Jewish Popular Culture
in the Research Perspective of European Ethnology
Christoph Daxelmüller


The analysis of Jewish popular culture has to include the methodological and sociological background of an institutionalized Jewish ethnology whose foundation 1898 in Hamburg reacted to a deep crisis of Jewish identity in Western Europe. On the other side it must be stated that "Volkskunde" as a national and nationalist science never regarded the Jews as part of the national culture. The destruction of European Jewish culture by the nationalsocialistic terror makes it today still more difficult to reconstruct Jewish life manners and conditions before the holocaust. Many modern studies on this subject are content with the description of surface phenomena and present a lot of misinterpretations because they take no notice of Jewish sources. But the historiography of Jewish culture demands the discussion of Jewish religious and cultural identity and its arrangement with non- and anti-Jewish life conditions in order to obtain a holographic view of popular culture. It will demonstrate cultural processes and symbiotic structures and lead to a more precise observation of changes, the structure of acceptance and isolation and its background in individual, collective and religious consciousness.

Last, but not least, the recognition of the Jews as part of the historical culture shows the intellectual and economic importance of a minority in creating popular culture which on its side cannot be defined by neglecting one of its most active factors.

Prof. Dr. Christoph Daxelmüller, Institut für Volkskunde, Universität Freiburg, Maximilianstraße 15, D-7800 Freiburg i. Br.

One of the absurdities of post-World-War ethnological research consists in the fact that, in spite of sporadic but hopeful starts during the last years and decades as made by Utz Jeggle (1969), Karin Sommer (1982), Alfred Höck (1979) or by Ina-Maria Greverus in a short chapter on Jewish identity (1978: 240–242) the German "Volkskunde" has not been able to establish a continuous research tradition of the history of Jewish popular life. Obviously the discussion about pre-Holocaust Jewish folk culture in Western as well as in Eastern Europe seems to depend on accidental interests and conditions.

Compared with this ethnological abstinence the activities of other disciplines like history (Bernd Martin 1981; Peter Aufgebauer 1984), social history (Monika Richarz 1976–1982; Alwin Müller 1984; Reinhard Rürup 1975), economic history (Stefi Jersch-Wenzel 1978) or history of art and architecture (Harold Hammer-Schenk 1981; Hannelore Künzl 1984) are remarkable. Beside the famous publication of rabbi Herman Pollack (1971) only the study of Ulrich Gerhardt (1980) who did his work as collector beside his job as doctor, anatomist and zoologist at the University of Halle informs about otherwise neglected items in this field. Moreover, these two publications make the ethnologist confront himself with the inadequacy of his own hermeneutics. But recognizing that the analysis of popular culture has neglected to comprise the cultural influence of the Jewish minority one also must state a certain discontent with the scientific results of the disciplines just quoted. They mostly present material written, delivered and discussed by non-Jewish authors, not the Jewish sources.
themselves. Therefore, many unsolved problems exist to which neither the European Ethnology nor other disciplines paid attention, e.g. the history of the attitudes of Jewish life, the conditions of Jewish economic activities and their influence on economics in general, on popular material culture in special, the reconstruction of the daily life and of forms of intercourse between the Jews and the Christian society, the quality of informations reaching in their contents from fearing the exotic until accepting the Jew in his individuality and, last but not least, the Jew as active part of cultural processes and changes which came into being only as a result of co-existence of Jews and non-Jews.

European Ethnology and Jewish Culture

In 1912, “Indenfor murene” (Within the Walls) written by the Jewish-Danish author Henri Nathansen (1868–1944) had its first performance in Copenhagen. Because of its actuality it is wellknown and popular in Denmark until today. Illustrating one of the main problems of Jewish existence in the Galut (Diaspora), namely the retreat to the own social group and to the family, the separation of religious identity from social life, the intactness within the family and the confrontation with prejudice and discrimination by the non-Jewish society, “Indenfor murene” became a common phrase in Denmark in connection with Jewish life. “Indenfor murene. Jødisk liv i Danmark” (1984) is the title of a publication presented on the occasion of the 300 years jubilee of the Jewish community in Danmark, “Indenfor murene” has been the motto of the Copenhagen exhibition about Jewish culture presented in 1984.

But “Indenfor murene” was a special exhibition. From the point of view of both ethnology and public consciousness of the non-Jewish majority this phrase should be changed to “udenfor murene” (outside the walls). Like many other national museums in Europe the Danish National Museum in Copenhagen does not document the history and culture of the Jews in Denmark in a permanent presenta-
The “Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde”

Until today the “Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde” is nearly unknown within the history of folkloristics. This society never belonged to the “Verband der Vereine für Volkskunde” (Meier, Schmitt 1954). Only short references to its foundation and activities can be found in relevant periodicals like “Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde” or “Mitteilungen der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde”. From the beginning the non-Jewish ethnologists took no notice of it. Therefore it does not wonder that the “Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde” fell into oblivion already before 1933 (Daxelmüller 1983, 1986; Noy 1980, 1982).

