Introduction

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> I saw by looking in his eyes
> That they remembered everything;
> And this was how I came to know
> That he was here, still wandering.
> For though the figure and the scene
> Were never to be reconciled,
> I knew the man as I had known
> His image when I was a child.

What would it be like to meet an immortal being? In this opening stanza to Edwin Arlington Robinson's 1920 poem "The Wandering Jew," the speaker depicts an encounter with the legendary figure, said to be cursed by Jesus with a supernaturally long life (Robinson 1928, 456; see also Stanford 1978). According to legend, as Jesus bore the cross along the Via Dolorosa, he paused before a man's home and asked to rest. The man refused, heartlessly urging him to hurry to his death. Jesus turned to him and said, "I will go, but you will tarry until I return." Since that moment, the Wandering Jew has been unable to die; he must await Jesus's return at the Second Coming. Converted to Christianity by his experience, the Wandering Jew shares his story with all he meets. This legend has been circulating since at least the sixth century, and during this time the cursed man has been known by many names, including Cartaphilus, Buttadeus, Ahasver, Isaac Laquedem.[1] Two of the figure's names reference the temporal and spatial nature of his curse. His wandering homelessness is emphasized in English, French, Italian, Spanish, and other tongues (*le Juif errant*, *l'ebreo errante*, *el judío errante*). In German, he is *der ewige Jude* (the Eternal Jew), a name that underscores his paradoxical curse

of immortality (see Băleanú 1991, 27). These two ways of naming the figure—the Wandering Jew and the Eternal Jew—reveal how extremes of time and space shape the legend. The time of the Wandering Jew reaches back to the Passion and stretches forward toward the end of days. On his many journeys, the Wandering Jew has roamed from the Bering Strait to the Indian Ocean, from Armenia to Finland (Hasan-Rokem 1986a). He is always, though, tied in some way to the place where his story began, the Jerusalem of memory. And it is the Wandering Jew's memories, especially his memory of his misdeed, that transform his immortality into a curse, as Robinson shows through his image of remembering eyes.

The Wandering Jew is also himself transformed: he becomes a living witness. He is, indeed, the only living witness to the Passion. The Wandering Jew's sharing of his personal memories with those he encounters brings that past alive for them. In many of the greatest imaginings of the legend, as in Robinson's poem, an encounter with the Wandering Jew is the spark that lights a creative flame. As Robinson conveys, it is the encounter with the Wandering Jew, that moment that cannot be "reconciled," that contains imaginative power. The power of the encounter is not only something represented as happening to the imagined figures in the works we examine. It extends to the encounters between the legend and the artists themselves, as they also often represent their own engagement with this legend about memory.

In this book, we will seek out significant artistic encounters with the Wandering Jew as well as another related kind of encounter, the centuries of encounters between Christians and Jews.[2] The Wandering Jew's original treatment of Jesus mirrors negative Jewish-Christian confrontation, and this tension endures throughout the centuries of the Wandering Jew tradition. But there is another way that Jewish-Christian relations shape the Wandering Jew legend. Existing alongside, and interacting with, the well-known Christian version of the legend are Jewish narratives concerning an apocalyptic messiah who also wanders. In pathbreaking scholarship, Galit Hasan-Rokem (2016, 159) has established the Wandering Jew legend as an important Jewish-Christian "coproduction" (see also Hasan-Rokem 1999 and Hasan-Rokem 2015). Hasan-Rokem's work expands and enriches the focus on the tradition's Christian elements that has predominated scholarship since the early nineteenth century and that also guides the most well-known study of the legend, George K. Anderson's encyclopedic *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (1965).[3] Recognizing and acknowledging the "two-headed" nature of the Wandering Jew tradition reveals not only its complexity as transmitted over

time, but also the rich intersections and interchanges between Jewish and Christian traditions, especially traditions around memory (Pedaya 2013; see also Massenzio 2010).[4]

Wanderer figures from the Jewish tradition include, of course, Cain, whose cursed state influences treatments of the Wandering Jew legend from Matthew Paris's thirteenth-century *Chronica majora* through Matthew Lewis's 1796 gothic novel *The Monk*, to the modernist poetry of Uri Zvi Greenberg (1896–1981) (see Mellinkoff 1981).[5] Jewish tradition also figures Elijah the prophet as a wanderer. Harold Fisch (1980, 132) has noted connections between Elijah and the Wandering Jew but argues that while the Wandering Jew "is viewed as the bearer of ancestral records and memories," his wandering has no goal. Elijah, in contrast, wanders with messianic purpose.[6] Most interesting for us is the story of a wanderer searching for Messias Menachem, who was born on the day of the Second Temple's destruction (Hasan-Rokem 1986b, 193). This last narrative shares with the Christian Wandering Jew tradition an anchoring in the memory of a profound event. Memory of the Passion and memory of the Second Temple's destruction, or Hurban, endow the legend with emotional power (see, respectively, Kupfer 2008; Mintz 1996). Jan Assmann (1988, 12) speaks of such foundational moments as temporal "fixed points," and we will see that Jewish and Christian variations of the legend resemble each other in that both are rooted in such fixed points.[7] The varying contours of the legend of the wanderer reflect what Eviatar Zerubavel (2003, 7) calls the "social shape of the past," the way that the memories of foundational events both shape and are shaped by the communities that remember them. Robinson's verse captures this important element of the legend as well. The speaker's encounter with the Wandering Jew reveals the legend's alchemy of personal and collective memory. Throughout the legend's long existence artists have deployed this alchemy as a means to represent the interface between an individual life and the greater flow of time that all humans experience.

