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“The Sincerity of their Historians”: Jacques Basnage and the Reception of Jewish History”¹

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There is no scholarly consensus concerning the evaluation of Jacques Basnage’s (1653-1723) epochal portrayal of Jewish history, even if he is universally recognized as the founder of a new Christian historiography of Judaism and as one of the first authors to attempt a comprehensive history of post-biblical Judaism.² In its definitive edition of 1716, *History of the Jews* comprised a substantial heft of nine books, printed in fifteen volumes, and included extensive accounts of Jewish theology, rituals, and practices in addition to a sweeping cultural and political history of Jewish life across the world since the time of Jesus.³ It became the standard history of Judaism, with a shelf life of over one hundred years, lasting until Isaac Markus Jost began publishing his *History of the Israelites* in 1820.⁴ In his own monumental history (1853-1870), Heinrich Graetz acknowledged Basnage’s *History of the Jews* as “an incalculable service to Judaism”⁵ that constituted a watershed for Jewish historiography: it “terminates the old epoch and inaugurates a new one,”⁶ meaning that Basnage was the first Christian scholar to engage the history of Judaism with sympathy instead of malice. Similarly, for Miriam Yardeni, a distinguished historian of French Jewry, Basnage’s magnum opus formed “the origin and inspiration of the pro-Jewish tradition in the Enlightenment.”⁷

Nonetheless, since the 1980s, several important studies have assailed the Christian biases that abound in Basnage’s landmark history, including, above all, his adherence to a Christian presumption of an eventual Jewish conversion and his utter disdain for the Talmud. Lester A. Segal, the pioneering scholar for this approach, wrote that Basnage’s history is “colored by religious polemic in which an *odium talmudicum* is one of the most prominent features,”⁸ a conclusion echoed by Michael A. Meyer, who stressed Basnage’s claims that conversion of the Jews might be advanced “by ridiculing the Talmud and other rabbinic works.”⁹ Extending this line of inquiry (and drawing attention to Basnage’s severe criticism of Catholic history), Jonathan M. Elukin argued that Basnage often portrayed rabbinic Judaism scornfully and dismissively in order to create an anti-Catholic “allegory.”¹⁰ More recently, the stakes have been raised: Basnage has been labeled a “remnant of Christian anti-Semitism,”¹¹ and his *History of the Jews* has been decried as a “new frontal attack on [Judaism].”¹² Obviously, these are important attempts to qualify or repudiate the favorable perspectives of Graetz and Yardeni.

In this essay, I would like to revisit Basnage's historiography of Judaism from the perspective of his productive reception of Jewish historians. My hope is that this approach will help us broaden our understanding of the complexity of Basnage's representation of Judaism. Another goal of this focus is to raise awareness of the historical significance of Jewish apologetic writing for fostering the evolution of more sympathetic Christian portrayals of Judaism. Indeed, a major innovation in Basnage's *History of the Jews*, certainly from a Christian perspective, was the embrace of Jewish historiography. In doing this, Basnage was transforming many Jewish works written originally for Jewish readers into authorities for Christians. Addressing his presumed Christian readership with self-conscious boldness, Basnage declared nothing less than the absolute primacy of Jewish voices in his reconstruction of Jewish history: "In composing this history, we have preferred the authors of the Jewish nation to all others."¹³ Basnage also portrayed himself as an innovator within Jewish historiography, claiming that with his presentation of Jewish history he was filling a major lacuna left by Jewish writers, delivering the missing universal history that the renowned Jewish scholar Menasseh ben Israel and the poet-historian Daniel Levi de Barrios¹⁴ had promised but never completed.¹⁵

An additional innovation was that Basnage studied the history of Judaism in part in order to compose a polemical history of Christianity: the final three books, with particular emphasis in Book 9, offer a comprehensive history—and impassioned condemnation—of Christian violence against Jews throughout the ages. As Basnage warned his readership in the general introduction ("The Plan of this History"), "Christians ought not to think it strange that we very frequently acquit the Jews of several crimes for which they are not guilty, since justice requires it."¹⁶ Although the emerging Enlightenment discourse of toleration, especially as developed by his close friend Pierre Bayle,¹⁷ was decisive for his development, there is also no reason to doubt that Basnage's consuming interest in Christian persecution of Judaism arose in the context of his own experience of religious oppression. He was an eyewitness to the end of Protestantism in France, including the violent razing of the Calvinist church he ministered in his native Rouen. After Louis XIV outlawed Protestantism with his revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, Basnage was forced into exile in the Netherlands, where he continued to serve as a prominent Calvinist minister and also published several works on the plight of his oppressed Huguenot brethren. With his extensive writings, he set out to expose a general Christian history of religious intolerance and violence, a subject for which the history of Christian-Jewish relations, alas, provided a vast source of material. His goal in analyzing this history of Christian inhumanity was not only to foster socio-political reconciliation of Christians and Jews,

but also to condemn Christian-Christian violence, especially, but not exclusively, violence perpetrated by Catholics.¹⁸ After all, many features of Louis XIV's anti-Protestant campaign suggested the history of Christian anti-Judaism. In early modern history, words such as "expulsion," "disingenuous conversion to Catholicism," "forced baptism," and "confiscation of property" immediately bring to mind images of Jewish victims. Yet these hardships, so familiar to Jewish history in Europe, were also inflicted on Christian Huguenots after 1685. As Basnage realized, the Huguenot persecution may have been cataclysmic for more people than was the 1492 expulsion of Jews from Spain. In the first edition of *History of the Jews* (1706-1707), Basnage wrote the following rhetorical question about the Spanish expulsion: "Will it not be acknowledged, that in civil society, banishment is one of the severest and most mortifying punishments? And has it not always been so? Are not the loss of property, confiscated by the sovereign, pecuniary taxes, the depriving of the means of livelihood, the ruin and starvation of a family, caused by edicts, nothing but cruel punishments in every nation of the world?"¹⁹ Such words as these, though written as a *cri de cœur* about Jewish experience, are intended to protest the suffering of the Huguenots as well. His ultimate concern for Christian-Christian legal toleration was so fundamental that in a few instances he sarcastically assailed the hypocrisy, in his mind, of some Catholic territories that tolerated Jews but persecuted Protestants.

Although he conducted no original archival research, Basnage drew upon a massive apparatus of historical publications. In addition to his magisterial command of European history, he was a profound bibliographer of Judaica and Christian-Hebrew scholarship. The sources were so central to his narrative structure and his narrative voice that he placed a hefty bibliography at the beginning of volume one as his point of departure; it runs to thirty-seven pages and includes some eighty titles by Jewish authors.²⁰ In nearly every case, Hebrew sources are cited according to Latin translations, an unintended but powerful demonstration of the cumulative impact of nearly two centuries of Christian Hebrew research,²¹ including the recently published Latin translation of the Mishnah (1698-1703), a philological labor of love by the tolerant Amsterdam scholar Willem Surenhuis.²² In the preface to the 1716 edition, Basnage acknowledged that his most important sources were sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Jewish historians, including Gedaliah ibn Ya@hya, David Gans, Solomon ibn Verga, Abraham Zacuto, Menasseh ben Israel, and Daniel Levi de Barrios.²³ In the text proper, he also frequently cited the authority of other early modern Jewish historians, such as Isaac Cardoso, Leon Modena, and Joseph Hakohen (the last acclaimed by him as "the best historian this nation has had since Josephus"²⁴), as well as the medieval historian Abraham

ibn Daud. Despite his enthusiasm for Jewish historians, Basnage expressed concern about the fact that they were of relatively “recent” vintage and were far fewer in number than their Christian counterparts.²⁵ In his determination to include as much material as possible, he extensively augmented the Jewish historians with other sources, both Christian historians and Jewish theological writing, including the Talmud, Ibn Ezra, Rashi, Maimonides, etc. For example, when describing the sources for his Book 6 (“Rites and Ceremonies of the Jews”), he explained that “we follow Leon Modena as a very sure guide, but we have taken ample and necessary additions from the Mishnah and famous authors.”²⁶ A good example of the reception of Christian historians was his use of Jesuit Juan de Mariana’s *Historiae de rebus Hispaniae* (1592/1605) to construct the framework for the history of the Spanish expulsion and inquisition.²⁷

