


4. JAHRBUCH SELMA STERN ZENTRUM FÜR JÜDISCHE STUDIEN BERLIN-BRANDENBURG

Sefardische Perspektiven Sephardic Perspectives

Herausgegeben
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 SELMA STERN ZENTRUM
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HENTRICH
& HENTRICH

- 58 Walter Gostelo, For Mannaseth Ben-Israel at Amsterdam, in: Charls Stuart and Oliver Cromwell United, London 1655, 293–303; Arise Evans, To Manaseth Ben-Israel, Arise Evans Wisheth Grace and Truth, Through God our Saviour, Amen, in: Light for the Jews, Or, the Means to Convert Them, n.p. 1664, 19–52; Margaret Fell, For Manaseth Ben Israel. The Call of the Jewes out of Babylon, London 1656. For a more detailed description of these and other examples, see Rauschenbach, Judentum für Christen, 237–242.
- 59 A good example is Arise Evans, who described his disillusion about Menasseh in the new Preface “To the Jews Nation”, in: Light for the Jews, 6. Margaret Fell, too, turned away from the Jews and dedicated her later publications only to Christian readers. See Claire Jowitt, “Inward” and “Outward” Jews. Margaret Fell, Circumcision, and Women’s Preaching, in: Reformation 4 (1999), 139–167.
- 60 The celebrity of the book is partly due to its famous German translation by Marcus Herz, which was published together with a long introduction by Moses Mendelssohn in 1782. See Menasseh ben Israel, Rettung der Juden, oder Sendschreiben zur Beantwortung einiger Fragen, die ihm ein vornehmer und gelehrter Engländer, die Beschuldigungen betreffend, die man der jüdischen Nation zu machen pflegt, vorgelegt hatte. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt. Nebst einer Vorrede von Moses Mendelssohn, Berlin 1782, in: Moses Mendelssohn, Schriften zum Judentum 2, ed. Alexander Altmann (= Gesammelte Schriften, Jubiläumsausgabe 8), Stuttgart 1983, 1–71.
- 61 For an example, see the dedication of the fourth volume of his *Conciliador*, where Menasseh states: “Dios me ha dado su gracia para salir con el intento, y descubrir en este mar inmenso de nuestra Ley santissima, mares nunca dantes navegados.” (Menasseh ben Israel, Cuarta y ultima parte del Conciliador, Amsterdam 1651, A2r.-A2v.). Menasseh’s reference to the sea reminds us of Francis Bacon and the famous engraving on the title of his *Instauratio magna*, published in London in 1620, and reprinted in Leiden in 1645.
- 62 Sina Rauschenbach, Kulturvermittler “in die falsche Richtung” – Anregungen aus der jüdischen Geschichte am Beispiel Menasse ben Israels und der christlichen Gelehrten des 17. Jahrhunderts, in: Ottmar Ette (ed.), Wissensformen und Wissensnormen des Zusammenlebens. Literatur – Kultur – Geschichte – Medien, Berlin 2012, 103–127.

Michael Studemund-Halévy
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Epitaphs in Blood

Crime and Punishment in Sephardic-Jewish Tombstones

A la mémoire de mon très cher ami, le regretté Gérard Nahon

The Jewish cemetery is not only a Jewish place (bound by location), and a Jewish space (bound by opportunity): A Jewish burial ground is a parallel space (heterotopia), juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible.¹

A Jewish burial ground is thus not only a space that has more layers of meaning or relationships to other places than immediately meet the eye, but it is also the place of Jewish texts, religious and literary, historical and fictitious, biographical or communal.² From antiquity on, the epitaph became a portion of literature, and the elaborated epitaphs were soon worthy of publication as poetry, biographical and historical documents, but also as e-documents (composing one’s own tomb inscription).³ Poets considered the epitaph a crucial genre precisely because it called into question prevailing conceptions of who and what was fundamental and peripheral, in life, death, and poetry. From the seventeenth century onwards, and well into the eighteenth century, the art of writing Sephardic (sometimes ante-mortem) epitaphs in rhyme and rhythm – in Hebrew, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish – became a true literary and widely circulated genre practiced by poetically gifted Sephardic rabbis, learned scholars, and amateur poets.

Poetical, historical or biographical epitaphs, carved in stone, etched in memory and connecting the dead with the living, are unique lenses through which the historical developments in a given community become visible. The inscriptions are, as David Malkiel has so aptly put it, “snapshots of a society’s social and cultural proclivities at particular moments in time.”⁴ For researchers focusing on the socio-economic history of a city, region or community, cemeteries

are a rich primary source.⁵ Beyond the iconographical elements of the sumptuous tombstone decoration and the spatial elements of the burial ground itself, a tombstone epitaph provides important prosopographical information, demonstrating that deathways are among the most potent symbols of group unity and disunity.⁶

The valuable documentation obtained from the epitaphs constitutes a sort of open access archive written in stone, yielding important information about the varied Jewish attitudes and conceptions regarding religion, religious attitudes, and death, a dying person's demeanor, belief in an afterlife, the individual and his or her family's lineage, ethnic origins, birthplace, his or her peregrinations, marital status, number of children, social status, ethnic and kinship connections. These aspects and name changes as a result of sickness (*rogativa*), language choice, biblical and Talmudic quotations, rhetorical formulae and literary devices are prime sources for studying the community's cultural, social, and literary history, as are the richly decorated gravestones containing a profusion of visual images (*memento mori* symbols, biblical narratives).

Causes of death such as parturition, plague and cholera are found in Jewish tombstone epigraphy and iconography.⁷ The circumstances and places of violent death are, however, only rarely mentioned on grave markers. Some epitaphs reveal to us one of the many Jewish tragedies experienced during terrible historical circumstances, such as the Crusaders' persecutions of the Jews of the Rhineland in 1096, the Iberian Inquisition, the pogroms in Russia or the Holocaust, to name only the most monstrous tragedies in Jewish history.

Sometimes the inscription, while unremarkable in style, tells of significant facts about the deceased's life and cause of death (murder and violence inflicted on those who died in violent circumstances at the hands of Jews or non-Jews) or choosing death (martyr's death). The speaking stones are powerful examples of how grave markers witness a community's historical experience. Thus, a tombstone testifies to the sacrifice of a believer who, because of the confession of unity and uniqueness of God, gave his life or had to endure his Judaism in the midst of grave difficulties in life. And because he died as a martyr in "sanctification of the divine name" (*ve-neharag al kidush ha-Shem*), the deceased is often called a "saint" (*ha-kadosh*) on his tombstone, a very honorable name, for he was cruelly murdered as an innocent, whether by non-Jews or by Jews.⁸ For a deceased person who has not died a natural death, the blessing turns into a curse and a desire for revenge: God avenge his blood (השם ינקום דמו).

