I try to imagine the twenty-three-year-old Dr Sally Daiches, as he was known in 1903, stepping on-board the ship that would take him to Britain. Did he board in Hamburg or Bremerhaven? Where did he alight? Dover, or Southampton, Hull or Grimsby? Or did he dock in Liverpool? His name is not to be found in the shipping lists I have consulted. I see him walking up to the office to complete the formalities preceding embarkation, his suitcase in one hand, his ticket in the other, also holding on to his hat which threatened to blow off and tumble on to the pier. In my mind, the image, though moving, is in the format of an old film reel, black-and-white, our rabbi-to-be and all other people on the pier are moving fast and in the somewhat unnatural way of early films. Salis’s face is obscured by the brim of his hat and by the hand which holds it so that I cannot make out his expression. What did he feel as he set foot on to the ship? Was he nervous and apprehensive? Or was he excited, full of hope for the future and calmly confident of a glittering career ahead of him? Perhaps all of these emotions coincided in the young man as he walked up to the large steamer which would deposit him in the south of England before travelling further west to New York. Did Salis travel alone or did his older brother Samuel accompany him? Were they perhaps with a group of friends all set to emigrate westwards? We are unlikely ever to know the answers to these questions.¹ We do know, however, that Salis was part of a large number of young Jewish men who sought their fortune serving Jewish congregations in the anglophone world, men who left behind, at least geographically, the traditions of Eastern European Jewish life.

This monograph adds to a number of recent publications that investigate, or at least presuppose, the mutual influence of Jewish lives across borders during the migrations of Jews in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Salis Daiches here exemplifies not only trends in Lithuanian, German and British Jewish Orthodoxy,² his life also testifies to an international network of interlocutors in the religious Jewish world: he corresponds with rabbis in Eastern Europe, Germany, and Palestine, and he is headhunted by congregations in South Africa. Not only is Daiches’s opinion sought, he is part of a Jewish cultural and intellectual circle that includes the old and the new worlds of Jewish life. Salis Daiches is also part of a movement of religious professionals who cross borders, bringing their specific training, religious practice and ideology to bear on the places in which they live and work. In
order to interpret Daiches’s professional journey, this book focuses on a specific location, bearing in mind the practices of a transnational historiography ‘that is sensitive to local context but also appreciates the interconnections, commonalities, and areas of overlap between communities’, such that the local becomes relevant to broader fields of study.

A larger context of inquiry to which this book contributes is that of migration history. As Panikos Panayi demonstrates, British immigration history is composed of a number of different strands of inquiry: in the first place, immigration history was, until recently, primarily written by historians with an immigration background themselves but now is beginning to inform mainstream British national history, thereby diversifying the understanding of the nation and its past. Secondly, a new research focus on the experiences of migrants themselves has developed in the past two decades at the same time as migration narratives and the transmission of the memories of individuals have come to the forefront of the public imagination. As Tony Kushner has shown, much of the energy in the study of immigration to Britain centres on the memory of refugees to the country, particularly refugees from Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe in the 1930s and post-World War II. Within the British Jewish community, as immigration from Eastern Europe soared, interest in the preservation of Jewish heritage arose at the close of the nineteenth century. Heritage, at that time, meant predominantly an engagement with the medieval and early modern contribution of Jews to society and economy, in a drive to keep in the public eye the long-standing and well-established place of Jews in British society. This, along with a programme of ‘anglicisation’ of recent migrants, were concerted efforts to manage hostility from within and outwith the Jewish community to co-religionists of vastly different cultural and economic backgrounds.

Recent historical approaches to the study of migration differentiate between the investigation of narratives of arrival, narratives of the migrant journey, and narratives of settlement. These approaches are significant in that they allow us to rethink assumptions about the impact of migration by focusing on individual and cumulative biographical research. They are also a consequence of the increasing availability of archives at the points of origin of the Jewish migrants and the various staging posts of the Jewish migrant journey, thus allowing different perspectives on the reasons for, and practices of, leaving one’s home to be analysed. The fact that many migrants not only maintained regular exchange with their locations of origin but, following exit from continental Europe, also often migrated more than once to various locations of the anglophone world, is now a feature of research into migration and its effects on individuals, communities and locales. In this book, then, Salis Daiches’s life serves as an example that helps us to shine a spotlight on specific aspects of Jewish religious change occasioned by large-scale migration in the early twentieth century. Rabbi Salis Daiches’s life thus serves as the focal point for a number of issues relevant to the exploration of religious authority and change and in
Introduction

the understanding of relationships between central and centralising Jewish religious institutions in London – such as the Chief Rabbi and the London Beth Din – and Jewish life in other cities in the United Kingdom. More specifically, this monograph also contributes to the historiography of British Jewish Orthodoxy by suggesting that a focus on ‘provincial’ communities can help us better to understand and to interpret religious developments affecting all British Jewry.

Terminology

In the following I use provincial, when referring to Jewish communities outwith London, to indicate their remove from what is generally understood to be the centre of Jewish life in Britain. I indicate with parentheses, however, when there is a need to draw attention to underlying ideological or argumentative assumptions that differentiate centre and periphery and where I suggest that there is a need to (re)-examine these.