If Basnage’s study is a synthesis of earlier works, it is also a history (re)narrated with a critical authorial voice, one that offers a running commentary on previous Jewish and Christian historical accounts and sources, often expressing skepticism and scorn for perceived deficiencies, small or large, in his forbears. It is important to stress that Basnage qualified his methodological privileging of Jewish sources with a big proviso: “when reason and love of truth have not obliged us to lay them aside.”²⁸ By test of “reason,” Basnage meant critical reflection on either the plausibility or the verifiability of Jewish accounts. His avowed “love of truth” is more complex and more problematic. On the one hand, it, too, refers to historical veracity, often to chronological accuracy, an issue that he caustically faulted in his Jewish sources: “They do not trouble their heads to reconcile their narratives with foreign historians ... They boldly make anachronisms; they record the grossest absurdities in chronologies and, without any scruple of conscience, corrupt the truth of history.”²⁹ On the other hand, “truth” also has a theological meaning. As an orthodox Calvinist minister, Basnage accepts a general framework of divine providence, specifically the survival of Judaism is God’s will, as is the ultimate conversion of Jews at the end of time.³⁰ Nonetheless, as a historian interested in exploring moral issues in human agency, he dismisses theological claims that individual events in Jewish history have divine meaning. Specifically, Jewish history does not record either divine retribution against Christians for their atrocities or divine punishment of Jews for their sins.³¹ Thus, Basnage integrates Jewish historical sources into his narrative only after resolving any uncertainties about historical accuracy and astringently scrubbing away all theological claims, in other words, after subjecting the sources to a rationalist critique. After such a critique, a Jewish source may no longer resemble a defense of Judaism as a religion but nevertheless still embodies a Jewish record of an historical event. I should also stress that in the process of expurgation Basnage

often uses caustic language. On many pages, the critical reflection is so heavy and so abrasive that sarcasm seems to be Basnage's principal rhetorical device, directed both at Jewish sources and, frequently with even more intensity, at Christian authors and historical figures.

Before we consider the ways he incorporated material from his Jewish sources, I would like to mention another striking aspect of his source criticism, namely, his skepticism toward Jewish converts to Christianity, especially to the arguments they advanced against their former faith. Writing about the convert Victor of Carben, who published two anti-Jewish tracts in the early sixteenth century (at the same time and place as the more famous convert Johannes Pfefferkorn), Basnage objects that "Converts (Proselytes) think that it is necessary for them to descend to extremes against those they have left behind, and that they have no better way to remove suspicions that are typically entertained concerning the sincerity of their conversion."³² He describes the prominent Bible exegete Nicholas of Lyra, whom Basnage wrongly but confidently labeled a convert, with similar disdain: "After his conversion, he wrote his treatise on Jesus Christ *Against the Jews*; as most of the proselytes do, who think they are obliged to prove their faith by writing against those they have abandoned."³³ More importantly, Basnage impugned missionary polemics in general, especially those written by converts and other Christians in medieval Spain. In his vehement criticism of Raymond Martini, a pioneering polemicist from the thirteenth century (labeled, also incorrectly, as possibly a convert),³⁴ Basnage asserted that Christian polemicists were wrong when they claimed that the Talmud and other Jewish theological sources provided evidence that supports Jesus's messiahship or the doctrine of the trinity: "We shall never convince the Jews ... that they believed what they never did, and that they do not oppose the doctrine of the trinity, which is the main object of their blasphemies."³⁵ In a similarly complex account of the Disputation at Tortosa (1413-1414), Basnage ridiculed the convert Geronimo de Santa Fe for attempting to use the Talmud to demonstrate that Jesus was the Messiah.³⁶

Another issue that pertains at least in part to the reception of the Talmud is the portrayal of Jewish writings against Christianity. Basnage unflinchingly documents profound theological enmity between the two faiths, but, with few exceptions, finds Jewish opposition to Christian dogma inoffensive, if wrong-headed. The accusation that Jewish enmity was a threat to Christian society, which had long been a trope among anti-Jewish agitators, had received a powerful boost during Basnage's lifetime with the 1681 publication of Johann Christoph Wagenseil's *Tela Ignea Satanae* (*Fiery Missiles of Satan*), a collection of Jewish anti-Christian texts that included the first printing ever of the scandalous biography of Jesus from the Middle Ages—the infamous *Toledot Yeshu* (*Life of*

Jesus).³⁷ Basnage took pains to summarize (with substantial quotations translated in French) and refute the work as a slanderous invective. Overall, however, while many Jewish sources oppose Christianity on theological grounds, Basnage detects only a few that suggest pathological hostility to Christians and their society. Nor do the Jewish texts warrant censorship or suppression. His apparent model in this regard was Johannes Reuchlin, the author of a famous Renaissance defense of Judaism against an attempt to confiscate and destroy all Jewish books in the Holy Roman Empire except the Hebrew Bible.³⁸ Basnage claims that Reuchlin adopted a moderate, rationalist approach in his dispassionate review of Jewish writings, concluding that there were “two sorts of books, one of which contained the doctrines, morality and rites of the Jews, and the other abounded in blasphemies against Christ.”³⁹ However, according to Basnage, Reuchlin only found two Jewish books in the latter category, one of which was the *Toledot Yeshu*. Most significantly, Basnage included relatively neutral descriptions of many Jewish apologetic works that challenged or directly attacked the validity of Christian theology. For example, Basnage analyzes another anti-Christian text that Wagenseil edited and translated into Latin: Isaac of Troki’s *@Hizruk Emunah*, the *Strengthening of Faith*. Troki’s book, written in the mid-sixteenth century, was a fierce but carefully argued refutation of Christianity—Voltaire praised it as a complete collection of problematic biblical passages.⁴⁰ Basnage himself concedes: “It must be admitted that his [Troki’s] book is one of the most dangerous ever produced against Christianity.”⁴¹ With this observation, Basnage is not advocating suppression but rather offering a scholarly tribute to the insightfulness of Troki’s analysis of New Testament inconsistencies.