In 1895, Dr. Max (Meir) Grunwald, born 10. October 1871 in Hindenburg (Zabrze, Upper Silesia), was appointed as rabbi to the new Dammtor synagogue in Hamburg. Before that he studied at the Jewish Theological Seminary (Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar Fraenckelscher Stiftung) in Breslau and wrote his thesis about the Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza. He was interested in history as well as in cultural history, history of art, genealogy, philology and folkloristics. Only a few months after his official installation as rabbi he convinced the philanthrope and president of the Henry-Jones-Lodge of the B’nai B’rith, Gustav Tuch, of his plan to establish a society for Jewish folkloristics. Already in 1896 he sent out a questionnaire consisting of a programmatic and a practical part. Two years later the “Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde” was founded officially in Hamburg. From 1898 until 1929 it published the “Mitteilungen (der Gesellschaft) für jüdische Volkskunde”, from 1923 to 1925 the “Jahrbuch für jüdische Volkskunde”. The last volumes of this periodical which today is a bibliophile rarity appeared in “Menorah”. Because of its content and its long and regular publication it is correct to characterize it as the probably most important German-Jewish journal beside the “Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums”.

In 1903 Grunwald left Hamburg in order to assume the vacant position as rabbi at the “Großer Leopoldstädter Gemeindetempel” in Vienna, the main synagogue in a district called “Mazzesinsel” because of the many Eastern-European Jews living there. He continued as editor of the “Mitteilungen” and acted as president in honour of the society. Although the last volume of the journal appeared in 1929, Jewish folkloristics in Western Europe definitively ended in 1938 when Grunwald in nearly the last moment succeeded in emigrating from Vienna to Palestine where his son, the convinced zionist Dr. Kurt Grunwald, born 1901 in Hamburg, lived. Max Grunwald died in 1953, 24. January, in Jerusalem.

It is not possible here to appreciate all the activities and merits of Grunwald, e.g. the foundation of a museum for Jewish ethnology in Hamburg or his collecting and publishing work. Nevertheless, some fundamental remarks should not be omitted. The already long emancipated “Wissenschaft des Judentums” (Wilhelm 1967) and Jewish folkloristics as a part of it reacted to a deep crisis of identity within the Western European Jewry at the end of the 19th century. At that time the Jews trusted in their new status as German, French, English or Danish citizens of Mosaic faith having equal rights as the non-Jews. But they also had to recognize that it was a deceptive hope. The assimilation had caused them to abandon their historical habits as established by the tradition without getting any compensation for it. Further, the new Anti-Semitism unexpected for many assimilated Jews made them feel again as a disliked minority. A part of them reacted by returning to Jewishness as they should do it fifty years later under the national-socialistic terror acts. Regardless of their different political and religious interests and convictions the Jews began to look for a common definition of their own identity, if it would be religion, culture, folk or nation. Thus it is not surprising that the first members of the “Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde” represent all parties and groups of the contemporary Western Jewry: orthodox and liberal-assimilated Jews, German-nationals and Zionists, religious and irreligious people, rabbis, theologians and bankers, lawyers and scientists. But
non-Jewish people, except a few ones like Richard Andree, did not join the “Gesellschaft”. All these different, sometimes completely controversial interests were connected by the nearly magical force of the term “Volk” represented in “Volkskunde” (yiddish: folksshafn).

Moreover, the most prominent Jews from all over Europe met each other in this society, e.g. Markus Brann, historian and editor of the “Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums” (Breslau), Zadoc Cahn, chief rabbi (Paris), David Kaufmann, theologian, philologist, historian and polyhistor (Budapest), David Simonsen, chief rabbi, judaist and bibliophile (Copenhagen), Moses Gaster, famous folklorist and Chacham (rabbbi) of the Spanish-Portuguese Jewish Community (London) or Max Isidor Bodenheimer, lawyer and leader of the German Zionist movement (Köl.). From the beginning Jewish folkloristics as an institution was international or, in other words, European ethnology.

