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SUMMARIES

WAS THERE A 'HASKALAH' IN ENGLAND? RECONSIDERING AN OLD QUESTION

by David B. Ruderman (pp. 109–131)

The article reexamines the nature of Jewish intellectual life in England at the end of the eighteenth century. It re-visits the conclusions drawn by Cecil Roth in an essay published in 1967 on a supposed Haskalah in England and rigorously denied by Todd Endelman in several of his writings. Endelman's portrait of Jewish life in this era inhabited by assimilated aristocracy, middle class businessmen, pickpockets and pugilists, appears to leave too little room for Jewish intellectuals, either of the traditional or secular bent. Roth's inventory of Jewish intellectual life, while conceptually flawed and superficially argued, does constitute a standing invitation to re-examine the evidence for an intellectual life among English Jews in the period roughly simultaneous with that of the German Haskalah.

Without making any extravagant claims about the existence of a Haskalah in England, this essay looks more carefully at five intellectual figures briefly considered by Roth: Mordechai Gumpel Schnaber (1741–97), known as George Levison; Eliakim ben Abraham (1745–1814), known as Abraham Abrahams; David Levi (1742–1801); and Samuel Jacob Ḥayyim Falk (c. 1710–1782). All five figures were either born in London [Tang, Hart, Levi] or lived for many years there [Falk and Levison]. In either case, their intellectual agendas were primarily shaped by the English environment in which they lived.

While this group hardly represents a cohesive circle or an ideological movement, each of the five was probably aware of the others as well as their reflections about Judaism. A complete examination of these individuals, as well as others, suggests a fascinating engagement between English and Jewish thought. Despite the limited nature of this encounter, it is significant because of its specifically English character informed by intellectual currents primarily located on English soil and not imported generally from the continent. English Jews required neither the cultural image nor the philosophical ideas of Mendelssohn and his followers to precipitate their own ruminations on Judaism and general culture. Moreover, they articulated

their thinking quite openly and publicly in a tolerant social climate between Jews and Christians, also relatively unique to England.

Jewish thought as exemplified by this sampling includes the following themes; deism and atheism; Lockian psychology and its impact on religious faith; Physico-Theology and Newtonian physics, prophecy, miracles, and the excesses of 'enthusiasm'; pagan mythology, Euhemerism, and comparative religion; mysticism, magic, and masonry; millenarianism, Christian Hebraism, as well as the traditional field of Jewish-Christian polemics.

In the final analysis, these thinkers should be included in any full account of the social and cultural history of Anglo-Jewry in the modern era. In the case of Levi and Falk, their public impact within Jewish and Christian societies is beyond doubt. Hart and Levison on the other hand, left only a limited impression through their Hebrew publications, and the impact of Tang, perhaps England's most profound Jewish thinker in the eighteenth century, is still to be determined. But as the case of Tang illustrates, the historical importance of critical thinkers in any era cannot merely be reduced to their impact on other thinkers or readers. Tang's original discourses on Judaism, deism, and pagan mythology are important to the historian in suggesting the range of possibilities through which Jews were capable of conceptualizing their religion and culture in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Viewed comparatively with the thinking of Tang's four other contemporaries in England, they suggest real and vital engagement with English ideas, hardly indifference, among a small but highly original group of English Jews.

TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF JEWISH ENLIGHTENMENT EDUCATION IN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by Mordechai Zalkin (pp. 133–171)

The Jewish Enlightenment in Russia has been studied as an independent phenomenon since the end of the nineteenth century. However, the historical research has focused primarily on the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the phenomenon was of a more radical dimension. In contrast, this article concentrates on the first half of the nineteenth century, and is concerned with the evolution of the educational system that has received only limited attention. Much of the previous research into this area focused on the state-run schools for Jews, established in Russia in the 1840s as an outgrowth of the Official Enlightenment Plan.

This article argues that already at the end of the eighteenth century, innovative Maskilic educational initiatives emerged which consisted of attempts to establish a network of schools

and seminaries for teachers alongside the traditional educational system, that is, the 'Cheder' and the 'Yeshiva'. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a group of Polish intellectuals from the university of Vilna, with the assistance of Count A. Czartoryski, established a state-run seminar for Jewish teachers. This institute became very popular among the local Jews, and served as a catalyst for a wide range of private Maskilic schools, established by Maskilim in a large number of cities and towns, which included: Odessa in the south, Uman, Kishinev, Cherson, Grodno, Minsk, Mitau and Riga in the northern Baltic region. These schools, designed for both girls and boys, included both a vocational and a non-vocational curriculum, and operated on either a daily or a weekly basis. This new educational system had two specific purposes: firstly, to spread Maskilic ideas among large circles of the Jewish population, and secondly, to train young Jews to cope with the social and cultural contexts they would encounter. A social Maskilic circle formed the basis upon which this diverse and multifaceted educational network developed. The educational institutions with which the Russian Maskilim were involved in at the time developed side by side with the emergence of a social group of individuals, who actively supported these new ventures. These individuals were consumers of what can be clearly identified as Maskilic culture, modern Hebrew literature and journalism. Both the Maskilic circles and the group of supporters became a focus of social attention, engaging public interest, and contributed impressively to the spread of Enlightenment ideas and values. What emerges from this new reconstruction is that of a cultural phenomenon, which although it developed slowly, was nevertheless widely spread and constant.

The argument and evidence put forward in this article is based mainly on previously untapped archival material from three main sources – The State and National Lithuanian Archive, located in Vilna; the archive of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York, and the collections in the department of archives and manuscripts in the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. Two of these collections, the Ginsburg Collection and the Schwadron Collection, contain many revealing letters written by contemporary Maskilim.

ART AND JEWISH HISTORY: MAURYCZ GOTTlieb'S 'CHRIST PREACHING AT CAPERNAUM'

by Ezra Mendelsohn (pp. 173–191)

In 1878 the Galician-born Polish Jewish artist Maurycz Gottlieb arrived in Rome. There he began work on a large canvas known today as 'Christ Preaching at Capernaum'. This picture, never finished, is at present prominently displayed at the National Museum in Warsaw.

The article attempts a 'reading' of this painting by relating it to contemporary Jewish re-evaluations of Jesus' role in Jewish history and, in particular, to Gottlieb's peculiar position as a German-speaking Jew who hailed from the Polish lands and admired Polish history and culture. Gottlieb was associated with the 'integrationist camp' in Galicia and with its chief organization, Shomer Israel. The article argues that his painting gives visual expression to the 'integrationist' position held by some Polish and many Central European Jews of the time, which combined pride in the Jewish past and in the Jewish contribution to world civilization with a universalist message calling for brotherhood, toleration, and for a rapprochement between Jews and the majority population (in Gottlieb's case the Poles). It also claims that the picture raises some doubts as to whether Gottlieb really believed that this universalist message, the message of the Jewish prophets (including Jesus, here portrayed as very much a Jew), would ever triumph in a world divided by ethnic and religious conflict.

The article concludes by discussing, briefly, the reception of this painting, particularly in the Jewish world.