One of the major changes in the 1716 edition was the addition of new perspectives from manuscripts of anti-Christian theological tracts by Jews, material so sensitive that Jews did not print them. (Basnage apparently gained access to the restricted material from his son-in-law, a certain M. de la Sarraz.⁴²) In a neutral presentation without refutation, Basnage provided careful summaries of several works, including defenses of the Talmud by Orobio de Castro, an anti-Christian tract by Rabbi Saul Levi Morteira (*Tratado de la Verdad de la Ley de Moseh*), and another tract by Abraham Israel Pizarro on the “scepter of Judah” (Genesis 49:10), a contested prophetic passage about the timing of the Messiah’s appearance.⁴³ Richard Popkin speculated that Basnage’s inclusion of this material may have exerted an influence on anti-Christian philosophers: “His neutral presentation of what would otherwise have been considered scandalous and inflammatory views at the time may have made it possible for 18th-century authors whose Christian beliefs were less than his to see the merits of some of the Jewish points, and then use them as d’Holbach did in his *Israel vengé*. Thus

Basnage may have provided a bridge between ‘objective’ presentation of Judaism and the use of Judaism by deists and atheists to combat Christianity.”⁴⁴

Moreover, the respectful treatment of Isaac of Troki is also consistent with Basnage’s criticism of the Talmud, for Troki was a prominent adherent of Karaite Judaism, a form of Judaism that rejected the Talmud and claimed to use the Bible alone as its religious authority. Not surprisingly, Karaitism became widely known among Christian scholars and played a role in early modern Christian discourse well out of proportion to its historical significance. Basnage devoted over seventy pages to Karaite history,⁴⁵ in addition to frequent scattered references, even though he acknowledged that Karaites constituted only a tiny minority of Jews. Clearly construing the Karaite position as an analogy to Protestant *sola scriptura* and rejection of the church’s traditions, he bluntly stated that Karaite theology “was better than that of the rabbinites.”⁴⁶ The great Catholic Bible scholar Richard Simon (1638-1712) criticized Basnage for this anti-Catholic position, claiming that the historian had misconstrued the Karaite theological position on extra-biblical authority.⁴⁷ In the 1716 edition, Basnage disputed Simon’s position on Karaite theology, but nonetheless also added a highly favorable account of Simon’s political support of Jews, acknowledging the Catholic scholar’s compassionate role in defending the Jewish community of Metz in 1671, in the aftermath of a blood libel accusation and a general anti-Jewish campaign.⁴⁸

Basnage also trained his critical eye on the Jewish historians he championed, as can be seen in his analyses of Solomon ibn Verga’s *Shevet Yehudah*, a major source for his history of persecutions. *Shevet Yehudah*, the *Scepter of Judah*, is a sixteenth-century compilation of medieval and early-modern persecutions of Jews, especially from Iberia.⁴⁹ It is possible that Basnage felt some affinity for Ibn Verga’s historiography for the Jewish historian was keenly interested in understanding the “natural causes” of events, even though he also retained an ideological framework of divine providence.⁵⁰ Of all the early-modern Jewish historians, he was perhaps the most inclined to perceive some fault on the Jewish side for hostilities with Christians and Christian society.⁵¹ Like Basnage, Solomon ibn Verga witnessed horrific religious persecution, most importantly, the 1506 massacre of Jewish converts in Lisbon, and he, too, spent his latter years in exile.⁵² *Shevet Yehudah* was first printed in Adrianople in 1554 and frequently thereafter, including a 1638 Amsterdam printing by Menasseh ben Israel. It was translated into several languages, including Yiddish and Spanish. Basnage, however, used a 1651 Latin translation by a Christian scholar, Georg Gentius, who was encouraged and perhaps even assisted by his Jewish teacher Menasseh ben Israel. Interestingly, the 1651 Latin version had already played a role in Christian–Jewish apologetics before Basnage mined it so

thoroughly. Gentius dedicated his translation of Ibn Verga's history of persecutions to the Senate (governing council) and the citizenry of Hamburg, urging the city to support legal toleration of their recently established Sephardic community against a fierce anti-Jewish campaign that had erupted from the local Lutheran clergy.⁵³

Despite his extensive reliance on Ibn Verga, Basnage subjected *Shevet Yebudah* to frequent tests of historical plausibility. He sometimes conjectured that Ibn Verga may have "confounded" two separate events, suggesting that a story of persecution may have been misplaced either chronologically or geographically, though it retains historical validity. Ultimately, this kind of analysis abetted his determined efforts to accommodate material from Ibn Verga in a chronological survey. It is, I think, a telling sign of his respect for Jewish sources that he accepted material from Ibn Verga as authentic even when conceding that the precise historical contexts could no longer be ascertained. With his vast knowledge of general European history, Basnage often quibbled with minor factual details in some cases. For example, he adopted Ibn Verga's portrayal of King Philip the Fair's oppression and expulsion of French Jews in the fourteenth century, but objected to some facets, such as Ibn Verga's claim that Philip died from falling into a ditch and that the king's demise was divine retribution.⁵⁴ This last adjustment aligns the account with Basnage's historiographic principle that neither persecution nor apparent retribution for persecution happens through divine agency. Sometimes Basnage's critical reflection is cautious and uncertain, as when he renarrates Ibn Verga's account of the 1263 Barcelona debate but points out that it does not agree entirely with other sources. Yet he allows Ibn Verga's portrayal of a Jewish triumph to stand, even if he expresses this with a gentle irony: "The Jews prided themselves so much because of this (i.e., the victory at Barcelona) that the pope condemned the king of Aragon for permitting it."⁵⁵ Basnage's dialog with his sources is so constant and his punctiliousness so obsessive that he castigates details even when convinced of the overall veracity of an account. For example, although a trenchant opponent of the ritual murder accusation, Basnage characterizes one passage in Ibn Verga defending Jews against the charge as being "generally childish."⁵⁶

Even if he quibbles with the details and pillories any perception of divine agency, Basnage confidently uses his Jewish sources to assemble a comprehensive history of Christian brutality for Christian readers to contemplate. He usually includes the shocking details from his Jewish sources, even when they recorded likely exaggerations, such as extremely high numbers of casualties. Adopting the voices of his Jewish sources, he openly expresses admiration for Jews who remained steadfast in their faith in death, but also compassion for those who tried to retain allegiance to

Judaism after undergoing forced conversion: “we must not exclaim against the treachery or inconstancy of the heart of man, but against the violence of the converters.”⁵⁷ A good illustration of Basnage’s admiration for Jewish martyrdom is his paraphrase of Ibn Verga’s Chapter 26, which describes in sketchy but heroic terms Ashkenazi Jews suffering martyrdom in pogroms following well-poisoning charges. In general, Ibn Verga does not represent the martyrdom of Kiddush ha-Shem as the highest ideal, showing instead, in many cases, equal appreciation for Jews retaining the observance of the faith after forced baptism.⁵⁸ Basnage, however, quotes the episode in order to express reverential awe for the courage of Jews facing cruel execution, standing firm in their sanctification of God’s name. Referencing both Ibn Verga and David Gans, he concludes: “The Jewish historians affirm that, although the misery was great, the like was never seen since the destruction of Jerusalem, not a single Jew [no one] forsook his religion. For, although the Germans rose on all sides against the sanctification of God, yet Israel did not desert his glory. The example of so general a constancy is rare, and we must believe this upon the sincerity (“bonne foi”) of the historians of the nation.”⁵⁹ As with other incidents taken from Ibn Verga, Basnage cannot fit this story firmly into a historical chronology or attach it to a specific place. He dates it, as did Ibn Verga, unconvincingly to the suspiciously round year of 1400 and, in this case, preserves the general nebulosity of the Jewish source.