But it was in Grunwald’s opinion a political science too. He was acquainted with the conditions and appearances of daily life not only by reading books but above all by his everyday duties as rabbi. He did not consider folkloristic research as an abstract end in itself, for him it was not a task of collecting dead material only for scientific purpose but rather a practical didactic work. In the questionnaire he mentioned the consequences when a historical culture is going to loose its traditions and roots: “Nichts steigert den Wert eines Gutes höher, als die Gefahr, es zu verlieren. Eine solche Gefahr droht nun heute einem jeden Volkstum in demselben Maasse (sic!), als seine Eigenart der alles ausgleichenden modernen Bildung zum Opfer fällt [...]. Dies gilt also von Stämmen, welche alle noch eine geschlossene Volksgemeinschaft darstellen, mehr oder minder auch politische und literarische Selbständigkeit aufweisen. Um wie viel ernster muss sich also erst ein Stamm an solche Aufgabe gemahnt fühlen,
wenn er, ohne jene Selbstandigkeit zu besitzen, auch die literarische mehr und mehr einbüsst, wenn diese Aufgabe also für ihn geradezu zu einem Gebot der Selbsterhaltung wird! Und wenn anderswo moderne Bildung und Grossstadluft (sic!) das Volkstum gefährden, wo wüten sie dann verheerender als im Judentum? Glaubensbrüder! So oft Israel der Väter Erbe bedroht sah, sammelte es sorgfältig und übersichtlich seine Schätze, den Seinen den Stolz am Besitze zu stärken und die Treue in seiner Verteidigung (sic!) gegen den äusseren Feind. Unser gesamtes Schrifttum giebt davon beredte Kunde. Hier gilt es nun, nicht sowohl denkend zu schätzen und zu schutzen, was unsere Väter lehrten, als liebend zu erfassen und zu erhalten, was sie lebten. Wie unser Schrifttum, so soll auch unser Volkstum uns ein Bollwerk werden nach aussen und nach innen!" (Fragebogen 1896).

Consequently folkloristics had to make its contribution to re-integrate an old minhag (custom) or to re-introduce a traditional wedding song and the performance of a purim play into Jewish family life. This intention may be considered as "Jewish folklorism", but, actually, it manifested not only a romantic nostalgia. More than any other discipline of the Wissenschaft des Judentums the Jewish ethnology, at that time, tried to contribute to a new Jewish self-confidence which finally resulted in the foundation of a Jewish nation. 

This coincidence of practical and scientific work forces us to interpret the history of an institutionalized Jewish ethnology not only by demonstrating its contents, activities and achievements, but, moreover, by realizing that it reflected concrete individual and social conditions. Investigating Jewish folk culture had its origin in the individual mentality of the founding members too (Grunwald 1953).

We must analyse the pre- and early history of this "Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde" in order to understand the radical interruption made in 1933 when the organized destruction of Jewish life in Western and Eastern Europe began. For a lot of the material collected by Jewish folklorists before the holocaust has been demolished. In many cases the original objects and writings like the pinkas, statutes of the Jewish communities and other sources are lost and only descriptive interpretations in contemporary publications on Jewish material are still extant. They reflect a concrete attitude which frequently differs from modern research interests and methods.

Contemporary History and Archaeology

In 1980, by visiting the well-preserved synagogue of Urspringen, Southern Germany, I found the remains of Hebrew and Jewish-German prayer-books in the Aron Ha-kodesh (thora shrine) (Ophir 1972: 398–399). Some pages showed traces of burning. Five years later, in 1985, I discovered Hebrew books thrown together to a heap in the loft of the synagogue of Ermreuth, Southern Germany (Ophir 1972: 202–203). In both cases the Reichskristallnacht 1938 seemed to be near or, the past identical with the present. I felt like a historian looking for a disappeared culture irrevocably destroyed in its traditional form. But, at the same time, I had a feeling of touching the proximity of vanished life in an almost physical way. This experience of a new time dimension where past and present coincide is probably the main problem of modern research on Jewish culture.

For it is nearly impossible to reconstruct the history of Jewish everyday life by the means of material objects only, while the people who used them do not exist anymore. In many villages of Northern Bavaria, for example, the old synagogues built in the 18th and 19th century are still preserved, but nobody prays there anymore. All over Germany Jewish cemeteries can be found, but nobody visits the graves of his ancestors. Nobody breaks a glass at the chuppah stone after the wedding ceremony. Looking for these dead remainings one recognizes the senselessness of the destruction of a flourishing culture and of human life in the cities and villages. Sorrow is joined with anger at the boundlessness of stupidity. Therefore the investigation of Jewish culture cannot be separated from the researcher's individual perplexity that just the half of a century has been enough to forget the important role of the Jews.
in cultural and social life. The ethnologist has to work as archaeologist feeling that only a few years made present change to history.