Besides the revenge and martyr epitaphs, we can find heartbreaking epitaphs

for children, women and men who were murdered by their slaves or during a slave uprising. We read on the stones bloodthirsty stories of innocent people who fell into the hands of murdering gangs, thieves and violent criminals, and we learn from the epitaphs that jealous husbands and unfaithful wives and their lovers, Jewish or not-Jewish, rid themselves of their spouses or rivals. And the epitaphic narratives tell us stories of atrocious crimes and the cruel punishment imposed on the murderers, vivid in pictorial depiction and ruthless clarity, as a reminder and admonition.

In recent years, especially in Israel, the USA, Italy, Portugal, and Germany, a veritable school of Jewish epigraphy has developed on the basis of hundreds of Jewish cemeteries in the Old and New World. Their results have been partly or completely entered into at least five epigraphical databases or published documentations and are thus available for research, one in Israel,⁹ one in the USA (currently under construction),¹⁰ one in Italy,¹¹ and two in Germany.¹² With the help of these databases it will now be much more convenient to start a thorough analysis of the data and to establish a *rhetorica funeraria* (rhetorical formulae and literary devices). For example:

- (1) a list of all abbreviations (not only in Hebrew) on the gravestones;¹³
 - (2) a dictionary of the Hebrew, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian gravestone language;
 - (3) a listing of epigraphic forms (rhetorical formulae), for example, epitaphs addressing the deceased (*siste viator*-motif), bidding the passer-by to stay and read the epitaph, present in practically every Sephardic cemetery, almost entirely absent from Ashkenazic graves;¹⁴
 - (4) a listing of epitaphs containing the initials for *baruch ha-gozer* (Blessed is the maker of this decree),¹⁵ present in practically every Sephardic cemetery in the Balkans, almost entirely absent from Sephardic graves in the ex-marrano world in Europe or in the Caribbean;
 - (5) curses on grave inscriptions; curses against violation of the graves;¹⁶
 - (6) monolingual, bilingual and polyglot inscriptions;¹⁷
 - (7) a divan of poetry in rhyme and rhythm,¹⁸
- to name only a few examples.

Curses on grave inscriptions were already documented by the Jews in Ancient Greek times.¹⁹ Two unusual and extraordinarily inscribed Jewish tombstones from Rheneia, a little Greek island near Delos (in the Aegean Sea), which also served as its cemetery, were found in 1834. The Greek epitaphs refer to a prayer for revenge (on Yom Kippur). The text of the two stones, one now in Bucharest and the other in Athens, is virtually identical except for the name of the two murdered young girls. The elaborate Jewish curse quoted below, inscribed in almost identical form on both sides of the stone – c. 42 cm high, 31 cm broad, and 6 cm thick – is for a certain Heraclea. The epitaph asks God the Most High²⁰ and his *angeloï* to avenge the girl's unjust death. On both sides, the inscription is capped by the image of two sculpted hands stretched upwards.²¹ The invocation requests that divine and angelic vengeance be visited upon the (unknown) murderers of the young girl, who died untimely:

I. Heraclea

I call upon and pray to God
the Most High, the Lord of the Spirits
and of all flesh, (to take action) against those who have treacherously
murdered or poisoned (with *pharmaka*) the wretched
Heraclea, untimely dead, and wickedly poured out
unjustly her innocent blood,
so that the same fate may befall both who
murdered or poisoned her and their children (with *pharmaka*).
You, Lord, who see
everything and the angels of God, before Whom every
soul on this day
abases itself with supplications,²² (please see to it) that you avenge
the blood of the innocent slain (cries aloud to Heaven)²³ and seek
payment (for it) as soon as possible.²⁴

At least three tombstones, one in situ, two extant only in photographic tradition, have survived at the Jewish cemetery Altona, indicating the murder of those buried here.²⁵ One stone with a bilingual Hebrew-Portuguese inscription is still in the Portuguese section of the cemetery,²⁶ the other two stones with a Hebrew inscription were prior to World War II in the Ashkenazic section of the cemetery. All three of those buried here were victims of non-Jews (*goyim*), as only the Hebrew inscription of Moses Ergas, an otherwise unknown Sephardic Jew, points out. The other two (more extensive) inscriptions report on the murder and the punishment of the murderer down to the smallest detail.

II. Moses Ergas, 25 April 1637

The Ergas family was well rooted in Livorno, Hamburg and Amsterdam. Family members became major figures in the local Sephardic oligarchy.²⁷ There are four Ergas graves in fairly good shape in the Altona Königstrasse cemetery: that of Sara (wife of Abraham Ergas Henriques), died 1643, and her three children Branca (died 1665), Isaac (alias Manoel da Silva, died 1630), and Moses Ergas. Two tombs are missing that should have been there: that of Abraham the father, and that of Jacob, the third son.²⁸ The killing of the young Sephardic Jew Moses Ergas does not seem to be mentioned either in the contemporary press or in other documents. The motive and circumstances of the incident and the names of the murderers are therefore unfortunately not known to us.

5397	5397
קול דמי הבחור	Voice of the blood of the unmarried young man
משה ארגז צועקי	Moseh Ergas. It cries
מן האדמה הזאת ²⁹	out from this ground,
יהמו ירעשו ואינם	it stirs, it trembles,
שוקטים עד אשר	and it will not be quiet until
ישפוט האלדים בינו	God judges between him
ובין מכהו	and his murder.
נהרג בשדה על ידי	He was killed in an open field by
גוים ביום שבת ר' ה	gentiles on the Sabbath Rosh Hodesh
אייר הרחק כמטדור	Iyar, at a distance
קשת ממקום דקבורתו	close to the range of a bow from his grave
שנת השצז	year 5397. ³⁰

BOS DO SANGE DO
VIRVOZO MANSEBO MOSE
ERGAS FI[L]HO DE
ABRAH[AM] ERGAS
CLAMA DA TERA ESTA ATE
QVE YVLGE EL DIO³¹
ENTRE EL Y ENTRE SEI
FIRIDOR FOI MATADO
EN DIA DE SABAT ROS HODES
IYAR ANNO

Voice of the blood of
the unmarried young man Mose
Ergas, son of
Abraham Ergas.
It cries out from this ground until
God judges
between him and his
murderer. He was killed
on the day of the Sabbath, Rosh Hodesh
Iyar, year.³²

III. Abraham Metz, 14 October 1683

A small distance from the other tombstones at the Altona Jewish cemetery was a tombstone that has now disappeared; it closed with an asymmetrical round arch rose, which reported in moving words the murder of Abraham Metz, a money changer and a native of Herford, and the cruel punishment of his murderer.³³ The epitaph tells us in merciless details about this murder, the victim, the murderer and his exemplary punishment:

פ"נ	Here lies
איש קדוש במצות ה' שמה	a martyr, a man who delighted in the commandments of the Eternal One.
בתומו הלך לבית מרזה	Unsuspecting he went to the inn,
רשע קם והכהו גפש רצה	there a scoundrel rose up and struck him down, murdered him.
היה נעלם ד' שנים כירח	For four long years he was missing like the moon ^[?] ;
מלך שקברי מתים פותח	the King, who opens the graves of the dead [=God],
גלה זה כי הוסיף מטבח	revealed this, because (the murderer) continued to murder,
והרג גם יהודי מר צרה	and killed still another Jew who cried out bitterly,
ונתפס ואמרו עלה קרה	and then he was seized, and people said: "Come on up, bald man."
נהפך הגלגל עליו שטה	Then the wheel of fate turned, and he was broken and racked upon the wheel.