I am using British Jewish communities and British Jews or British Jewry throughout to speak about the Jewish population of Britain. This is to signal the geographical location of these Jews and their developing or already established identification with the United Kingdom as a place to settle and call home. More specific identifications of Jews as English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish will be mentioned where appropriate. I do not hyphenate these designations because it seems to me that there is an extent to which these identifications are fluid and adapt to the context in which they are used. For example, Salis Daiches insisted on being a Scottish Jew but he also identified as British Jewish in his loyalty to the state and the Jewish communities across Britain. Earlier studies preferred the term Anglo-Jewry and its derivatives, terminology that has been criticised for its exclusion of Jewish communities of the other nations of the British Isles and for assuming that English Jews, particularly those resident in London, are setting the parameters for the interpretation of Jewish history in Britain.\(^8\)

Orthodox, in the context of this study, refers to Jewish self-descriptions of a particular range of Jewish religious ideologies and practices debated in Germany at the turn of the twentieth century which contrast with other contemporary religious identifications such as Reform and Liberal. The most significant distinguishing feature of all forms of Orthodoxy in this context is the exclusion of the Pentateuch from historical–critical investigation, and the primacy of halakhah in the organisation of the life of the individual and a Jewish community. Within Orthodoxy, as we will also observe later in this study, there is a wide spectrum of ideologies and practices, and interpretations of halakhah, including the rejection of the designation ‘Orthodox’ in favour of other descriptors such as ‘Conservative’, ‘traditional’ or ‘authentic’ Judaism. Reform and Liberal Jewish ideologies at the time were not only including the Pentateuch in historical–critical studies, they were also considering the modification of Jewish practice
through authorities derived from sources other than halakhah. In Chapter 1 we explore the epithet ‘Orthodox’ further, specifically in relation to Salis Daiches and the Hildesheimer Seminary, as well as in relation to the United Synagogue and the congregations under the authority of the Chief Rabbi, and those who rejected his leadership. Other Jewish immigrants to the United Kingdom at that time would have eschewed this terminology altogether such that the descriptor ‘Orthodox’ is better understood as an outsider category. I shall clarify in the text when there is a need to differentiate between insider and outsider use of the epithet ‘Orthodox’.

Setting

The comparatively tiny Jewish population of Scotland is well positioned as an example that illustrates major currents in Jewish migration, transnationalism and Orthodox religious authority in the anglophone Jewish world of the early twentieth century. Located at the northernmost Celtic Fringe, Scotland’s Jews, even those in the nation’s capital city of Edinburgh, were, and are, as far removed from the most populous centre of Jewish life in the London metropolis as is possible on this small island. If, for a moment, we exclude the colonies of the British Empire from our view, in the first half of the twentieth century only the even smaller Jewish population of the Emerald Isle of Éire across the Irish Sea was more difficult to control by the emissaries of the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain and the Empire. During a period characterised by mass migration and massive cultural change, keeping hold of his rabbinical spheres of influence and authority was one of the challenges confronting the Chief Rabbi located in London. While he primarily presided over the largest urban Jewish community of the British Isles and while his office had grown out of the unification of London’s Ashkenazi synagogues, his jurisdiction encompassed, and encompasses, all British dominions. The centralisation of rabbinical authority under Chief Rabbis Nathan and Hermann Adler has been written about elsewhere and forms the backdrop to the local, regional, national and inter- or transnational analysis of the chapters of this monograph. As will become clear below, one aim of this monograph is to begin to think about local British Jewish religious history within the larger frameworks of Jewish migration and religious organisation across the anglophone world.

As indicated in the preface, Scottish Jewry, along with the Jewish populations of the Celtic Fringe of Ireland and Wales, has, as yet, received little critical scholarly attention. As is true of other regional or ‘provincial’ Jewish communities, where their history has been written, it has been written largely by local historians who write for a readership principally within their own communities, acting at once as archivists of their community’s history and as memory-makers who extend the reservoir of shared narratives. While these local studies are helpful first steps and provide a wealth of information and contextual expertise, little effort has been made to
connect the study of Scottish Jewry to similar historiographical work on small Jewish communities in other places, notably in North America, South Africa and Australia. The past decade, however, is characterised by burgeoning scholarship on ‘provincial’ ‘Celtic’ Jewish communities in Britain. Here we find historians, literary and film scholars alongside genealogists and statisticians offering new interpretations and extending the conceptual basis for the study of Scottish, Irish, and Welsh Jewry.

The themes Jewish migration, transnationalism and Orthodox religious authority frame the analysis put forward in the four chapters of this book. Thus, the monograph continues modes of inquiry begun in other places, such as Kahn and Mendelsohn’s Transnational Traditions, and furthers the conversation about what we may learn when we place Jewish history in its own context rather than in that determined by other fields of study. Similar trends in scholarship are observable in the study of Jewish communities in the American south, all of which complement the scholarship on Jews in acknowledged ‘Jewish spaces’, such as New York and its Lower East Side and London’s East End. And scholarship on urban and rural Jewish communities in the American north adds further dimension to the study of the local. I argue for similar attention to be given to Jewish communities in British towns and cities in a manner that eschews both an insider focus on Jewish affairs only and an effort to speak solely in relation to other fields of inquiry by supplying a comparative ‘Jewish dimension’. The fact that transnational Jewish history is gathering interest and feeds into the writing of local Jewish history is thus an encouraging sign. In many ways, the current focus on transnational migration studies continues and expands on Sander Gilman’s and Milton Shain’s 1999 anthology Jewries at the Frontier. Here, Gilman proposes the concept of the ‘frontier’ as a way in which to democratis the study of Jewish history, lifting it out of the binary of an assumed (textual or geographical) centre and a corresponding periphery. Thus, the concept of the frontier allows Jewish history in various places to assume local and international significance without prioritising specific locations. While the notion of ‘Jewry at the frontier’ primarily speaks to the internal structure of Jewish history, the idea of a transnational Jewish historiography seeks to reflect both inner Jewish historiographical concerns and the relationship of Jewish history to other national histories.