As prelude to the intense history of the late-medieval persecutions, Basnage composed a seminal chapter titled “The Reasons Christians Make Severe and Ignominious Laws against the Jews.”⁶⁰ The goal, as he expressed with a certain amount of sarcasm, was to determine “whether it be reasonable to persecute the Jews.”⁶¹ In this analysis, Basnage argued that the horrific persecutions arose not out of God’s decision to punish the Jews but as a result of the vicious slanders that Christians confabulated.⁶² This focus on the baleful effects of several Christian calumnies, which he analyzes one by one, was inspired by Isaac Cardoso’s *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos* (1679), a major book that, in the words of Yosef Yerushalmi, synthesized “the entire chain of Sephardic apologetics.”⁶³ Born to a converso family, Cardoso was a highly successful physician in Spain until he fled to Venice in 1648 to return to the open practice of Judaism. Basnage draws heavily on the second part of the book, a critical analysis of the *Decima Calumnia de los Hebreos*, in which Cardoso “refutes ten accusations that Christians bring against this people, part of which we have inserted in several places.”⁶⁴ Of the ten innuendoes analyzed by Cardoso, Basnage explicitly describes and debunks seven; his discussion, by the way, even adopts references to the numbers Cardoso applied to the calumnies: calumny 3 (Jewish men menstruate),⁶⁵ 4 (Jews curse gentiles), 5 (Jews proselytize),

6 (Jews oppose Christian governments), 7 (Jews are misanthropic), and 10 (Jews commit ritual murder), as well as a more distinctive innuendo refuted by Cardoso (calumny 9): Jews desecrate sacred images.⁶⁶ He developed these arguments in two further chapters that provide a systematic overview and critique of the “severe and ignominious” ecclesiastic and civil laws enacted throughout history to persecute Jews.⁶⁷ The point of Basnage’s lengthy legal-historical analysis is to demonstrate that no form of Jewish mistreatment is justified. The past techniques of coercive proselytism, including those limited to non-violent missionary campaigns, are unwarranted forms of abuse in Basnage’s account.

The presentation of blood libel throughout *History of the Jews* well illustrates Basnage’s commitment to include Jewish voices as much as possible. First, it is important to stress that he conscientiously recorded the occurrences of blood libel throughout history since it first appeared in England in the 1140s, both to attest Christian duplicity in all the accusations and to describe the terrible suffering inflicted on individual Jewish victims and communities. Basnage also incorporated lengthy paraphrases, with direct quotations, of blood libel episodes from Ibn Verga’s *Shevet Yebudah*, even though once again he was unable to pin down the precise context for several of the vignettes.⁶⁸ His difficulty in this respect is not entirely surprising, for current research holds that all seven of the blood libel cases narrated by Ibn Verga in *Shevet Yebudah* are probably legendary, without any surviving historical corroboration, even though Basnage accepted Ibn Verga’s authority (and, of course, also included many other cases of blood libel atrocities with solid historical documentation).⁶⁹ In a paraphrase of Ibn Verga’s well known Chapter 7, a Spanish King Alfonso, identified by Basnage as Alfonso X, and a philosopher named Thomas, identified by Basnage as perhaps (but probably not) Thomas Aquinas, discuss social disturbances and threats of violence emerging from a blood libel accusation. The philosopher Thomas persuades King Alfonso that the Jews do not commit ritual murder, which, according to the story, causes the king to stop the incipient pogrom. Although Ibn Verga and Basnage stress that there is no justification for a ritual murder accusation, both nonetheless also imply the possibility that policies should be enacted to reduce social tensions between Christians and Jews. “Thomas procured for them the king’s protection,” but he also “advised the prince to make some laws against luxury and usury that would be very agreeable to the people.”⁷⁰ Basnage adopted another lengthy blood libel vignette from Ibn Verga, one that ended tragically with the massacre of Jews in two Spanish cities, Orsona and Palma. Again, this story, which is probably a legend, has only sketchy and vague details, and Basnage can only place it tentatively as “probably in this great Prince’s reign”⁷¹ (i.e., reign of Alfonso X, d. 1284).

In a lengthy passage paraphrased from Ibn Verga, the Jews are declared innocent of the accusation, but nonetheless, by implication, held partially responsible for causing dangerous levels of social tension: “The King acquitted the nation of the murder, which had not been committed. But nevertheless rebuked them for their excessive usury, the sumptuousness of their clothing, and the pomp with which these fugitive slaves walked the streets, provoking the jealousy of his subjects.”⁷² Although taken from Ibn Verga, the sentiment appears to have Basnage’s tacit agreement.

In many other cases of blood libel, however, Basnage was solely concerned with Christian responsibility for the anti-Jewish violence. This is particularly evident in Basnage’s narration of the Simon of Trent atrocities—a 1475 case that became the most infamous blood libel of all time, creating the most popular blood libel shrine for Christian pilgrims.⁷³ Basnage concisely related the great suffering resulting from the hoax—the execution of innocent victims and the expulsion of Jews from Trent—and also focused scornfully on the religious corruption, i.e., the numerous fake miracles, arising from the wildly popular cult of the fraudulent saint. In this case, Basnage also acknowledged significant Christian opposition to the fraud. His source for this was Cardoso’s extensive refutation of blood libel in *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos*, perhaps the most extensive historical refutation of blood libel published to date. Among Cardoso’s extensive evidence that Christians were aware that the innuendo was groundless was a 1475 letter by Venetian Doge Pietro Moncenigo opposing the persecution and mandating protection of Jews in Padua and elsewhere from the unrest fomented by the mendacious cult.⁷⁴ Cardoso probably uncovered the letter in the Padua city archive.⁷⁵ Although Moncenigo’s 1475 intervention ended in failure, it nonetheless reminds us that most blood libel accusations faced opposition from at least some contemporary Christians (and, of course, Christians quashed some of the accusations outright). Moreover, Cardoso’s 1679 publication of the authentic Venetian letter, as referenced emphatically by Basnage, would play an increasingly significant role in Christian discourse opposing blood libel.⁷⁶ It was reprinted in 1681 by an unknown author using the pseudonym Isaac Viva and thereafter by Wagenseil as a major piece of evidence in his 1705 refutation of blood libel.⁷⁷ Basnage and Wagenseil became important authorities in legal discourses against blood libel in Germany. Both Johann Jodocus Beck (*De Juribus Judaeorum*, 1731) and Justus Böhmer (*Dissertatio juridica de cauta judaeorum tolerantia*, 1717) quote Basnage’s rejection of blood libel: “I believe these crucifixions of young Christians have only been so many pretenses used to incense the people and the kings against the Jews.”⁷⁸ Böhmer, moreover, uses Basnage as his most important source for his favorable portrayal of legal toleration (a study that in turn was thoroughly mined by Beck for his defense of

legal toleration). In 1714, in a much more avid defense of Judaism, John Toland leaned heavily on Basnage's account, especially for his repudiation of blood libel: "The reverend Mons. Basnage ... undeniably prov'd this murder of Children to be a gross fable, invented out of perfect malice and calumny."⁷⁹