ודנהו ובראשו מקדה	And he was sentenced, and his head was pierced.
ה"ה הקדוש הר"ר אברהם בן	It is the martyr, the master, Mr. Abraham, son of
הר"ר שמשון זימלא מבונא	the master craftsman Mr. Shimshon Simle Metz from Bonn,
ז"ל נהרג כ"ד תשריו תמ"ד	may his memory be blessed, murdered (on)
מ"ץ	24 Tishri [5]444
ונקבר כ"ב מנחם תמח לפ"ק	and buried on 22 Menahem [5]448 after a small counting.
תנצב"ה	May his soul be bound in the bundle of life. ³⁴

We are informed about this murder not only by the detailed "speaking epitaph" on the gravestone, but also by two contemporary reports³⁵ and a dozen Yiddish press reports.³⁶ In her Memoirs, Glikl, a distant relative of the wife of Abraham Metz, writes about the burial of the murdered Abraham Metz and the public punishment of his murderer:

There was great mourning in our community, as though they had been killed that day. The friends of my kinswoman Sarah, before they allowed the burial, examined the corpse well, for Sarah told of certain marks on his body that it might be known for certain that he was indeed her dead husband and that she was really widow.³⁷ After this the result of the trial was made known: the murderer was to be broken on the wheel and his body, bound round with iron bands, placed on a stake, that he should be an example for a long time.³⁸ His wife and servant were freed, but had to leave the country. On the day the murderer was executed, there was an uproar in all Hamburg such as had not occurred at an execution for a hundred years.³⁹

IV. Isaac [Isak] Renner, 13 October 1783

Another case from Hamburg may also be instructive.⁴⁰ In 1783, the eighteen-year-old Isaac Renner was murdered in Hamburg. According to the epitaph, Renner was killed like the biblical Avner (see 2 Sam 2:27), tricked to enter a place and killed there by those who enticed him to enter. When Renner's murderers were caught and questioned, it became clear that Renner was killed because they wanted his "Jewish blood."⁴¹ The religious motive for the murder seems to have raised the "status" of Renner's martyrdom, yet it was not reflected on the

victim's gravestone, which was so careful not to mention the circumstances of his death. Perhaps the epitaph was composed before the inquiry took place.⁴² Renner's grave lay left to the grave of Naftali Hirsch b. Abraham Frankfurt. Between the two graves, there was an empty space half a grave in width, in honor of the murdered man, and for use by those who wished to pray at this site.⁴³

<p>הקדוש בכו בכה להולך ישר ונהרג כאבנר⁴⁴</p> <p>ה"ה הב"ח הקדוש כ' איצק ב' שמעון רענר בחר ורך בשנים והוא כבן ח"י א' דחה"מ סוכת תקמ"ד נעלם מעין כל חי כי בא לבית גוי אכזרי לתומ ויתנכלו אותו להמיתו ונהרג ע"י איש זדון ובארבע מיתות נדון⁴⁵</p> <p>ך"ט תשרי נמצא גויתו חשך משהור שני קצותיו אכלה האש ותוכו נחר וביר' ג' ב' מרחשון נקבר ונספד כשור' תהא נשמתו בצרור החיים צרורה⁴⁶</p>	<p>Here is buried the martyr. Weep and lament for him who walked upright and was murdered like Avner.</p> <p>It is the respected bachelor, the mar- tyr, the honored Izek, son of Shimon Renner, chosen and tender in years, he was about eighteen, [on] the first of the intermediate holi- days of Sukkot 544, he disappeared without a trace, for he entered the house of a cruel gentile unsuspectingly, then they seized the attack against him to kill him, and he was murdered by a villain, who was condemned to the four [ju- dicial] kinds of death.</p> <p>On 29 Tishri his body was found, dar- ker than black, for his two ends had been consumed by the fire and his center was burned, and on the third day, the 2' of Mar- heshvan, he was buried and mourned as befits him. His soul is bound into the bundle of life.</p>
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Venice

The murder of Jews at the hand of Jewish-fellows was not an entirely unknown phenomenon in Italy. Echoes of Jewish criminal activity in Venice include, for example, Leone da Modena's vivid description of his son Zevulun's murder, memorialized later in his son's tombstone inscription.⁴⁷ Zevulun, a young man of 21 years, "a sweet psalmist with a pleasant voice,"⁴⁸ was murdered by a gang of Jewish ruffians in 1621.⁴⁹ Two years later, his father writes about his beloved son:⁵⁰

He [the composer Salamone de Rossi] asked me to prevent any mistake that might come to the composition, to prepare and arrange it for printing, and to proof-read it by keeping my eyes open for printing errors and defects. My lyre has turned to grief. I am a fountain of tears [Jer 8:23]. The death of my lovely Zevulun weighs upon my heart [...] Still, I did not want to take this pious act lightly. As a reward for performing it, I said, God will have mercy on his [Zevulun's] soul and it will be a light and sign of joy to the rest of the Jews [Esther 8:16].⁵¹

We can find another tragic description of a murder in an epitaph from Venice which describes the cruel murder of a certain Tobia Spira on Succoth Eve 1635, who was killed by hired gentile assassins.⁵²

V. Efraim Clerle, 24 November 1713

<p>אבן מקיר תצעק העוברים התמה מהו ותמהו השתוממו ומאוד תחרבו וקול בכי ונהי השמיעו ותרבנה עניכם דמעה על המקרה הרע אשר קרה להבחור הלזה כמ"א אפרים קלירילי הי"ד⁵³ שהיה כיונה תמה אשר בתוקף ימי בחרותו בן כ"ב שנה נשפך דמו מבן עולה באור ליום ו"ר" כסלו ש"</p>	<p>Even the stone cries pain! O you who pass by be taken by surprise, be amazed and be amazed and voice of weeping and moaning raised and your eyes shed tears at the terrible thing that happened to this young Ephraim Clerle, who was like a pure dove, in the vigor of his youth, twenty-two, was shed his blood by a wicked person on the evening of Friday, 6 Kislev of the year</p>
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תע"ד לפ"ק נב"ת⁵⁴ אמן והנה הוא
ממרום שואג כאריה צועק
וקורא אל נקמות ה' זכרני ופקדני
והנקם לי מרודפי ותחא מתתי
כפרה על כל עונותי

5474. His soul rests in peace, amen. But here
from above, he roars like a lion, exclaims
and cries: O God of righteousness, O Lord,
remember me, grant Thy assistance,
and make me righteous in the face of my
persecutors, may my death be
my atonement for all my sins.