This monograph also touches on how the religious and cultural lives of Jews complicate ideas of identity, in this case of ‘Scottishness’ and of ‘Jewishness’. ‘Jewish spaces’ are constructed as ethnic, religious and cultural environments as well as real, mappable places. The impression hitherto has been that Jewish migrant communities in Scotland existed in a pattern of transition and acculturation that lies outside major Scottish or Jewish historical narratives of belonging. Studies on larger populations, such as London’s East End or New York’s Lower East Side, in many ways pave the way for the study of smaller Jewish communities by demonstrating how the perception of ‘Jewish space’ in specific geographical places is conditioned
by historical lives and contemporary narratives that memorialise the people populating these locations in the past. Thus, the distinction between geographic ‘place’ and Jewish ‘space’ in Scotland links the development of Scottish Jewish identity formation with a number of factors: urban space, historical memory, cultural production, religious artefacts, religious institutions, texts and documents, all contributing to constructions of belonging. By focusing on the themes of Jewish migration, transnationalism and Orthodox religious authority in a specific local context and ‘space’, and by discussing them in relation to a particular individual, the monograph adds a new dimension to the study of British Jewish history.

Recent debates in British Jewish historiography

In 2012 Tony Kushner and Hannah Ewence edited the provocatively titled collection *Whatever Happened to British-Jewish Studies?* whose contributions cast a critical eye across the post-war decades of British Jewish historiography. The desire of the editors and several of the contributors was to link the still rather insular work in British Jewish studies with international scholarship in related fields, though achieving this has proven difficult as several of the contributions evidence. For the nineteenth century, we see work on Britain and transnational migration emerge from scholars such as Adam Mendelsohn, and the work of Tobias Brinkmann and Joachim Schloer for the early twentieth century offers a broader view on developments in British Jewish history. Research specifically on Scottish Jews – though the same could be said for research on Welsh and Irish Jews – runs parallel to, rather than in conversation with, research on Scottish (Welsh/Irish) history and migration. Thus, the charge of insularity with regard to Jewish historiography on the Celtic Fringe still stands, yet emerging scholarship on these Jewries, which is utilising the concept of the ‘frontier’, is set to change this.

This book focuses on a very particular immigrant journey, largely within the United Kingdom, and the analysis presented in the chapters that follow offers an exploration of the themes of migration and acculturation with a still more specific focus on religion, more particularly, Jewish Orthodoxy which is treated here in an international context. In doing so, the book implicitly casts a fresh light on debates in British Jewish historiography. As David Cesarani has outlined, the writing of British Jewish history since the nineteenth century followed, or responded to, particular social and political agendas:

The study of Anglo-Jewry has been hobbled by an apologetic tendency that has taken two successive forms. The first mode of apologetics was the product of Anglo-Jewry’s particular route to modernity and the conditions under which Jews in Britain gained emancipation in the mid-nineteenth century. Jews were accepted not for who and what they
were, but according to terms set by the English majority and cast in the liberal rhetoric of toleration and universalism. Accordingly, Jewish historical research devoted itself to showing that Jews had earned and continued to deserve full civic equality. Research stressed the duration of Jewish settlement in Britain and the contribution of Jews to the ‘host’ society.\(^{20}\)

The moves away from the glorification of the medieval Jewish past in Britain, and away from the celebration of British tolerance following readmission under Cromwell, and the move to a critical historiography, occurred with the professionalisation of British Jewish history by a new generation of scholars from the 1960s onwards:

Prior to the 1960s, Anglo-Jewish studies were almost entirely the preserve of gifted amateurs or part-time historians who combined busy professional lives with research and writing. Cecil Roth was the doyen and virtually sole exponent of professional Jewish Studies in Britain. The monopoly position of enthusiasts in the Jewish Historical Society of England, clustered around Roth, remained virtually unbroken until the welcome intrusion of the American-born and trained Jewish historian Lloyd Gartner. His study *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, published in 1960, catapulted modern Anglo-Jewish history onto a new level of accomplishment and vastly broadened its scope.\(^ {21}\)