These remains which today enable us to reconstruct Jewish life again contain another problem of interpretation. Where only the objects, but not the people dealing with them are at disposal, the description of cultural processes runs the risk to analyse the objects in a museological and not in an anthropological way. Besides, another exclusion is made. For in many cases these objects can be defined as “Jewish” only if they were used for religious and ritual purposes. For example, the mesusa, or its traces on the door frame, signifies the house of a religious Jewish family. But it can not be identified as a Jewish home without this mesusa. Thus historical Jewish culture is going to be reduced exclusively to the group of observant Jews while the assimilated, non-religious, middle-class Jews living in the cities since the second half of the 19th century can-

“Frauenempore” in the synagogue of Urspringen, South Germany, built 1803. The building is now used as store-room. Photograph 1980.
Cultures in Contact

The difficulties of describing Jewish life and culture as a historical phenomenon can partly be solved by using a research pattern which contents geographical, temporal, cultural and mental aspects. The concrete Jewish living space is formed by the Galut (Diaspora), the distancy of Zion. It mainly contained the European countries with the Ashkenasic and Sephardic Jews. While Spain, Italy or Germany with their many Jewish communities, especially Baden-Württemberg (Hundsnurscher/Taddey 1968; Sauer 1966), Hassia (e.g. Arnsberg 1971; Höck 1979), the southern part of

Traces of a mezusa at the door frame of the former Israelitische Lehrerbildungs-Anstalt in Würzburg, founded in 1864 by rabbi Seligmann Bär Bamberger (1807–1878).
Niedersachsen (Asaria 1979; Röhrbein/Busch/Wilhelm 1973) and Northern Bavaria (Ophir/Wiesemann 1979), which I prefer to call the Middle-European Galicia, could look back on a tradition starting in the Middle Ages, Jews came relatively late to the Northern European countries. As late as 1662 Christian IV, king of Denmark, invited Sefardic Jews to settle in Glückstadt (Balslev 1932; Borchsenius 1969; Katz 1981). The Galut, in particular, was Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the culture of the shteidl which later on simply became the symbol of Jewishness in western consciousness by the Chassidism.

In a schematic way the mental and cultural aspects can be subdivided into three overlapping fields concerning the conditions and expressions of Jewish life and identity:

1) the inner field of Jewish life as represented in religious and cultural autonomy;
2) the contact field between this inner field and the outer field where religious behaviours because of Jewish traditional laws and non-Jewish legal and social influence had to manifest itself in and for the non-Jewish public. Here non-Jews had been able to get insight into the inner field of Jewish identity in several ways. They mostly reacted to this confrontation by incapacity to transfer strange meanings to their own way of thinking and to translate unknown words into their own cultural concepts ("cultural speechlessness"), further, by the fear of the exotic, by misinterpretation and prejudices;
3) the outer field of Jewish public life as characterized by the active or passive participation in non-Jewish culture (e.g. fashion, material culture, non-Jewish societies) or by the social and economic life.

Obviously, the coherence of these three fields not only shows patterns of life and life conditions, but, at the same time, also processes of information and, at last, the reduction of information values. Jacob Katz, the famous Jewish historian and expert in the history of emancipation and assimilation, gave a more explicit formulation: "Es hätte mehr bedeutet, wenn sich der Landpfarrer und der jüdische Dorf-
This must be explained by some examples. The religious life took place within the closed sphere of the private house and the synagogue. The Sabbath ritual lasting from Erev Shabbat (Friday evening) until Hawdolo (Saturday evening) was celebrated in and together with the family. But from the point of view of the outer world Sabbath was manifested by total abstinence of working. While the religious Jews went to the synagogue on Sabbath as well as on other holidays the non-Jews had to work on Saturday. Out of this behavioural contrast they got only a very limited impression of Jewish holiday customs prescribed by traditional laws, for example as "Schabbesgoj" helping the Jews by opening letters or by lighting the candles. Such mostly superficial observations created prejudices like the topos of the Jew's aversion to work.

The religious life took place within the closed sphere of the private house and the synagogue. The Sabbath ritual lasting from Erev Shabbat (Friday evening) until Hawdolo (Saturday evening) was celebrated in and together with the family. But from the point of view of the outer world Sabbath was manifested by total abstinence of working. While the religious Jews went to the synagogue on Sabbath as well as on other holidays the non-Jews had to work on Saturday. Out of this behavioural contrast they got only a very limited impression of Jewish holiday customs prescribed by traditional laws, for example as "Schabbesgoj" helping the Jews by opening letters or by lighting the candles. Such mostly superficial observations created prejudices like the topos of the Jew's aversion to work.

Similar keyhole situations can be found at the occasion of birth or circumcision (B'rith Mila). In the 19th century the laws concerning public health were intensified: midwives or physicians not always being Jews had to participate in the circumcision ceremony. Further, Jewish prescriptions themselves implied the performance of several religious ceremonies in public, as for example the wedding rite under the chuppa, the erecting of tabernacles in the open air at Sukkot (Feast of the Tabernacles) and, naturally, the burial. Finally, the restriction of Jewish business life and the exclusion from nearly all handicraft technologies until the 19th century made the non-Jews penetrate into this inner field of Jewish religious life for instance by sculpturing tombstones or by producing household articles like pewter or earthenware for the daily use and for holidays.