The Wandering Jew through the Lens of Memory

If we understand the Wandering Jew legend as concerned not only with prodigious life span and displacement, but also with a singularly extraordinary individual memory, its potential value to memory studies becomes clearer. The notion that interactions between an individual and a group shape that individual's memory derives from the work of sociologist Maurice Halbwachs ([1925] 1994), who introduced his concept of "collective memory" nearly a

century ago. Halbwachs contends that individual memories, which we typically think of as organic and unique, are, in fact, shaped by social frameworks of memory (*les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*), such as family, religious community, or political affiliation. These frameworks do more than connect groups of people in the present. The present "needs and interests" of the community create an orientation toward the past (Erll 2011a, 17). Perceptions of the past—memories—are constructed within and through these social frameworks. Individual and "collective" memory are therefore interdependent. Collective memory can exist over several generations, as in the case of family memory, stretching back to the memory of the oldest member in the group.

What of remembrances of events that are older than any living member of a group? How are these remembered collectively? Halbwachs explored this question by visiting the Wandering Jew's place of origin. In his *Legendary Topography of the Holy Land*, Halbwachs (1971) focused on the role of place in the development of collective memory over the *longue durée*, considering some of the same Christian memory practices and beliefs that also, we will see, influenced the development of the Wandering Jew legend. Building on Halbwachs's work, Aleida Assmann (1995; 2011) and Jan Assmann (1988) developed the concept of "cultural memory" (*kulturelles Gedächtnis*), which includes "the realm of tradition, transmissions, and transferences" they see left out of the concept of "collective memory" as put forth by Halbwachs (Assmann, 2008, 110). The Assmanns distinguish between two distinct forms of memory: "communicative memory" and "cultural memory." Communicative memory is memory shared among individuals within a limited time frame, roughly between two generations. Cultural memory is a cultivated form of memory within a group that reaches back into an ancient or mythic past. The development of cultural memory is, in the Assmanns' conceptualization, essential to group identity and cohesiveness.

The Wandering Jew legend engages both of these distinct memory forms (communicative and cultural memory) as it is typically through personal interaction with the Wandering Jew that individuals learn about a central event of the distant past. The Wandering Jew's curse—that is, his immortality and his compulsion to tell his story, which is also a narrative of the Passion—represents a bridging of these two different memory forms through the encounter between the Wandering Jew and mortals. The artistic depictions of the encounter with the Wandering Jew that this project analyzes explore that intersection between memories shared between individuals and memories shared among larger groups. They also examine what a Christian legend focused on the memories of a fictional converted Jew can mean for

actual diasporic Jews, whose complicated and often fraught status as a minority group can necessitate a complex negotiation of memory and identity.

The concepts of collective and cultural memory are, of course, not meant to evoke some kind of organic hive mind. They are conceptualizations of memory as a process, an interaction between and among individuals, and between individuals and their environments, drawing on sensory, locational, and other cues. These cues emerge during encounters, and the artists whose works we will examine in this book use the Wandering Jew legend to explore such encounters and to represent how the interface between individual and collective memory is negotiated through them. Such encounters can be, as in Robinson's poem, between the Wandering Jew and a mortal, or, as we will see, they can be set in relation to a specific place, such as in Heinrich Heine's and Edmond Fleg's depictions of the Wandering Jew in Jerusalem. The artists examined use the Wandering Jew legend as a means to represent how memories are made and to reveal the friction of that interface between an individual and the social structures that support individual memory. The Wandering Jew legend, because of its preoccupation with memory, provides fertile ground for these artistic explorations. And through these explorations, we will see, these creators not only craft artworks but also present their own interventions into the production of cultural memory.

In order to better understand the role of place and its relation to the legend's engagement with memory, we will also consider the Wandering Jew as what Pierre Nora (1996), building on Halbwachs's work, calls a *lieu de mémoire* or site of memory.[8] *Lieux de mémoire* are loci, often but not always associated with a physical location, that become invested with meaning through their connection to the past. They can be constructed or built, perhaps to serve an intentional memorial function, as in the case of monuments, or they might also be sites of worship. Artworks or other texts, buildings, holidays, historical personages, or figures like King Arthur, Joan of Arc, or the Wandering Jew can also be sites of memory. Our examination of artists' engagements with the Wandering Jew as sites of memory has the potential, I believe, not only to produce new understandings of the legend, but also to deepen our understanding of the development of such memory sites over time.

