Ahasuerus in which he sought eventually to reach the “standpoint of Spinoza.”³⁷⁹ Gutzkow's preoccupation with the “modern” Ahasuerus may implicitly have been a response to an earlier review of Mosen's poem by the writer Ferdinand Gustav Kühne who had noted that the epic lacked any reference to the modern period. Kühne maintained that “no one has yet given shape to the modern Ahasuerus, no one has yet comprehended him as the modern Prometheus who, for his ire towards God, seeks to make humanity happy.”³⁸⁰ In conclusion, the critic chal-

kularismus sich über das Unglück moquirten und ein Verbrechen (nicht am Christenthum, sondern) an der Menschheit begingen!”

376 Translation quoted from Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question*, p. 197. See also Gutzkow, “Julius Mosens Ahasver. I.,” 989: “Grade dies ist der moderne Ahasver, wie er noch immer unter uns schachert und trödelt, wie er in der Literatur witzelt, das Organische zersetzt, der schlechte, sich auf sich selbst steifende Theil des Judenthums, der Theil des Judenthums, der meinetwegen jetzt selbst sich schon besingt, Ahasver, der sich selbst in Gedichten auf sich selbst zum großen Mann und Zukunftsmissionär macht.”

377 Translation quoted from Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question*, p. 197. See also Gutzkow, “Julius Mosens Ahasver. I.,” 987: “grade in seiner Missionsunfähigkeit.”

378 See Gutzkow, “Julius Mosens Ahasver. I.,” 987.

379 Ibid., 986: “Standpunkt Spinozas.”

380 [Ferdinand] G[ustav] Kühne, “Julius Mosen's Ahasver,” *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* 38.116 (June 16, 1838): 461–3, 463: “der moderne Ahasver ist noch von Niemand zur Gestalt gebracht,

lenged: "Who among the German poets shall find a suitable form for the modern Ahasuerus?"³⁸¹

In the course of his argument, Gutzkow attacked also Ludwig Philippson as well as "Jewish clubs" and "emancipation societies" for resisting to acknowledge that Judaism was supposedly no more than a "deaf nut."³⁸² Philippson's venture of a Jewish newspaper, he had established the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* in the previous year, was decried by Gutzkow because, to him, it appeared to affirm Jewish particularity and was thus another hindrance on the path to full Jewish integration through assimilation.

Ahasuerus may have personified for Gutzkow everything that was obstinate and obsolete in Judaism, yet the German writer emphasized that he had "a great hope of the younger generation of Jews."³⁸³ As observed by Paul Lawrence Rose, rather than offering reassurance, this may well have appeared to his contemporaries "a statement of his innermost conviction that the vast majority of Jews are evil and incapable of redemption."³⁸⁴

Philippson was quick to respond to what he perceived as Gutzkow's attack on Judaism. The reform-oriented rabbi fiercely criticized the "symbolization"³⁸⁵ of Jewish history in the figure of Ahasuerus as it was observed by Gutzkow but simultaneously also perpetuated by the writer with his own proposal for a modern Ahasuerus. Insisting on the idea of a Jewish mission, Philippson sternly rebuffed the dissolution of Jewish particularism demanded by the German writer:

Lo and behold, *then* we should be traitors, because we should have sold *our* mission, the part of universal life that accrued to *us*; because we should have sent to the bottom of the sea, where it is nothing nor creates anything, the hoard that we defended with our hearts' blood, *that* truth *we* have been entrusted to safeguard!³⁸⁶

noch von Niemand als der moderne Prometheus erfaßt, der aus Zorn gegen den Gott die Menschheit beglücken will."

381 Ibid.: "Wer von den deutschen Dichtern wird für einen modernen Ahasver die geeignete Form finden?"

382 Gutzkow, "Julius Mosens Ahasver. I.," 989: "Judencasinos [. . .] Emanzipationsvereine [. . .] taube Nuß."

383 Translation quoted from Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question*, p. 199. See also Gutzkow, "Julius Mosens Ahasver. I.," 991: "auf die *jüngern* Juden hab' ich eine große Hoffnung."

384 Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question*, p. 199.

385 [Ludwig Philippson], "Ahasver, Gutzkow und Juden. I.," *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* 2.114 (September 22, 1838): 460–1, 460: "Symbolisierung."

386 [Ludwig Philippson], "Ahasver, Gutzkow und Juden. (Fortsetzung und Schluß.) II.," *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* 2.117 (September 29, 1838): 472–3, 473: "Sehet da, *dann* wären wir Verräther, weil wir *unsre* Mission, den *uns* gewordenen Antheil am allgemeinen Leben verkauft,

Following on this, in what was apparently meant to be the concluding sentence of his response to Gutzkow, Philippson exclaimed: "We have *experienced* history, why should we understand it so badly?!"³⁸⁷ The insistence on experienced history and its didactic value appears to conceive of Judaism and Jews as a community of fate and suffering.³⁸⁸ This not only re-affirms the particularity of Judaism and Jews in a historical continuum but emphasizes the self-reflexivity in relation to history which perpetuates the Jewish community.

In an apparently new conclusion to his response, published a week later and polemically directed at Gutzkow, Philippson added to this in a paraphrase of Steinheim, that Judaism includes "the autonomy of mankind on the basis of revelation."³⁸⁹ The Jewish editor and writer extols Judaism in this way as a religion of reason focused on humanity but authorized by the divinity.

It was only in the second part of his review that Gutzkow eventually engaged with Mosen's epic poem. Favorably noting that the poet's re-interpretation affected the legend's human and moral motifs rather than its theological import, Gutzkow nevertheless insisted that any deviation from the established "Christian" narrative was inadmissible, in particular its Jewish appropriation to the emancipation struggle. More specifically, the writer felt that the identification of Ahasuerus with the Jewish nation was misleading because the messianic hope as well as the concept of a Jewish mission were oriented toward the future and did not look for oblivion, did in fact lack the "drive for self-annihilation" attributed to Ahasuerus.³⁹⁰

As Wagner was to echo about a decade later,³⁹¹ for Gutzkow Jewish self-annihilation was precisely what the "modern" Ahasuerus should symbolise, be-

weil wir den von uns mit unserm Herzblute vertheidigten Hort, *die Wahrheit*, die *uns* zu wahren aufgegeben worden, in das Meer versenkt hätten, wo er Nichts ist und schafft!"