Qui giace i cadavere di
HRANZIN ZORZETTO
SEPOLTO 6 KISLEV 5474⁵⁵

Here lies the corpse of
HRANZIN ZORZETTO
SEPOLTO 6 KISLEV 5474⁵⁶

Suriname

The Dutch colony Suriname experienced repeated and violent clashes during Maroon raids or cruel slave uprisings on plantations. These uprisings were often mentioned on the grave markers (*matado por os croues negros*, murdered by the "atrocious Negroes"). The words on the bilingual Hebrew-Portuguese tombstones express "feelings of pain and hatred," and reflect the hazards of those living on the frontier of the slave economy of eighteenth-century Suriname.⁵⁷

VI. David Rodrigues Monsanto, 2 September 1739

אל נקמות יי אל נקמות היפייע⁵⁸

O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs.
O God, to whom vengeance belongs,
shine forth!

S^A

DO YNCURTADO
MANCEBO DAVID ROD^S
MONSANTO QUE FOY
MATADO
POR OS CRUEYS NEGROS
ALEVANTADOS
EM 29 MENAHEM A^O 5499

Grave
of the curtailed
young man David Rodrigues
Monsanto who was
killed
by the cruel Negroes
who rose up
on 29 Av of the Year 5499

QUE CORRESPONDE
A 2 SETT^{RO} AO 1739
SUA SANGRE SEJA
VINGADA

which corresponds
to 2 September of the Year 1739
May his blood be
avenged.⁵⁹

VII. Imanuel de Aron Pereyra, 21 July 1738

אל נקמות יי אל נקמות היפייע⁶⁰

O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs.
O God, to whom vengeance belongs,
shine forth!

S^A

DO BEMAVENTURADO
E YNCURTADO MANCEBO
YMANUEL DE ARON PEREYRA
QUE FOY MATADO PELOS
NEGROS ALEVANTADOS
NA FLOR DE SUA YDADE
EM: 4, DE AB. AN^O 5498
QUE CORRESPONDE
A 21 DE JULHO 1738

Grave
of the fortunate
and complete young man
Emanuel, son of Aron Pereyra,
who was killed by the
uprising Negroes
in the flower of his age
on the 4th of Av the year 5498
which corresponds
to the 21st of July 1738
May his soul be bound up in the bundle of
life.⁶¹

הנצבה

Jamaica

VIII. Samuel de Lucena, 3 February 1680

The bilingual Hebrew-Portuguese epitaph of Samuel de Lucena says that he was killed by his enemy (הנהרג ביד צרו). It is reasonable to assume that the murderer was a non-Jewish person, since in Portuguese he is called "a barbarian" (*cruel barbaro*).⁶²

מצבה

Tombstone

קבורת איש הם וישר שנת בקש בשייבה

The burial of an honest and righteous
person who was called

של מעלה שמואל די לוסינה הנהרג.

ביד צרואיב יום ג לחדש אדר ראשון
שנת התם אל נקמות יי ינקום נקמתו⁶³

תנצבה

S^A

Do manso Virtuozo e Benigno
SAMUEL de LUCENA que por
maõ do cruel Barbaro homecida
foy derramado seu inocente
sangue em 3 de adar Rison
Anno 544o sua Alma Goza
da Gloria.

to the Heavenly Tribunal.
Samuel de Lucena was killed
by vicious murderers on 3 Adar Rishon
in the year of the innocent. The Lord
of vengeance shall revenge his death.
May his soul be bound in the bundle of
life.⁶⁴

Tomb
of the gentle, virtuous and kindly
Samuel de Lucena,
whose innocent blood, at the
hand of a cruel and barbaric
murderer, was spilled on
Sunday, the 3rd of Adar Rishon, 5440.
May his soul enjoy Glory.⁶⁵

Karnobat (Bulgaria)⁶⁶

In the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878, in which many Jews fought and died, the ferocious Circassian auxiliary troops, the Muslim Bashi-bazuks⁶⁷ and their Bulgarian accomplices, terrorized the countryside, torching villages, robbing and plundering the town of Karnobat, inflicting all manner of outrages upon the Jews who were murdered or expelled in atrocious circumstances.⁶⁸ Of the 577 tombstones of the old Jewish cemetery of Karnobat, today almost totally destroyed and shamefully neglected, ten bear Hebrew inscriptions that report of the murder of travelers who have fallen victim to rioters or into the hands of murderous gangs.⁶⁹ According to Zvi Keren, half of these incidents occurred towards the end of the eighteenth century, four in the nineteenth century and one at the beginning of the twentieth century. The relatively small number of violent incidents that resulted in death (10) and the limited number of grave-stones (577) cannot serve as a reliable criterion for determining whether these were the only “murder incidents” experienced by the community over hundreds of years.⁷⁰

IX. Ya'aqov Bekhar Barukh Ashkenazi, 5532/1772–1773

אם כבוד לך ביום קונם
הריגתך לנקום מחכות
נקמתך אזי אניה לך למצוא
מקום גן עדנך ה"ה הנבו
ומעולה כה"ר יעקב בכ"ר
ברוך אשכנזי נ"ע מתושבי
Barukh Ashkenazi, May he repose in Eden,
Resident
of Silistra, Killed in the year
5532.⁷²

X. Ya'aqov Hasson, 4 September 1788

אם נגזר לך מיום קדם
נקם למצוא גן עדנתך היקר
הריגתך מהר לנקום
וחשוב כה"ר יעקב האסון
Hasson
May he repose in Eden. His bones were
buried on Sunday, 2 Elul 5548.⁷³

XI. Aharon Nisim son of Avraham, 16 August 1882

אהה מה זה בשדה למצוא מהרת
פגע בך המשחית ואך אותך מכת מות
את כוס דם חמתך התרעלה באבי שפכת
בצל שדי יחסי מציו פני עליון עין לא ראית
היא מ"ק
Alas, why did you hasten to meet your
death in the field
The destroyer smote you and inflicted
the death blow
The poisonous, enraged cup of your
blood [Isaiah 51:22] was ruptured early
Your eyes did not behold the shelter of
the protection of the Lord
And the brilliance of His countenance
[Ps 91:1f.].