Nora (1989, 23) asserts that "there are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory." As we examine the medieval and early modern treatments of the legend, however, we will see that this formulation of an organic premodern past obscures the fact that *lieux de mémoire* were constructed, sometimes very consciously, well before the nineteenth century.[9] Furthermore, the concepts of

cultural memory and *lieu de mémoire* have been deployed in ways that can lead to static, nationally focused uses, what Astrid Erll (2011b, 7) calls formulations of "container cultures." In response to this overly fixed conceptualization, Erll argues that cultural memory is actually always in motion; it "travels," crossing through and over borders and media, a characteristic of many legends, but, again, one that is specifically incorporated into key details of the Wandering Jew legend. The Wandering Jew legend, due to its "two-headed" nature and the fact that the legend itself is *about* Jewish-Christian relations, is also a prime example of Jewish-Christian entanglement, including entangled forms of memory. This entanglement will become readily apparent as we examine works by Jewish writers and artists in the modern period, but we will also see that the strands of entanglement stretch back further than one might expect (Feidnt et al. 2014; see also Baumgarten et al. 2017; Kim 2014).

Michael Rothberg (2009, 5) notes astutely that "memory's anachronistic quality—its bringing together of now and then, here and there—is actually the source of its powerful creativity, its ability to build new worlds out of the materials of older ones." The encounters with the Wandering Jew legend discussed in this book provide compelling examples of artistic creativity that are not limited by periodization boundaries. Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), for example, ranges freely in the zodiac of cultural memory. In Heine's 1851 "Jehuda ben Halevy," Alexander the Great and Cleopatra appear alongside renowned medieval Sephardic poets and hundreds of generations of the Jewish faithful. Heine's poem sings of all their memories, intertwined with the memories and longings of the Wandering Jew and with the poet's own. The power of Heine's representation derives from the anachronism that Rothberg describes.

Instrument of Memory

From the many hundreds of adaptations of the Wandering Jew legend, I have selected striking instances of the legend used as an instrument of memory, a rendering that entwines past, present, and future, often with the purpose of navigating the complex borders of centuries of Jewish-Christian relations.[10] I am interested in how artists, particularly literary artists, engage with and reimagine the Wandering Jew legend in order to explore personal and cultural memory and their intersections.

The two most influential early written versions of the legend illuminate the Wandering Jew as an instrument of memory: Matthew Paris's thirteenth-century *Chronica majora* and the 1602 *Kurtze Beschreibung und Erzehlung*

von einem Juden mit namen Ahasverus (A Brief Description and Narration Regarding a Jew Named Ahasuerus). In these works, the Wandering Jew serves not only a narrative, but a worldview. Matthew's world chronicle depicts Christendom as threatened by Muslims, Mongols, and Jews, the latter two of which he even depicts as colluding with each other. The Wandering Jew, as we will see, is a figure very much rooted in Christian temporal figurations of Jews and Judaism. Matthew, following medieval conceptualizations of the Jew that reach back into the patristic period, depicts the Wandering Jew as out of sync with the natural flow of time, as existing in a kind of stasis, endlessly awaiting redemption and release.

In addition to the temporal dynamics of Christian representations of Jews and Judaism, medieval Christians also located Jews within a spatial scheme. According to Christian tradition, Jews are exiled and homeless as punishment for crimes against Christ, as I will discuss in relation to the medieval context of the Wandering Jew in the next chapter. Christian tradition regards the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE, the destruction of the Second Temple, and the Jewish diaspora as punishments for alleged Jewish crimes against Christ. Just as supersession posits Judaism as old and outmoded, its prophecies fulfilled and subsumed by Christianity, so too does Jerusalem, earthly and heavenly, become, within the framework of supersession, rightfully Christian. In the *Kurtze Beschreibung*, these interreligious tensions, including the complicating element of an Ottoman-controlled Jerusalem, serve as background to the author's reshaping of the Wandering Jew legend to reflect contemporary Jewish-Christian relations, as well as controversy between Lutherans and Catholics over Christian belief and practice. The Wandering Jew's memory of the Passion renders him an authoritative instrument through which Christian past, present, and future, as well as Christian claims to holy spaces, can be imagined. Even later, in the eighteenth century, as writers expand the Wandering Jew narrative to have him voice his memory of great swathes of world history, the Passion remains the narrative's fixed point, its memorial core. In these works, the Wandering Jew becomes witness and mouthpiece for cultural memory ever more broadly conceived, but still fundamentally Christian.

The Wandering Jew's voice itself is another instrument of memory that develops along with the narrative tradition. Early versions do not represent his voice directly, but in the late eighteenth century writers began to present direct encounters between the Wandering Jew and the reader. Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart's 1783 "Der Ewige Jude: eine lyrische Rhapsodie" (The Eternal Jew: A Lyrical Rhapsody) is notable in this regard because it depicts the Wandering Jew lamenting the loss of his family as he flings his

deceased father's skull down from Mount Carmel. Schubart thus shifts focus from the Passion story to personal loss. The Wandering Jew's affront to Jesus at the time of the Passion becomes the backdrop for personal expression and even for rebellion.