But it is not justified to define the inner field in its segregation and, at the same time, its connection with the outer field only by referring to symbiotic structures within the society. The interference between the inner and the outer field caused even by the necessity of co-operation in non-autonomous areas becomes an important source: for developments, the types and qualities of acceptance and, with it, for historical mentalities on the one side, for the bounds of religious identity and for the importance of religious autarky on the other side. This autarky refers, above all, to food (Kashrut), clothes and to household utensils that had to be separated into "milchig" and "fleischig".

To live between religious isolation and public demi-integration which was enabled by business life has always been dangerous because of the anti-Jewish attitudes which were present in everyday life. The schema (cf. p. 106-07) can also be read as a graph of processual courses: it figures from the right to the left the reduction of information quality. Namely in the contact field where Jewish autarky in inner-Jewish legal and religious affairs has been confronted with conditions and claims set by the non-Jewish authority prejudices and mockeries originated from lacking insight and "cultural speechlessness". The "little" anti-Semitism arising from this contact and expressing itself in psychical violations always preconditioned the "big" anti-Semitism which was directed against Jewish life and health. It got its power and arguments from the everyday anti-Judaism that in spite of the irreality of its argumentation belonged to the injury of the Jewish everyday life using such violating pictures like the Jew as usurer, cheating cattle-dealer, stinking garlic eater, sexual psychopath or as a rider on a pig (Shachar 1974), above all as poisoning wells, profaning sacred hosts and as ritual murderer who needs the blood of a Christian in order to prepare his mazzot for Passch (Hayn 1906).

Characteristically the "Volkskunde" mainly has been interested in such items of anti-Jewish folklore as expressed in popular sayings, folksongs, stories and, last but not least, in places of pilgrimage which refer to a supposed "Jewish crime". But the reality of Jewish life and life conditions has been beyond ethnological consideration.

The discussion of the Jew as an imaginative antitype, not as an acting and suffering cultural being within historical and temporal processes partly resulted from the "cultural speechlessness". It prevented from analysing Jewish culture in an objective way and caused
### Inner Field of Jewish Life and Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious isolation: Jews as an exclusively religiously defined group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jewish culture in inner and outer view</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality of Jewish life in the Galut between religious and secular life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance of life</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious identity and Jewish autonomy conditioned by religious and traditional rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation and description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviours and customs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feast, holiday, religious events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed field/home, synagogue/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. ex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukkot (Feast of the Tabernacles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosch Haschana (New Year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth, B’rith Mila (circumcision)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/marriage/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/Pessach/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/sickness, death/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material and technological culture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nourishment as limited by Jewish traditional laws (Kashrut)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selfproduced food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schächten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazzot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish material culture conditioned by religious prescriptions (f. ex. clothes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual/technological autarky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time dimensions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious time cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kind and quality of research sources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources: Hebrew, Jewish-German, Yiddish, German etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/Jews in contact with non-Jews on a cultural level/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formation and increase of anti-Jewish prejudices, reduction of information value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Jewish religious life as manifested in public | non-Jewish participation in and observation of Jewish religious life |
| secular life, not at all or partly restricted by religious rules; business life and economic situation |

| Examples | interpretation |
| limited participation in non-religious social events |

| Performance in public | non-Jewish involvement |
| abstinence of work | “schabbesguf” |
| Sukka (tabernacle) | /visual perception/ |
| Schofar | /acoustic perception/ |
| hygiene laws | non-Jewish physician, midwife |
| /chuppa/ used in wedding rite | participation in burial, production of tombstones |

| “schächten” under supervision | /non-Jewish butcher/ |
| adaption of non-Jewish products for ritual use (separation between “milchig” and “fleischig”) | production of vessels, earthenware etc. for ritual use |
| participation in non-Jewish material culture and modes (f. ex. clothes, household utensils etc.) |

