

The Poems in the *Barcelona Haggadah* A Literary Study

Since the *Haggadah* itself is a book intended uniquely for the home, it might seem strange that texts for the public service in the synagogue are appended to it. Yet a number of Sephardi illuminated *Haggadoth* of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries contain, in addition to the *Haggadah* proper, a group of *piyyutim*, “liturgical poems,” written specifically for the festival days and intermediate Sabbath of Passover, as well as for the Sabbath preceding the festival (*shabbath ha-gadol*).

Most of these poems, by some of the finest of medieval Hebrew poets, have no direct connection with the home ceremony of Passover. There are, however, exceptions. It is logical that a book for home use would include *’azharoth*—rhymed summaries of the religious regulations concerning Passover and the Passover home ceremony, the *Seder*—since, although *’azharoth* are routinely recited on the Sabbath preceding Passover, it made good sense to include them in the *Haggadah* as useful guides for the complicated preparations for and procedures during the *Seder*. One could equally explain the appearance of poem 5,* “A watch-night this,” [*Lel Shimmurim*] since the poem is for the eve of Passover, and the owners of these volumes may have wished to have the entire liturgy for the evening, both at synagogue and in the home, available in one book. Yet this factor does not explain why texts belonging to the public services for other days of the festival were added to *Haggadah* manuscripts. It is conceivable that the custom harks back to before the thirteenth century, when the *Haggadah* was not yet regarded as a separate book, and was presented as part of larger prayerbooks containing all the Passover texts, or even those for other festivals too.¹

* The Poem numbers refer to the translation of texts in the *Commentary* volume of the facsimile edition of *The Barcelona Haggadah* (London, 1992), pp. 75-171

1 See Bezalel Narkiss, *The Golden Haggadah* (London, 1970), pp. 10-11.

ובאשר הראשון יתברך לא יקיף בו מקום ובאשר מדרגת קדושתו למעלה ממדרגת
אלה הנקראים שכליים יאמרו קצת נכבדינו: צרו מקומות מהכילך / וישחו מרומות
מסבול גדלך / ותכו אדמות לפעמי רגליך / ועל גב חכמות נתקעו אהליך / כי אין
מחניף אהל ואולם.

Concerning [the claims that the First, may He be blessed, is not encircled by a place and that the grade of His holiness is above the grades of these [entities] that are called "intellects," some of our venerable people said, Places are narrow from encompassing You and heights are bent down from bearing Your greatness. Lands melt at Your footsteps, and upon Wisdom is Your tent thrust, because Your camp is not in a tent or a hall.²²

This passage is much simpler than the previous one. In it, Ibn Giat expresses the old Rabbinic doctrine, based on biblical antecedents, according to which the world is not the place of God but God is the place of the world.²³ This idea is found frequently in the poems of the classic Golden Age poets, and as shown by Aron Mirsky, its frequent use is caused by the connection between these poems and the basic philosophic-theological work by Bahya ibn Pakuda, *Duties of the Heart*.²⁴ It is the cardinal belief in the incorporeality of God and, for that reason, finds its place in many liturgical poems of the Spanish school. Mirsky collected a number of such passages from the poems of Ibn Gabirol and Judah Halevi.²⁵ Ibn Giat's words, as quoted by Ibn Daud, may now be added to them.

22 *Ibid.*, Hebrew section, p. 323 (162b, 11.5-9); English section, p. 180. The quotation is from a poem beginning: "שירו לאלהים" see Davidson, *op. cit.*, letter shin (supplements in vol. 4), number 54. The best text of this poem is the one published by Joseph Marcus in *Sinai*, vol. 56 (1965), pp. 22-23. See also: David, *op. cit.*, pp. 474-475. In Ibn Daud's text the word צרו became corrupted into סרו, therefore the mistranslation: "Place turn aside." The translation of תכו as "melted" was left intact for lack of a better one.

23 See A. Marmorstein, *The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God* (London, 1927), pp. 92-93 and Altmann and Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 126, note 1.

24 A. Mirsky, "Hebrew Poems from Spain Based on the Second Gate (*Sha'ar Ha-Behina*) of R. Bahya Ibn Paquda's *Hovot Ha-Levavot*," in *Tarbiz*, vol. 50 (1980-1981), pp. 303-338 and his article on the same subject in *Hebrew Language Studies Presented to Professor Zeev Ben-Hayyim* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1983), pp. 383-406.

25 Mirsky, in *Tarbiz*, *ibid.*, pp. 333-334.

created world as one of gradation, beginning with the loftiest emanation, namely that of Wisdom and descending through various stages to the material world. For the earliest stage of emanation (for the moment at which it begins), Ibn Gabirol and Ibn Giat use the word: to split, בקע or the synonymous גזר. Both words are used in the Bible for the splitting of waters, e.g. in Genesis 7:11, Exodus 14:21, Psalms 136:13, etc. In Isaiah 58:8, the passive of *baka'* occurs in connection with the spreading of light. Both poets, indeed, employ metaphors of light and water in describing the process of emanation. In Ibn Gabirol we read: ...תַּחֲכֵמָה מְקוֹר חַיִּים מִמֶּךָ נֹבַעַת... וְשׂוֹאֵב מִמְּקוֹר הָאוֹר מִבְּלִי דָלִי... וְקָרָא אֶל הָאֵין וְנִבְקַע light it draws... and He called out to nothingness and it was split),¹⁸ while Ibn Giat says: גִּזְרֵי חֲכָמוֹת גִּבְהוּ גִזְרֵי וּמִקְוֵיהֶם גִּבְרוּ... גַּל עֵינֹת שָׁכַל (God split apart lofty Wisdom; its fountains swelled; a wave of the springs of Intellect), and in the second passage: זוֹהֵרֵי חֲכָמָה (splendours of Wisdom). It seems, therefore, plausible to suggest that in order to convey the idea of Wisdom emanating from God which bears in itself the diversity of subsequent creation, writers in the Arabic tradition as well as in Hebrew poetry employ the word “to split,” implying by this the unity of a first substance “which... is the substratum of diversity.”¹⁹ “To split” is, then, the beginning of the process of emanation, which is further described through metaphors of sources of light and fountains of water.²⁰