387 Ibid.: "Wir haben die Geschichte *erlebt*, warum sollten wir sie so schlecht verstehen?!"

388 See *The Babylonian Talmud. Seder Nashim. Yebamoth*, transl. Israel Slotki, ed. Isidore Epstein (London: Soncino, 1936), Yebamoth 47a.

389 [Ludwig Philippson], "Ahasver, Gutzkow und Juden. (Schluß.) III.," *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* 2.120 (October 6, 1838): 484–5, 485: "die Selbstständigkeit des Menschen auf dem Grunde der Offenbarung." See also Steinheim, *Offenbarung nach dem Lehrbegriffe der Synagoge*, I, 283. A final contribution was published by Philippson in response to Gutzkow's reaction to Theodor Creizenach's accusation that the Ahasuerus debate revealed the writer's "occasionally dishonest manner," see Theodor Creizenach, "Gutzkow über Ahasver," *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* 38.189 (September 27, 1838): 753–5, 755: "zuweilen unlautere[] Art." See also [Karl] Gutzkow, "Noch einmal Ahasver," *Telegraph für Deutschland* 2.168 (October 1838): 1339–41 and [Ludwig Philippson], "Tages-Controle," *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* 2.129 (October 27, 1838): 519–20.

390 Gutzkow, "Julius Mosens Ahasver. II.," 1019: "Trieb der Selbstvernichtung."

391 For Gutzkow's influence on Wagner and critical perspectives on the writer's views, see Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question*, pp. 193–202.

cause his curse was in truth not the eternally unfulfilled wish to die, but his feeble and exhausted stagnation, his “outliving of himself” and his progressive “obsolescence.”³⁹² It was only in his destruction—and that of the Jewish nation—that a full emancipation was possible through complete assimilation.

The messianic hope of Judaism was considered by Gutzkow a particular hinderance to Jewish emancipation and assimilation. As a witness to the significance of another, new and universal Jewish mission which he considered to transcend the fatal stagnation, Gutzkow too invoked Steinheim, in whose home he was a frequent guest and who was an occasional contributor to the *Telegraph für Deutschland* edited by Gutzkow.³⁹³ The objective of this mission was, according to the writer, to facilitate the reversion of all philosophies and religions to Jehovah by safeguarding “the invisible Temple of Jerusalem,”³⁹⁴ or, in other words, ethical monotheism.

In the previous year, Gutzkow had published under the pseudonym E. L. Bulwer a critical reflection on his times entitled *Die Zeitgenossen* (1837; The Contemporaries),³⁹⁵ in which he articulated his views on emancipation and to which he explicitly refers in a footnote in his review of Mosen’s epic, maintaining that he concurs with everything said by “Bulwer” about the Jewish question.³⁹⁶ In short, Gutzkow detests the particularism of Jews as allegedly manifest especially in their manners,³⁹⁷ which—as Wagner was also to claim—the German writer perceives to foment “our” revulsion toward the Jewish way of thinking and acting.³⁹⁸ Any emancipation on merely political grounds he rejects; to him, emancipation must rather be based on moral affinity.³⁹⁹ Gutzkow consequently values emancipation as an instrument of undermining Jewish particularism and of the destruction of that “decay” which envelops the “morals of the old and obstinate Judaism.”⁴⁰⁰ Implicitly linking the question of Jewish emancipation to the concept of the Wan-

392 Translation quoted from Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question*, p. 199. See also Gutzkow, “Julius Mosens Ahasver. II.,” 1019: “das Sichselbstüberleben, das Veralten.”

393 For a bibliography of Steinheim’s contributions, see Alfred Estermann, *Inhaltsanalytische Bibliographien deutscher Kulturzeitschriften des 19. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 2: *Telegraph für Deutschland (1837–1848)* (Munich: Saur, 1995), p. 320.

394 Gutzkow, “Julius Mosens Ahasver. II.,” 1019: “den unsichtbaren Tempel von Jerusalem.”

395 See E. L. Bulwer [i.e., Karl Gutzkow], *Die Zeitgenossen: Ihre Schicksale, ihre Tendenzen, ihre großen Charaktere*, 2nd edn (1838; Pforzheim: Finck, 1842).

396 See Gutzkow, “Julius Mosens Ahasver. I.,” 990.

397 See Bulwer [i.e., Gutzkow], *Zeitgenossen*, p. 227.

398 See *ibid.*, p. 226.

399 See *ibid.*, p. 228.

400 See *ibid.*, p. 230: “destroy that mould with which the customs of the old and obstinate Judaism are coated! [jenen Moder zerstören, mit welchem die Sitten des alten und verstockten Judenthums umzogen sind!]”

dering Jew, once again like Wagner after him, Gutzkow concludes: “emancipation would scatter the Jews all the more, [it] would disperse them across the world and fulfil the curse which *Christ* saw in their eternally ceasing to be *one* people.”⁴⁰¹

Polemically, Gutzkow called for action on the part of the Jews, rather than eternal lamentation.⁴⁰² His primary target may have been Joel Jacoby’s controversial *Klagen eines Juden* (1837; Lamentations of a Jew). In this collection of poems modeled on biblical psalms, Jacoby amplified the idea of Jewish sorrow, which he associated with the romantic concept of *Weltschmerz* (world-weariness) and which he universalized, suggesting that “the world has turned into the Wandering Jew.”⁴⁰³ Widely considered exaggerated and inauthentic, Jacoby’s text was criticized also by Steinheim. In a note to his own *Gesänge aus der Verbannung*, he decried the poet’s effort as “repulsive” and “revolting” and insisted that his state of mind was not representative of the Jewish collective.⁴⁰⁴ Philippson, too, denounced the poet as one of the “false Jews” who “sniff at and bemoan Judaism”;⁴⁰⁵ he commenced, as Wittler puts it, a “veritable campaign” against Jacoby in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*.⁴⁰⁶ Philippson fiercely rejected the suggestion that the situation of contemporary Jews in Germany was in any way similar to that of the Babylonian Exile⁴⁰⁷ and insisted: “We have not yet *lamented*, and have not *accused*—we *hope* and *strive*!”⁴⁰⁸

Yet Gutzkow’s criticism of Jewish lamentation was clearly aimed not only at Jacoby but also at Eduard Bendemann. “Wherever one looks,” he taunted, “we see lamenting and sorrowful Jews, either sitting amid the ruins of Jerusalem or by the rivers of Babylon.”⁴⁰⁹ In the same year, Gutzkow mocked in an article about

401 Ibid., p. 234: “aber gerade die Emanzipation würde die Juden erst recht aus einander treiben, nach allen Weltgegenden hin zerstreuen und den Fluch erfüllen, den *Christus* darin sah, daß sie in Ewigkeit aufhören sollten, *ein Volk* zu seyn.”

