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SUMMARIES

JEWS, HUSSITES AND GERMANS ACCORDING TO THE CHRONICLE '*GILGUL BNEI HUSHIM*'

by Israel Jacob Yuval (pp. 275–320)

The chronicle '*Gilgul Bnei Hushim*' was written by R. Salman of Sankt-Goar in the second quarter of the 15th century. Originally appended to R. Zalman's *Minhagei Maharil*, the chronicle was subsequently omitted from some manuscripts and from all printed editions of that work, due to its minimal contextual association with it. While the chronicle has been subjected to scholarly research, its literary characteristics and historical context have not been adequately examined. The present article addresses these critical lacunae.

The first part of the chronicle describes the initial stages of the Hussite movement in Bohemia in the early 15th century, and the supposed participation of the Jews in the movement. These legendary descriptions expose the favorable attitudes of German Jewry towards the Hussite heresy, and their expectations for the imminent downfall of Christianity. The sources of the author's information on the events in Bohemia originated in the anti-Hussite Catholic propaganda in Germany that alluded to the Hussites' cruelty, and their collusion with the Jews. The author believed these stories but applied a positive interpretation to them, seeing the Hussites as potential converts to Judaism.

The author proceeds to describe, partly as an eyewitness, the battles between the Germans and the Hussites during the 1420s. He dwells in particular on the grave anxiety that gripped German Jews in the summer of 1421, during the second crusade. Maharil dispatched letters to the German communities urging them to forestall the evil by undertaking a public fast. No more than ten days following that fast the German army was defeated at Saaz (2.10.1421), and the author attributes this deliverance directly to the fast. Maharil and R. Salman describe assaults on the Jews as the armies were gathering for war in Bohemia. Singled out in particular in this context was the expeditionary force from Barabant, which carried out attacks on the Jews of the Rheinland and the city of Neustadt, near Nuremberg. This obtuse information has been corroborated by a document in the Nuremberg archive,

and on the basis of the two sources the events of the summer of 1421, and the Jewish reaction to them, are reconstructed in detail. It appears that the Jewish perception of the political reality of 1421 was shaped in no small measure by the collective memory of the persecutions of 1096. The effective links of communication between the Jewish communities enabled them to take certain diplomatic precautionary steps, and these were not limited to the ritualistic sphere of activity. This would explain R. Salman's presence at the time in districts adjacent to Bohemia. He had been dispatched there by Maharil, who was the moving spirit behind the communities' efforts to organize their self-defense.

Following the collapse of the Hussite reformation, Jewish interest in the movement declined. R. Salman's story, which in part was a factual report, was transformed by the early 16th century into a complete historical fiction. R. Elijah Capsali heard the story during his visit to Padua, and incorporated it into his work '*Divrei ha-Yamim le-Malkhei Venezia*'. This version describes a mass conversion to Judaism among the Catholics, initiated by the Jews themselves. Consequently, the Jews were banished from the cities of Germany in the 15th century as a result of their detrimental influence. This version is clearly an apologetic one, which strives to draw a parallel between the expulsion of the Jews of Germany and the expulsion from Spain. By means of this comparison the *ashkenazim* in Italy could explain the reasons for their own migration to that land.

Appended to the article is a synoptic edition of the six different versions of the chronicle.

JACOB H. SCHIFF AND THE FINANCING OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR: A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF JEWISH DIPLOMACY

by Daniel Gutwein (pp. 321–350)

This article re-examines the accepted interpretation of Jacob Schiff's motives for playing a central role in the floating of Japanese war loans in 1904-1905. Most scholars have uncritically endorsed Schiff's own contention that he was motivated by his opposition to Russia's antisemitic rulers, and by his hope that a military defeat would trigger a change in the Russian leadership and its policies, including a liberalization of its Jewish policy.

However, the validity of Schiff's assertion that 'Jewish solidarity' was his sole motive may be challenged, by comparing the *modus operandi* of the traditional Court Jew with that of the modern Jewish economic elite. Schiff, it appears, was motivated by economic and

political interests as well. In floating the Japanese war loans he co-operated with businessmen, such as the Barings and Sir Ernst Cassell, with whom he already maintained close business and personal connections. These men belonged to the English political faction that supported British co-operation with the Franco-Russian alliance. A Japanese victory, they felt, might be instrumental in the restoring to power S. Witte, the former Russian finance minister and leader of the Russian 'peace party'. Witte had lost his position to V. von Plehve, the minister of the interior and leader of the 'war party'. Thanks to his pro-French and anti-German policies Witte enjoyed the support of the British 'Franco-Russian' faction. Moreover, as Russia's leading industrialist he was a long-standing ally of many of that faction's businessmen.

These economic and political considerations also suited Schiff's Jewish interests. While Witte was thought to be 'pro-Jewish', his rivals in the 'war party' and von Plehve in particular were believed to be antisemites.