If we now return to Abraham ibn Daud, we can clearly see the purpose of his quoting this passage by Ibn Giat. Ibn Daud's chapter, in which this quotation is used to support his thesis (called כְּתוּבִים מְעִידִים, “what scriptural verses testify about the above”) deals with the order of the universe and especially with the philosophical problem of “what is called the ‘Many from the One’.”²¹ Ibn Daud recalls this passage from Ibn Giat to prove that there is a chain of intermediaries between the One (God) and the Many (the diversity of the created universe).

The second quotation from one of Ibn Giat's poems occurs in the same chapter of *The Exalted Faith*. It reads:

18 *Keter Malkhut*, section 9, ed. Seidman (see above note 16), pp. 20-24.

19 Altmann and Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

20 [See now: Adena Tanenbaum, *The Contemplative Soul: Hebrew Poetry and Philosophical Theory in Medieval Spain* (Leiden, Brill, 2002), pp. 106-107.]

21 *The Exalted Faith* (see above note 1), p. 169.

The second quotation may be rendered as follows:

Your deeds are: At the beginning You created the splendors of Wisdom. Their nature is beyond comprehension and those who ponder it say: how mighty are Your deeds.

Your deeds are: from the light of wisdom You brought into existence the element of Intellect, which is like the radiance of fire...

Your deeds are: from the radiance of the Intellect You brought forth the Soul...

The similarity with Isaac Israeli's text and with *Ibn Hasday's Neoplatonist* is evident, and it is safe to assume that all three were using a common source, probably an Arabic treatise, as Stern indeed had proposed in connection with Israeli and the *Neoplatonist*.¹⁵

Let us now return to the quotation found in *The Exalted Faith*. What is the exact meaning of the root גזר in גזר גבור חכמות גבור? What did Abraham ibn Daud intend to prove with Ibn Giat's verses?

Solomon ibn Gabirol in his *Royal Crown*, when describing creation, says: וְקָרָא אֶל הָעֵץ וְנִבְקַע (and He called out to nothingness and it was split).¹⁶ The Hebrew root גזר is synonymous with the Hebrew root בקע. Accordingly, we may consider Ibn Giat's passage as parallel to Ibn Gabirol's. In both, the process of creation, at its very beginning, is described with the help of a verb that means: to split. Shlomo Pines proved that the verb בקע in Ibn Gabirol resembles a usage found in a passage occurring in a treatise by Avicenna. Pines also places the use of the Arabic equivalent, the root *falaka*, in the context of writings which present the reader with an image of the created universe in its various gradations.¹⁷ This is, of course, also the context of the *Royal Crown*, as pointed out by Pines. We may now add Ibn Giat's poem to this group. This long poem, which consists of many parts, also has as its subject the presentation of the

his *Ha-Askola ha-Paytanit shel Rav Sa'adya Gaon* (Jerusalem: The Schocken Institute, 1964), p. 105. The meaning of the phrase is as in the singular and it was translated accordingly, to avoid using the awkward "Wisdoms."

15 *Op. cit.*, p. 96.

16 Section 9; See *Keter Malkhut*, ed. by Y.A. Seidman (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1950), p. 24.

17 Shlomo Pines, "'And He called out to nothingness and it was split' — A Note on a Passage in Ibn Gabirol's *Keter Malkhut*," in *Tarbiz*, vol. 50 (1980-1981), pp. 339-347.

The latter passage can best be understood by comparing it to the following statement that occurs in Isaac Israeli's *Chapter on the Elements*:

Aristotle the philosopher and master of the wisdom of the Greeks said: The beginning of all roots is two simple substances: one of them is first matter, which receives form and is known to the philosophers as the root of roots. It is the first substance which subsists in itself and is the substratum of diversity. The other is substantial form, which is ready to impregnate matter. It is perfect wisdom, pure radiance, and clear splendour, by the conjunction of which with first matter the nature and form of intellect came into being, because it [intellect] is composed of them [matter and form]. After the nature, form, and radiance of intellect had come into being, a radiance and splendour went forth from it. From this the nature of the rational soul came into being.¹¹

As shown by S.M. Stern, the above is in accordance with the doctrine of emanation as found in the so-called *Ibn Hasday's Neoplatonist*.¹² The author of this treatise as well as Isaac Israeli discuss the degrees of emanation and particularly the gradation of the intensity of light in the process of emanation. Concerning this, Isaac Israeli says: "Regarding the quality of emanation of the light from the power and the will, we have already made it clear that its beginning is different from its end, and the middle from both extremes, and this for the following reason: when its beginning emanated from the power and the will, it met no shade or darkness to make it dim or coarse."¹³

We have placed Ibn Giat's verses into the framework of ideas concerning the theory of emanation. We may attempt to paraphrase them as follows:

God split apart loftly Wisdom; its fountains swelled and did not diminish; a wave of the springs of Intellect emanated from Him and this was the beginning of God's works.¹⁴

11 A. Altmann and S.M. Stern, *Isaac Israeli: A Neoplatonic Philosopher of the Early Tenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 119.

12 *Op. cit.*, p. 98.

13 *Op. cit.*, p. 88 and see also p. 102.

