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# HOUSE OF ETERNITY

**Dedicated to the memory of**

**ROLF VERLEGER,**

**co-editor of the original German version of this book,**

**„Haus der Ewigkeit“, which appeared in 2019.**

**He also edited this English translation,**

**but did not live to see it published.**

# THE HISTORY OF JEWS IN STOCKELSDORF-FACKENBURG

## HOW JEWS CAME TO HOLSTEIN IN THE NORTH OF GERMANY

**T**he Jewish religion emerged in the seventh century BCE (Before the Common Era) in the area of the present-day West Bank. It was chiefly characterised by ritualised animal sacrifices conducted in a central temple – situated for long periods in Jerusalem – and by respect for the “teaching” (“Torah”) of the five Books of Moses. But due to the dominance of powerful neighbouring states, Babylon, later Macedonia, then the Roman Empire, the central temple service was impeded, then finally abolished. As a consequence, the religion became spiritualised. A correct way of life based on the commands of the Torah and the erudition required for studying the Torah attained ever greater importance.<sup>2</sup> Judaism spread throughout the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean; it was a proselytizing religion and in competition with its reform movement, Christianity.<sup>3</sup> From these areas, Jews travelled along trade routes into other countries. There were two major economic drivers of this population spread. One driver was the craft skills which were in short supply elsewhere – for example, until the rise of guilds in central Europe, glass making was a Jewish craft. The other driver was trading, notably as a network of import-export merchants along the Silk Road. Because goods transport was dangerous and risky, this trading community depended on the profound solidarity of its members. On the basis of their shared religion, their minority status and their shared knowledge of reading and writing Hebrew, Jews were predisposed to provide this.

One of the most important Jewish centres was Babylon (in present day Iraq) where the Talmud was recorded in writing up to the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The Talmud is the foundation text of observant orthodox Judaism. New Jewish centres later formed in Europe, first in Islamic Spain and in the Rhine area of the Frankish Empire, and then, up to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. How Jews were able to emigrate from these three centres to Holstein is outlined as follows.

In the Rhineland of the early Middle Ages there lived a large Jewish community, focused on the cities of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz, whose origins went back to the time of the Roman Empire. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, about 1000 of the city of Mainz’ 7000 inhabitants were

reportedly Jewish<sup>4</sup>. Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki (Rashi) studied there and also in Worms, writing commentaries on the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud considered authoritative to this day. This flourishing of Jewish culture came to an abrupt end with the “People’s Crusade” of 1096. Its followers had been originally mobilised to free the Holy Land from “Mussulmen”. But instead, some of them rampaged through the Rhineland killing the indigenous Jews. After the Jewish community had recovered from this blow, it suffered pogroms and massive expulsions around 1350, when about one third of the European population perished in the huge plague epidemic and demagogues blamed the then inexplicable death rates on Jewish “well-poisoners”. After that, although a Jewish presence did persist in German lands, it was only in small numbers.

Spain was conquered in the 8<sup>th</sup> century by Arabic followers of Mohammed. In Islamic Spain, Jewish spiritual life and culture flourished. This came to an end in 1492, when Catholic armed forces, having occupied the entire Spanish territory, forced Muslims and Jews either to emigrate or to convert to Christianity, a conversion which they afterwards tested through the Inquisition. In Portugal, the situation was similar. Many Jews took ship and emigrated. Most settled around the Mediterranean, chiefly in the Ottoman Empire, but some of them moved to northwest Europe. The architectural heritage of this immigration includes Amsterdam’s large Portuguese Synagogue, inaugurated in 1675 and the Jewish cemetery in Altona near Hamburg which was laid out in 1611.

But political conditions for Jews were incomparably better than in other Christian countries in the expanding Kingdom of Poland, later the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Founded in 1000, its territory at one point extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The kings encouraged Jews to immigrate, and so they came; from German lands in the west and from areas as far as the Caucasus in the south-east. Their communities enjoyed wide-ranging legal and economic autonomy. Poland-Lithuania became the Jews’ mother-country, that is until its partition of 1772 – 1795 between the Russian Empire, the Habsburg Empire, and Prussia. From 1648 – 54 however there had been a massive set-back when the rebellion of Orthodox Cossacks against Catholic feudal domination unleashed bloody massacres of the Jewish and Catholic civil population. This gave rise in 1648 to the first Jewish emigrations from Poland-Lithuania to German lands in the west. In 1656 a Jewish community comprising such immigrants was founded in Moisling just outside Lübeck’s city gates. One hundred years later, in 1772, when West Poland was annexed by Prussia, Polish Jews became new citizens of Prussia and were able to move westwards to areas such as Holstein.<sup>5</sup>



## JEW IN FACKENBURG

Immigrants are not welcome everywhere. Jews coming to Holstein from Poland-Lithuania or other areas of Germany in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries faced the problem of whereabouts they could settle.