402 See Gutzkow, “Julius Mosens Ahasver. I.,” 990.

403 Joel Jacoby, *Klagen eines Juden* (Mannheim: Hoff, 1837), pp. 81–2: “die Welt ist zum ewigen Juden geworden.” For Jacoby’s text and the controversy it aroused, see also Wittler, *Morgenländischer Glanz*, pp. 384–96.

404 See Steinheim, *Gesänge aus der Verbannung* (ed. 1837), p. 91.

405 [Philippson], “Ahasver, Gutzkow und Juden. I.,” 460: “Das trifft denn ganz herrlich mit jenen falschen, traurigen und schwermüthigen Dichtern und Künstlern zusammen, die das Judenthum beschnüffeln und beseufzen, mit den falschen Juden, die vom Weltenweh und Weltenschmerz, vom Judenweh und Judenschmerz leiern und psalmodieren.”

406 See Wittler, *Morgenländischer Glanz*, p. 396: “einen regelrechten Feldzug gegen ihn.”

407 See [Philippson], “Ahasver, Gutzkow und Juden. I.,” 460.

408 Ibid., 461: “Wir haben noch nicht *geklagt*, und noch nicht *angeschuldet*—wir *hoffen* und *streben*!”

409 Gutzkow, “Julius Mosens Ahasver. I.,” 990: “Wo man hinblickt, sehen wir klagende und trauernde Juden, bald sitzen sie auf den Trümmern Jerusalems, bald an den Wasserbächen Babels.”

Wilhelm von Schadow (1837), at the time the director of the Düsseldorf Academy of the Arts, the romantic preoccupation of the so-called Düsseldorf school of painting, with which both Bendemann and Kaulbach were associated. Again, he in particular criticized its alleged obsession with lamentation, such as Bendemann's hugely, and internationally, successful *Gefangene Juden im Exil* (1832; Figure 5) and *Jeremias auf den Trümmern Jerusalems* (1834–35; Figure 6); both are discussed in relation to Kaulbach's painting in chapter I.⁴¹⁰ This kind of subject, Gutzkow maintained, was not really adequate to the art of painting. It could only ever be fully comprehended by the poet because it needed to be associated with thoughts, reflections, and historical judgments. No painting of this sort, he insisted, could be truly pleasing. It would always remain theatrical and in need of poetical explication: "The genuinely tragic in such a composition can only be achieved by the poet who alone knows how to represent it."⁴¹¹

Gutzkow intervened with his criticism in the perennial *paragone* debate about the respective expressive potential of the arts which had reasserted itself in the nineteenth century and which Menzel had discussed in relation to the historical novel.⁴¹² Whereas Gutzkow felt that Bendemann had challenged the literary prerogative with his 'Jewish' paintings,⁴¹³ Hermann Püttmann argued for the superiority of the artist's representation. The art historian, intriguingly taking recourse to literary descriptors, more specifically suggested that Jacoby's *Klagen eines Juden* compared to Bendemann's *Jeremias auf den Trümmern Jerusalems* like a "puppet show" to a "tragedy by Sophocles."⁴¹⁴

The question mooted by Gutzkow in a polemical spirit was nevertheless valid, and it translates in the context of the cultural engagement with the destruction of Jerusalem into the question of which medium and which genre might best be suited to giving expression to the lofty subject. The cultural productivity of Kaulbach's painting observed in chapter I in relation to a number of oratorios which were produced intermittently throughout the century highlights the desire

⁴¹⁰ For the success of both paintings and their significance for the negotiation of the so-called Jewish Question, see Wittler, *Morgenländischer Glanz*, pp. 407–25.

⁴¹¹ Karl Gutzkow, "Wilhelm Schadow. 1837," in *Gesammelte Werke*, 1st series, vol. 9: *Oeffentliche Charaktere*, 3rd edn (Jena: Costenoble, 1879), pp. 242–55, p. 253. The male figure in *Gefangene Juden im Exil* has been said to have been modeled on Schadow, see Wittler, *Morgenländischer Glanz*, p. 428n192.

⁴¹² For the resurgence of the *paragone* in the nineteenth century, see Sarah J. Lippert, *The Paragone in Nineteenth-Century Art* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019).

⁴¹³ See Wittler, *Morgenländischer Glanz*, pp. 423–4.

⁴¹⁴ Püttmann, *Düsseldorfer Malerschule*, p. 45: "wie ein Marionettenspiel zu einer Sophokleischen Tragödie." For a more detailed discussion of the *paragone* debate around Bendemann's 'Jewish' paintings, see Wittler, *Morgenländischer Glanz*, pp. 423–4.

for the comprehensive articulation of the subject. At the same time, Kaulbach's attempts to enhance his pictorial representation through its oratorical extension suggest that Kaulbach felt his own art inadequate to doing the subject full justice.

Roughly concurrent with the completion of Kaulbach's artistic engagement with the destruction of Jerusalem began to emerge what was to become a proliferation of literary treatments in different genres, encompassing dramatic poems, narrative fiction, and epic poems. While narrative fiction is the main focus of chapters IV and V, products of the dramatic imagination will mostly be explored in chapter III. With regard to the epic genre—in contrast to England, but also Italy and Spain⁴¹⁵—the treatment of the historical occurrence remained rudimentary in Germany. Intriguingly, only two epic poems specifically dedicated to the destruction of Jerusalem appear to have been published in nineteenth-century Germany within two years of one another, in 1836 and in 1838, respectively, and both remained fragments.