14 The scriptural verses which are reflected in this passage are the following: Psalms 136:13, Genesis 7:19-20; Genesis 47:13; Job 40:19. The use of the plural in *חכמות גבור* has a parallel in one of Saadia Gaon's poems where we read: *תבונותיך גבור*. This was pointed out by M. Zulay in

the philosophy of Ibn Giat, and the commentary could now also be utilized for the understanding of some difficult poetic passages in his work.⁶

Ibn Giat's religious poetry received very scant attention in recent times and very little, if anything, is published about him in English.⁷ This, of course, is to be regretted, since Ibn Giat was a central figure in eleventh century Spanish Jewry and was highly regarded as a halakhist and as a poet.⁸

In the present paper, the two passages quoted by Abraham ibn Daud will be examined.

Abraham ibn Daud's first quotation is from Ibn Giat's monumental composition for the morning service of the Day of Atonement. It reads:

אמרו קצת חשובי אומתנו וחכמיה ומשורריה' גִּזְרֵי חֲכָמוֹת גָּבְהוּ / גִּזְרֵי וּמִקּוּרֵיהֶם
גָּבְרוּ וְלֹא לָהוּ / גַּל עֵינֹת שֶׁכֶּל יֵצֵא מִנְהוּ / וְהוּא / רִאשִׁית דְּרָכֶי אֵל.⁹

In order to understand this passage, we must look for aid in other places in Ibn Giat's compositions, which will, perhaps, shed light on this rather difficult sentence. Elsewhere in the Day of Atonement liturgy, Ibn Giat writes:

מַעֲשֵׂיךָ זֶהְרֵי חֲכָמָה רִאשִׁית יִצִּירוֹת נִצְרוּ / חֲקֵי תְכֵנִיתָם מִהֲשִׁיג גָּבְרוּ / טוֹעֲמֶיךָ טַעְמוֹ
וְרֵאוּ וְאָמְרוּ / לֵאלֹהִים מָה נִרְאָ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ.

מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יִסּוֹד שֶׁכֶּל מְאוֹר חֲכָמָה נִמְצָא / כְּנִגְהָ אֵשׁ וּמֵן הָאֵשׁ בָּרַק יֵצֵא / מַעֲשֵׂיךָ מִנְגְּהָ
הַשֶּׁכֶל נְבוֹנָתִי / נִמְצָאוּ נִשְׁמוֹת עַד לֹא נִמְצָאתִי.¹⁰

6 In *Hamesh Megillot 'im Perushim 'Atikim*, edited by Joseph Kafih (Jerusalem, 1962), pp. 161-296. See S. Pines in *Tarbiz*, vol. 33 (1964), pp. 212-213; G. Vajda in *Historia Judaica*, vol. 2 (1963), p. 450; S. Abramson, *Rav Nissim Gaon* (Jerusalem, 1965), p. 305, note 1.

7 See the brief selections from his poetry in *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*, edited and translated by T. Carmi (Middlesex, England and New York: Penguin Books, 1981), pp. 103-104; 317-320.

8 See Abraham Ibn Daud, *The Book of Tradition (Sefer ha-Qabbalah)*, Critical edition and notes by Gerson D. Cohen (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1967), Hebrew Section, pp. 60-61; English section, pp. 81-82 and Moshe ibn Ezra, *Kitab al-Muhadara wal-Mudhakara*, edited by A.S. Halkin (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1975), pp. 72-73.

9 *The Exalted Faith* (see above, note 1), Hebrew section, p. 324 (160b, 11.7-9); English section, p. 179. The composition begins: "וארץ אכך", see: Israel Davidson, *Thesaurus of Mediaeval Hebrew Poetry*, 4 volumes (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1924-1933) (reprint: New York: Ktav Publishing, 1970), letter vav, number 66. The quotation is from the first section; see also: Yonah David, *The Poems of Rabbi Isaac ibn Ghiyyat*; a tentative edition (Jerusalem: Akhshav, 1987), p. 7.

10 Davidson, *op. cit.*, letter mem, number 2056; David, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

Two Philosophical Passages in the Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Isaac Ibn Giat

Abraham ibn Daud, in his *The Exalted Faith*,¹ regularly quotes Scripture to bear testimony to the various philosophical opinions expounded by him. It is quite amazing that Abraham ibn Daud's prooftexts rarely, if ever, contain references to post-biblical sources, but, on the other hand, include two passages as prooftexts from Isaac ibn Giat's poetry. This clearly indicates that, in the view of Abraham ibn Daud, Ibn Giat's poetry offers valid and authoritative statements relating to metaphysical themes.

In the nineteenth century, the father of modern research in the history of medieval Hebrew poetry, Leopold Zunz, pointed out that Isaac ibn Giat's religious poetry contains interesting information on Jewish philosophy, as well as on the history of sciences among the Jews.² Other nineteenth century scholars, Leopold Dukes,³ Michael Sachs⁴ and David Kaufmann,⁵ also used Ibn Giat's poetry as a source of philosophical and scientific knowledge.

In 1962, Ibn Giat's Arabic commentary on Ecclesiastes was published for the first time, although the existence of the work had been known previously. With the publication of this work, new insights were gained into

- 1 Abraham ibn Daud, *The Exalted Faith*; translated with commentary by Norbert M. Samuelson. Translation edited by Gershon Weiss (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1986).
- 2 Leopold Zunz, *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie* (Berlin, 1865), p. 195.
- 3 Leopold Dukes, "Die naturhistorischen Hymnen des Isak ibn Gioth," in: *Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, vol. 8 (1859), pp. 118-121.
- 4 Michael Sachs, *Die religiöse Poesie der Juden in Spanien*. 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1901), pp. 262-263.
- 5 David Kaufmann, *Die Sinne* (Budapest, 1884), pp. 30, 40, 44, 51, 84, 93, 124, 139. Also in his *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt, 1908-1915), vol. 1, p. 246 and in his *Studien über Salomon ibn Gabirol* (Budapest, 1899), p. 102 and in his notes to S.J. Halberstamm's edition of Judah bar Barzillai al-Bargeloni's commentary to *Sefer Yezira* (Berlin, 1885), p. 345.