הגבון כ' אהרון נסים ב' אברהם נ"ע נפ' יום
 Here lies the wise and honorable
 Aharon Nisim son of Avraham. He
 rests in Eden, Died 1 Elul 5642.

רחמימ ש' אל נקמות ינקם מגוי אכזר לפ"ק
 The God of vengeance will take
 revenge on the cruel gentile.⁷⁴

XII. Mordechai de Eliah Angel, 12 August 1904

מצבת קבורת ילד
 This is the grave of the sweet and
 pleasant Child

נחמד ונעים מרדכי נ"ע
 Mordechai, who rests in Eden

בן אליה אנג'ל הי"ד⁷⁵
 Son of Eliah Angel, May the Lord
 avenge his blood

הנפט' בקצור שנים ר"ח
 Died at an early age,

רחמימ שנת תרס"ד
 1 Elul 5664.⁷⁶

On the Edition of the Texts

The twelve epitaphs edited here were taken from scholarly editions; they were designated as such, provided with annotations and more recent scholarly insights, and only occasionally emendated, and then without any further commentary. Eight Sephardic inscriptions belong to a corpus of Sephardic epitaphs from Hamburg, Amsterdam, Glückstadt, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey and the Caribbean. I am currently preparing that corpus for publication; it deals with thematic motifs, rhetorical formulae, and other elements. Three Ashkenazic epitaphs from Hamburg and Venice and one Jewish inscription from Ancient Greece (Rheneia) were selected to show that the motif of crime and punishment (rather rare) was employed on gravestones down through the centuries – although, as it appears, more in the Sephardic than the Ashkenazic context, and more frequently in the Early Modern Era than in the Late Middle Ages.

Notes

- 1 A cemetery's spatial aspects – the gravestones lying next to and behind one another, the rows and fields – what binds the gravestones in situ and constitutes the cemetery as an ensemble of tombstones, can also yield important information.
- 2 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, New York 1971. See also Avriel Bar-Levav, *Jewish Attitudes towards Death. A Society between Time, Space and Texts*, in: Stefan C. Reif / Andreas Lehnardt / Avriel Bar-Levav (eds.), *Death in Jewish Life*, Berlin 2014, 3–15, here 15.
- 3 As Michela Andreatta has shown in her inspiring article on the Jewish epitaph as literary genre, it was the rabbis and leading scholars who wrote collections of sepulchral inscriptions either for themselves, or as commissioned by others. Epitaphs, both true and fictitious, were worthy of publication as poetry. See Michela Andreatta, *L'epitaffio como genere letterario*, in: A. Mortari / C. Bonora Previdi (eds.), *Il giardino degli ebrei. Cimiteri ebraici del Mantovano*, Florence 2008, 9–23. See also J. A. Brombacher, *Chofne Zetim. Handen vol Olijven. De poezie van Selomoh d'Oliveyra, rabbijn en leraar van de Portugese Natie in de 17e eeuw te Amsterdam*, PhD diss., Universiteit Leiden, Leiden 1991; eadem, *Poetry on Gravestones. Poetry by the Seventeenth-Century Portuguese Rabbi Solomon de Oliveyra*, in: Jozeph Michman (ed.), *Dutch Jewish History*, vol. 2, Jerusalem 1985, 153–165; Rafael Arnold, *Spracharkaden. Die Sprache der sephardischen Juden in Italien im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Heidelberg 2006; Michael Studemund-Halévy, *Moses de Gideon Abudiente and his epitaphical Diwan* (forthcoming).
- 4 David Malkiel, *Stones Speak. Hebrew Tombstones from Padua, 1529–1862*, Jerusalem 2014, 1.
- 5 See the most useful and comprehensive bibliography of Falk Wiesemann, *Sepulcra Judaica. Jewish Cemeteries, Death, Burial and Mourning from the Period of Hellenism to the Present. A Bibliography*, Essen 2005.
- 6 On cemeteries as a source for cultural and historical research, see Michael Studemund-Halévy, *Sea is History, Sea is Witness. The Creation of a Prosopographical Database for the Sephardi Atlantic*, in: Yosef Kaplan (ed.), *Religious Changes and Cultural Transformations in the Early Modern Western Sephardi Communities*, Leiden 2019, 487–511.
- 7 Why one was called a martyr and the other not, requires further consideration. In the Early Modern period the term “martyr” was used for those who were murdered or killed in various disasters such as fires and plagues. See Susan L. Einbinder, *After the Black Death. Plague and Commemoration among Iberian Jews*, Philadelphia 2018; eadem, *Beautiful Death. Jewish Poetry and Martyrdom in Medieval France*, Princeton 2002.
- 8 Murders by gentiles is a large rubric in the tombstones of the Jews of Medieval Würzburg. See Avraham (Rami) Reiner, *Discoveries from the Jewish Cemetery in Würzburg [Hebrew]*, in: *Zemanim* 95 (2006), 52–57, here 56: “Struck by an evil non-Jew with a dagger and died;” “Struck while alone in his shop [...] by a non-Jew.” See also Malkiel, *Stones Speak*, 341. It is characteristic that some authors of “bloody epitaphs” found it necessary to emphasize the fact that these Jews were victims of Jewish murderers.
- 9 The Goldstein-Goren Center in Tel Aviv is constructing an online database of Jewish cemeteries in Turkey based on data collected by Minna Rozen over the course of many years of research. Her collection includes over 100,000 photos of 60,000 gravestones from all over Turkey, dating from the sixteenth through twentieth centuries.
- 10 The epigraphical and iconographical Database JEWISH ATLANTIC WORLD, directed by Laura A. Leibman, presents more than 3,600 gravestones, <https://rdc.reed.edu/c/jewishatl/home/browse>. See also Amalia S. Levi, *Linked Sephardim. A Prosopography of the Sephardic Community of the Island of Barbados, West Indies* (unpublished manuscript).