Since then, British Jewish history has mainly been written as a contribution to wider British national history, that is as minority history which augments and adds to (and thereby seeks to become relevant to and part of) the mainstream but does not itself set a historiographical agenda.\(^ {22}\) Todd Endelman suggests that, while British Jewish history thus became part of British history, it did not lose its apologetic agenda with regard to its place in British national history or with regard to other historiographical endeavours as the central question remained what the study of Jewish history ‘can do for the study of something else’.\(^ {23}\) More positively, he also notes that the insertion of Jewish history into British history helped push the agenda of Jewish historiography away from generalising paradigms and towards more nuance by giving close attention to context and location.\(^ {24}\) And yet, this historiographical trend is only now emerging in regard to Scottish Jewish history and, indeed, in regard to the distinctive histories and identities of ‘provincial’ Jewry. While there is recent work which seeks to make a wider claim to the relevance of local Scottish Jewish history to the historiography of Jews in Britain and the anglophone world, notably Nathan Abrams’s 2009 study of small Jewish communities across Scotland entitled *Caledonian Jews* and the special issue of *Jewish Culture and History* on *Jews in the Celtic Lands*, these exceptions have not yet led to wider historiographical revisionism in ‘provincial’ Jewish history.\(^ {25}\) There is, then, scope for revisiting local Jewish history in relation to national and international Jewish history.
and, at the same time, for rethinking the opportunities and limitations of conceptualising minority history in terms of its functionality for other fields of study. Indeed, it needs to be asked whether the hierarchies operating in the construction of national histories obscure more than they enlighten when labelling the local peripheral. Specifically, in relation to Scotland, Edinburgh as the capital city and Glasgow as the then Second City of the British Empire are anything but provincial. Subordinating the national and international significance of these cities to the hierarchy operating in Jewish historiography, which labels Jewish communities outwith London condescendingly ‘provincial’, limits the possibilities of inquiry into the self-perception of these communities and their leaders. As we will see in the following chapters, Salis Daiches took his ‘provincial’ communities seriously and invested his activity into them. Hence, we may well question whether today’s understanding of ‘local’ and ‘peripheral’ versus ‘central’ accurately captures Daiches’s and his contemporaries’ perceptions of their location and status.

With the fragmentation of historical inquiry into various subdisciplines from the 1960s onwards, we find a good deal of research on the social and professional transformation of the British Jewish community through and since the large-scale immigration from 1880 to 1914. Here the focus has largely been on the economy and its relationship with the social history of Jews, on issues of culture, food and language, while much less attention has been given to the transformation of the religious life of Jews and the ideological conflicts between British-born and Eastern European religious Jews. Significantly, the pioneering research was carried out by scholars trained in the United States – such as Lloyd P. Gartner, and Todd Endelman – whose perspective on Jewish history was markedly different from that of their British counterparts. Their perception of Jewish history as a national, ethnic, cultural and religious history in its own right, studied across more than two millennia, offered a refreshing vantage point from which to study Jews in Britain. Hence the work of Gartner and Endelman pushed historians in Britain to engage anew with the Jewish history of the twentieth century.

The past two decades have seen a proliferation in the study of British Jewish religious history, first of all through the work of Geoffrey Alderman and, more recently, in the book-length investigations of the British Chief Rabbinate by Miri Freud-Kandel, Benjamin Elton, and Meir Persoff. The focus of these works is on the central religious institutions of Anglo-Jewry, and the authority of the Chief Rabbi located in London. Neither the ‘provinces’ of the British Isles nor the international anglophone Jewish world are considered as important counterpoints or interlocutors in this research, even though all British Chief Rabbis – with the exception of Hirschell, Brodie, and Sacks – hailed from outwith the United Kingdom and maintained strong relations with rabbis across the Jewish world. Endelman, very reasonably, argues that it would have been helpful had these works
included a broader view of Jewish history and indicts what he considers a continuing insular trend even within recent British Jewish historiography. Another development of the past thirty years is an increased engagement with British Jewish heritage, the archiving of Jewish historical documents and the preservation of artefacts and other items of Jewish material culture, and their academic study. Bill Williams’s pioneering study of Manchester Jewry marked not only a broadening of the focus of British Jewish historiography, it also appeared at a time crucial for the preservation of Jewish heritage, architectural, material and documentary. Firstly, Williams put the largest British Jewish community outwith London in the spotlight for the first time. Secondly, Williams also pointed to the failure of the Jewish and wider communities to preserve recent Jewish history at all, allowing the documentary evidence of many defunct communities to disappear into the waste bin of history. In this context, David Cesarani shows convincingly that, even though British Jews did, since Victorian times, have a strong engagement with their heritage in Britain, heritage was deliberately constructed in relation to discourses of British national identity:

From the 1890s onwards, the construction of an Anglo-Jewish heritage was not merely an exercise in the establishment and perpetuation of Jewish values: it was also part of a continuing struggle with the taxonom of Englishness. Anglo-Jewish history was part of the weaponry deployed by English Jews in the struggle against exclusionary tendencies in English culture and politics. As Tony Kushner demonstrates, however, this construction of heritage went together with a (purposeful) neglect, if not destruction, of the documentary, architectural and material culture of contemporary Jewish mass immigration:

Thus at the same point that the Anti-Demolition Movement was set up to preserve the elite Bevis Marks (the oldest surviving synagogue in Britain with close links to the resettlement of the Jews), establishment Anglo-Jewry was trying [...] to destroy the tiny informal synagogues, or shtiebhs, which housed the chevraoth (societies) of the East End. To the elite it was essential to Anglicize the immigrant masses as soon as possible. It was therefore undesirable to preserve for posterity in any way, including for the historical record, the immigrants’ radical politics or un-English religious habits.