Whether we find the story connected with *ta shema* or *u-netanneh tokef* or both, many literary and liturgical questions and problems remain. A search for versions of the Rabbi Amnon story in other manuscripts of the *Or Zarua*, in collections of stories, in liturgical commentaries, and in machzor manuscripts as well as printed editions, may one day yield some solutions to the puzzles posed by this widely known martyrological story. For now, the Amsterdam manuscript of *Sefer Or Zarua* continues to serve as the starting point of all inquiry into the history of the story of Rabbi Amnon of Mainz.

READING

- E.G.L. Schrijver, "Some Light on the Amsterdam and London Manuscripts of Isaak ben Moses of Vienna's 'Or Zarua'," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library Manchester* 73.3 (1993).
E.E. Urbach, [Introduction to] *Sefer Arugat Ha-Bosem* 4 (Jerusalem, 1963), p. 40, n. 92.

commentary on liturgical hymns. In a recent article, Ivan Marcus has argued convincingly that the Amnon story reflects the social and cultural reality of Ashkenazi Jewry in the late twelfth century, the time of Rabbi Ephraim.¹ The connection between the contents of *u-netanneh tokef* and martyrology, however, is unclear. In *u-netanneh tokef* there are no references to events or circumstances in the story itself, and it is devoid of any allusions to martyrology. Also deserving scrutiny is the problem of tracing the route or transmission of the Rabbi Amnon story through the ages.

On the basis of a very limited and preliminary search, it seems that unlike the standard printed machzorim, medieval manuscripts did not routinely place the Rabbi Amnon story alongside *u-netanneh tokef*. A.N.Z. Roth in his study mentions only one manuscript, a machzor (Jewish National and University Library, 8^o 3037, beginning of the fourteenth century) in which the commentary to *u-netanneh tokef* includes the story, although in a version different from the one in the *Or Zarua*.² Roth refers to a Hamburg manuscript, dated 1317, where *u-netanneh tokef* is identified as the *silluk* (a type of *piyyut*) of Rabbi Amnon, but without the story itself. In printed editions the story first appears in the Bologna 1540 Roman Machzor and in the Venice 1600 Ashkenazi Machzor.

The occurrence in an edition of *selichot* published in Prague in 1587 of a somewhat different version of the Rabbi Amnon story from the one commonly circulating presents a surprising twist. In this source, the story appears before the selichah *ta shema*, written by the previously mentioned Ephraim of Bonn. We are told that before he died as a result of the mutilation he had suffered, Rabbi Amnon composed two poems, *ta shema* and *u-netanneh tokef*. The chronicles *Shalshet Ha-Kabbalah* by Gedaliah ibn Yahya (1515-1578) and *Tzemach David* by the Prague rabbi and scholar David Ganz (1541-1613) also mention *ta shema* along with *u-netanneh tokef* as having been authored by Rabbi Amnon. In fact, on the basis of the content of *ta shema*, it may make more sense to attach the Rabbi Amnon story to it than to connect it to *u-netanneh tokef*.³

1 I.G. Marcus, "Kiddush ha-shem be-ashkenaz we-sippur Rabbi Amnon mi-Magenza," in: I.M. Gafni et al., eds., *Sanctity of Life and Martyrdom: Studies in Memory of Amir Yekutiel* (Jerusalem, 1992), pp. 131-147 (in Hebrew).

2 A.N.Z. Roth, "U-netanneh tokef ve-ha-ir Magenza," *Hadoar* 44.36 (1964) pp. 650-651.

3 Menahem H. Schmelzer, "Maaseh Rabbi Amnon ve-ha-selicha ta shema", *Hadoar* 44.38 (1964) p. 734 [see Hebrew section, pp. 188-189].

Sefer Or Zarua and the Legend of Rabbi Amnon

A highly important Hebrew manuscript at the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana is a late thirteenth-century copy of the famous halakhic work *Sefer Or Zarua* by Rabbi Isaac ben Moses of Vienna (c. 1180-c. 1250). It was from this manuscript, one of only two surviving medieval copies, that the first edition of the work was published in Zhytomir in 1862. The *Or Zarua* preserves one of the earliest, if not the very earliest version of the story of Rabbi Amnon. At the end of the laws concerning Rosh Ha-Shana, Rabbi Isaac of Vienna recorded in the name of Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn (1133-after 1197) that a great and pious scholar in Mainz, Rabbi Amnon, had been the target of a conversion attempt by the local ruler. Under the continued enticement of the ruler, Rabbi Amnon once faltered in his steadfastness. He deeply regretted this momentary hesitation and henceforth refused to appear before the ruler, whereupon the latter ordered his mutilation. With his last ounce of strength, Rabbi Amnon asked to be carried to the synagogue on Rosh Ha-Shana. When the cantor reached the Kedushah prayer, Rabbi Amnon interrupted him and recited the hymn *u-netanneh tokef*. He passed away immediately afterwards. Three days later he appeared in a dream to Rabbi Kalonymos ben Rabbi Meshullam and taught him the hymn that has since become a regular component of the Rosh Ha-Shana liturgy for Ashkenazi and Italian Jewry.

Much has been written about this story, about whether or not Rabbi Amnon was a historical figure; about the liturgical-literary problem concerning the hymn, the text of which antedates the time in which Rabbi Amnon was supposed to have lived; and about the historical setting that gave birth to the story, all of which have been subject to scholarly inquiry.