The development of a voice for the Wandering Jew also extends to expressions of Jewish cultural memories. In Heine's "Jehuda ben Halevy" this first-person voice is used to convey, in an intimate and personal manner, Jewish cultural memory of a fallen Jerusalem. Heine's example provides yet another nuance to the idea of the Wandering Jew as an instrument of memory, the sense of an instrument used for delicate or precise work, or to measure, register, and record a phenomenon (*OED*, s.v. "instrument"). Heine's recalibration of the Wandering Jew legend with a fixed point in Jewish rather than Christian memory—the fall of Jerusalem—transforms the Wandering Jew into the voice of the Jewish lamentation tradition. In this tradition, of course, the fall of Jerusalem is not vengeance for alleged Jewish actions against Jesus.[11] It is the Hurban, brought on by sins against God. Heine's recalibration to this fixed point in Jewish cultural memory does not break with Christian cultural memory. Heine portrays the two as entangled and does so in a way that creates a sense of interaction, rather than Christian dominance. Uri Zvi Greenberg's recalibration of the legend is more radical. In his early work, Greenberg transforms his Wandering Jew from a desperate, tormented figure shambling through a European hellscape into a king who is the sole survivor of the Bar Kokhba revolt. Greenberg's choice of a completely new and original fixed point by which to center the legend remakes his Ahasver into a Zionist symbol.

Conceiving of these different approaches to the Wandering Jew legend as recalibrations also helps us avoid a problem in Anderson's approach to variations in the legend's form. Anderson's (1965, 11, 349) search for the "true" legend seems to have led him to overlook variations based in Jewish tradition or to dismiss them as "alien," a troubling orientation for this magisterial work, which provides an indispensable survey of the tradition.[12] Rather than measuring conformity to a specific strand in the Wandering Jew tradition, we will consider artistic choices as calibrations and look for meaning in those choices. Artists who calibrate their instrument of memory by the fixed point of the Hurban are setting out a course according to the tradition of their choosing and should be understood as such. These artists' choices will influence how they portray the Wandering Jew's past, his memory, and his relation to the future, a future often understood through the lens of Jewish or Christian messianic tradition.

Reimaginings of the legend by artists whose work is informed by both Jewish and Christian cultural memory reveal how the interface between individual and collective memory can be fluid and, to use Rothberg's (2009, 34) conceptualization, "multidirectional." The Wandering Jew legend presents a unique case for memory studies because it is, in distinction from other legends such as those of King Arthur or Joan of Arc, centrally concerned with memory itself. It is also deeply implicated in the history of Jewish-Christian relations, including Christian antisemitism, which, like the Wandering Jew legend, developed over centuries. Indeed, the Wandering Jew has figured in some of the most notorious works of antisemitic polemic and propaganda.[13] Analyzing the Wandering Jew figure as an instrument of memory over the *longue durée* provides an opportunity to look beyond the typically modern emphasis of memory studies. This may help us better understand how influential premodern cultural forms endure into the present, a line of investigation with implications not only for memory studies, but for the study of antisemitism as well.

The Time of the Wandering Jew

As Mary Carruthers (2009, 238) notes, "Memory is the matrix of all human temporal perception," and the legend's representation of memory and of temporalities are, as Carruthers's work on memory would suggest, generative. The Wandering Jew legend functions on fixed points in the past in order to support visions of messianic, restorative futures. While scholars have often interpreted the Wandering Jew's unending displacement as symbolic of the Jewish diaspora, less attention has been paid to his uncanny temporality. The temporal dimension of the Wandering Jew's curse reflects Christian denial of both Jewish coevalness and the tripartite nature of medieval anti-Jewish temporality, which viewed Jews of the past, present, and future in terms of their relation to Christian history. This denial is a core, if less acknowledged, component of antisemitism.

If we consider the thirteenth century, when the first written accounts of the Wandering Jew legend appeared, we can see that at that time medieval Christians honored the so-called Old Testament Jews of the past as Christian precursors, and acknowledged that, in the future, a "remnant" of Jews was needed for the end time. Contemporary Jews were, in contrast, represented as stubborn resistors to the progress of Christian spiritual history, who should be tolerated primarily so as to be preserved for their prophesied eschatological role. Jews, then, played valued roles in the Christian past and future,

but not in the Christian present. The Wandering Jew's endless punishment reflects the uncomfortable spiritual stasis to which medieval Christians typically relegated their Jewish contemporaries. One of several paradoxes of the Wandering Jew legend—that he remains cursed despite conversion—reflects this anti-Jewish temporality. The Wandering Jew embodies the denial of Jewish coevalness, presenting a Jew who is alive in the present, but never truly of it. Spiritually mired in a pre-Christian past, this Jew is preserved in a kind of spiritual stasis awaiting a prophesied Christian future (see Biddick 2003, 22–23; Fabian 1983). As with so many aspects of the Wandering Jew myth, this temporality serves, as Hasan-Rokem (2001, 52) puts it, as a "refraction" of Christian identity.