Epic Failure: Schnaase and Walter

Die Zerstörung Jerusalems (1836; The Destruction of Jerusalem) by Eduard Schnaase (1805–86) originates in the context of the Christian mission to the Jews. Schnaase was a Protestant preacher and, later in life, archdeacon of St Catharine's in Danzig (present-day Gdansk in Poland). The Protestant clergyman published various devotional books, including a song book for schools, as well as a number of historical studies;⁴¹⁶ his *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche Danzigs actenmäßig dargestellt* (1863; The History of the Protestant Church in Danzig According to the Records) is still referred to today.⁴¹⁷ With his *Zerstörung Jerusalems*, Schnaase pursued a two-fold agenda. The proceeds of his publication were meant to support Jewish proselytes to Protestantism in Lublin; with his text the Protestant minister moreover hoped to win further Jewish proselytes to the Christian faith.⁴¹⁸

415 For a Spanish epic about the destruction of Jerusalem, see Angel Sanchez, *La Titiada, compuesta in doce libros*, 2 vols (Madrid: Ibarra, 1793).

416 See, e.g., Eduard Schnaase, *Schulgesangbuch zum Gebrauche beim Beginn und Schlusse des Unterrichts in Volks- und Bürgerschulen* (Cöslin: Hendeß, 1837); *Christliche Geburtstags-Gedichte für Kinder von 5 bis 10 Jahren* (Danzig: Gerhard, 1838); *Christliche Morgen- und Abendfeier in täglichen Gebeten* (Berlin: Oehmigke, 1840); *Die Schule in Danzig und ihr Verhältnis zur Kirche: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Schule* (Danzig: Schroth'sche Offizin, 1859).

417 See Eduard Schnaase, *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche Danzigs actenmäßig dargestellt* (Danzig: Bertling, 1863).

418 See Eduard Schnaase, *Die Zerstörung Jerusalems. Erster Gesang: Das letzte Osterfest* (Danzig: Botzon, 1836), title page and preface.

Only the first canto of the poet's "attempt," as he called it,⁴¹⁹ was completed and it is unclear how many cantos were originally envisaged; presumably the response to his epic instalment was not as encouraging as Schnaase had anticipated.⁴²⁰ The missionary objective of the poet is in evidence throughout the fragment and distinguishes it clearly from the learned tradition of epics about the destruction of Jerusalem which originated in England in the late eighteenth century.

Following the pattern of contemporary Pietist missionary efforts, outlined in more detail in chapter IV, Schnaase elaborates Jewish customs at Passover in order to confront them with their Christian re-interpretation. He does so against the background of the historical destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple which is clearly meant to confirm the salvific truth of this re-interpretation and the supersession it indicates. In addition to the historical Temple service, Schnaase describes the *seder* ceremony in detail as it continues to be celebrated to this day. Yet while soliciting the reader's sympathy with the magnificence and profundity of the celebrations in ancient Jerusalem, the poet insists on their ultimate vacuity and the new meaning given to the Passover ceremonies through the sacrifice of Jesus. Peers, too, in his *The Siege of Jerusalem*, challenged the ritual of Passover, but he neglected to make its Christian re-interpretation productive for his text. To Schnaase and his missionary objective, in contrast, it is crucial; it was a focus which the English epist did not share. The renewal offered with the re-interpretation of Passover as Easter was rejected by the Jews of ancient times and has therefore, according to Schnaase, precipitated the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple. The Protestant minister's epic is thus a plea to contemporary Jews to recognize the supposed truth of supersession and to convert to Christianity, rectifying the alleged mistake of their forebears.

The epic fragment commences with the evocation of the *ubi sunt* motif, a staple of homiletic discourse, in regard to Zion and elaborates in its first stanzas a condensed image of the city's destruction. The poet is shaken by the gruesome spectacle but is enjoined not to question the divine decision of the punitive judgment even as he is instructed to address his "brethren":

To your brethren proclaim that not lessened is my arm,
In your songs do tell that gladly I take pity
On him who looks for mercy, his face to me doth turn;
Yet in eternity condemn him, who my word not heeds.⁴²¹

419 Ibid., title page: "Ein Versuch."

420 See the author's brief preface, *ibid.*, n.p.

421 Ibid., p. 3: "Verkünde deinen Brüdern, dass unverkürzt mein Arm, / Erzähl' in deinen Liedern, dass ich mich gern erbarm' / Dess, der nach Gnade sucht, sein Antlitz zu mir kehrt, / Doch ewiglich verflucht, der auf mein Wort nicht hört."

The offer of divine mercy to those who turn to God and the threat of eternal damnation to those who will not is clearly directed by the poet at potential Jewish proselytes. In his invocation, addressed to the Spirit of Mercy, Schnaase concisely articulates his missionary purpose:

Spirit of Mercy, descend Thou
 Upon me, strengthen me
 That I may sing in your honour,
 That I proclaim Zion's fall
 For the blindness of its sin,
 And yet the brethren's faith increase;
 That they in Thy word should trust,
 Joyfully believe until they shall see.⁴²²

The Jewish rejection of Jesus is related by the epologist not only to the last Passover in the doomed city, but Schnaase moreover attributes its destruction in a reiteration of well-known stereotypes to the alleged moral corruption of the Jews and their supposed perseverance in sin and hypocrisy:

Their hearts are corrupted,
 Have died,
 Dark, they are, as is the night;
 Easter came so graciously,
 Yet it did not lift
 The power of sin.

Come, come, shepherd of the soul,
 Bring goods,
 That remain for evermore!
 Come, come and spare!—
 Yet the Son
 Is basely cursèd by the people's multitude.

Woe, woe! Ruin
 Cannot die
 In the feast's sacred sounds;
 For the song is vain hypocrisy,
 Vile flattery,—
 Ruin is its reward!⁴²³

422 Ibid., p. 5: "Geist der Gnaden, senke dich / Auf mich nieder, stärke mich / Dass ich sing zu deiner Ehre, / Dass ich Zions Fall verkünde / Ob der Blindheit seiner Sünde, / Doch der Brüder Glauben mehre; / Dass sie deinem Worte trauen, / Freudig glauben bis sie schauen."

423 Ibid., p. 39: "Doch die Herzen sind verdorben, / Sind erstorben, / Finster sind sie wie die Nacht; / Ostern ist so freundlich kommen, / Doch genommen / Hat es nicht der Sünde Macht. //

Schnaase identifies Passover—or Easter—as the pivotal connection between God and His people. Elaborating the narrative of Israel's liberation from bondage, he suggests this to be the type for the liberation of humankind through the sacrifice of Jesus as symbolized through the re-configuration of the *seder* as the Last Supper. Passover and the Temple cult of sacrifice have been superseded with the one and eternal sacrifice of Jesus. Schnaase emphasizes the finality of this last Passover before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and the failure of Israel to apprehend the substitution:

[. . .]