### **The politico-economic context and the founding of Fackenburg**

Holstein was a political patchwork of separate political entities: the Hanseatic city of Lübeck, the Duchy of Holstein and the Bishopric of Lübeck<sup>6</sup>. Stockelsdorf did not exist as such: the boundary between the Bishopric of Lübeck and the Duchy of Holstein roughly followed the modern-day Ahrensböcker Strasse and Grenzweg (Boundary Way). The territory to the west was Stockelsdorf and belonged to the Lübeck Bishopric; the area to the east up to the Lübeck city limits was the Mori estate and belonged to the Duchy of Holstein. For taxation and customs purposes, the Duchy was linked to the Danish state and therefore, from the Lübeck perspective, foreign economic territory<sup>7</sup>.

Lübeck was a Free Imperial City whose access to the Baltic Sea meant it was, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, still an important center of trade and industry, even though it was beginning to lose out to the North Sea port of Hamburg. From Lübeck's medieval *Holstentor* (the Holstein city gate) there were two trade routes, one leading south-west via Oldesloe to Hamburg and the other north-west to Segeberg. On the Hamburg road lay the Moisling estate, where Jews had been settled since the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. That this had happened beyond the city limits, in the Duchy of Holstein, was because the Lübeck City Council had forbidden Jews from settling in Lübeck, from spending the night there, or even trading in its streets. By passing these measures, the Council was endeavouring to protect Lübeck merchants and tradesmen from competition by Jewish merchants and their goods. But if the merchant cannot access the customer, the customer may well come to the merchant, especially if he is located outside the Lübeck customs zone. Lübeck people were able to buy more cheaply from Jewish dealers in Moisling, where they would also visit taverns or even spend the night. While this was a constant irritation for the Lübeck business world, for the Moisling estate owners it represented a steady and lucrative source of income<sup>8</sup>.

The other trade route ran from Lübeck's *Holstentor* to Segeberg. This road passed through the Mori estate, which, like Moisling, became another favorable spot for trade and industry to take root in.

This opportunity had been recognised by the estate's enterprising steward, Philibert Fack. The Mori manor house, erected in 1637, was from 1745 the residence of the Lord of the Manor, Baron Heinrich Otto von Albedyle.<sup>9</sup> In 1751, he granted Fack permission to build a brewery and a schnapps distillery on the Mori estate.<sup>10</sup> Fack called his new settlement "Fackenburg". The settlement was located on the Krempeisdorf turnpike road by the tree marking the Lübeck city limits. Its location was crucial, since the Mori-Lübeck boundary was a customs border as well.

Tradesmen gradually settled here: locksmiths, blacksmiths, glass makers, carpenters, joiners, masons, basket weavers, bakers, butchers plus a few innkeepers and dealers.<sup>11</sup> Fackenburg's population soon exceeded that of the surrounding villages. The 1803 census records 335 people<sup>12</sup> occupying about 30 dwellings.<sup>13</sup> The owner of the neighboring Stockelsdorf estate, Danish State Councillor Lübbers, also used its favorable location to develop economic activities such as a brewery, a schnapps distillery, and between 1771 and 1786, the famous Stockelsdorf earthenware manufactory.<sup>14</sup> At the beginning of the 1770s, Lübbers had even attempted to obtain from the Danish king the concession to settle Jews in Stockelsdorf, but due to Lübeck's intervention in Copenhagen, the attempt had failed.<sup>15</sup>

There was a big fair in Fackenburg twice a year, in Lent (a month before Easter), and on the feast of St James (July 25<sup>th</sup>). Between September and December there was an ox market three times a week.<sup>16</sup>

### **Jewish settlement from 1792**

For obvious reasons, Jews were attracted to this center of economic activity and attempted to settle there. Settling on an estate gave Jews the advantage of only having to deal with one person in authority, the Lord of the Manor. The Lord of course did not exercise his powers personally, but delegated them to a legally trained clerk. And apparently, in 1792, neither Baron Albedyle nor his clerk found any reasons to prevent three Jewish families from settling there. These were the families, including children, of Samuel Selig (meaning, Samuel, son of Selig Horwitz) and his wife Rebecca; of Wolf Selig (meaning Wolf, son of Selig Horwitz) with his wife Prinsge; and of Jonas Levin (meaning Jonas, son of Levin) with his wife Mierel.<sup>17</sup> They were followed in 1797 by Jacob (son of) Joseph and his wife Vogel ("Bird" in German), a midwife, and in 1803 by five further Jewish married couples with their children plus widow Süsgen with her daughter Sara making ten Jewish families altogether.<sup>18</sup> This was what was recorded in the 1806 official list of resident Jews which the clerks of the "Lübsche Güter" (estates in the Holstein Duchy traditionally owned by noble

Lübeck families) were required to return to the Holstein government in Glückstadt. According to this, out of all those Lübsche Güter, only Mori had settled Jews.