Publications such as The Making of Manchester Jewry prompted a turn in the interests of the Jewish Historical Society of England which only as late as the 1980s began to be concerned about the preservation of Jewish heritage and history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since 1990, the University of Southampton has hosted the largest public collection of archival materials relating to Jewish history in Britain complemented by the holdings of the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA),
the Jewish Museum London, the Jewish Museum in Manchester and the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre (SJAC). From the 1960s onwards, British Jewish studies revived with the work of Williams, Endelman, Cesarani and Kushner. Kushner, in particular, pursued migration history alongside local Jewish history, paving the way for studies like the present monograph which seeks to make a contribution to British Jewish history and to migration studies by evaluating the impact of Jewish immigrants on communities outwith London. In this context, Endelman rightly highlights the fruitful preoccupation of a few historians of British Jewry with place, space and locality. Williams and Kushner, in their focus on specific urban and rural communities, and the historians of London’s Victorian Jewry, in particular, are mindful of the profound influence of the geographical and architectural contexts in which Jewish lives were, and are, lived. My own monograph works on these themes through the example of Scotland by focusing on Rabbi Salis Daiches’s career and a specific geographical and national context. I thereby aim to show the relevance of both place and context for interpreting larger, international currents in Jewish history in the early twentieth century, such as those pertaining to religion and authority in the era of Jewish mass migration. In a sense, this book develops a larger historiographical agenda, taking its cue from Kushner and Ewence and the recent work of Abigail Green, Adam Mendelsohn and David Feldman. In a 2008 article, Abigail Green called attention to the need to examine the ‘encounter between religion and modernity’ in an international setting, pointing to the current trend to examine Jewish modernity in national and regional contexts. The focus on analysing Jewish relationships with modernity within national and regional frameworks was understandable, seeing that the social and political conditions across Europe varied as did the moves towards emancipation and as did Jewish responses to these. Green proposes, however, that ‘Rethinking the encounter with modernity in terms of a transition from pre-modern Jewish internationality to religious internationalism may help to make good this short-fall.’ Green’s 2008 article and the subsequent work of Adam Mendelsohn illustrate such reconfigurations of Jewish international networks in the nineteenth century through the examples of Sir Moses Montefiore and emerging networks of migrant religious professionals. This monograph seeks to contribute to the study of Jewish modernity by examining aspects of such Jewish religious internationalism in a local setting through the biography of one migrant religious professional. Further impetus for the exploration of the transnational in the local comes from a 2017 article by David Feldman. Feldman proposes a re-examination of the binary division between Eastern and Western Jewry, taking his cue from Jonathan Frankel who, already in 1992, suggested that, rather than a straightforward opposition between East and West, scholars might be better placed to look out for ‘a multiplicity of conflicting forces interacting in unpredictable ways’. Feldman suggests that
the following binary account of a straightforward culture clash between Eastern and Western Jews can be found in the works of Alderman, Cesarani and Endelman as well as in his own earlier research:

With remarkable consistency, we find this history narrated and analyzed as the outcome of interaction between a familiar triad of forces: first, a population of immigrants whose vibrant religious practice and confrontational politics led to conflict with the established communal leaders and institutions; second, an acculturated and decadent community of British-born Jews; and, third, a majority population liable to be hostile to both foreigners and Jews.38

As we shall see later on in this monograph as well, however, Bill Williams’s 1990 chapter ‘East and West’ already ‘sought to confront the conventional triadic framework of analysis and break from it’.40

The history of Jewish migrants and their communities, then, has been, and is being, written from a variety of perspectives, depending on the questions asked by the scholar and the disciplines the writer is at home in. Accordingly, we find national, ethnic and religious approaches to the westward migration of Jews written by archival, social, cultural, and religious historians. These works categorize the subjects of their inquiry in line with the dominant analytical framework of their discipline or the readership they are aiming for. Thus, the ideological and methodological context of scholarship and the intended readership determine the shape of the analysis: are Jews understood as a subgroup which, in some way, needs to be related to the mainstream historiography of a nation, a cultural or a religious context? Or is Jewish history, in the terms of national history, the overarching interpretive framework into which Jewish religious history is inserted as a subcategory? This monograph presents a coherent Jewish historical and religious narrative which seeks to relate its subject to various national, cultural and religious contexts. Migration history and transnational studies appear to be two of the most fruitful frameworks into which to integrate the chapters of this book.41 Both contexts offer frameworks of inquiry which open the possibility of connecting the history narrated in this book to other contexts of analysis without determining hierarchical relations or dependencies between national, cultural, religious or ethnic histories. Rather, the themes of migration, religious orientation, identity and belonging are explored through the prism of the biography of Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches whose personal story – as far as we are able to piece it together from the sources – offers the opportunity to tap into various discourses without having to pin the analysis into one thematic framework. This approach then reflects on the diversity of experiences and outlooks found within the immigrant and resident Jewish communities which refract and assume a number of, sometimes competing and always coexisting, hierarchies and dependencies. Transnational studies, in particular, allow for the recognition that concepts and experiences identified with the local
Jewish Orthodoxy in Scotland

are of interest not only as contrasts but as features of the transnational framework. While the following analysis is shaped by three overlapping contexts – the life of an individual, the concerns of central Jewish religious institutions in Britain, and the local Scottish scene – the backdrop for the exploration of religious authority is the transnational framework of Jewish migration from Europe to and across the anglophone world.