| /calendar books and tables/ | secular time cycle |
| sources: German, Latin etc. |
to see only the strange and exotic in Jewish behaviours. It may be true that Richard Andree's "Volkskunde der Juden" (1881) was well-meant in his time. But it is full of contemporary racial theories and therefore illustrates the misunderstanding of a foreign culture. Such misinterpretations made by non-Jewish authors can be found until today and depend on the available sources and on the way of interpreting them. Many modern publications on the subject rely on non-Jewish material written by the non-Jewish bureaucracy and subdued to the "interpretatio christiana" that did not understand Jewish identity at all. One of the main difficulties of describing and reconstructing Jewish life consists in the impossibility to translate unknown meanings both in the philological and in the cultural way. Anybody who tries to write the history of popular Jewish culture exclusively with the aid of Christian descriptive material will come to similarly insane paraphrases like the clergyman Andreas Wurfel. He attempted to explain the form of the Magen David for his non-Jewish readers: "Das Kahls Siegel oder einem Bierzeichen nicht ungleich" (1754: 71). The same helplessness in transforming meanings can be observed in the field research, when non-Jewish people are asked to depict Jewish behaviours as they have observed it before holocaust. The results of their reports are both extremely wrong and ridiculous. Thus one can learn that the Jews made the "sign of the cross" upon the bread at Sukkot. It would be very easy to enlarge this list of false interpretations that make the Jew appear as a crypto-Catholic or as a monster. Non-Jewish sources and the ethnological interview with non-Jews have at best only limited and in many cases no importance. Consequently the discussion of Jewish life's history in the Galut has to use the Hebrew, Jewish-German and Yiddish material too, e.g. the Pinkas, the synagogue and community accounts, the Jewish theological literature and, finally, the most important sources of the minhagim books and rabbinical decisions. However, the demand for Hebrew and Yiddish knowledge seems to be contradictory in the present research situation in Western Europe. The destruction of the Wissenschaft des Judentums and of the institutionalized Jewish ethno­logy in Western and Eastern Europe interrupted the European Jewish research traditions and facilities. Jewish scientists like historians or folklorists studying Jewish popular culture in Europe are missing while, on the other hand, the claim for the integration of an ethno­logy of the Jews into the research fields of modern European ethnology is condemned to be wrecked because of the absence of non-Jewish specialists. Accordingly there is only one but not an easy way to reduce these difficulties, i.e. to leave the outer field of observing Jewish customs and behaviours in its surface utterances and to try to enter the inner field of Jewish religious identity. Already in the 18th century the Lutheran pastor Johann Christoph Georg Bodenschatz (1717–1797) demonstrated how it can be done. He belonged to the Judenmission movement that contempted to converse the Jews to Christianity by convincing them of the supposed mistakes of their own explanation of the Old Testament. But contrary to his contemporians Bodenschatz was not content with following only the traditional anti-Jewish arguments. After intensive studies on Jewish thought and exegesis he published the "Aufrichtig Teutsch Redender Hebräer", the still most objective work on Jewish life in the 18th century. An illustration in this book shows Bodenschatz entering the synagogue and listening to the explications of an old wise Jew, just as he described it in the foreword: "Denn ich habe überall aus den besten Quellen geschöpfet, und alles, was ich geschrieben, aus denen bey den Juden selbst geglaubten Büchern genommen, darunter die vornehmsten und wichtigsten sind: Der Talmud, die Mischna, die Arba Thurim, nämlich, der Thur Orach Chajim, Jore deah, Eben haeser, und Choschen hamischpath, des Maimonidis Jad chasaca, oder allsogenannte Mischneh thora, der Abarbanel und andere mehr". Further he discussed many exegetic problems with the rabbis: "So habe ich auch keine Bedencken getragen, alle Materien mit einem wirklichen Juden auf das sorgfältigste durchzulesen, um das Werk desto richtiger und vollständiger zu liefern" (1756: foreword, unnumbered).
Sabbath. Etching from Johann Christoph Georg Bodenschatz, Aufrichtig Teutsch Redender Hebräer, 1756. The illustration shows a Lutheran priest, probably Bodenschatz himself, listening to the explications of an old Jew.
Times in Contact

In order to recognize the conditions and the individuality of Jewish life in the Western world it is important to realize the phenomenon of living in two life cycles and calendary times. The Jewish-biblical calendar is according to the vegetation cycle and the climate conditions of the Near-Eastern mediterranean region. It was nonsensical for Western and Northern Europe to celebrate the Chamischo Oser Beschetwat, the “New Year of the Trees” in winter, mostly in February, or praying for rain at Sukkot in autumn, where rainfall is vitally necessary for the vegetation in Palestine, but a common climatic phenomenon in Europe. At Sukkot, the “Kol mevasser” is said, and because of the beginning of rain storms in Denmark at this season, the Danish Jews created a traditional feast meal: stuffed cabbage, or in Danish-German: käl med wasser (Melchior/Lexner 1982: 84). They reacted with humour to these double year cycles, the religious and the secular year. But the discrepancy between Jewish and Christian calendary rules took its effects in everyday social behaviour patterns too. One had, for example, to send New Years greetings first at Rosch Haschana, the Jewish New Year, to the Jewish friends, then at the end of the Christian year to the non-Jewish colleagues.