The attribution of the story to Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn is of special relevance. Rabbi Ephraim was the author of a chronicle, *Sefer Zekhirah*, on the Crusades and other anti-Jewish persecutions; of liturgical poems, some of which commemorate the martyrdom of Jewish victims; and of a

of the above, Ibn Gabirol's treatment of the passage provides a better understanding of the original intent of R. Eleazar.

Ibn Gabirol's surprising interpretation should not be attributed to poetic license alone; he may have possessed a tradition according to which the word צדקה in the passage in *Bereshit Rabba* (and parallels) referred to God's mercy and not to the giving of charity. Ibn Gabirol's *Kether Malkhuth* is the only surviving testimony of this interpretation.

rabbinic exegesis: *וישובו מדרכם הרעה: הרי תשובה* and *ויתפללו: הרי תפלה*. These are very simple, straightforward “midrashim”. This is not so, however, in the case of the third phrase: *ויבקשו פני: הרי צדקה*. Indeed, for this exegesis the midrash needs a prooftext: *היאך דאת אמר אני בצדק אחזה פניך (תה' יז טו)*. *היאך דאת אמר אני בצדק אחזה פניך* means to seek the face of God, that is, to gain God’s attention and favor;¹⁷ in other words, to seek God’s mercy. Therefore, *צדקה*, as the rabbinic exegesis of *ויבקשו פני*, may be interpreted by Ibn Gabirol as mercy in the abstract sense, and as God’s mercy.¹⁸ That *צדקה* and *רחמים* are equated is known from the Babylonian Talmud: *חסד זו גמילת חסדים רחמים זו צדקה*; but there *צדקה* clearly means the giving of charity.¹⁹ In the statement by R. Eleazar, as interpreted by Ibn Gabirol, it refers to God’s mercy. Possibly, this could have been the original intent of the midrashic passage as well.

Now the prooftext makes sense, too. Ps. 17.15 (*אני בצדק אחזה פניך*) was chosen to “prove” that *ויבקשו פני* means *צדקה* in the sense of God’s mercy. If one would want to bring a prooftext to indicate that *צדקה* means charity, Prov. 10.2 (*וצדקה תציל ממות*) would be more to the point. This is, indeed, the prooftext in R. Yitzhak’s statement, quoted above,²⁰ and it serves to demonstrate the merit of charity in rabbinic literature.²¹

Through this interpretation, Ibn Gabirol lends a new dimension to the midrashic statement and to its liturgical derivation. Man can do two things to combat the *gezerah* (in Ibn Gabirol’s understanding, the machinations of the evil inclination): engage in worship (*תפלה-עבודה*) and repent. If these two fail, one can only rely on God’s mercy. Although the giving of charity is a great and meritorious deed, it is not in the same category as prayer and penitence. One could argue that some other deed could easily be substituted for charity, but not for prayer and penitence. Instead of singling out just one good deed, we would rather expect a more general category, such as for example the frequently used *מעשים טובים*, as in the expression *תשובה ומעשים טובים*.²² In light

17 See C.L. Mayers and E.M. Mayers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8* AB, 25B (New York, 1987), p. 438.

18 It may be just a coincidence, but it is interesting to note that in a poem by Yannai for Rosh hashanah (*The Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Yannai* [ed. Z.M. Rabinovitz; Jerusalem, 1987], p. 199, line 13) we read *וצדקה מפרשת צדקה מבקשת*. The sense of the line is that Israel seeks *צדקה* (from God). Does the midrashic passage, *ויבקשו פני: הרי צדקה*, reverberate here? Does Yannai understand the passage in the Midrash the same way as Ibn Gabirol?

19 *B.B. Bat.* 10a.

20 See above, n. 5.

21 E.g. in *b. Sab.* 156b.

22 E.g. in *m. Ab.* 4.11; 4.17; *b. Ber.* 17a; *b. Sab.* 32a, etc.

כי אמרתי: אם יבוא יצרי אל המחנה האחת והכהו — והיה המחנה הנשאר
לפליטה, וכאשר חשבתי, כן היה: והנה גבר עלי, והפיץ חילי, ולא נשאר אלי, כי
אם מחנה רחמך.¹³

I am unworthy of all the mercies and of all the truth that Thou hast dispensed to Thy servant... for Thou hast put a holy soul in me... and with my evil imagining I profaned it... my cruel temper stands firm by my right hand... how many times did I go forth to fight against him and order the company of my worship and my penitence, putting the company of Thy mercies before me to help me. For I said: if my temper “comes to the one company and smites it, then the other company which is left shall escape.” And as I thought, so it was. For he prevailed over me, and scattered my warriors, and nothing remained to me but the company of Thy mercies.¹⁴

It seems that this passage alludes to R. Eleazar’s statement. The three “companies” are worship, penitence and God’s mercy. They are the ones that are mobilized against the evil inclination (evil imagining or temper, in the above translation). In the *Tanhuma*,¹⁵ too, the triad serves as an antidote against the evil inclination. It seems plausible to suggest that ibn Gabirol’s source is the *Tanhuma*. Ibn Gabirol, however, understood צדקה in R. Eleazar’s statement as God’s mercy and not as the giving of charity. This can easily be done if one understands the word according to one of its many biblical nuances. While in rabbinic literature צדקה denotes charity, in the Bible it may mean many things, including God’s love, compassion, mercy, etc.¹⁶

However, a question remains: is it appropriate to interpret צדקה, occurring in a midrash, in its biblical sense? Let us now take a look at the midrash again. Two of the phrases in 2 Chron. 7.14 easily support their

13 Paragraph 36 (Jerusalem: Y. A. Seidmann, 1950), pp. 76-78.

14 Solomon ibn Gabirol, *The Kingly Crown*, trans. B. Lewis (London, 1961), p. 58. See also R. Loewe, *Ibn Gabirol* (New York, 1990), pp. 150-51.