In his review of the innuendoes against Jews and the resulting history of atrocities, Basnage was able to draw political conclusions perhaps too daring for Ibn Verga and Cardoso to attempt. The cruel history of Christian persecution was not part of God's plan, even if the supersession of Judaism by Christianity, according to Basnage, and the diaspora were initiated through divine agency. His position is clear: "all those bloody and cruel acts of faith made from time to time against the Jews, where the Inquisition reigns, are nothing but acts of inhumanity and barbarity that ought never to be seen among Christians."⁸⁰ Claims by the church that harsh treatment of Jews was beneficial because it promoted recognition of the "truth" constitute the ultimate false ideology: "if the church has a mind to punish people in error, and believes it has the power to do so, let the church speak honestly and authorize, if it dares, cruelty and violence; but the church should not give the name of clemency to disgrace, pain, and misery. ... How is it that religion can alter the meaning of language? Has the church the power to transform what all nations deem a harsh and indefensible punishment into clemency? Shall we say that those thousands of Jews who were banished from Spain and who perished in famine and misery did not suffer?"⁸¹ Like virtually every Christian of his era, Basnage assigned guilt to Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus. Nonetheless, according to his moral-historical analysis, this did not justify Christian persecution, nor was punishment of Jews God's will: "The Christians maintain that they have deserved banishment and the other punishments, for their cruelty in crucifying Jesus Christ and their obstinacy against him. But more equitable people could wish they were more humanely treated."⁸²

Basnage's original 1706-1707 edition and his 1716 revision of *History of the Jews* both conclude with a largely identical coda that looks into the future of Christian-Jewish relations from a theological perspective. Basnage sets off this coda sharply from the preceding history with the introductory phrase "we have completed the History of the Jews and have seen this nation dispersed into all parts of the world."⁸³ The theme of the coda, however, is conversion of Jews, an inherently controversial topic that forms the foundation of Basnage's ambivalent portrayal of Judaism. Maintaining his critical perspective on Christian history, he launched his concluding reflections with a forceful diatribe against the misuse of political power (including the publication of inflammatory theological polemic) to coerce Jewish conversion. According to Basnage, the forgoing nine volumes

of *History of the Jews* have proven that these missionizing policies not only always failed—and will always fail—but also that they undermined the integrity of Christianity because Christian anti-Jewish action typically resulted in inhumane atrocities. Nevertheless, he included extensive passages from the conservative Calvinist theologian Pierre Jurieu in support of a new approach to conversion. Jurieu, as paraphrased by Basnage, contended that “to always be telling the Jews of a Messiah that has come and was crucified by their fathers is cruelly to upbraid them and to throw them into despair.”⁸⁴ Instead of debating the past appearance of Jesus as the Messiah, missionaries should focus on the second coming, which the Jews will simply construe as the first coming of the Messiah: “the Jews must have their share in it as we. Why then should they not be flattered with so pleasing an expectation, and so agreeable to their prejudices.”⁸⁵ Moreover, the apostle Paul represents the ideal model for Jewish conversion because he was originally a “great zealot for the Law”⁸⁶ before embracing Christ. Ultimately, according to Jurieu, as quoted by Basnage, “a time must come, which shall be the reign of the Messiah and the Jews, in which this nation shall be exalted, as has been promised, above all nations.”⁸⁷ In his own voice, Basnage proposes that Christians still should try to abet conversion through theological instruction and critical engagement with Jewish sources, including ridiculing perceived insufficiencies in the Talmud. In a final salvo, Basnage writes that “the conversion of the Jews would be easier if they had less respect for the Talmud.”⁸⁸ Basnage, however, stresses that the ultimate conversion will not result from any of these efforts by Christian governments or people but will happen solely through divine agency at the end of time. The concluding sentence of the first edition strongly qualifies the efficacy of Christian proselytism: “These are only external means and God alone knows the time when he will recall the elect nation.”⁸⁹

For the new edition of 1716, Basnage extended the conclusion in order to narrate a recent political development in Christian-Jewish relations: an attempt to normalize Jewish naturalization in Great Britain. Whether intended or not, the new valedictory words shift away from the theological discourse of the original coda and returned the discussion of the future of Judaism back to the political-historical focus of the book. After recommending that Christians should merely pray to God for the conversion of the Jews, Basnage insists, as throughout his history, that Christians must eschew political pressures, such as implementing “violent means,” “penalties,” “terror,” and “enticements,” to promote conversion since such measures are not only ineffectual but also cruel.⁹⁰ This warning leads to the final paragraphs of the new edition, Basnage’s report that the prominent philosopher John Toland (“the famous Mr. Toland”) has published *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in*

Great Britain and Ireland, a 1714 tract arguing forcefully and extensively for the legal toleration of Jews. Toland himself had drawn inspiration either from the first French edition of 1706-1707 or from the 1708 English translation of Basnage's history and, on the basis of Basnage's magisterial presentation, had included in his defense of Judaism a concise but substantial critique of Christian atrocities: "the Annals of all European nations are foully besmear'd with their blood, since Christianity got the mastery."⁹¹ In the words of one scholar, Toland's *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews* argued unequivocally "for political normalization of the political status of the Jews" and "was unprecedented both in its secularism and its specificity, and has appropriately been celebrated as an important landmark on the historical pathway to Jewish emancipation."⁹² The tract explicitly called on the English parliament to legislate an expeditious naturalization process for Jewish immigrants, insisting that Jews would become loyal citizens who would contribute to the economic and cultural prosperity of the country. By celebrating Toland's stunningly innovative proposal, Basnage concluded the definitive edition of *History of the Jews* with an aspirational vision of future progress for the political-legal status of Judaism in the Christian world, albeit without retracting his Christian understanding of salvation.

The examples we have reviewed for Basnage's reception of Jewish sources indicate that Jewish apologetic history was a critically important source for portraying the history of Christian persecution. Solomon Ibn Verga and Isaac Cardoso narrated the horrors and recorded the injustice of Christian persecution, elements that Basnage readily adopted as centerpieces of his history, even if he rejected their views that the trials of the diaspora were part of God's plan for the chosen people. After publication of the first edition, Basnage was attacked by a prominent English churchman, Professor of Divinity Robert Jenkin, for his favorable portrayal of Judaism, his "invective against Christians," and especially for his rejection of the blood libel.⁹³ In response, Basnage asserted his identity as the critically objective historian of Judaism: "I am the historian of Judaism and I do not know why I have been branded their apologist."⁹⁴ Thus Basnage formulated his dichotomous perspective as the political historian who would not bend his historiography to satisfy the forces of Christian apologetics but also as the traditional Christian unable (and unwilling) to serve as theological apologist for Judaism. This last point might remind us that there are significant limitations in any defense of Judaism written from a Christian perspective, and, yet, as we assess this pivotal historian, it is important to observe that Basnage conceptualized his work primarily as a political-cultural history and not as a theological salvation-history (*Heilsgeschichte*). After all, his critical methodology was grounded in an attempt to separate theology (or theological meaning) from

historical events and developments. Ultimately, his inclusive approach to his “sincere” Jewish sources informs his historically grounded appeal for liberalization of Jewish policies in Christian lands.

¹ This essay grew out of the Feld Memorial Lecture that I had the honor of delivering in March 2018 at the Klau Library, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (Cincinnati). I wish to thank David J. Gilner, Yoram Bitton, and Laurel S. Wolfson for their hospitality on that occasion as well as for their support during my years of research at Klau Library. I am also grateful for many valuable suggestions from Michael A. Meyer and from anonymous reviewers for *JQR*.

² Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1989), 81.

³ Jacques Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs, depuis Jesus-Christ jusqu'à present*, 9 vols. (The Hague, 1716). The citations preserve the orthography, punctuation, and capitalization of the original imprints.