- 11 See, for example, Mauro Perani, *The Corpus Epitaphiorum Hebraicorum Italiae (CEHI). A Project to Publish a Complete Corpus of the Epitaphs Preserved in Italian Jewish Cemeteries of the Sixteenth-Nineteenth Centuries*, in: Stefan C. Reif / Andreas Lehnardt / Avriel Bar-Levav (eds.), *Death in Jewish Life*, Berlin 2014, 241–288.
- 12 EPIDAT, the Database of Jewish Epigraphy presents the inventory, documentation and editions of epigraphical collections. Currently available online are 179 digital editions with 32,172 epitaphs (63,429 image files). See EPIDAT – Datenbank zur jüdischen Grabsteinepigraphik. Inventarisierung und Dokumentation historischer jüdischer Friedhöfe, in: Eckhard Bolenz et al. (eds.), *Wenn das Erbe in die Wolken kommt. Digitalisierung und kulturelles Erbe*, Essen 2015, 161–168, <http://www.steinheim-institut.de/cgi-bin/epidat>. SEFARDAT, the Database of Sephardic Epigraphy (currently under construction), presents the inventory and documentation of epigraphical collections (Hamburg-Altona, Amsterdam, Caribbean, USA): www.juedischer-friedhof-altona.de. See also the database A NAÇÃO. PROSOPOGRAPHY OF THE PORTUGUESE JEWISH NATION, 1500–1800, <https://nacao.weebly.com/about.html> (under construction).
- 13 See Frowald G. Hüttenmeister, *Abkürzungsverzeichnis hebräischer Grabinschriften (AHebG)*, Tübingen ²2010.
- 14 On the dialogue between the deceased and the passer-by as a well-known motif in Hebrew-Spanish and post-exile Sephardic literature in the Western and Eastern Sephardic diaspora, see Michael Studemund-Halévy, “Wanderer der Du hierher kommst, lobe ihre Erinnerung.” *Der Dialog mit dem Verstorbenen in sefardischen Grabinschriften* (forthcoming). See also Carsten L. Wilke, *Dialogue of the Dead. Talking Epitaphs by Sephardi and Ashkenazi Rabbis of Hamburg*, in: *Zutot* 5, 1 (2008), 61–74.
- 15 The term *gozer* (decree) usually signifies an edict of a harsh nature, and not desirable to man.
- 16 See, for example, Johan H. M. Strubbe, *Curses against violation of the grave in Jewish epitaphs of Asia Minor*, in: Jan W. van Henten / Pieter W. van der Horst (eds.), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy*, Leiden 1994, 70–128.
- 17 Moses de Gideon Abudiente (1610–1688), rabbi, poet and linguist from Hamburg, authored some polyglot poetry and funeral inscriptions.
- 18 See, for example, Kenneth Brown, *Spanish, Portuguese, and Neo-Latin Poetry Written and/or Published by Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Sephardim from Hamburg and Frankfurt*, in: *Sefarad* 59, 1 (1999), 3–42; 60, 2 (2000), 227–253; 61, 1 (2001), 3–56; Brombacher, *Poetry on Gravestones*, 153–165; Michael Studemund-Halévy, *La mort de Sara et la source de Miriam. Interprétation d’une épitaphe du cimetière Juif de Hambourg*, in: *Materia Giudaica* 10, 2 (2005), 353–363.
- 19 For the various curses in antiquity, see Wolfgang Speyer, *Fluch*, in: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 7 (1969), 1160–1288.
- 20 Gen 14:18; Num 24:16; Ps 81:6.
- 21 The shape of the stone, iconography and epigraphy are all adaptations to the Hellenistic surroundings. On the hands as a prayer gesture, see Franz Cumont, *Il sole vindice dei delitti ed il simbolo delle mani alzate*, in: *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia, Serie III: Memorie* I/1 (1923), 65–80, Plate IV.
- 22 It reminds one strongly of Lev 23:29, which is about fasting on the Day of Atonement, a high holiday evidently celebrated by the Jewish community on pre-Christian Delos. See Pieter W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs*, Kampen 1991, 149; idem, *Saxa judaica loquuntur. Lessons from Early Jewish Inscriptions*, Leiden 2015; Pieter W. van der Horst / Judith H. Newman, *Early Jewish Prayers in Greek*, Berlin 2008, 137f.
- 23 See Gen 4:10; Job 4:3; Enoch 22:6f.
- 24 Translation taken from Margret Williams, *The Jews Among the Greeks and Romans. A Diaspora Sourcebook*, Baltimore 1998, 60–61. See also Adolf Deissmann, *Die Rachegebete von Rheneia*, in: idem, *Licht vom Osten*, Tübingen ¹1924, 351–362; M. T. Couilloud, *Les monuments funéraires de Rhénée*, Paris 1974. More gravestone poems mentioning a murder can be found in Werner Peek, *Griechische Grabgedichte. Griechisch und Deutsch*, Berlin 1960.
- 25 This well-documented and thoroughly studied cemetery is the oldest Jewish burial place in Hamburg-Altona and one of the most prominent Sephardic cemeteries in the world, currently being considered for recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. See Michael Studemund-Halévy, *Der lange Weg zum Weltkulturerbe. Der Portugiesenfriedhof an der Königstrasse*, in: Hans-Jörg Czech et al. (eds.), *350 Jahre Altona. Von der Verleihung der Stadtrechte bis zur Neuen Mitte (1664–2014)*, Dresden 2015, 84–95. See also Michael Studemund-Halévy / Gaby Zürn, *Zerstört die Erinnerung nicht. Der Jüdische Friedhof Königstrasse, Hamburg* ³2010 [2002].
- 26 Michael Studemund-Halévy, *Biographisches Lexikon der Hamburger Sefarden*, Hamburg 2000, 400f.
- 27 Some Ergases arrived in Amsterdam from Hamburg over the course of the seventeenth century: Abraham Ergas, member of the pious society *Yeshu’ot Meshiho* of Amsterdam, signed in 1666 a letter to hail *Sabtay Zvi* as Messiah. See Leo Fuks / Rena G. Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew and Judaic Manuscripts in Amsterdam Public Collections*, vol. 2, Leiden 1975, 189 (HS. EH 47 A 11). On the Ergas family, see Zeki Ergas, *The Formation of “Portuguese Nations” on the Atlantic Seaboard. From Hamburg to Amsterdam to London. The Ergas Family Case Study* (unpublished manuscript, 2005); idem, *A Visit to Hamburg in Search of the Historical Ergases*, 15 May 2002, in: *Maajan* 65, 4 (2002), 2100–2103; Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers. The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period*, New Haven 2012, 26–34; Studemund-Halévy, *Biographisches Lexikon*, 400f.
- 28 See the marriage contract of Jacob b. Abraham Ergas, born 1628 in Hamburg, and Deborah, daughter of Isaac Cabeção [קביסאן] alias Fernão Nunes, Amsterdam, 1651, in: Fuks / Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew and Judaic Manuscripts in Amsterdam Public Collections*, 201 (HS. EH Pl. A-6).
- 29 Ergas’ blood cries out for justice and retribution, see Gen 4:10; Job 4:3; Enoch 22:6f. The allegory of the “blood crying out for justice” is from the biblical Cain and Abel narrative. The Hebrew Bible solicits that God is not only aware of the murder but can actually hear the blood crying out. See A. J. Swoboda, *Blood Cries Out. Pentecostals, Ecology, and the Groans of Creation*, Eugene, OR, 2014, x–xxi.
- 30 Translation: Marian and Ramon Sarraga, *Some Episodes of Sefardic History as Reflected in Epitaphs of the Jewish Cemetery in Altona*, in: Michael Studemund-Halévy (ed.), *Die Sefarden in Hamburg. Zur Geschichte einer Minderheit*, vol. 2, Hamburg 1997, 661–719, here 668–669. See also Studemund-Halévy, *Biographisches Lexikon*, 400f.
- 31 “A voz do sangue [do teu irmão] clama a mim desde a terra [Gen 4:10f.]”
- 32 Translation: Marian and Ramon Sarraga, *Some Episodes*, 668–669. See also Studemund-Halévy, *Biographisches Lexikon*, 400f.
- 33 For a photo of the tombstone see Eduard Duckesz, *Glasplatten © CAHJP Jerusalem, Glasplatten: HMB/2452, Inv 2326, Digitalisat: CDB/5–7*; Eduard Duckesz, *Chachme AHW*, Hamburg 1908, 2, no. 7.
- 34 The translation is mine.
- 35 Samuel ben Meir Heckscher, *Samuel ben Meir Heckschers Notizen hinter חמץ חמץ*, in *Besitze von Rabb. Dr. Sg. Auerbach in Halberstadt*, in: David Kaufmann (ed.), *Zikhroynes mores Glikl Hamel, 1645–1719, Frankfurt am Main 1896, 394–400*; Glikl, *Zikhronot*, 1691–1719, ed. Chava Turnianski, Jerusalem 2006, 426f.; Johann Jacob Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, vol. 4, part 2, Frankfurt am Main 1718, 255. See also Bluma Goldstein, *Enforced Marginality. Jewish Narratives on Abandoned Wives*, Berkeley 2007, 18.