But another source portrays a somewhat different picture. A Holstein Duchy census of 1803 records each inhabitant by name.<sup>19</sup> According to this, there were 18 Jewish families consisting of 75 people in Fackenburg – 22% of its 335 inhabitants.<sup>20</sup> Of these, 42 were older than 18. The census also reveals that the Jewish families had formed a community with its own board.<sup>21</sup> They also employed a synagogue attendant.<sup>22</sup> The community also needed a cemetery; this was granted them in 1799.<sup>23</sup> The first recorded burial took place in 1812.

The 1803 census records the Jews' occupations using the blanket term “dealer”. But other sources yield more detail. For example, a magazine article of the Lübeck History and Antiquarian Society refers to a break-in in 1815 at St James' church Lübeck and the theft of money from the strong box<sup>24</sup>. Researches into court documents revealed that a certain Peters or Petersen had changed a large quantity of small coins (sixpenny and threepenny pieces amounting to a value of 14 – 15 thalers<sup>25</sup>) with the Jew Daniel Isaak in Fackenburg.<sup>26</sup> Daniel son of Isaak (resident in Fackenburg from 1799 and buried there in 1845) was evidently a money changer. People from Lübeck needed Holstein coins for payments in Fackenburg, and merchants travelling to Lübeck needed Lübeck currency. For the transaction, the money changer charged a small fee, a fee that was evidently lower than in Lübeck. The next indication comes from the regional archives in Schleswig which record a dispute between two Fackenburg Jews. Abraham son of Levin (in Fackenburg since 1800) lodged a claim against Joseph son of Jesaias Möller (in Fackenburg since 1803) for unpaid goods.<sup>27</sup> And the alphabetical directory of trades gives the occupation of Ruben son of Jonas (with his father Jonas [son of] Levin, in Fackenburg since 1792) as part-time peddlers.<sup>28</sup> These examples demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between Fackenburg's indigenous residents and the Jews. It was the Jew (Daniel Isaak) who changed money for Lübeck people enabling them to spend it in Fackenburg's shops, workshops and taverns. It was Jews (Abraham son of Levin and Joseph son of Jesaias Möller) who provided Lübeck people with non-local trade goods and who, as peddlers like (Ruben son of Jonas), distributed these, and presumably also Fackenburg products, in the surrounding area.

### **Foreigners out!?**

So how come, three years later in 1806, only ten Jewish families were registered on the official list? We will attempt to shed light on this.





# A1 (№1)



פ"ט H[ere] l[ies hidden]  
אשת חיל כבת אבי חיל *the valorous wife like the daughter of Abihail*  
מרת אסתר אשת כ"ה the lady Esther, wife of the h[onorable] M[r]  
יוזפא מעללער שנאספת Yuspa Möller, who *was gathered*  
אל עמה ביו"ג ונקברת *to her people* on day 3 and was buried  
ביום ה' י"ג ניסן שנת on day 5, 13<sup>th</sup> Nissan of the year  
תקצ"ויו לפ"ק 59six in s[hort] c[ount]  
ת נ צ ב ה M[ay] [her] s[oul be] b[ound up] in the [bond] of [life]

**M**rs Esther Möller, died on Tuesday 29.3.1836. *Möller* (North German version of Müller, = miller) is an unusual surname for Jews. In the 1803 census list, the grave details match Ester Levin, aged 28, wife of Joseph (= Yuspa) Ben-Jesaias aged 24. This would make her age at death 61. Esther and Joseph, resident in Fackenburg since 1803, are the parents of Juda ben-Joseph Möller born 1805 and Pess'che who died in 1824 (B3).

This son Juda Möller was the teacher of the Jewish school. The 1845 census records him and his wife Eva Wolff as having eight children; the daughter born in 1840 – four years after the death of the Esther buried here – was named Esther, apparently after the grandmother. Juda Möller died 1869 in Altona and was buried in Hamburg-Ottensen. (This cemetery was destroyed in the Nazi era.)