Also the division of the Jewish week differed from the non-Jewish one. Sabbath probably presents the most striking instance to explain these differences. It started on Friday evening (Erev Shabbat) according to the changing time of sunset and it finished on Saturday evening with the Hawdolo ceremony. Following Jewish law Sunday could be working-day again whereas it was a strict holiday for the Christians. The development of the discriminating prescriptions regulating Jewish business life demonstrates the Jewish merchants’ attempts to use the Sunday for business affairs, but also the numerous prohibitions and restrictions in regard to Jewish business activities on holidays. Where, in such manner, the two calendary cycles did not correspond, also other problems arose. For example, there was the long discussed question whether the Jewish children had to visit the school at Sabbath or not (e.g. Barthels 1972: 415, num. 3095). Not till the 19th century a more liberal praxis was introduced. It led to compromises both as regards the problem of attendance at school and the business affairs. As to be seen in Jewish autobiographies like the “Erinnerungen” of Eduard Silbermann the Jews opened their stores on Sundays for a few hours after the mass: “Da die Einwohnerschaft des Dorfes und der Umgebung vorwiegend aus Bauern und Kleingütern bestand, die an Werktagen wenig Zeit zur Besorgung ihrer Einkäufe hatten, so konzentrierte sich das Ladengeschäft auf die Sonntage und christlichen Feiertagen. An den Sabbaten und jüdischen Feiertagen hielt mein Vater das Geschäft streng geschlossen” (Richarz I, 1976: 160).

Certainly it was possible for the observant Jews sometimes to avoid the strict Sabbath rules. But theoretically, when the week and working rhythm of both groups is compared and it is supposed that because of their own laws and, of the Christian holiday perceptions the Jews in most cases could not work neither on Saturday nor on Sunday, that, further, because of the concrete Jewish business life situation as traders and door-to-door salesmen they had to travel in faraway regions and outlets and therefore to plan their return journey very early, probably on Thursday evening or Friday morning in order to reach their home and the beginning of Sabbath in time, thus, possibly, the Friday as working-day had to be omitted too, four workdays of the Jews compared to six of the non-Jews can be figured out. The number of Jewish working days, beyond it, can be reduced too by a lot of Catholic and Protestantic holidays.

Joseph Rohrer realized this situation and its consequences: “Nicht bloß in Lemberg, sondern in ganz Galizien ist der Jude gewöhnlich früh, wo gerade die Kräfte des Menschen am meisten vermögen weil der Körper ausgeruht hat, zu zwey auch drey Stunden mit Ablezen von Gebethformeln zu Hause oder in der Schule beschäftigt. Man sieht in unsern Galizischen Syriagogen von der funften bis zur achten Stunde des Morgens im Sommer alles mit Judenmännern, denn die Weber bleiben zum Glücke noch bey Hause, angefüllt; also gerade

From the Jewish point of view the famous orientalist Ignaz Goldziher wrote upon his experience of living in two time cycles. In September 1916 he noted in his diary: “Zu der schüsslichen Situation, in die ich durch dies Dekanat versetzt bin, gesellen sich noch beunruhigende Gewissensskrupel, die mir unruhige fieberhafte Nächte verursachen: Verhältnis zu den jüdischen Feiertagen, Teilnahme an den gnostisch-neuplatonischen, antimonotheistischen Kirchenfeierlichkeiten der Herrschenden, an denen die Dekane in Galakostüm offiziell teilnehmen müssen. Mein Gewissen gleicht (ich glaube doch nicht, dass diese Ausgleichung ein Sophisma sei) diesen Skrupeln durch die Erwägung aus, dass die passive Enthaltung von allen diesen Dingen von den Feinden dauernd als Beweis dafür angeführt werden könnte, dass innerhalb des Judentums die Betätigung als vollwertige Staatsfunktionäre unmöglich sei” (Goldziher/Scheiber 1978: 303).

It seems clear that many prejudices grew from this situation, where religious life and public attitudes contradict each other. The literary topos of the lazy Jew who avoids hard work was literarized by the Enlightenment of the 18th century with its interest in calling on the Jews to productive, that is useful work for the political economy. But the reality of the religious and the secular year is opposed to the picture of the workshy Jew. It shows rather the origin of the Jewish pauperism in the Diaspora.

The Jewish calendary books demonstrate how difficult and urgent it has been to combine the internal religious and the external secular time. It is not easy to define “popular literature” as the folkloristics try to do it. But this non-narrative instructing literature as represented by the calendary books and schedules was popular beyond all. Such manuscripts and prints like the “Sefer ha-evronot” finished in 1649 by Juda ben Samuel Reutlingen Meila
from Fulda contained the names of market-places, dates and tables converting the Jewish into the Christian calendar. Jewish life needed such aids, and realizing these processes helps us to approach the inner field of Jewish mentality.