The sources

The sources available to recover Salis Daiches’s biography and his contribution to Jewish life in the United Kingdom are scarce. This is not unusual for his generation of migrants as few documents survived the journey and, until 1987, there was no archive in Scotland dedicated to the preservation of Jewish history. While the collections of some larger Jewish institutions and significant individuals were donated to national and local repositories, the same is not true for the documents of most Jewish organisations and persons of Jewish interest in Scotland. The majority of the papers of the Daiches family, containing mainly those pertaining to Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches, was donated to the National Library of Scotland (NLS) in 2003 by his granddaughter, Jenni Calder, having been with the family for close to sixty years after the death of Salis. It is not possible to reconstruct whether and how the family evaluated and sorted the papers, what was destroyed (accidentally or with purpose), held back or simply lost. For example, it is surprising that we have very little record of extensive correspondence with Daiches from any other well-connected rabbi in the first two decades of the twentieth century. One reason for this might be that Salis Daiches himself may have not kept records from this period though we have no way of knowing whether this was the case. Only from 12 October 1925 to 23 May 1932 did he appear to keep a correspondence book. This book allows the tracing of some correspondence but, crucially, the early years of his residence in the United Kingdom, his work in Hull and Sunderland, as well as the first seven years of his work in Edinburgh are not recorded systematically or at all. It is also not possible to ascertain whether this correspondence book holds all the letters sent during the period in which the book was in use. The correspondence book does not, for example, collect personal letters but is filled solely with letters sent in his capacity as rabbi of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. It is most likely that the rabbi did not systematically keep copies of his own letters nor those addressed to him before and after this period which would have allowed him (and others later on) to trace his professional correspondence; and private correspondence is close to non-existent. Additionally, it is likely that files were lost or destroyed in the family’s many moves or not deemed suitable or relevant to be given to the archive. The Daiches family archive at the NLS contains only a few private letters addressed to Salis Daiches. The bulk of the archive consists of a significant collection of handwritten sermons, some
manuscript drafts, proofs of publications and an array of syllabus cards and invitations for Salis to speak, legal papers concerning a major court case in the 1920s, the Levison Case, and assorted newspaper cuttings and miscellaneous printed matter.\textsuperscript{46}

Casting a wider net, there is no record of rabbinical or other official community correspondence for any of Edinburgh’s synagogues nor for the majority of Glasgow’s synagogues. Hardly any records of the immigrants’ synagogues survive and there are no papers accessible in local or national archives either pertaining to the rabbis serving them. While the SJAC has been collecting all manner of documentation about the Jewish communities in Scotland and continues to receive donations on a weekly basis, papers concerning the religious organisation of the communities and those relating to religious professionals (rabbis, ministers, cantors)\textsuperscript{47} are hardly found in the archive. If such papers survive, they would be in the possession of family members many of whom have moved on to different locations in the United Kingdom, Israel or further afield. The records that survive in the SJAC are mainly minute books and even these are far from complete even for the oldest Glaswegian community in Garnethill. This is not an unusual state of affairs seeing that the drive to collect recent Jewish heritage in the United Kingdom post-dates the move to the suburbs, the decline of many synagogues and the resulting loss of real estate which had the consequence that most of the paper documents of abandoned synagogues and community centres were pulped when the land and buildings were repurposed.\textsuperscript{48} Scotland is no exception among British nations and regions here, and the absence of materials complicates the reconstruction of the development of national British and Scottish, as well as local, traditions in relation to and extension of the \textit{minhag(im)} brought by migrants.

A source which has hardly been evaluated is the extensive correspondence of the Chief Rabbi’s office with communities across Britain and the anglophone world. My own analysis of the correspondence of Daiches and others with the Chief Rabbi’s office thus is one of the first forays into a study of the community-related correspondence, promising a fruitful field for further study.\textsuperscript{49} Among other things, a detailed evaluation of similar correspondence would allow us to understand more about local religious practices and disputes which arose, for example, with regard to \textit{minhag}. Staff at the Chief Rabbi’s office kept a record of incoming correspondence and carbon copies of letters sent. While there is no way of knowing whether the surviving record is complete, the Chief Rabbi’s archive having changed locations a number of times in the twentieth century before finding permanent homes in the LMA and in the Anglo-Jewish Archives at the University of Southampton’s Hartley Library (HLS), a strong and continuous record does survive. These two archives also hold papers and reports pertaining to the Conference of Anglo-Jewish Ministers (later Preachers) which will play an important part in the discussion in Chapter 2.

Research on Scottish Jewish history to date has made extensive use of
the archives of the *Jewish Chronicle* (JC), the oldest surviving Jewish weekly newspaper, and the local press in Scotland.\(^5\) Regarding the Scottish Jewish press, hardly anything survives of the *Yiddish* papers,\(^5\) and it is only with the establishment of the English-language *Jewish Echo* in 1928 that an unbroken line of weekly issues is available until its final edition in 1992.\(^5\) The community journal the *Edinburgh Star*, founded in 1989, regularly carries obituaries as well as articles remembering aspects of community life from the early twentieth century.\(^5\) With decreasing opportunities for gathering ethnographic material on Jewish life during Rabbi Salis Daiches’s tenure, the *Star* and the memories of Daiches’s contemporaries offer some insight into the perception of his work, albeit mainly from the vantage point of those who were small children at the time of Daiches’s ministry.