- 36 Fraytagische Kurant, 26 September 1687: "Hamburg, 20 September. Finally, the Jew-murderer got his legitimate verdict, that he will be broken on the wheel alive." Fraytagische Kurant, 10 October 1687: "Hamburg, 4 October. After the Jew-murderer was broken on the wheel alive, recently, the maid who helped him with the murder was also whipped and branded. But in Hamburg in the New Town (Neustadt) some boys and sailors ransacked two Jewish houses and beat many other Jews and caused great mischief and things might have turned out badly, but the mounted guards intervened and dispersed the mob," quoted from Hilde Pach, "In Hamburg a High German Jew was Murdered," in: Yosef Kaplan (ed.), *The Dutch Intersection. The Jews and the Netherlands in Modern History*, Leiden 2013, 213–223, here 221f.
- 37 On abandoned wives (*agunot*) see Goldstein, *Enforced Marginality*.
- 38 Nathanja Hüttenmeister, *Form und Freiheit. Inschriftentypen am Beispiel der Verwandtschaft der Kauffrau Glückel und einiger außergewöhnlicher Todesfälle*, in: Michael Brocke (ed.), *Verborgene Pracht. Der jüdische Friedhof Hamburg-Altona, aschkenasische Grabmale*, Dresden 2008, 213–251, here 231. See also Max Grunwald, *Hamburgs deutsche Juden bis zur Auflösung der Dreigemeinden*, 1811, Hamburg 1904, 186–188.
- 39 Glückel of Hameln, *The Life of Glückel of Hameln, 1646–1724*, trans. and ed. Beth-Zion Abrahams, Philadelphia 2010, 135. "As Turniansky has observed, Glikl tends to borrow existing stories and to assimilate them into the framework of her memoirs in such a way as to make them her own." (Iris Idelson-Shein, *Difference of a Different Kind. Jewish Constructions of Race during the Long Eighteenth Century*, Pennsylvania 2014, 18); Marcus Moseley, *Being For Myself Alone. Origins of Jewish Autobiography*, Stanford 2006, 164–165 and 170.
- 40 Max Grunwald, *Hamburgs deutsche Juden bis zur Auflösung der Dreigemeinden*, 1811, Hamburg 1904, 186–188; J. H. Spies, *Neue Criminalgeschichten voller Abentheuer und Wunder und doch strenge der Wahrheit gemäß*, Hamburg 1801–1804, vol. 1, 153, see also Edward Fram / Verena Kasper-Marienberg, *Jewish Martyrdom without Persecution. The Murder of Gumpert May*, Frankfurt am Main, 1781, in: *AJS Review* 39 (2015), 267–301.
- 41 Hermann Leberecht Strack, *The Jew and Human Sacrifice [Human Blood and Jewish Ritual]. An Historical and Sociological Inquiry*, New York 1909, 100–102.
- 42 The two women involved in the murder were broken on the wheel, their heads impaled, their remaining torsos buried under the gallows. The judgment was announced on Wednesday and carried out on 23 Tishri 5544 / 19 October 1783, see Hüttenmeister, *Form und Freiheit*, 231.
- 43 Grunwald, *Hamburgs deutsche Juden*, 187.
- 44 A comparison with Abner, the commander-in-chief of King Saul, who was assassinated after the King's death.
- 45 Allusion to the four methods of capital punishment for biblical sins or crimes described in the *Mishneh Torah* (Sanhedrin 45a, 52a and 52b): stoning (*seqilah*), burning (*serefah*), beheading (*hereg*) and strangulation (*heneq*).
- 46 The translation is mine.
- 47 See Simon Bernstein, *Luhot Avanim*, part II, *Hebrew Union College* 10 (1935), 483–552, nos. 19, 24, 52, 70, 83.
- 48 Don Harrán, Salamone Rossi, *Jewish Musician in Late Renaissance Mantua*, Oxford 2003, 215. In his introduction to Salamone de Rossi's book *Ha-shirim asher li-selomoh*, Venice 1623, Leon da Modena, who prepared the book for publication, sadly related that since the murder of his son Zevulun he no longer listened to "the voice of male or female singers" and eschewed music.
- 49 On the epitaph, see Bernstein, *Luhot*, part II, 37, no. 52. About the life of Zevulun da Modena, see also Mark R. Cohen, *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi. Leon Modena's "Life of Judah"*, Princeton 1988, 60, 101, 115, 117, 168 and 211.
- 50 The Italian rabbi Leon da Modena had a keen interest in music, both as practiced in and outside the synagogue. See de Rossi, *Ha-shirim*, foreword, fol. 3^r; Harrán, Salamone Rossi, 211; Katelijne Schiltz, *A Companion to Music in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, Leiden et al. 2018.
- 51 "The Jews enjoyed light and gladness, happiness and honor [...] there was gladness and joy among the Jews." Chanting this verse, Jews could envision a longed-for future.
- 52 Bernstein, *Luhot*, 489, no. 83. Jewish money, Jewish hostility towards Christianity, kidnapping of infant children of rich Jewish bankers for ransom, seem to have been the motives and the circumstances for killing or violence towards a Jew. See Anna Esposito, *Violent Conflicts and Murder Involving Jews, in Renaissance Italy*, in: Trevor Dean / K. J. P. Lowe (eds.), *Murder in Renaissance Italy*, Cambridge 2017, 211–227.
- 53 השם ינקום דמו
- 54 נפשה בגן תנוח
- 55 Hranzin Zorzotto and Clerle seem to be one and the same person.
- 56 The translation is mine. See Aldo Luzzatto, *La Comunità ebraica di Venezia e il suo antico cimiterio*, 2 vols, Milano 2000, vol. 1, 503–504 (Archivio Ottolenghi). See also Bernstein, *Luhot*, part II, 483–552, nos. 19, 24, 70, 83.
- 57 Wieke Vink, *Creole Jews. Negotiating community in colonial Suriname*, Leiden 2010, 154f.; eadem, *On Burial, Boundaries and the Creolisation of the Surinamese Jewish Community*, in: David Cesarani / Tony Kushner / Milton Shain (eds.), *Place and Displacement in Jewish History and Memory*, London 2009, 71–87, here 74.
- 58 "The Lord of vengeance shall revenge his death." [Ps 94:1–2].
- 59 Translation: Aviva Ben-Ur / Rachel Frankel, *Remnant Stones. The Jewish Cemeteries of Suriname*, Cincinnati 2009, 237, no. 348 (Jodensavanne Cemetery). See also Vink, *On Burial*, 74.
- 60 Ps 94:1–2.
- 61 Translation: Ben-Ur / Frankel, *Remnant Stones*, 230, no. 325 (Jodensavanne Cemetery).
- 62 Michael Nosonovsky, *New Findings at the Old Jewish Cemetery of Hunt's Bay, Jamaica. Epitaphs as a Historical and Anthropological Source*, in: Artem M. Fedorchuka (ed.), *Studia Anthropologica. Collection of Articles for the Jubilee of Prof. Michail A. Chlenova*, Moscow 2010, 118f.
- 63 Ps 94:1–2.
- 64 Translation: Marilyn Delevante, *The Knell of Parting Day. A History of the Jews of Port Royal and the Hunt's Bay Cemetery*, Kingston, 2008, 94, no. 24. See also Richard D. Barnett and Philip Wright, *The Jews of Jamaica. Tombstone Inscriptions 1663–1880*, Jerusalem 1997, 7, no. 24.
- 65 Translation: Delevante, *The Knell*, 94, no. 24.
- 66 About the history of the Jews of Karnobat see Zvi Keren, *Murder and Violence in Karnobat*, in: idem, *The Jews of Karnobat*, Sofia 2014, 166–170.
- 67 The *bashi-bazo(u)ks askeri* ("leaderless," "unattached," irregular troops) were refugees from the Caucasus, adventurers, armed (sometimes being cavalry) and supported by the Turks but not paid directly by them; they were mercenaries, rewarded by what plunder they could obtain from the spoils of war. See Vicki Tamir, *Bulgaria and her Jews. The History of a Dubious Symbiosis*, New York 1979, 86–91.
- 68 A Jewish community was first established in Karnobat in the sixteenth century. There are no Jews living in the area today (also known as Karnabat). See Salomon A. Rosanes, *History of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire [Hebrew]*, 6 vols., Sofia 1930–1945; Hayyim Keshales, *History of the Jews in Bulgaria [Hebrew]*, Tel Aviv 1971, vol. 1, 116, 142, 177, 191, 202, 311, 418, 422 and 434.
- 69 See Michael Studemund-Halévy, *Sintid esta endetcha que quema el corasson. A Judeo-Spanish Epic Poem in Rhyme and Meter, Lamenting the Brutality of Invading Russians*