⁴ Isaak Markus Jost, *Die Geschichte der Israeliten seit der Zeit der Maccabäer bis auf unsere Tage*, 10 vols. (Berlin, 1820-1847). In the absence of a comprehensive history written by a Jew, it is not altogether surprising that in the 1780s Solomon Maimon planned a Hebrew translation of Basnage for enlightened Jewish readership. Although this project never came to fruition, Basnage's history was eventually translated twice into Hebrew; see Lester A. Segal, “Jacques Basnage de Beauval's *L'Histoire des Juifs*: Christian Historiographical Perception of Jewry and Judaism on the Eve of the Enlightenment,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 54 (1983): 321 (and note 75). Moreover, it was translated into English (1708) and Dutch (1726-1727), appeared in both an abridged French edition (1710) that excised anti-Catholic perspectives and an expanded (1785) French edition that also mitigated Basnage's critiques of Jewish theology, and was substantially plagiarized by the Danish writer Ludvig Holberg (1742), a version that was translated into German as *Jüdische Geschichte* (Altona, 1747). On the expanded French edition of 1785 by Louis de Boissi, see Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York, 1968), 263-64.

⁵ Heinrich Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, 11 vols. (Leipzig, 1853-1876), 10: 315: “hat dem Judenthum einen unberechenbaren Dienst erwiesen.”

⁶ Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, 10: 315: “welches (i.e., Basnage's “Geschichtswerk”) gewissermaßen die alte Zeit abschließt und eine neue ahnen läßt.”

⁷ Miriam Yardeni, “New Concepts of Post-Commonwealth Jewish History in the Early Enlightenment: Bayle and Basnage,” *European Studies Review* 7 (1977): 246.

⁸ Segal, “Jacques Basnage de Beauval's *L'Histoire des Juifs*,” 303.

⁹ Michael A. Meyer, *Judaism within Modernity* (Detroit, 2001), 53.

¹⁰ Jonathan M. Elukin, “Jacques Basnage and the *History of the Jews*: Anti-Catholic Polemic and Historical Allegory in the Republic of Letters,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53 (1992): 603-630; quote on page 606.

¹¹ Gerald Cerny, *Theology, Politics and Letters at the Crossroads of European Civilization: Jacques Basnage and the Baylean Huguenot Refugees in the Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht, 1987), 190.

¹² Immanuel Clemens Schmidt, “Revealing the Absurdity of Jewish Hopes: From Polemical Ethnography to Basnage’s *L’Histoire des Juifs*,” in *Revealing the Secrets of the Jews: Johannes Pfefferkorn and Christian Writings about Jewish Life and Literature in Early Modern Europe*, ed. J. Adams and C. Heß (Berlin, 2017), 245-59; quote on page 259: “A new frontal attack on Jewish hopes and hence aimed at the Jews’ future.”

¹³ Jacques Basnage, *L’Histoire et la religion des Juifs depuis Jésus-Christ jusqu’à présent*, 5 vols. (Rotterdam, 1706-7), 1: preliminary folio *15^r: “En composant cette Histoire, nous avons preferé les Auteurs de cette Nation aux autres, lors que la raison et l’amour de la verité ne nous a pas contraints de les abandoner.” The translations, as here, are often grounded in the contemporary English translation of the first edition: *The History of the Jews, from Jesus Christ to the Present Time*, trans. Thomas Taylor (London, 1708). I have cited Basnage according to the second, revised edition of 1716, except, as here and a few more places, when a passage did not appear in the revision.

¹⁴ Basnage also refers to him as Miguel de Barrios.

¹⁵ Basnage, *L’Histoire et la religion des Juifs*, ed. of 1706-1707, 1: preliminary folio *15^r: “Si Menasse et Barrios avoient executé la promesse qu’ils avoient faite d’écrire cette histoire...”

¹⁶ Basnage, *L’Histoire et la religion des Juifs*, ed. of 1706-1707, 1: preliminary folio *9^r: “Le Chretien ne doit point trouver étrange que nous dechargions très-souvent les Juifs de divers crimes, dont ils ne sont point coupables, puis que la Justice le demande.”

¹⁷ See Adam Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2003), 79-99 and 220-25. Many other authors in the Dutch milieu, including Philipp van Limborch’s 1692 *Historia inquisitionis*, also informed Basnage’s perspectives.

¹⁸ For example, Basnage also includes an unapologetic condemnation of Martin Luther’s actions. See Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/3: 935: “Luther ne s’accommodoit pas de leur Théologie, et il les a souvent censurez avec cette Impétuosité de Génie qui l’emportoit hors de la Modération.”

¹⁹ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/1: 356: “Ne m’avouera-t-on pas que dans la Societé civile l’Exil est une Peine dure et mortifiante, et ne l’a-t-elle pas toujours été? La Perte des Biens que le Souverain

confisque, les Taxes pécuniaires, la Privation des moins de gagner sa Vie, la Ruïne, la Disette d'une Famille, cause par des Edits, ne sont-ils pas dans toutes les Nations du Monde autant de Peines cruelles?"

²⁰ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 1/1: il-lxxxvi.

²¹ For example, Ibn Verga's *Shevet Yehudah* has been available to the Latin-reading scholar since 1651, but is still unavailable to the English reader. On Basnage's limited Hebrew and Aramaic, see Segal, "Jacques Basnage de Beauval's *L'Histoire des Juifs*," 308.

²² On Surenhuis, see Peter van Roden, "The Amsterdam Translation of the Mishnah," in *Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben-Yehuda*, ed. W. Horbury (Edinburgh, 1999), 265: "Quite possibly Surenhuis is the most philosemitic Christian Hebraist of the seventeenth century."

²³ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 1/1: 21-23.

²⁴ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 737: "le meilleur Historien que cette Nation ait eu depuis Joseph."

²⁵ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 1/1:21: "Les Juifs ont quelques Historiens de leur Nation; mais, ils sont modernes, en petit nombre."

²⁶ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/1: 18: "Nous suivons Leon de Modène comme un Guide très sur; mais, nous avons tire de la Misna, et des Auteurs célèbres des Additions très amples et très nécessaires."

²⁷ Although Basnage admires Mariana's extensive portrayal of the long crisis of Sephardic culture in Spain, he also reproves Mariana for defending the church's cruelty to Jews; see Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 706.

²⁸ Basnage, *L'Histoire et la religion des Juifs*, ed. of 1706-1707, 1: preliminary folio *11^r: "lors que la raison et l'amour de la verité ne nous a pas contraints de les abandoner."

²⁹ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/1: 10: "ils ne se mettent point en peine de les concilier avec les Historiens étrangers. ... Les Anachronismes ne leur coutent rien. Ils digèrent des Monstres en matière de Chronologie, et ne se font point un Cas de conscience d'altérer la vérité des Faits et des Evenemens."

³⁰ On the issue of divine providence in the survival of Judaism, see Jonathan Elukin, "Post-Biblical Jewish History through Christian Eyes: Josephus and the Miracle of Jewish History in English Protestantism," in *The Jew as Legitimation*, ed. D. J. Wertheim (Cham, Switzerland, 2017), 103-115. Elukin also documents Basnage's strong influence on eighteenth and nineteenth-century English historians.

³¹ The only evidence of divine agency is the survival of Jews in so many parts of the globe, despite their crushing oppression.

³² Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/3: 916: “Les Prosélytes croient qu’il faut tomber dans l’Excès contra ceux qu’ils sont quittez, et que c’est là le grand Art pour écarter les Soupçons qu’on a souvent sur la Sincérité de leur conversion.”