In recent years, numerous scholars have explored the complexities of the temporal dimensions of interactions between medieval Jews and Christians. Kathleen Biddick (2003), in delineating the "Christian typological imaginary," examines the workings of supersession, the idea that Christianity is the rightful inheritor of Jewish prophetic tradition, and that the truth of Christianity thus supersedes Judaism. Steven F. Kruger (2006, 1; and see 2013) has illuminated the "Christian reorganization of history" that supersession necessitates and that also undergirds Christian notions of conversion. Mo Pareles also focuses on conversion to explore Christian "repudiations of Jewish time" (Pareles 2019). Anthony Bale (2010, 55) explores another type of reorganization of temporality; showing how the "memory work" of medieval Passion devotion could make Christ's suffering immediate, collapsing the time between the present and the memorialized event. Anna Wilson (2016, 54) has written of "colliding" Jewish and Christian "temporal regimes" in the making of ritual murder accusation narratives, and Miriamne Ara Krummel (2022, 230–36) has recently analyzed what she calls "the empire of common time," through which Christian temporality casts itself as normative while marginalizing or even demonizing the Jewish notions of time from which it emerged. Historians Elisheva Carlebach (2011), C. Philipp E. Nothaft (2014), and David Frick (2003) have each explored how Jewish-Christian relations were often mediated through calendars and other means of measuring time. Israel Jacob Yuval's (2006) work examines what he calls the "dialogism" between Jewish and Christian messianisms. These scholars demonstrate both how medieval Christian theology attempted to subsume Jews and Judaism into a temporal frame that subordinated them to Christian triumphalism and also how actual interactions among medieval Jews and Christians reflect entanglements between Jewish and Christian temporalities that complicate models of Christian dominance.

The paradox of the Wandering Jew—cursed to unending life—reflects the complexities of medieval Christian spiritual temporalities and the ways that "the Jew" figures into them. In a now-classic study, Aron Gurevich (1985, 109–10) explores the notion of "sacral time," the only time, he asserts, that "possessed true reality" for medieval Christians. He writes that within medieval Christian theology, Christ's "act of redemption" created a dual Christian temporality: "the kingdom of God exists already, but earthly time is not yet concluded, and the kingdom of God remains the final end, the aim towards which all must strive." Emphasizing the experiential nature of this complex and multiple temporality, Gurevich (1985, 139) argues that it shapes how medieval Christians experienced time, feeling themselves "on two temporal planes at once: on the plane of local transient life, and on the plane of those universal-historical events which are of decisive importance for the destinies of the world—the Creation, the birth and the Passion of Christ."

These two temporal planes come together in the figure of the Wandering Jew, who exists in the world of "local transient life," encountering Christians for whom he can act both as an eyewitness of Christ's Passion and as a sign of the end time to come. These dual elements are related to each other in ways that are complex and multiple. Writing about Christian eschatology, Debra Strickland (2016, 15) has argued that this aspect of Christian temporality is "not linear and sequential, but rather multi-directional and disruptive, pointing simultaneously to past, present, and future." If, as Gurevich (1985, 110) posits, "at certain crucial moments human history 'breaks through' into eternity," then the unnatural, cursed existence of the Wandering Jew literalizes this breakthrough. The Wandering Jew brings the biblical past, the messianic future, and the present day together in one figure. The Wandering Jew thereby embodies the temporality of Jewish-Christian relations from the perspective of Christian theology.

Christianity's complex temporal relationship to Judaism generates paradox. Jeremy Cohen (1999, 60) points this out in his insightful discussion of "the Jew" in the writings of Augustine, perhaps the most significant Christian theorist of temporality: "Augustine's Jew constitutes a paradox, a set of living contradictions. He survived the crucifixion, though he deserved to die in punishment for it; he somehow belongs in Christendom, though he eschews Christianity; he accompanies the church on its march through history and in its expansion throughout the world, though he remains fixed 'in useless antiquity.' This Jew pertains, at one and the same time, to two opposing realms." We can see in Cohen's description of Augustine's Jew the outlines of the Wandering Jew legend. More significantly, the Wandering Jew's unnatu-

ral stretch of life marches along with Christian history, but he always remains trapped in his past, continually reliving the day he cursed Christ and sharing that experience with those he encounters. If we recall the German name for this legendary figure—*der ewige Jude* or the Eternal Jew—it should come as no surprise that his legend touches on so many aspects of Jewish-Christian relations as expressed through temporal concerns. The Wandering Jew legend has at its core a clash—an ugly encounter that results in a curse—and many of the works we will discuss are concerned with contested and clashing "temporal regimes" (Wilson 2016, 48–54). A clear point of intersection is messianism. The Wandering Jew of Christian legend is forced to wait until Christ's return, and the two Jewish wanderer legends we have mentioned, that of Elijah and Messias Menachem, are also shaped through messianic hope.

A less obvious connection is the way that these legends link past, present, and future through an immortal figure. Let us recall the temporality that animates the first stanza of Robinson's poem, in which the speaker knows at a glance the depth of the Wandering Jew's memory, a recognition that collapses his own temporal experience of past and present: "I knew the man as I had known / His image when I was a child." Robinson's poem and so many other works about the Wandering Jew represent a temporality in which past, present, and future collapse, as do the boundaries between personal and group memories. The speaker in Robinson's poem encountered the Wandering Jew tradition as a child; as an adult he encounters him in the flesh. The effect of such representations can feel supernatural or uncanny, as in Robinson's poem, or as in a work like Sholem Asch's novel *The Nazarene* (1939), discussed in chapter 8, which uses *gilgul* (the transmigration of souls) as a temporal device.