The end of celebrations arises for the people;
One last time, the Lord is close to it.

For the celebrations' decorations descends
 Black gloom of night,
 To receive with shivers
 Whatever lived and kept a wake;
 Nevermore the feast shall come,
 Who bestowed it, took it, too,
 When the Temple's curtain was rent,—
 The downfall is assured.

And from afar and far
 It resounds like the crash of thunder;
 In black the stars enshroud themselves;
 And approaches the Son of the Eternal.
 Lo, He keeps what He did promise,
 To tear the rug of Moses;
 Comes, yet not in mercy anymore;
 War and misery Him precede.

Peace, peace in the highest!
 Once did say the angels' multitude;
 Yet now it chimes: Woe! Woe!
 Woe! Now and for evermore.
 Woe! Woe, in Salem's gates!
 Woe to all that were born!

Komme, komme Seelenhüter, / Bringe Güter, / Die da bleiben immerdar! / Komme, komme und verschone!—/ Doch dem Sohne / Fluchet schnöd' des Volkes Schaar. // Wehe, wehe! Das Verderben / Kann nicht sterben / In des Festes heil'gem Klang; / Denn der Sang ist eitel Heucheln, / Loses Schmeicheln,—/ Das Verderben ist der Dank!"

Woe, the Judge is nigh!
And the Day of Wrath has come!⁴²⁴

The evocation of the apocalyptic dimension with which Schnaase's fragment concludes associates the universal exhortatory significance of the destruction of Jerusalem in homiletic discourse. His epic is predominantly, but not exclusively, addressed to the Jews, whose ancestors had experienced the supposed historical divine judgment. As such the destruction of Jerusalem is construed as a type of the Last Judgment and its literary exposition emerges as a plea to the remnant of Israel finally to see the light before it is too late; yet it is calculated to put the fear of God also into the Christian reader.

It seems difficult to imagine where the ecclesiastical poet should have gone from here. His failure to complete his project may not only have been due to its lack of commercial and missionary success but also to conceptual issues. His point strongly made in this first canto with the evocation of supersessionist logic and of the Last Judgment, any continuation could, at best, only have been a reiteration of the same which, at worst, would have been perceived as numbing and loathsome.

Johannes Walter's *Die Zerstörung von Jerusalem: Ein Epos* (1838; The Destruction of Jerusalem: An Epic), of which no copy seems to have survived, did not fare any better than Schnaase's effort, though it appears to have followed a very different trajectory.⁴²⁵ It did not, as far as can be gauged, participate overtly in the discourse on the mission to the Jews, but focused rather on the historical dimension and its moral and religious import. The first of several projected instalments

424 Ibid., p. 48: "[. . .] / Der Festschluss ist dem Volke da, / Noch *ein* Mal ist der Herr ihm nah. // Nieder steigt zum Festes-Prangen / Schwarze Finsterniss der Nacht, / Um mit Schauer zu empfangen / Alles, was gelebt, gewacht; / Nie mehr soll die Feier kommen, / Der sie gab, hat sie genommen / Als des Tempels Vorhang riss,—/ Das Verderben ist gewiss. // Und aus weiter, weiter Ferne / Dröhnts heran wie Donnerton; / Schwarz verhüllen sich die Sterne / Und es naht des Ewgen Sohn. / Sieh, er hält, was er verheißen, / Mosis Decke zu zerreißen; / Kommt, doch nicht in Gnaden mehr, / Krieg und Elend vor ihm her. // Friede, Friede in der Höhe! / Rief wohl einst der Engel Schaar; / Doch nun tönte es: Wehe! Wehe! / Wehe! jetzt und immerdar. / Wehe! Weh', in Salems Thoren! / Wehe Allem, was geboren! / Weh', es ist der Richter nah! / Und der Tag des Zorns ist da!"

425 Johannes Walter, *Die Zerstörung von Jerusalem: Ein Epos* (Augsburg: Kollmann, 1838). This was the first volume of the epic poem, which apparently comprised a lengthy apology by the author and, entitled "Weihegesang" (Consecration Song), was the first of altogether twelve projected cantos, of which no more seem to have appeared in print. The volume is still mentioned in *Bibliotheca Judaica: Bibliographisches Handbuch umfassend die Druckwerke der jüdischen Literatur einschliesslich der über Juden und Judenthum veröffentlichten Schriften*, ed. Julius Fürst (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1863), p. 492.

which apparently never made it into print, the slender volume, printed at the author's expense, was given the title "Weihegesang" (Consecration Song) and comprised "the portents heralding the destruction as well as the comprehensive depiction of the moral and mystical state of this period and the lamentable political circumstances of the Jews in this era."⁴²⁶

Advertised as the first poetic work of its author, who was the editor of the *Augsburger Tagblatt*, Walter's epic poem was praised by Joseph Heinrich Wolf as highly dramatic and quite original; the critic noted moreover that occasionally the poet adopted the style of oratorio libretti.⁴²⁷ The reviewer for *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung* was less charitable.⁴²⁸ Focusing mostly on the poet's use of meter and orthography rather than his rendering of the subject, the critic expressed strong reservations, although he deferred his final judgment to the publication of the remaining cantos of the epic. He nevertheless emphasized that the chosen subject was perfectly suitable for an epic treatment.

In the publisher's announcements, praising the poem's Klopstockian enthusiasm,⁴²⁹ a similar claim had been made:

In the whole of history there will hardly be any subject more suitable for a purely epic treatment than the present one; and following that section of history which directly encompasses the foundation of the Christian religion, the narrative of the destruction of Jerusalem, the once so mighty city and initial cradle of Christianity, the narrative of the fall of the Jewish people and its dispersal throughout the world, may very well be one of the most remarkable for all denominations.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁶ "Die Zerstörung von Jerusalem, ein Epos von Johannes Walter" [advertisement], *Der Erzähler: Ein Unterhaltungsblatt für Jedermann* 4.33 (April 24, 1839), *Intelligenz-Blatt zum Erzähler* 1–2: 4: "[Es enthält] die der Zerstörung vorangegangenen Wunderzeichen, sowie ein gedrängtes Bild des moralischen und mystischen Zustandes jener Periode, wie der politisch traurigen Lage der Juden in jener Epoche."