In 1928 Daiches published one volume of essays, *Aspects of Judaism*, in which he gathered a number of philosophical essays and some linguistic works he had developed since his days as a student.\(^5\) He intimates in the introduction that he planned to publish another book of collected essays.\(^5\) Certainly, Daiches had much material from which to craft another anthology. He had many speaking engagements and, unless he spoke freely most of the time, he would have had a mass of notes and perhaps even full speech manuscripts. It seems that Salis Daiches wrote his sermons in long-hand for most of his career. While we do not have a complete collection of his sermons, there are enough to allow a detailed evaluation of his preaching.\(^5\) Daiches’s obituary in *The Scotsman* also suggests that he planned to publish a collection of his sermons.\(^5\) Furthermore, the syllabus cards and invitations to speak allow a reconstruction of Daiches’s status in the wider community and also, when triangulated with his diaries, give a reliable insight into his busy speaking schedule.

How do we evaluate these different sources? We have no ‘ego-documents’ from Salis, unless we think of letters written in a professional capacity as such, seeing that they project a deliberate public image of the rabbi. The professional correspondence is the largest part of the available written sources and, as such, sets the reader right *in medias res*. Syllabus cards and diaries offer an insight into when something happened and where and sometimes also who was present. Beyond that, we can only infer proceedings from events documented in the press and extrapolate what is likely to have taken place in other venues. Memories of Salis Daiches are prominent in David Daiches’s *Two Worlds* because they occupy substantial space in the memoir and because the memories David Daiches has of his father are the most prominent text we have about the rabbi. The status of the text as a memorial and a coming to terms with the death of his father, while David himself was on the other side of the Atlantic and unable to participate directly in the family’s mourning, informs what we may glean from the book about Salis and how he was perceived in the community and beyond. Reminiscences in the *Edinburgh Star* and local memoirs, such as Howard Denton’s *The Happy Land*, are reflections on childhood perceptions of
Introduction

The career of an immigrant rabbi who came to the United Kingdom in 1903 and ministered in three communities (Hull, Sunderland and Edinburgh) which were composed of British and immigrant Jews, and, indeed, Salis Daiches’s own migration journey, his ideology and his leadership ambitions, form the thread linking the four chapters of this book. The rabbi’s career path offers an opportunity to evaluate aspects of the contribution made by immigrant rabbis to the structure of the Jewish community in Britain through ideology and leadership (Chapter 1). The early decades of the twentieth century and the growth of the Jewish communities made Jews much more publicly visible in many cities of the United Kingdom. As a result, the relationship with the non-Jewish majority population came to matter enormously to the British Jewish leadership, particularly in the lead-up to both World Wars when ‘aliens’ were subject to much suspicion. ‘Anglicising’ rabbis, such as Salis Daiches, who placed a positive relationship with secular society and education at the centre of his ministry, allow us to understand better the efforts of the leadership of the British Jewish community to promote integration without the loss of tradition. At the same time, placing rabbis trained on the Continent in leadership positions across Britain’s religious Jewish communities exposed conflicting visions of congregational life and religious authority among immigrants as well as in relation to the central institutions of Jewish religious authority in Britain: the Chief Rabbi and the London Beth Din.

Rabbi Salis Daiches’s life, then, also allows a closer investigation of the relationship of the United Kingdom’s regional communities to the centralised institutions of the United Synagogue in London, notably the Chief Rabbi and the London Beth Din (Chapter 2). Glasgow, as the Second City of the British Empire since the late nineteenth century, has boasted the largest Jewish community in Scotland: up to 15,000 Jews were resident in Glasgow at the community’s largest expansion just before World War I; Edinburgh’s community, at its greatest expansion, numbered no more than 2,000 Jews. It was Edinburgh, however – as the Scottish capital closely associated with the intellectual traditions of the Scottish Enlightenment – which first attracted the services of a rabbi of greater public stature: Daiches, trained by both Eastern European rabbis and also trained in the context of the modern Orthodox German Jewish tradition of the Hildesheimer Seminary in Berlin, a combination hitherto unparalleled in Scotland. Hence, while serving the smaller, and thus numerically less significant or impactful, community, Daiches became the public face...
of Scotland’s Jews, able to articulate ‘the Jewish contribution’ to society and the compatibility (as he saw it) of Orthodox belief, values and practices with full participation in the secular life of the country. Glasgow boasted a number of Eastern European rabbis of excellent stature but it took until the appointment of Reverend I. K. Cosgrove at Garnethill Synagogue in 1935 for a Glaswegian minister to match Daiches’s outward-facing disposition with someone who was able to forge a firm relationship with the Scottish churches and other public institutions in the city.

The relationship between the religious Jewish leaders in Edinburgh and Glasgow following World War I allows us to examine the reach of the Chief Rabbi’s authority in the United Kingdom’s northernmost Jewish population (Chapter 3). While the size of Glasgow’s Jewish community rendered Daiches largely irrelevant to local Jewish politics in Glasgow, his unparalleled combination of religious and secular learning, his close relationship with Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz and his popularity in non-Jewish society made him an ideal ‘outpost’ of the London Beth Din in Scotland, conveniently positioned to offer a public defence of Jews and Judaism. The friendly relationship Salis Daiches enjoyed with Hertz arguably also had an impact on how he was perceived locally.