We should also remember that this temporal collapse shares something with a sacred temporality that facilitates and is facilitated by memory practice. In her study of collective memory in early Christian martyr narratives, Elizabeth A. Castelli (2004, 13) points to how "Christianity's relationship to time . . . claims to be simultaneously *both* historical at its root *and* outside of time, eternal." She sees this temporality exemplified in the Eucharist, "a ritual restaging of a purported historical event; both event and ritual reenactment take place in history, in time. The cultic, commemorative repetition, however paradoxically, seeks to remember something that recedes ever more persistently into the past the more it is reenacted." Christian theologians have attempted to explain this eucharistic temporal paradox, which, as established through the doctrine of the real presence, truly collapses both time and space. Odo Casel (1926), for example, refers to eucharistic temporality as the *Mysteriengegenwart* (mysterious presence). This temporality operates in Christian

versions of the Wandering Jew legend, as Edgar Knecht (1977, 7–8) argues, in which legend makes the experience of the practicing Christian contemporaneous with *illud tempus*, that mythical time before time.

This uncanny temporality can also help illuminate some of the temporal dynamics of antisemitism, which posits Jews as eternal threats to Christians precisely through a form of temporal collapse, coupled with the charge against the Jews as Christ killers (see Lampert 2001, 249; J. Cohen 2007). We can see this, for example, in the vivid meditation practice of late medieval Christian mystic Margery Kempe (1940, 70–71) and her account of such experiences while on pilgrimage in Jerusalem. Kempe's meditations include a focus on alleged Jewish abuse of Christ during the Passion. This deeply anti-Jewish aspect of medieval Christian ritual meditative practice encourages the participant to collapse time and make themself "present" at the Passion. The Wandering Jew embodies this temporal collapse, which is facilitated through his own memory and his sharing of it. Although the Wandering Jew is regretful and penitent, his original act represents eternal Jewish crime, and his curse is eternal Christian vengeance. This representation illustrates how vengeance is itself a form of memory and of temporal collapse, as vengeance cannot exist without some form of memory, with the initial action and revenge for it forever joined.

Temporal collapse also animates the Jewish memory practices that inform the Wandering Jew tradition. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi (1996, 17–18) writes about the rabbis seeming to "play with Time as though with an accordion, expanding and collapsing it at will," with many temporal levels "placed in an ever-fluid dialogue" with one another. He also points to how medieval Jewish response to catastrophe, and the collective memory of it, was created through the social framework of remembering previous events already part of the sacred corpus, such as the connections made between *kiddush ha-Shem* as a response to Crusader violence, and images of the Akedah, the binding of Isaac (see also Einbinder 2009). This sort of schematization can be found represented in celebrations of Second Purims, in which the triumph or escape from violence of specific communities was commemorated in relation to the Purim narrative (Yerushalmi 1996, 47–48). Yerushalmi's distinctions between Jewish memory and historiography as well as his periodizations have been subject to critique and debate (see Gribetz and Kaye 2019, 349–50), but his insights are important to us for how they highlight the complexity of Jewish memorial forms. While not equivalent to each other, the temporal "concertina effect" Peter Brown (1981, 81) detects in early Christian sources and Yerushalmi's "accordion" reveal complex temporalities within both Jew-

ish and Christian memory traditions, temporalities that inform the Wandering Jew legend over its centuries of existence (see also Castelli 2004, 13 and 208n18; Schmitt 2001, 55). Theoretical discussions of collective memory and of memory practice tend to rely on traditional periodization models, which posit radical shifts around moments like the French Revolution. I wouldn't deny radical shifts caused by "foundational events" (see Confino 2011), or the impact of less dramatic historical shifts and trends. We can discern, however, the enduring influence of long traditions of memory on the Wandering Jew legend, examples of which we find even today. This enduring influence demonstrates the limits of rigid periodization schemes.

Jewish and Christian temporal regimes are part of how cultural memory is constructed and cultivated within communities through text and through liturgical and ritual practice. I've tried to outline here what I see as the important role of Christian temporalities in the development of the anti-Jewish aspects of the Wandering Jew legend. Jewish and Christian temporal regimes not only clash with each other, they are entangled. Both the Christian and Jewish strands of the Wandering Jew tradition emerge from events that shape community timescapes. The Christian version of the Wandering Jew legend emerges from the Passion narrative and, crucially, focuses on the trauma of the Passion. The traditional Wandering Jew narrative includes an encounter not with the risen Christ as described in the Gospels, but with the suffering Christ on the Via Dolorosa. The Wandering Jew's punishment is to endure an endless stasis between Jesus's violent sacrifice and his eventual return. So too do Jewish versions of the legend derive from a moment of trauma that operates on the scale of time, space, and memory: the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE (see Gribetz 2020, 8–13). We will consider the literary tradition that grows out of Jewish trauma, what David G. Roskies (1989) calls the "Literature of Destruction," when we turn to modern representations by writers of Jewish origin such as Heine, Greenberg, Fleg, and Asch. We can also see recognition of the significance of the Second Temple's destruction reflected in a work like the 1602 *Kurtze Beschreibung*, the subject of chapter 2. This text stresses the Wandering Jew's expulsion from Jerusalem and his later return to find the city destroyed beyond recognition.