³³ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 586: “Après la conversion, il écrivit son Traité de Jésus-Christ *contra les Juifs*; comme font la plupart de Prosélytes qui se croient obligez de donner un Preuve de leur Foi, en écrivant contra ceux qu’ils ont abandonnez.”

³⁴ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 492.

³⁵ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 500: “On ne convaincra jamais les Juifs, lors qu’on s’entêtera de leur persuader qu’ils ont cru ce qu’ils ne croient pas, et qu’ils ne s’opposent point au Dogme de la Trinité, qui est le principal Objet de leur Blasphêmes.”

³⁶ See Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 690-92.

³⁷ The harshest polemic against Judaism published during Basnage’s lifetime was Johann Andreas Eisenmenger, *Das entdeckte Judenthum (Judaism Revealed)*, one of the most vicious and influential anti-Semitic publications from the early modern period. The first attempt to print it was suppressed in 1700; although the second printing appeared in Berlin (with the false imprint of Königsberg) in 1711, Basnage was not familiar with the work, as far as I can tell. The circulation of the second edition remained illegal in the empire during Basnage’s lifetime. Unlike Wagenseil, Eisenmenger portrayed Jews as implacable enemies bent on the destruction of Christian society and as being guilty of all the medieval innuendoes including ritual murder.

³⁸ See David H. Price, *Johannes Reuchlin and the Campaign to Destroy Jewish Books* (Oxford, 2012).

³⁹ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/3: 925: “Reuchlin ne tomba point dans un Excès oppose à celui de ses Ennemis: il distingue deux sortes de Livres, dont les uns renfermoient les Dogmes, la Morale, les Rites des Juifs, et les autres étoient remplis de Blasphêmes contra Jésus-Christ.”

⁴⁰ Voltaire, quoted from David Deutsch, ed. and trans., Isaac of Troki, *Befestigung im Glauben* (Breslau, 1873), 6-7: “Il (i.e. Isaac of Troki) a rassemblé toutes les difficultés, que les incrédules ont prodiguées depuis ... Enfin les incrédules, les plus déterminés n’ont presque rien allegué, qui ne soit dans ce rempart de la foi de rabbin Isaac.”

⁴¹ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/3: 937: “Mais, il ne laisse pas d’être vrai que son Livre est un des plus dangereux qu’on ait produits contre le Christianisme.”

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- ⁴² See Richard H. Popkin, “Jacques Basnage’s *Histoire des Juifs* and the Bibliotheca Sarraziana,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 21 (1987): 156.
- ⁴³ Popkin, “Jacques Basnage’s *Histoire des Juifs* and the Bibliotheca Sarraziana,” 154-62.
- ⁴⁴ Popkin, “Jacques Basnage’s *Histoire des Juifs* and the Bibliotheca Sarraziana,” 161.
- ⁴⁵ See Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 2: 371-442 (on the Karaites). On the impact of Karaism among early modern Christian scholars, see Stefan Schreiner, “‘Die zweyete Secte der heutigen Juden’: Die Karäer in Johann Jacob Schudts *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten*,” *Judaica* 4 (2014): 376-98, and 5 (2015): 1-20. On the strong interest in Karaites in Basnage’s milieu, see Yosef Kaplan, “‘Karaites’ in Early Eighteenth-Century Amsterdam,” in *Sceptics, Millenarians and Jews*, ed. D. S. Katz and J. I. Israel (Leiden, 1990), 227.
- ⁴⁶ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 2/2: 427: “leur cause est meilleure que celle des Rabbanistes.
- ⁴⁷ See Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 1/1: xviii-xxvii.
- ⁴⁸ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 615-16.
- ⁴⁹ See Jeremy Cohen, *A Historian in Exile: Solomon ibn Verga, “Shevet Yebudah,” and the Jewish-Christian Encounter* (Philadelphia, 2017), for the best study of Ibn Verga.
- ⁵⁰ Cohen, *A Historian in Exile*, 5.
- ⁵¹ Cohen, *A Historian in Exile*, 5, notes Ibn Verga’s criticism of Jewish conduct as a salient feature of his book.
- ⁵² It is not known for sure where he lived in exile. Earlier scholars assumed Italy, whereas Cohen, *A Historian in Exile*, 2-3, thinks perhaps in the Hapsburg Low Countries.
- ⁵³ On the agitation in Hamburg, see Joachim Whaley, *Religious Tolerance and Social Change in Hamburg 1529-1819* (Cambridge, 1985), 73-80; on Gentius’s dedication of *Shevet Yebudah* to the Hamburg Senate, and Gentius’s hope that the work would inspire adoption of a tolerant Jewish policy, see Sina Rauschenbach, “Vernunft und Unvernunft in der jüdischen Geschichte: Ein Nachwort zur Geschichtsdeutung Salomo Ibn Vergas,” in Salomo Ibn Verga, *Schevet Jehuda: Ein Buch über das Leiden des jüdischen Volkes im Exil*, trans. Me’ir Wiener, ed. S. Rauschenbach (Berlin, 2006), 251-55.
- ⁵⁴ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 587.
- ⁵⁵ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 495: “Les Juifs s’en faisoient tant d’Honneur que le Pontife condamna le Roi d’Arragon qui l’avoit permise.”
- ⁵⁶ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 711: “toutes puérides.”

⁵⁷ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 704: “Il ne faut pas crier contre la Perfidie, ou l’Inconstance de l’Esprit humain; mais contre la Violence des Convertisseurs, qui ne laissent pas la Liberté nécessaire pour faire une véritable Conversion.”

⁵⁸ Cohen, *A Historian in Exile*, 129-33.

⁵⁹ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 682: “les Historiens Juifs assurent que malgré la Misere qui étoit si grande qu’on n’en avoit point vu de semblable depuis la Ruine de Jérusalem, personne n’abandonna sa Religion; car, quoi que les Allemans s’élevassent de toutes Parts contre la Sanctification de Dieu: cependant, Israël n’abandonna point sa Gloire. L’Exemple d’une Perséverance si générale est rare; et il faut la croire sur la bonne-Foi des Historiens de la Nation.”

⁶⁰ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/1: 347: “Raisons qui ont obligé les Chrétiens à faire de Loix dures et infamantes contre les Juifs.”

⁶¹ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/1: 348: “nous examinerons en peu de Mots si on a eu raison de persécuter les Juifs.”

⁶² See Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto* (New York, 1971), 442, on Cardoso’s view of divine punishment of Jews (which Basnage consistently rejects).

⁶³ Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, 356.

⁶⁴ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 3/3: 738: “Enfin, il (i.e., Cardoso) repousse dix Accusations que les Chrétiens font à ce Peuple, et donc nous avons inséré une Partie en divers Endroits.” As far as I can tell, Basnage does not make much use of the extensive first section of Cardoso’s book, the “excelencias” (virtues) of the Jews. Miriam Silvera, “Contribution à l’examen des sources de *L’Histoire des Juifs* de Jacques Basnage: *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos* de Ysaac Cardoso,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 25 (1991): 49-50, contends that Basnage impugned several of Cardoso’s virtues, which she tries to prove with an analysis of Basnage’s remarks on circumcision, one of Cardoso’s virtues. Basnage certainly does reject a Jewish understanding of circumcision in favor of a Christian approach, but he does not refer to Cardoso, using other Jewish sources instead (such as Leon Modena). Similarly, in a discussion of Jewish miracles as a sign of divine favor, Basnage only refers to Cardoso as part of a long list of Jewish sources. Moreover, his objections are part of his rational critique of Jewish sources investing divine meaning in their history: “The Jews console themselves for the barbarity of the Christians with a false ideology of miracles and with heaven taking an interest in their afflictions” (Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 743: “C’est ainsi que les Juifs se consolent de la Barberie des Chrétiens par une fausse Idée de Miracles, et de l’Intérêt que le Ciel prend à leurs Maux”).