Thus, the first three chapters of this monograph evaluate, from different perspectives, the perception of the institution of the Chief Rabbinate and resulting authority structures. Rabbis and other Jewish religious functionaries trained in various locations on the Continent and adhering to, and propagating, a number of religious ideologies faced the question of how to relate to the Chief Rabbi. Here, a transnational perspective is particularly helpful as it is plausible to suggest that the perception of the institution by immigrants was based on their experience of Jewish leadership structures and halakhic authority in other countries. For example, was the Chief Rabbinate perceived predominantly as a representation of Jewish leadership to gentiles or was it seen as an institution for resolving differences within the Jewish community? For immigrants who hailed from states in which the authority of chief rabbis and central batei din was more extensive, the Chief Rabbi in London might have been perceived as an institution of the state to exert control over the Jewish community and he might have been accepted because of a perceived relative weakness of autonomous religious structures that might seek solutions for Jewish issues independent of the state. For the resident Jewish community, the Chief Rabbi may also have had a function analogous to the relationship enjoyed by the Anglican Church with the monarchy. Indeed, the origins of the Chief Rabbinate, as conceived and implemented during Nathan Adler’s tenure from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, suggest that the office of the Chief Rabbi was directly modelled on that of the Archbishop of Canterbury with the ambition of similar authoritative and representative functions, and a close alignment to the monarchy. It is possible simply to suggest that the key difference between immigrants is their Continental
region of origin: those originating in the East had experience of strong Jewish communal autonomy and limited authority granted to state rabbinate, while the mental maps of those having lived in the West relied on small Jewish communities within strong states whose centralising rabbinate reflected the need to work with gentile powers. Perhaps, however, it may be possible to differentiate this picture further and research across different parts of the Russian Empire at different times, and focus on the large city communities of the Habsburg Empire and those in Frankfurt–Berlin–East Prussia who numbered secessionist communities alongside the Einheitsgemeinde. Salis Daiches and his brother Samuel probably would naturally have resisted a strong central chief rabbinate model, seeing that they hailed from Vilna and lived in Königsberg and Berlin within the secessionist forms of Orthodoxy. By contrast, as we shall see in Chapters 1 and 2, the transformation of the Chief Rabbinate and the United Synagogue under Nathan Adler also reflect ideas about the safeguarding of the dignity of the Jewish community which can be seen to parallel arguments about the function of the monarch. This monograph proposes that further research into conflicting models of leadership and authority among Jewish immigrants and residents is warranted in the future. Indeed, it may be helpful to complicate the picture roughly outlined above by detailed attention to the diverse cultural factors which affect how Jews in early twentieth-century Britain – long-term residents and recent immigrants – assess the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Chief Rabbi in London.

The book concludes with a chapter on memory, seeking to position the Jewish community of Edinburgh and its most significant rabbi in the twentieth century within the city’s and the community’s narrative and physical spaces (Chapter 4). Edinburgh’s ‘Jewish spaces’ are created by those who inhabit(ed) them and by the relationship of the current residents of Edinburgh to these spaces, physically and in local memory. Thus, a map of contemporary Edinburgh can be viewed as a palimpsest which enables the reader to view various perspectives on the city’s history through the eyes of previous and current inhabitants. The fourth chapter explores David Daiches’s memoir Two Worlds: An Edinburgh Jewish Childhood, first published in 1957, and a recently created Jewish walking tour of Edinburgh’s Southside, ‘Jewish Edinburgh on Foot’. I would argue that it is possible that, in the Jewish community and among interested outsiders, we observe community-sustaining local narratives across local cultural, transgenerational and also transnational boundaries. As migrants, Jews are often identified with urban environments. Patterns of Jewish settlement are a way of observing the transformation of city spaces into Jewish spaces. Tony Kushner argues in Anglo-Jewry since 1066 that British Jewish history has been regarded as being of minor importance, and its provincial experiences even more so. Yet the histories revealed in Anglo-Jewry since 1066 show the richness of previously neglected
Jewish communities from the medieval era onwards. They show that the ‘global is everywhere and already, in one way or another, implicated in the local’.

Chapter 4, by mapping changes in the interpretation of parts of the city of Edinburgh by today’s resident Jewish population, contributes to a better understanding of the performance of religious and cultural identities of an urban immigrant population in the first half of the twentieth century, and the place historical memories of the Jewish residents have in the local and international imagination of this city. Indeed, with Kushner I would argue that Jews were an integral part of the local world, and their subsequent invisibility or problematic, ‘alien’, representation fails to do justice to the richness of the past. Movement and diversity are not simply products of modernity: heterogeneity is the natural order of things. While rarely acknowledged, the places covered in this study were, I argue, in Ruth Gruber’s phrase, ‘virtually Jewish’. By acknowledging and accepting that all places (and not just the post-Holocaust European continent) are, amongst other things, ‘virtually Jewish’, we can at least start to challenge the ethnic and racial certainties that are continuing and intensifying in the twenty-first century.

And yet, I would also wish to introduce a different slant: whereas Kushner is highlighting that, in the local, one can helpfully contrast heterogeneity of experience with certainties of ideology about identities, I am also wanting to highlight ways in which performances of authority and religious ideology embed both local and transnational components and thus expose a heterogeneity which need not be used to counter certainties. Starting with the migrant journey of Salis Daiches from Vilna via Königsberg, Berlin and Leipzig to Leeds, and, more than a decade later, to Edinburgh, we begin to explore the location of religious ideology and authority in the Jewish spaces created by early twentieth-century Jewish immigrants in Scotland.