Not all versions of the legend are, however, focused on exile and wandering. Medieval and early modern pilgrim accounts, like that of late medieval Dominican friar Felix Fabri, make reference to the Eternal Jew of Jerusalem, who serves as "the last living relic of Jesus' presence on earth." This manifestation of the Wandering Jew speaks not to the Jewish exile from Jerusalem, but to Christian desires for the Holy City, that which they "covet the

most, but are unable to possess" (Shagrir 2018, 358). While less prevalent than accounts of the Wandering Jew in exile, this version shares in its temporality. The Wandering Jew's immortality puts him outside the natural flow of time. This temporal displacement is in keeping with the dynamics of Christian supersession, which posits Christianity as the rightful successor of a Judaism portrayed as old and outmoded, as symbolized by the frequent representation of the Wandering Jew as an old man. The "hidden Jew of Jerusalem" may live out his uncanny existence not in exile, but in Jerusalem. Immortality, however, remains the essence of his punishment.

How This Book Works

In addition to the many hundreds of creative works depicting the Wandering Jew legend, we also have a rich body of scholarship dating back at least two centuries (see G. Anderson 1965, 399–413). These studies include illuminating examinations of individual works, but treatments of the legend's *longue durée* tend to be surveys, providing synopses and brief assessments, rather than in-depth readings. *Instrument of Memory* instead highlights specific reworkings of the legend, organized diachronically from the Middle Ages to the present day, and provides in-depth readings of these essential texts.

Part I deals with the medieval and early modern periods, reading Matthew Paris's *Chronica majora* and the 1602 *Kurtze Beschreibung* to demonstrate how in these texts the Wandering Jew serves as a living reminder of the Christian idea that the Jewish diaspora is a form of vengeful punishment for alleged Jewish actions against Christ. These texts also shape the Wandering Jew's uncanny temporality in ways that make him resemble a Christian relic. Chapter 1 looks at the *Chronica*, where Matthew's Wandering Jew references appear among many other references to Jews, including his mentions of the English monarchy's financial exploitation of the Jewish community, a particularly gruesome ritual murder accusation, and an account of an alleged Jewish-Mongol plot to overthrow Christendom. Matthew depicts the Wandering Jew in ways that make him resemble the many relics, such as the Holy Blood and the Crown of Thorns, that also appear in the *Chronica*. Like these relics, Matthew's Wandering Jew, I will argue, is both a person and a thing (Geary 1986, 169).

Chapter 2 deals with the other most important early Wandering Jew text, the 1602 *Kurtze Beschreibung*, which features a 1542 encounter between the Wandering Jew and the Lutheran leader Paulus von Eitzen in a Hamburg church. The 1602 pamphlet proved enormously popular and strongly influ-

enced later representations (Neubaur 1884; Băleanú 2011). In the pamphlet, the Wandering Jew becomes, I contend, a particularly Lutheran kind of relic. The Wandering Jew's banishment from Jerusalem and his endless movement, given new emphasis in the *Kurtze Beschreibung*, as well as his name, Ahasver (Ahasuerus), show how he has become an ambulatory *lieu de mémoire*, designed not only to address intra-Christian struggles, but to inspire a specific approach to Jewish communities in German-speaking territories.

Part II moves to the Age of Emancipation and shows how the Wandering Jew morphs again. Some representations alter the legend to acknowledge the pain of Jews who love a culture that does not love them back, others focus on the wanderer's suffering and simultaneously reduced emphasis on his Jewishness. This period saw a flowering of the legend in all forms of media, making choosing texts for this project challenging (see G. Anderson 1965; Davison 2004: 87–119; Felsenstein 1995, 58–89; Körte 2000; P. Rose 1990; and Shapiro 1996). Chapter 3 examines Eugène Sue's 1844 *Le Juif errant* because it is perhaps the most widely read of any work treating the Wandering Jew, even though, as Edgar Allan Poe pointed out, the Wandering Jew (and Jewess) in this novel is not a well-developed figure (Huntington Library, HM 1183, 19–20). In chapter 4, I pair examination of Sue's novel with Heine's representations of the Wandering Jew. Heine, who lived in Paris at the same time as Sue, takes an opposite approach to the legend. His references to the Wandering Jew, scattered across several works, are even briefer than Sue's, but they endow the Wandering Jew with a humanity understood through Jewish cultural memory. Heine is not the first to give the Wandering Jew a voice, but his "Jehuda ben Halevy" makes that voice part of a Jewish chorus that includes the voice of the great Hebrew poet of the poem's title and Heine's own.

In part III, we turn to a cluster of works by four writers and artists, Marc Chagall (1887–1985), Uri Zvi Greenberg, Edmond Fleg (1874–1963), and Sholem Asch (1880–1957), each of whom drew on the Wandering Jew legend during the turmoil, violence, and tragedy of the first half of the twentieth century. These men, whose personal and professional paths crossed in various ways, engage the figure of the Wandering Jew to address escalating catastrophe. Their works are connected because each reimagines the traditional relationship between Jesus and the Wandering Jew. Their representations of Jesus are part of what Matthew Hoffman (2004; 2007) calls the "Jewish reclamation of Jesus," a cultural development in which the Wandering Jew plays an underexamined role. The area commonly known as "the Holy Land," particularly Jerusalem, also plays an important role in these works. This landscape

serves as a site of memory through which to consider the Jewish experience in relation to both Europe and the Holy Land, a relationship saturated in memory. Like Heine, each of these creators recognizes the Wandering Jew as entangled in both Christian and Jewish traditions. They are also highly aware of the grave threat faced by the European Jews literally and physically entangled—trapped—in Europe during the Second World War.