⁶⁵ Cardoso's calumny 3, that Jewish men menstruation, is dealt with briefly in Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 705, where Basnage actually mocks Cardoso for taking the innuendo seriously (and also expresses disdain for the anti-Jewish agitator Vincent Ferrer for making the accusation).

⁶⁶ See, for example, Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/1: 367.

⁶⁷ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/1: 393-454.

⁶⁸ See Cohen, *A Historian in Exile*, 87-119, on the centrality of blood libel in Ibn Verga's history.

⁶⁹ See Cohen, *A Historian in Exile*, 92. *Shevet Yehudab* has two further blood libel cases, probably written by Solomon's son, Joseph ibn Verga, that do have historical grounding. *Shevet Yehudab* does not mention the best-known blood libel cases, namely, William of Norwich (1144), Simon of Trent (1475), or the Holy Child of La Guardia (1491), although Basnage includes them from other sources.

⁷⁰ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 712: "il leur attira la Protection du Roi" and "Enfin, il conseilla au Prince de donner quelques Loix contre le Luxe et l'Usure, qui plurent fort au Peuple."

⁷¹ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 3/2: 512. Gentius, Basnage's source, translates the city as "Orsona," although the Hebrew may indicate Ecija.

⁷² Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 513: "Le Roi déchargea la Nation du Meurtre qui n'avoit point été commis; mais, il ne laissa pas de leur reprocher leurs Usures excessives, la Magnificence de leurs Habits, et la Pompe avec laquelle ces *Esclaves fugitifs* marchaient dans les Rues; ce qui excitoit la Jalousie de ses Sujets." This paraphrase is based on Gentius's translation of *Shevet Yehudab: Historia Judaica. Res Judaeorum ab eversa aede Hierosolymitana, ad haec fere tempora usque, complexa* (Amsterdam, 1651), 81. "Esclaves fugitifs" is Basnage's rendering of "servos ... vagantes." See also Solomon Ibn Verga, *Shevet Yehuda* (Hebrew), ed. A. Shohat and Y. Baer (Jerusalem, 1947), 47.

⁷³ Amazingly, Basnage dates the Trent atrocity wrongly to 1276 (and even states that Sixtus IV canonized Simon two hundred years after the event).

⁷⁴ On the Venetian intervention under Pietro Mocenigo, see Wolfgang Treue, *Der Trienter Judenprozess* (Hannover, 1996), 83, 87-88, and 207-10. Ibn Verga did not mention the case of Simon of Trent.

⁷⁵ See Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, 467.

⁷⁶ Quoted in Isaac Cardoso, *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos. Por el Doctor Yshac Cardoso* (Amsterdam, 1679), 427, and Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/3: 853.

⁷⁷ Wagenseil quotes and discusses the letter in Johann Christoph Wagenseil, *Unwidersprechliche Widerlegung der entsetzlichen Unwahrheit/ daß die Juden zu ihrer Bedürfniß Christen-Blut haben müssen* (Berlin, 1705), 191-92. Wagenseil either used Cardoso or probably Isaac Viva, *Vindex sanguinis* (Amsterdam, 1681), 17 (a reprint from Cardoso) as the source for his citation.

⁷⁸ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/1: 370: “Je crains que ces Crucifixions de jeunes Chrétiens n’aient été souvent autant de Prétextes dont on s’est servi pour animer contre eux les Peuples et les Rois.” This is quoted by Justus Böhmer, *Dissertatio juridica de cauta judaeorum tolerantia* (Halle and Magdeburg, 1717), 11, and by Johann Jodocus Beck, *Tractatus de juribus judaeorum* (Nuremberg, 1731), 6.

⁷⁹ John Toland, *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1714), 27.

⁸⁰ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/1: 362: “ces Actes sanglans et cruels de Foi, qu’on fait de tems en tems contre les Juifs, dans les Lieux où l’Inquisition regne, sont autant d’Actes d’Inhumanité et Barberie, dont on ne devoit jamais voir l’Exemple chez les Chrétiens.”

⁸¹ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/1: 356: “Si l’Eglise veut punir les Errans, et qu’elle se croie en Droit de la faire, qu’elle parle sincèrement, et qu’elle autorise, si elle l’ôse, la Cruauté et la Violence; mais, qu’elle n’appelle pas la Honte, la Douleur, et la Misere une Douceur. ... Pourquoi changer de Langage dans la Religion? L’Eglise a-t-elle le Pouvoir de transformer en Douceur; ce qui est une Peine dure et insupportable chez toutes les Nations du Monde? Est-ce que ces Milliers de Juifs, bannis de l’Espagne, que la Famine et la Misere firent périr, ne souffroient point?”

⁸² Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/1: 350: “Les Chrétiens soutiennent qu’ils ont mérité l’Exil, et les autres Peines par leur Cruauté, en crucifiant Jésus-Christ, et par leur Entêtement contre lui. Mais, les autres plus équitables souhaiteroient qu’on les traitât avec plus d’Humanité.”

⁸³ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/3: 1089: “Nous avons achevé l’Histoire des Juifs, et vu cette Nation dispersée dans tous les Lieux du Monde.”

⁸⁴ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/3: 1104: “Parler toujours aux Juifs d’un Messie venu et crucifié par leurs Peres, c’est leur faire un Reproche cruel, et les jeter dans de Desespoir.”

⁸⁵ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/3: 1105: “Les Juifs doivent y avoir part comme nous; pourquoi donc ne les flatter pas d’une Espérance douce et conforme à leurs Préjugés?”

⁸⁶ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/3: 1092-93: “grand zéléteur de la loi.”

⁸⁷ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/3: 1108: “Il faut donc qu’il vienne un tems qui sera ce Regne du Messie et des Juifs, dans lequel cette Nation soit élevée, comme il lui a été promis, au dessus de toutes les Nations, il faut qu’elle régne par ses Saints, par ses Prophètes, par ses Apôtres.”

⁸⁸ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/3: 1137: “La Conversion des Juifs seroit beaucoup plus facile, s’ils avoient moins de Respect pour le Thalmud.”

⁸⁹ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/3: 1140: “Mais, au fond, ce ne sont là que des moiens externes, et Dieu seul connoît le tems auquel il rappellera *cette Nation élue*.”

⁹⁰ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/3: 1140: “Cette Réflexion engage les Chrétiens à prier Dieu pour eux, au lieu d’emploier les Moïens violens qui les oppriment, et ne les convertissent pas. Les Peines épouvantent, et ne persuadent pas. La Crainte trouble la Raison, au lieu de la convaincre, et les Récompenses séduisent le Cœur: mais, ils n’y portent ni la Lumière, ni la Connoissance nécessaire à la Conversion.”

⁹¹ Toland, *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews*, 22.

⁹² Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment*, 227.

⁹³ See Richard Jenkin, *Remarks on some books lately published* (London, 1709), 1-49, esp. 42 on blood libel. See Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 633.

⁹⁴ Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, 9/2: 635: “Je suis l’Historien des Juifs, et je ne sai pourquoi on me fait leur Apologiste.”