15 See above, p. 292 n. 2.

16 See the various biblical dictionaries. See also A. Hurvitz, “The Biblical Roots of a Talmudic Term: The Early History of the Concept צדקה (=charity, alms),” in *Mekharim be-lashon* (Jerusalem, 1987), pp. 155-60. I am grateful to David Marcus for calling this paper to my attention.

This phenomenon is, of course, quite odd. There is no other passage in the prayerbook with a similar attempt of definition. Why the superimposition of these “explanations”? It is suggested here that the placing of the three words on top of the original triad is connected with the issue of its sequence, namely, that the three superimposed letter-numerals that originally indicated the “proper” sequence ultimately evolved into the three superimposed words. In at least two printed commentaries to ונתנה תקף, we read:

ומהר"י היה אומ' ותשובה ותפלה וצדקה ודלא כסדר הפסוקים ושקולים זה כזה
דכל א' [חד] בגי' [מטריא] קל"ו: צו"ם קו"ל ממון¹².

Mahari, probably identical with Maharil, justified the deviation of the liturgical text from that of the midrashic one in the following ingenious way: since the numerical value of three words, which are “synonymous” with the original three words of the triad, comes to the same amount, it does not actually matter in what order one recites them; ignore the superimposed *letter-numerals*, which try to tell you that the sequence is wrong. Pay attention, instead, to the superimposed *words* and their numerical value. Since it is the same for all three, 136 for צו"ם and קו"ל as well as for ממון there is no need to worry about the sequence of תשובה ותפלה וצדקה. Apparently, the previous explanation, about “preparing the ground” was found wanting, and, therefore, a supplemental reason, based on *gematria*, was advanced.

The identification of צדקה as ממון (money) seems natural. After all, the word means giving charity in rabbinic and post-rabbinic parlance. This is how the word, as it appears in the midrashic passage and in ונתנה תקף, is universally understood. There is only one possible exception: a passage in Solomon ibn Gabirol's *Kether Malkhuth*. This religious poem was intended as a private devotion for Yom Kippur. In it we read:

קטנתי מכל החסדים ומכל האמת אשר עשית את עבדך ... כי נתת בי נפש קדושה...
וביצרי הרע חללתיה... יצרי האכזר נצב על ימיני לשטני... וכמה פעמים יצאתי
להלחם עמו וערכתי מחנה עבודתי ותשובתי ושמתי מחנה רחמיך לעזרתי:

12 *Mahzor* (Cracow, 1585) f. 21a and *Mahzor* (Venice, 1600), with commentary *Hadrath Kodesh*, f. 72b. The same comment is found in a marginal manuscript note in the copy of a *Mahzor Ashkenaz* (Salonika, 1555-1556), the verso of quire 8.1, in the Library of JTS, 1758.2. In this *Mahzor* one also finds the superimposed letters over the three words.

וכת' הרא"ק שיש לומר ותפלה וצדקה ותשובה כסדר הפסוק ואין לשנות כלל.⁹

On the other hand, Rabbi Jacob Moellin (the Maharil; Germany, 14-15th century) advocates the conventional order. Since he is aware of the weighty argument against the common reading, which is based on the original sequence of the Midrash, he has to defend the prevalent practice and find justification for it. Accordingly, he advances the following explanation:

ותשובה ותפלה וצדקה ודלא כסדר הקראי ואמר ותשובה ותפלה ר"ל ע"י התשובה הקדומה לתפלה ולצדקה על דרך נירו לכם ניר (ירמ' ד ג).¹⁰

תשובה, placed before the two others, alludes, according to Maharil, to the need of "preparing the ground" for the effectiveness of תפלה וצדקה. As if תשובה would be needed to break the untilled ground (Jer. 3.4) so that sowing (and not amidst thorns) may follow.

The controversy about the proper order of the words cannot be documented before the 14-15th centuries. Therefore, it should be assumed that the appearance of superimposed letters in older *mahzor* manuscripts indicates later additions.¹¹

The origin of another tradition in connection with this triad may be explained as a result of the controversy concerning its proper sequence. Worshippers are familiar with the way תשובה ותפלה וצדקה appear in the printed editions of most *mahzorim*. Above each of the words, in smaller type, a kind of identification appears. It looks like this:

ממון	קול	צום
צדקה	תפלה	תשובה

9 Handwritten marginal note in the printed *Mahzor* (Prague, 1522-1525), see previous note. This remark is not found in *Minhagim* of Rabbi Abraham Klausner (ed. Y.Y. Dissen; Jerusalem, 1978).

10 See *Sefer Maharil: Minhagim shel R. Yaakov Moellin*, ed. Sh. Y. Spitzer (Jerusalem, 1989), pp. 294-95.

11 That the suggestions for changing the order are late may also be seen from the comments of R. Moses Mat (Poland, 16th cent.). In his *Matteh Mosheh* (Cracow, 1591), 144a, paragraph 819 (in later editions: 818) he writes:

ואומר ונתנה תקף ואח"כ ותשובה ותפלה וצדקה, כך נמצא בכל המחזורים, חדשים גם ישנים. רק חדשים מקרוב באו אומרים ותפלה וצדקה ותשובה על פי המדרש, אמר ר' יודן וכו' ונראה דאין לשנות כלל כמו שכתב בדרשות מהרי"ל וזה לשון מהרי"ל שגגה היא ביד המגיהים את הספרים של הצבור וכו'... ומי יודע מה היא כוונת המסדר ואפשר שהיה כוונתו על דרך הנעלם סוד... לכן אין לשנות, וכן ראיתי כל רבותי נוהגים... וכל המשנה ידו על התחתונה.