⁴²⁷ See [Joseph] H[einrich] Wolf, "Feuilleton," *Bayerische National-Zeitung* 5.166 (October 21, 1838): 678.

⁴²⁸ See Anonymous, "Bericht über eine Poeten-Centurie aus dem Jahre 1839," *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung* 15.2 (July 2, 1840): 737–51, 747. The review may have been written by Heinrich Brockhaus, the editor of the magazine, until Hermann Marggraff took over from him in 1854.

⁴²⁹ See "Die Zerstörung von Jerusalem. Ein Epos von Johannes Walter" [advertisement], *Bayerische National-Zeitung* 6.3 (January 4, 1839): 16.

⁴³⁰ "Die Zerstörung von Jerusalem, ein Epos von Johannes Walter" [advertisement], *Der Erzähler: Ein Unterhaltungsblatt für Jedermann* 4.33 (April 24, 1839), *Intelligenz-Blatt zum Erzähler* 1–2: 4: "In der ganzen Geschichte möchte es wohl keinen Stoff geben, der zu einer rein epischen Darstellung sich mehr eignen würde, als der Vorliegende, und nach demjenigen Abschnitte der Geschichte, welche direkt die Gründung der christlichen Religion in sich begreife, möchte die Erzählung von der Zerstörung Jerusalems, der einst so mächtigen Stadt und anfänglichen Wiege

In Germany, the sentiment appears not to have been generally shared, or the undertaking may simply have been considered too daunting by other poets—Heinrich von Kleist apparently considered it, as did Coleridge in England, yet ultimately neither embarked on this major undertaking. In any case, the epic treatment of the destruction of Jerusalem appears to have been a disheartening failure in German literature of the nineteenth century. More intriguing is therefore the claim as to the interest that the subject was thought to hold to all denominations. As discussed in chapter IV, the destruction of Jerusalem in fact became a remote battleground in which the two major denominations in Germany—Protestantism and Catholicism—enacted a side, or after, show to the *Kulturkampf*.

Epic Transformations of Ahasuerus against the Background of the Destruction of Jerusalem: Mosen, Heller, and Giseke

Schnaase's and Walter's epic poems about the destruction of Jerusalem appear to be the only ones to have been published in nineteenth-century Germany. Yet there are, among the plethora of epic poems on the related subject of the Wandering Jew, three works in which the link between Ahasuerus and the destruction of Jerusalem, suggested by Croly's *Salathiel* and Kaulbach's monumental painting, was also elaborated in a significant way, though three decades lie between Julius Mosen's *Ahasver* (1838) and Seligmann Heller's *Die Wanderungen des Ahasver* (1865; 1868; The Wanderings of Ahasuerus) and Bernhard Giseke's *Ahasverus, der ewige Jude* (1868; Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew).⁴³¹

Mosen (1803–67) was descended from an originally Jewish family which had converted centuries earlier.⁴³² By profession an advocate, his literary production was associated with the *Junges Deutschland* movement. Among his contemporaries, Mosen may have been known best for his “Andreas-Hofer-Lied” (1831; Andreas Hofer Song) about the heroic figure of the eponymous Tyrolean freedom fighter during the Napoleonic Wars.

des Christenthums, die Erzählung von dem Sturze des jüdischen Volkes und dessen Zerstreuung durch die ganze Welt, wohl eine der merkwürdigsten für alle Confessionen seyn.”

⁴³¹ See Julius Mosen, *Ahasver: Episches Gedicht* (Dresden and Leipzig: Fleischer, 1838); [Seligmann] Heller, *Die Wanderungen des Ahasver* (Wien: Verlag der typogr.-liter.-artistischen Anstalt, 1865); and Bernhard Giseke, *Ahasverus, der ewige Jude* (Berlin: Schweigger, 1868). For Mosen's epic poem, see Anderson, *Wandering Jew*, pp. 218–20 and Skolnik, *Jewish Pasts, German Fictions*, pp. 33–4. For Heller, see Anderson, *Wandering Jew*, pp. 261–2; for Giseke, see *ibid.*, pp. 254–5. For the cultural productivity of the Ahasuerus legend in the German context, see Werner Zirus, *Ahasverus: Der ewige Jude* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1930).

⁴³² For Mosen's biography, see DLL (1986), X, cols 1353–4.

Mosen's *Ahasver* was the product of a philosophical approach in which he sought to create a counterpart to his earlier *Das Lied vom Ritter Wahn* (1831; Lay of the Knight of Delusion).⁴³³ In this poem, in contrast to the later epic, he sought to find poetic expression for "the soul struggling to become one with God in immortality," while in his *Ahasver* he attempted to articulate

the nature of man encompassed in its earthly being, like as to the spirit of universal history embodied in the individual, that initially in involuntary defiance and then in acute consciousness brusquely confronts the God of Christianity.⁴³⁴

Controversially, Mosen maintained moreover that "[l]ike the German people has been the real carrier of Christianity in universal history, it may also avail itself in consistent inevitability of the legend of Ahasuerus as a national myth."⁴³⁵

Mosen's epic poem in *terza rima* appeared in the same year as Walter's fragment—in the very year in which Kaulbach's cartoon was first exhibited. It is difficult to say, therefore, whether it had a direct impact on the artist's conception or, conversely, whether the poet was familiar with the artist's design.⁴³⁶ Yet his conception of the Ahasuerus figure is, in any case, very different from that of Kaulbach. Other than Schnaase's and Walter's efforts, Mosen's epic won critical acclaim, as witnessed by Gutzkow's interest and a proliferation of reviews.⁴³⁷

⁴³³ See Julius Mosen, *Das Lied vom Ritter Wahn: Eine uralttalische Sage in vier und zwanzig Abenteuer* (Leipzig: Barth, 1831).

⁴³⁴ Mosen, *Ahasver*, p. 184: "Im Liede von Ritter Wahn, [. . .] habe ich den Gegensatz von Ahasver—die zur Vereinigung mit Gott in der Unsterblichkeit ringende Seele—zur poetischen Anschauung zu bringen gesucht, während jetzt in Ahasver die in irdischem Dasein befangene Menschennatur, gleichsam der in einem Einzelwesen verleiblichte Geist der Weltgeschichte, erst in unbewußtem Trotze, dann endlich mit deutlichem Bewußtsein dem Gotte des Christenthums sich schroff gegenüberstellt."