Culture in Hologramm. A Programmatic Survey

Including Jewish culture into the analysis of cultural processes in general makes it possible to interpret culture in three dimensions. Thus to be a Jew within a non-Jewish society involves influences from outside and reactions to non-Jewish cultural elements. Jewish identity nearly everywhere was confronted with acculturation problems and the question of accepting non-Jewish fashions. It had to change without losing traditional values and could only survive as "Jewish", if it found the middle course between conservativism and progress, between persisting on traditional items and participation in common cultural changes. However, there were many situations in daily religious life where inner tradition and outer development seemed to contradict themselves. In course of time the Jews accepted a lot
of behaviours and customs because they had to take part in non-Jewish life. For example, the Jewish origin of the Holekreisch, the custom of giving the Jewish name to a child, is not clear at all. The problem connected with acculturation did not consist in maintaining the intellectual isolation caused by old traditional laws but in combining them with contemporary claims. For this reason the Minhagim-literature came into being. It explained the meaning of religious customs (minhag) and examined foreign developments that did not seem to agree with Jewish thought and tradition (Chill 1979). With the Minhagim-decisions Jewish theologians reacted to special cultural items of the non-Jewish society. For us the Minhagim collections concerning concrete events, fashions and customs are very important and objective sources for cultural behaviours, sensitive indicators for changes and for the Jewish mental reaction to the environment too.

In community affairs the “Tekunoth” (“preceptions”) regulated Jewish behaviours. From Fürth, for example, the “Tekunoth-Büchlein” is preserved through the translation of Andreas Würfel. It consists of rules against luxury with regard to clothes and banquets. But it also hands down relatively special problems in the discussion with the outer world, for instance the acceptance of a new fashion. Thus in Nürnberg the women began to wear a new sort of raincoat, and the Jewish women of Fürth accepted this fashion. Now the Jewish authorities did not know whether the wearing of this coat because of its weight would offend against the Sabbath rules or not. They could not solve this problem, made a picture and sent it to a famous Polish rabbi who for his part decided that it must not be worn at Sabbath (Tekunos Büchlein 1754: 156).

As in the area of material culture processes of separation and acculturation can be found in other fields too. The symbiotic structure of life becomes distinctive in customs and ways to perform a feast. There are two Jewish holidays, Purim and Chanukka, which are similar in regard to their character and date to Chris-
tian events, carnival and christmas. It can be observed that the performance of Purim as made by children obtained many features of the non-Jewish carnival without contradicting Jewish traditional rules while, differently, the substitution of the Chanukka lamp by the Christmas tree in assimilated families did not conform with Jewish traditional behaviour, but signalized the abandonment of traditions and their symbolic utterance.

There is a third field of interethnical symbiosis. It concerns, I suppose, the most important fact: both the participation of the Jews in creating popular culture and their function as mediators of informations and of cultural objects. One can define their importance with the economic terminology of import and export: Jews brought objects, often from faraway regions, to the villages, and they made them circulate as traders of new and used luxury and everyday goods (e.g. Daxelmüller 1985).

The paradigm "Jews in a non-Jewish world" demonstrates that culture does not exist as a nationalistic phenomenon, but as the
result of social interdependences of all ethnic and religious groups living in a territory. The Jews, before the Holocaust, belonged to this culture, and this culture had been their own. It is simply impossible to write the history of this culture by neglecting one of its most creative parts: the Jews both as suffering object and as acting subject.

Notes
1. This list of publications quoted here is neither representative nor complete.
5. Original edition in the Jewish National and University Library Jerusalem, estate Dr. Max Grunwald, signature 4° 1182/XX.
6. Folkloristic research activities have been done by other institutions too like the Jidishe Vissnshaftlekhe Institut (YIVO) in Wilna. Further some local Jewish ethnographic societies existed in Southeastern Europe; cf. e.g. Ignaz Goldsäher (ed. Alexander Scheiber) 1978: 133–134.
7. The literature on Eastern European Jewish history and culture is both extensive and dispersed. For an introduction to this field cf. e.g. Joshua A. Fishman (ed.): Never Say Die! A Thousand Years of Yiddish in Jewish Life and Letters. The Hague/Paris/New York 1981, further the material published in the Yivo Bieter (Wilna, later on New York).
8. Utz Jegge 1968: 11–98 divides the system of social relations into “Umwelt, inneres System, äußeres System, Interrelationen, Konflikte”.
10. For this see Christoph Daxelmüller: Jüdische Kultur in Franken (in print).

Bibliography
Balsev, Benjamin 1932: De danske jøders historie. København.
Bodenschatz, Johann Christoph Georg 1756: Auf­richtig Teutsch Redender Hebräer. Frankfurt/ Leipzig.
Grunwald, Max 1896: Sammlungen zur jüdischen Volkskunde (questionnaire). Original edition in the Jewish National and University Library Jerusalem, estate Dr. Max Grunwald 4° 1182/XX.