In R. Eleazar's homily, based on 2 Chron. 7.14, the sequence of the triad is: first תפלה, followed by צדקה, and concluded by תשובה. Whether by design or by chance, the sequence of the words in the *Tanhuma* is different. Here we find תשובה, תפלה, צדקה. It is the order of the *Tanhuma* which has found its way into the liturgical hymn, ונתנה תקף. We recall that it is also the *Tanhuma* that connects the three to the evil inclination. Since ונתנה תקף follows the order of the *Tanhuma*, and not that of the other sources, and, furthermore, since in the liturgical setting of Rosh ha-shanah judgment of sins (caused by evil inclination) plays such a central role, it is plausible to suggest that the anonymous author of ונתנה תקף used the *Tanhuma* (or a source similar to it) as his inspiration.

The deviation from the sequence of the three things as enumerated in the original midrashic exegesis did not escape the attention of medieval liturgists. On the other hand, in modern times the issue has been forgotten completely. No trace of it is left in present liturgical practice and for that matter, it is hardly even mentioned in scholarly literature.⁷ A cursory examination of just a few medieval and early modern manuscripts as well as printed *mahzorim* yields some interesting information relating to a debate among Rabbis concerning the proper sequence of the triad. In some *mahzorim* we find small letters above the three words, indicating a different order.⁸ The text in these sources looks like this:

ב	א	ג
וצדקה	ותפלה	ותשובה

There is no doubt that the superimposed letters try to restore the order of the original homily, as derived by R. Eleazar from the Biblical verse. Still, in no *mahzor* was the conventional sequence changed in the body of the text itself. It was only some commentator, owner or scribe who indicated the "correct" sequence by superimposing letters, thereby disapproving of the order as normally found in ונתנה תקף. The sources also give explicit explanation for the graphic signs. It is reported in the name of Rabbi Abraham Klausner (Austria, 14-15th century):

7 W. Bacher, *Die Agadah der palaestinisches Amoraer*, II (Strassburg, 1896), p. 13 n. 3 refers to the different sequence in the *u-netanneh tokef*. Bacher's observation is quoted by Theodor in his *Minhath Yehuda to Bereshith Rabba*, top of p. 435.

8 Ms. Oxford, Opp. 166, Neubauer, Catalogue, 1160, f. 49a; JTS, Ms. 4843, f. 85b; *Mahzor* (Prague, 1522-25) (printed), I, for *mussaf* for first day of Rosh ha-shanah.

In the Babylonian Talmud, R. Yitzhak suggests four remedies for averting the severe decree:

צדקה, צעקה, שינוי השם, שינוי מעשה

sedaqah, crying out (prayer), change of name, change of deed.⁵

The original context of R. Yitzhak's statement is not indicated, but it is likely that he said it in connection with averting destiny declared upon an individual by the stars, and not brought upon himself by his evil deeds. Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain why שינוי השם would be considered useful to change the divine judgment.

Three of R. Yitzhak's four things match the triad of R. Eleazar. צעקה (crying out) obviously corresponds to תפלה, as does שינוי מעשה (changing of deed) to penitence (תשובה). צדקה is the same in both sources. Still, there is an important difference: in R. Yitzhak's statement the proof-text for צדקה is וצדקה תציל ממוט (Prov. 11.4, But *sedaqah* saves from death), while, as we recall, R. Eleazar's proof-text is Ps. 17.15, "Then I, *be-sedeq* will behold Your face." We shall return to this discrepancy below. It is obvious that various strains are discernible in these traditions about *gezerah* or *gezar din*. They include destiny determined by stars, foretold by dreams, caused by the evil inclination or declared in God's annual judgment of human beings according to their deeds. The recommended acts to avert fate resulting from any of the above, however, always include prayer, penitence and *sedaqah*. That these matters are commingled in the various sources indicates, the complexity of the concept of destiny on the New Year in Ancient Israel and in rabbinic Judaism. It is obvious that the change of year brings with it a change of fate. At first, this fate was probably conceived as determined by astrology, and only later by the individual's good (or evil) ways.⁶ It would be interesting to attempt to trace the evolution of this concept in the literature, but let us instead turn our attention to some other matters relating to the occurrence of the triad in the liturgy of the Days of Awe.

5 B. Roš. Haš. 16b.

6 See N.H. Snaith, *The Jewish New Year Festival: Its Origins and its Development* (London, 1947), esp. pp. 73ff; 165ff; 217f. The various meanings of *gezerah* are also discussed in traditional Jewish sources, see, e.g. Samuel Ashkenazi, *Yefeh Toar*, a commentary on *Bereshith Rabba* (Fuerth, 1692, reprint Jerusalem, 1989), f. 262b. In his comments on our passage, he differentiates between גזירת השנה and גזירת המערכה, the latter meaning destiny determined by the constellations.

same verse: "When My people, who bear My name, humble themselves, pray" (II Chronicles 7.14): this means prayer, "and seek My face" (*ibid.*) this is *sedaqah*, as it is written "Then I, *be-sedeq*, will behold Your face" (Psalms 17.15) "and turn from their evil ways" (*ibid.*): this is repentance, etc.

This saying of R. Eleazar is quoted in various contexts in rabbinic literature. Its original setting seems to be in connection with astrology or dreams; *gezerah* means one's fate as determined by stars or foretold by dreams. In *Bereshith Rabba* R. Eleazar's words are recorded immediately following the assertion that Abraham, the patriarch, was a prophet and not an astrologer, and that the stars had no power over him. In *Koheleth Rabba* (and in its parallels), R. Yudan's statement is quoted in connection with the verse:

There is much dreaming and futilities and superfluous talk, but you should fear God (Eccl. 5.6): Rabbi says: If you dreamt difficult dreams and had difficult and contradictory visions and (or) you are scared because of them, hasten to do three things and you will be saved, as stated by R. Yudan in the name of R. Eleazar, three things annul bad decrees, etc.³

In both sources, then, the *gezerah* is not the result of actions by man, but rather of superhuman or unconscious forces. To counteract these forces, the Rabbis urge the individual to resort to three things, which, for sure, will act as an antidote to ill fate destined by astrology or predicted by dreams.