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 185: "Wie aber das deutsche Volk der eigentliche weltgeschichtliche Träger des Christenthums gewesen ist, so darf es wiederum in folgerechter Nothwendigkeit die Sage von Ahasver als Nationalmythos in Anspruch nehmen."

⁴³⁶ Avraham Ronen suggests that Mosen's *Ahasverus* or one of the translations of Croly's *Sala-thiel* may have inspired Kaulbach's use of the figure of the Wandering Jew; see, "Kaulbach's Wandering Jew," 249. Yet, while the artist was still working on his painting by the time Mosen's epic poem appeared, as indicated by Ronen, his cartoon was already completed in 1838.

⁴³⁷ See in addition to Gutzkow's review, e.g., the anonymous review in *Phoenix: Frühlings-Zeitschrift für Deutschland* 4.149 (1838): 593–6 and 4.150 (1838): 598–9; and the reviews by August Lewald in *Europa: Chronik der gebildeten Welt* 3 (1838): 133–6; by Wolfgang Menzel in *Literaturblatt* 32.66 (June 29, 1838): 261–4 and *Literaturblatt* 32.67 (July 2, 1838): 268, the literary supplement of *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser*; by Ferdinand Gustav Kühne in *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* 38.116 (June 16, 1838): 461–3; and by "121" in *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung* 13.327 (November 23, 1838): 1325–8 and 13.328 (November 24, 1838): 1329–31 as well as, somewhat later, in an exploration of recent "philosophical" epic poems, V. A. H., "Die neuesten Versuche auf dem

Mosen's main conceit is the re-interpretation of Ahasuerus, like Job, as an embodiment of suffering humanity. Yet in contrast to Job, he loses his spiritual certainty in response to circumstances. When he is supposed to give up his two children—Ruben and Lea—to “Roman lust and bondage,” as one critic explains the poet's more oblique rendering,⁴³⁸ Ahasuerus approaches Jesus, whom he believes to be the Messiah of the Jewish imagination—mighty, a savior come with his sword to free the Jews from the Roman yoke. Yet Jesus, in response, prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem. In disappointed rage, Ahasuerus accuses the Galilean of having lied and betrayed his people. Seeing no alternative, Ahasuerus eventually kills his children to save them from the Romans and descends into strict materialism which denies any transcendence:

Made from earth is Man, and on the Earth
And of the Earth he lives, so that once,
Like his mother, he turn into earth again.⁴³⁹

And so the focus of his ire shifts to include the new and contrary god:

Not a human struggle is incumbent on us,
Not with Rome alone and a Roman world;
Incumbent it is, to subdue a new, strong God.⁴⁴⁰

In relation to his extensive description of the destruction of Jerusalem, Mosen devises a configuration which may have inspired later narrative variations of the subject. Lea, the daughter of Ahasuerus, is in love with the Christian Roman Matthias; and his son Ruben is the Roman's best friend. When the Temple is all ablaze and only Ahasuerus and his two children survive on its roof, Matthias, returned against his will as a soldier in the besieging army, seeks to save them. Yet Ahasuerus hurls first him and then his children into the blaze before he too, “the last Jew,”⁴⁴¹ in vain seeks his death in the flames.

In each of the three periods in which the poem is structured—the second focusing on Julian the Apostate and the attempted reinstatement of the Jewish Tem-

Gebiete des philosophirenden Epos,” *Evangelische Kirchen-Zeitung* 33.70 (September 2, 1843): cols 553–7, 33.71 (September 6, 1843): cols 561–6, 33.72 (September 9, 1843): cols 569–71, and 33.73 (September 13, 1843): cols 577–9; and K. H., “Deutsche Dramatische Dichter. II. Julius Mosen,” *Illustrirte Zeitung* 4.95 (April 26, 1845): 265–8 and 4.96 (May 3, 1845): 286–[7].

438 V. A. H., “Die neuesten Versuche,” 555: “Römischer Lust und Dienstbarkeit.”

439 Mosen, *Ahasver*, p. 24: “Aus Erde ist der Mensch und auf der Erde / Und von der Erde lebt er, daß er einst / Wie seine Mutter wieder Erde werde.”

440 Ibid., p. 47: “Es gilt nicht einen Menschenkampf zu kämpfen, / Nicht nur mit Rom und einer Römerwelt, / Es gilt den neuen, starken Gott zu dämpfen.”

441 Ibid., p. 82: “der letzte Jude.”

ple cult—his children are restored to Ahasuerus, like those of Job. Yet again and again, unlike Job, he becomes guilty of their deaths.

Eventually, hiding from the world, in the third period Ahasuerus has visions of the dead proceeding past him and finally he perceives the “demon” of his people, “Jehovah with the tiger’s visage.”⁴⁴² The terrible vision is contrasted with the appearance of the maternal personification of Nature who, his children at her breast, promises Ahasuerus to keep them alive until they shall be restored to him. Yet the “demon” incites him as an instrument of his own revenge against the Christian god who “with a brush of fire / Has swept far and wide the children of Israel.”⁴⁴³ The “demon” seeks to elect to himself another people—the progeny of Ismael. He thus inspires the foundation of Islam by Mohammed, and Ahasuerus is his messenger:

Yet you, man of the first experience,
Shall be with him [i.e., Mohammed], so he learns to comprehend
Within himself the new, great revelation.⁴⁴⁴

With the Muslim hordes Ahasuerus then besieges Roman Jerusalem. When he fails to mobilize Israel to join the fray, he rejects his people. Instead, he opens himself up to love for all humankind and thus means to turn his curse into a blessing.

For the last time, the children of Ahasuerus are restored to an earthly life at the Holy Sepulchre. Yet, ignorant of this miracle and echoing the biblical story of Jephtha, Ahasuerus vows that anyone found at the holy site of Christianity shall be put to death. Despairing at the cruelty of the circumstances he seeks to save Lea and Ruben, but his soldiers shoot at him and the children at his breast: “At his chest, like glass they [i.e., the arrows] shatter, / Yet fell his children’s tender limbs.”⁴⁴⁵

Nearly insane with pain and sorrow, Ahasuerus challenges Christ to an eternal fight so as to save humankind from him: “Unshackled from Him and from His mercy / Commence I now the lengthy fight ’gainst Him, / ’Til all humankind from Him I shall have saved!”⁴⁴⁶ In a final vision of Christ who accepts the challenge

⁴⁴² Ibid., p. 38: “Jehova mit dem Tigerangesichte.”