Quotations (*in italics*): line 2, first half: Proverbs, 31,10; line 2, second half: Esther 2, 15. The two quotations rhyme. (Abihail was the father of the biblical Esther, his name's literal meaning is "Father of valor").

Line 4 -5: A biblical quotation (Numbers 20,24) about the death of Aaron.

Line 7: In the Hebrew number תקצ"ו the last letter, unusually, is written as a word (תקצ"ויו); as if for example "vee" were written instead of "v"), hence our translation as "59six".

## A2 (№2)



פ"ט H[ere] l[ies hidden]  
 קבורת שפרינצכה אשת the grave of Shprints'khe, wife of  
 כ"ה וואלף סג"ל הורוויץ the h[onorable] M[r] Wolf SeGaL Horwitz  
 הלכה לעולמי יום ה' ט"ז *She went to h[er] eternity on day 5, 16th,*  
 ונק' בעש"ק י"ז אלול and was bur[ied] on the e[ve of the] h[oly] Sa[bbath], 17<sup>th</sup> Elul  
 תקצ"ח לפ"ק 598 in s[hort] c[ount]  
 תנצ"ה *M[ay] [her] s[oul be] b[ound up] in the [bond] of [life]*

**M**rs Shprints'khe Horwitz, died Thursday 6.9.1838. In the 1803 census she is listed as Prinsge Selig née Isaak, born around 1777, this would give her age at death as about 61. Her husband Wolf Horwitz (A9) was 15 years older; she was his second wife. In 1803 the Horwitz couple (then aged 41 and 26) were living with their two children: Philip aged 8 (who is, despite the disparity of names, Jehoshua Falk, D1), Getta (aged 2) and two daughters from Wolf Horwitz' first marriage, Genendel and Saara (aged 19 and 16). In 1818, at the age of 41, Shprints'khe may have given birth to Tsvi (Hirsch) "Wulff" (F2; see there for the explanatory note on his name).

Quotations (*in italics*): see the previous section *Grave Inscriptions*.

## A3 (№3)



פ"נ H[ere is] b[uried]  
הילד משה ב"כ יעקב the boy Moshe, s[on of the] h[onorable] Ya'akov  
ה"ל יום ה' ער"ה אדר ראשון *[He] w[ent to [his eternity] on day 5,*  
e[ve of the] f[irst day of the] m[onth] of First Adar,  
וני יום א' ב' אדר שנת תקע"ה לפ"ק and was [buried] on day 1, 2nd Adar of the year  
575 in s[hort] c[ount]  
תנצבה *M[ay] [his] s[oul be] b[ound up] in the [bond] of [life]*

**M**oshe (Moses), son of Ya'akov (Jacob), died on Friday 9.2.1815. The year cannot be conclusively deciphered – either ה"תקע/575 (1814 – 15) or 35 – 1834) 595/ה"תקצ). As the gravestone is flanked by two stones dated 1832 and 1838, 595/1834 might be considered more likely. On the other hand, 5575 and not 5595 was a leap year with the additional month of Adar II (only in this case would there be a “first Adar”, as here, as otherwise there is only one month of Adar in the year), and it was only in 5575, not 5595, that the last day of the month before the first Adar fell on a Thursday (“day 5”).

A square hole in the centre of the bottom edge probably anchored a metal rod.

Quotations (*in italics*): see the previous section *Grave Inscriptions*.

## MAPS SOURCE DOCUMENT

Maps 1 – 3 are adaptations by Rolf Verleger of Google Earth images (© 2021 Google GeoBasis-DE/BKG)

### RENÉ BLÄTTERMANN'S GRAPHIC ARTWORKS

René Blättermann's subtly composed artworks lead the viewer into a world beyond reality.

The gravestones, compact manifestations of the material world, preserve the names of the deceased and stand testimony to their former existence.

Their weatherings, overgrowths, scars, chips and breaks are signs of impermanence.

Blättermann places them in the context of his own internal images: elemental images of Earth, Air, Fire and Water; images of Biblical tradition, associations with Hebrew letters, stories, rituals and customs.

From the interplay of color, light and dark there emerges an atmospheric density, which is an invitation to linger, to dream - to "see behind things".

The graphic artworks were created between 2013 and 2019.

LeOr S. 5  
Eden S. 8  
Palti S. 10  
Rimon S. 12  
Chupatecha S. 15  
Kria S. 30  
HaMajim S. 33

Adom S. 37  
Zipor S. 40  
Ruach S. 43  
Kanaf S. 45  
Nefesch S. 48  
HaSchem S. 53  
Esch S. 57