In part IV, the legend shifts again, to address the postwar memory of the catastrophic violence inflicted on European Jews by their fellow Europeans, the founding of the State of Israel, the threat of nuclear war, and questions of identity, gender, and power in the post–World War II era. Chapter 9 works with Stefan Heym's 1981 novel *Ahasver*, which includes depiction of the time of Luther. Heym wrote his novel as a critique of a state-sponsored intervention in collective memory: the commemoration of the 1983 "Luther-Year" by the repressive leadership of the German Democratic Republic. Heym reimagines the Wandering Jew legend in order to address state manipulation of the past, including a cultivated collective amnesia about centuries of German antisemitism and its catastrophic consequences.

Chapter 10 addresses works from the recent past. In Eshkol Nevo's *Neuland* (2011) the Wandering Jew legend is used to explore the burden of memory among different generations of Israeli Jews and to question how contemporary Israel compares with the utopian visions of a Jewish state that emerged in the nineteenth century. Dara Horn's novel *Eternal Life* (2018) is notable for being built on a foundation of Jewish cultural memory of the Second Temple. The work eschews any reference to Christian versions of the legend, beyond the connection to the Eternal Jew that her title evokes. Horn's novel innovates by featuring a female Eternal Jew, whose immortality comes not from sin but from sacrifice, and whose personal memory, focused on family, is a source of pain but also of resilience. Sarah Perry's *Melmoth* (2018), in contrast to the Nevo and Horn novels, draws on the Christian tradition of the Wandering Jew legend. The work is an homage to Charles Maturin's 1820 *Melmoth the Wanderer*, a novel of nested stories that feature the demonic immortal Melmoth. While drawing inspiration from *Melmoth the Wanderer* and its gothic depths, Perry also, however, reaches back to the fixed point of the Christian Wandering Jew legend, the life of Christ. Perry innovates by focusing not on the Passion but on the resurrection.

Throughout our exploration of the legend, I will refer to the memory traditions on which the authors rely as Jewish or Christian, but as we will see, the readings of individual texts demonstrate the complex entanglement of the two religious traditions and their cultural memories. The labels of "Jew"

and "Christian" will sometimes seem appropriate for our artists. Matthew Paris, after all, was a Benedictine monk, and it seems safe as well to assume a Christian subject position for the author of the *Kurtze Beschreibung*, which advances an interpretation of the legend adapted to early modern Lutheran beliefs. Asch, Chagall, Fleg, Greenberg, Nevo, and Horn all openly identify as Jewish.

Other writers are not so easy to categorize. Sue's *Le Juif errant* combines a vicious attack on the Jesuit order with a critique of the plight of France's poor and working classes. And yet, we will see how much Sue's representation of the Wandering Jew retains a focus on sacrifice modeled on the Passion: Sue relies on the same depictions of Jewish temporality that we find in Matthew's *Chronica*, as well as in the work of polemicists of Sue's own time who combine newly emerging antisemitic formulations with time-worn supersessionist models. Heine, Sue's contemporary, was born into a Jewish family but converted to Christianity in the hope of social advancement, a decision he immediately regretted.[14] Heym, also born into a Jewish family, demonstrated throughout his life a deep commitment to his socialist ideals. His deepest commitment, it could be said, was to his vocation as a writer, a role he thought should be dedicated to speaking truth to power, whoever or whatever that power might be. Contemporary English novelist Sarah Perry has spoken publicly of being raised in a Christian "fundamentalist sect," describing herself as "post religious" (Saner 2016). We will consider how the influence of these varied subject positions can sometimes be discerned, or at least intuited, as we examine each writer's engagement with the legend.

One thing we can be sure of is that while Heine and Heym might not have had strong commitments to Jewish faith and practice, they do share with Asch, Chagall, Fleg, Greenberg, and Horn the experience of living as some sort (or multiple sorts) of outsider within a dominant Christian culture. These writers and artists of Jewish descent are all aware of what Heine (1970, 20:265) calls the "myth of the eternal Jew." They cannot afford not to be. Matthew Paris, Eugène Sue, and the author of the *Kurtze Beschreibung*, in contrast, appear to know little if anything of the Jewish side of the coproduction of the Wandering Jew legend. To them, as to Anderson, the dangers of the unknown or "alien" are imagined rather than existential, a difference we will see reflected in creative works and in scholarship about the Wandering Jew.

As will become clear in these pages, my encounters with the Wandering Jews created by artists of Jewish descent have sparked my curiosity the most. This project centers their voices for several reasons. First, despite the voluminous scholarship on the legend there is still much to say about the

treatment of the Wandering Jew by writers like Heine, Fleg, Greenberg, and Asch, whose works are only briefly mentioned or are even omitted from many book-length studies of the legend. I am eager to share my enthusiasm for these Wandering Jew works with an Anglophone audience. Second, close analysis of these works allows us to trace new paths through a long tradition of Jewish and Christian entanglements. The Wandering Jew has been symbolically deployed against Jewish communities, but it has also been used to navigate Jewish and Christian memory traditions in ways that honor lived Jewish experiences. Finally, the legend, while it is not as well known today as in the past, lives on. Earlier examples and scholarship about them continue to stimulate creativity. I hope new understandings of the legend's rich and complex past can inspire its future.