⁴⁴³ Ibid., p. 150: “[. . .] mit Feuerbesen / Die Kinder Israels weit hinweggefeht.”

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 151: “Du aber, Mann der ältesten Erfahrung / Sollst bei ihm [i.e., Mohammed] sein, daß er begreifen lernt / In sich die neue, große Offenbarung.”

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 177: “An seiner Brust zersplitterten sie [i.e., the arrows] wie Glas, / Doch strecken sie der Kinder zarte Glieder.”

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 178: “Von ihm und seiner Gnade losgekettet / Beginn’ ich jetzt mit ihm den langen Kampf, / Bis ich von ihm die Menschheit hab’ errettet!”

and defers its resolution to the Last Judgment, Ahasuerus is told by Jesus to “struggle on! and on!”⁴⁴⁷ The epic poem thus offers an idiosyncratic Christian interpretation of the legend, in which Ahasuerus is given Promethean qualities and his quasi-Faustian struggle is presented as paradigmatic of the human condition. Ahasuerus is revaluated by Mosen as an eternally striving everyman figure, which reflects an increasing interest in imbuing the otherwise insufficiently complex figure of the Wandering Jew with life by representing him as the personification of a principle.⁴⁴⁸

Seligmann Heller (1831–90), mainly known for his translations from the Hebrew into German, was also of Jewish heritage but, unlike Mosen, identified as a Jew. His *Die Wanderungen des Ahasver* (The Wanderings of Ahasuerus) first appeared in 1865 but was reissued in a second edition in 1868 to which were added two more “wanderings” and the subtitle *Ein Heldengedicht* (A Heroic Poem).⁴⁴⁹

Noting the poet’s indebtedness to Johann Gottlieb Rönnefahrt, whose own dramatic poem is discussed below in more detail, as well as to Croly and Robert Browning, Anderson scoffed that Heller’s *Ahasverus* “is all familiar to us, especially the passages dealing with the destruction of Jerusalem.”⁴⁵⁰ Yet this appears to be a simplification. The description of the historical event is not only extremely condensed, in contrast to both Mosen and Giseke, but the poet moreover explicitly rejects the otherwise pervasive Christian notion of the destruction of Jerusalem being the fulfilment of the prophecy of Jesus. Rather, the cataclysmic catastrophe is attributed exclusively to the internal strife among the Jews and the zealous distortion of their religion.⁴⁵¹ It is thus effectively disengaged from the in Christian texts pervasive soteriological framework and is represented as the result of the Jews’ betrayal of their essentialized national character.

By far the most detailed description of the violent events of the destruction of Jerusalem in the epic genre is Giseke’s. His *Ahasverus, der ewige Jude* (1868; Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew) is influenced, as Anderson observes⁴⁵², by the Book of Lamentations and, once again, by Croly’s *Salathiel*.⁴⁵³ As the critic notes, there

447 Ibid., p. 182: “ringe weiter! weiter!”

448 See Körte, *Uneinholbarkeit des Verfolgten*, p. 94.

449 See Heller, *Wanderungen des Ahasver* and S[eligmann] Heller, *Ahasverus: Ein Heldengedicht* (Leipzig: Wigand, 1868).

450 Anderson, *Wandering Jew*, p. 261. Recognizing the poet’s ambition, Anderson nevertheless concludes that “[i]n many ways the poem is the most spectacular failure in the whole history of the art form of the Legend,” p. 262.

451 See Heller, *Wanderungen des Ahasver*, pp. 29–31.

452 See Anderson, *Wandering Jew*, pp. 254–5.

453 See *ibid.*, p. 254.

is nothing “Byronic or romantic” in Giseke’s epic poem: “it is in many ways a realistic narrative, and its very flatness—its almost cold, remorseless objectivity of style—makes for dynamic writing.”⁴⁵⁴

Giseke, appearing to conflate him with John of Giscala, sets Ahasuerus up as inciting the war against the Romans and usurping leadership. He attributes to him, by implication, the destruction of the city and the Temple:

Is this, Ahasuerus, what you bring?
Then, the torch you wield is
A firebrand that in terror
This city, and us, shall consume.⁴⁵⁵

After the destruction of Jerusalem, burrowing through the ground beneath the ruins, Ahasuerus escapes to Masada. During his extended subterranean existence, he loses all “measure of time.”⁴⁵⁶ At Masada he is, once again, conflated with another historical figure, in this case Eleazar ben Jairus, who incited the Jewish garrison to mass suicide in the face of the impending breach of the defences of the Jewish stronghold by the Romans. In the speech attributed by Giseke to Ahasuerus, the Zealot envisages the future coming of the Messiah even as he concedes that he misread the signs of the times—another allusion to the Wandering Jew’s fall from time:

Ere all this calamity here happened,
Believed I that the time was now.
Since the signs I misunderstood,
Jehovah I did not recognise.⁴⁵⁷

The epoiist ties his Ahasuerus to messianic ideas, but the signs he fails to recognize are not signs of redemption but of destruction; supersession is implicit in Giseke’s epic poem. In Heller’s epic, the messianic expectation finds no articulation at all, in line with the poet’s demythologization of the historical occurrence. In Mosen’s *Ahasver*, finally, the figure of the Messiah appears as a manifestation of divine power in the world, yet its inactivity and apparent helplessness toward the un-

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 255.

⁴⁵⁵ Bernhard Giseke, *Ahasverus, der ewige Jude* (Berlin: Schweigger, 1868), p. 30: “Ist’s dies, Asvere, was du bringst, / So ist die Fackel, die du schwingst, / Ein Feuerbrand, der schreckensvoll / Die Stadt und uns vertilgen soll.”

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 82: “das Maß der Zeit.”

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 88: “Eh all dies Unglück hier geschah, / Vermeint’ ich schon, die Zeit sei da. / Da ich die Zeichen falsch verstand, / Hab ich Jehova nicht erkannt.”

folding of the divine will provokes disappointment and materialism as a consequence. Nevertheless, the deceptive indifference of the Messiah in Mosen's epic is ultimately the power which provokes Ahasuerus's resistance and his own activity. It thus sets his teleological and potentially redemptive trajectory in motion, which is denied to the figure in the other two epics.