- Toward the Jews in Bulgaria, in: *Miscellanea de Estudios Árabes e Hebraicos*, Sección Hebreo 63 (2014), 111–129.
- 70 Keren, *The Jews of Karnobat*, 169.
- 71 According to Philip Dimitrov, in 1880 the Jews in liberated Silistra numbered 322 persons, 318 of them were Sephardim and four (!) Ashkenazim. See Philip Dimitrov, *Information About the Relations Between Bulgarians and Jews in Silistra*, in: *Godishnik/Annual XVIII* (1983), 143–145. See also Tudor Mateescu, *Evreii din oraşul Silistra în timpul stapînirii otomane*, in: *Studia et Acta Historiae Iudaeorum Romaniae* 3 (1998), 64.
- 72 Translation: Keren, *The Jews of Karnobat*, 166f.
- 73 Translation: Keren, *The Jews of Karnobat*, 167.
- 74 Translation: Keren, *The Jews of Karnobat*, 168f.
- 75 השם ינקום דמו
- 76 Translation: Keren, *The Jews of Karnobat*, 169f.

Katja Martin
(Potsdam)

„At one time I spoke and wrote against cremation“
Sefardische Perspektiven zum Reformprojekt Feuerbestattung

Es blieben nur einige Monate bis zum Tod des sefardischen Rabbiners Sabato Morais, als dieser seinen Schwiegersohn, Emanuel Cohen, in Kenntnis über seine Beerdigungswünsche setzte:

You did not give me any “pain” by approaching that subject. Life has never been to me a delightful gift from my parents, and that for reasons which it were idle and foolish to relate. At one time I spoke and wrote against cremation. In later years, my mind underwent decided change. Still, as I have already stated to you when in Philadelphia, the fear of shocking the Jewish community made me reconsider the determination of being cremated.¹

Der aus Livorno stammende Morais war Mitbegründer des sefardischen theologischen Seminars des Maimonides College in New York City, an dem er während des sechsjährigen Bestehens den Lehrstuhl für Bibel und Bibelliteratur innehatte.² Am 11. November 1897 starb Morais, einer der wichtigsten Vertreter amerikanisch-jüdischer Orthodoxie, im Alter von 74 Jahren.³ Zur Beerdigung des Rabbiners erschienen zahlreiche Menschen, darunter viele seiner Schüler.⁴ Zeit seines Lebens hatte sich Morais gegen die Feuerbestattung ausgesprochen, über die er verschiedene Predigten verfasst hatte.⁵ Nun gegen Ende seines Lebens zog er sie dennoch für sich selbst in Betracht. Was war geschehen?

Die Debatte um eine moderne Feuerbestattung begann in den 1850er Jahren zunächst in Intellektuellenkreisen Mitteleuropas. Der Mediziner Friedrich Küchenmeister bezeichnete die Wahl der Feuerbestattung als Ausdruck eines „Gefühls der Gebildeten“.⁶ Der Sprachforscher Jacob Grimm stellte fest, es sei „ein

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