There is, however, a third midrashic context, in which R. Eleazar's saying appears. In the *Tanhuma* the triad is recommended as an antidote to the evil inclination, the *yesser ha-ra*.⁴ Thus, in the *Tanhuma*, the belief in the effectiveness of the triad shows affinity for the liturgical theme, as it appears in the hymn וְנִתְּנָה חֻקָּךְ חֲמֹק. The statement becomes appropriate for the Days of Awe: sin (caused by the evil inclination) results in an unfavorable, severe divine decree. This decree may be annulled and atonement may be attained by employing the three things recommended by R. Eleazar. Here it is the evil inclination, and not the stars or dreams, that determines man's fate.

3 *Midrash Koheleth Rabba* on Eccl. 5.6.

4 *Tanhuma, Noah*, paragraph 8.

Penitence, Prayer and (Charity?)

The triad, תשובה, תפילה, צדקה is familiar to the Jewish worshipper from the liturgy of the Days of Awe. It is found in the liturgical poem, ונתנה תוקף, which is recited according to the present Ashkenazi rite on both days of Rosh ha-shanah as well as on Yom Kippur.¹ The full sentence, in which these three nouns are found, reads:

ותשובה ותפילה וצדקה מעבירין את רוע הגזרה

and repentance, and prayer and charity remove the evil decree.

This statement reaches back (over the rather long section beginning with the words (בראש השנה) to the closing words of the first paragraph of the poem:

ותכתוב את גזר דינם

and you will inscribe their decree

All commentators point to a passage in *Bereshith Rabba* as the source of the statement. We read there:²

ר' יודן בשם ר' לעזר: שלשה דברים מבטלין את הגזירה ואילו הן: תפילה וצדקה ותשובה ושלשתן בפסוק אחד: ויכנעו עמי אשר נקרא שמי עליו ויתפללו (דה"ב ז יד), הרי תפילה, ויבקשו פני (שם שם), הרי צדקה היך דאת אמר אני בצדק אחזה פניך (תהלים יז טו), וישובו מדרכם הרעה (דה"ב שם), הרי תשובה וכו'.

R. Yudan in the name of R. Eleazar: Three things annul the decree: Prayer, *sedaqah* and repentance. We learn this from one and the

¹ The poem was originally for Rosh ha-shanah only. It is not found for Yom Kippur in the old French and German rites. See *Mahzor le-yamim noraim. I. Rosh ha-shanah*, ed. D. Goldschmidt (Jerusalem, 1970), pp. 169-71, esp. the variant reading to line 1. See also *op. cit.*, II. Introduction, pp. 41-43.

² *Bereshith Rabba* 44.12 (ed. Theodor Albeck), p. 434 and parallels.

Babylonian), was the subject of frequent inquiry among the commentators.²⁸ In the present note, the examination of one aspect of the Day of Atonement service by the High Priest demonstrates the complexity of the poetic traditions as they reflect the rabbinic texts. On the one hand, there is a great deal of uniformity and faithfulness in following the sources, but, on the other hand, we see how the poems contain elements lacking in our sources and also, how the poets adapt, interpret and change them.

28 See Weissenstern (note 22), p. 64ff.

Second Temple period the celebration of the Day of Atonement included a merriment at night (that at a later period may have turned improper) and another one during daytime that was considered to be praiseworthy. These two events may have lent to the Day of Atonement a character totally different from what we normally associate with that day.

The creating of קול הברה in Jerusalem was understood by the *payyetanim* to mean an uproar generated on the streets of a tumultuous city (cf. Isaiah 22,2) and some *payyetanim* hint at joyous singing as part of the practice.²⁶

נוֹתָנִים שְׁאוֹן עִיר הוֹמָיָה לְהַשְׁבִּיעוֹ נְדוּדִים עֲדֵי נֶשֶׁף
 שְׁאוֹן יִגְבִּירוּ הַמּוֹן רַבָּתִי עִם כִּי מְקוֹלָם שְׁנָתוֹ תַפּוּרָר
 אֵת קוֹל שְׁאוֹן מַעִיר יִשְׁמַע וְתַפְּרֵד שְׁנָתוֹ עַד יִחַצֶּה לַיְלָה
 צַעֲדֵי שְׁלוֹם הַבֵּרָה יִשְׁמִיעוּ בְּרַחוּבוֹת עִיר עָרֵב יוֹם כְּפוּר
 צַעֲדוֹת יִרְבוּ בְּכָל פְּנוֹתֶיהָ לְהַשְׁמִיעַ לִכְהֵן לְבַל יִתְנַמֵּס
 נִיצוּחֵי הֵיכָל שָׁשׁוּ לְשׁוֹרר נְדוּדִים בְּשִׁבְעוֹ וּמִשְׁאוֹנָם יִתְעוֹרֵר
 נוֹתָן בְּרַבָּתִי קוֹל הַנַּחַת גִּהָץ נִדְּדָה שְׁנָתוֹ [עַד?] לַיְלָה יַחַץ
 נִהְלִוּהוּ רֹבֵי קְהִילָה בְּהַבְרָה כָּל הַלַּיְלָה
 מִשְׁמִיעִים שִׁיר וְתַהֲלִילָה לֵאל נוֹרָא עַל־לִילָה
 וְהָעִיר תִּהְיוֹם שְׁנָתוֹ לְנִדְּדָה

In a concise manner, Meshullam ben Kalonymus combines the various attempts at keeping the High Priest awake at the night of the Day of Atonement in one brief stanza:²⁷

וַיַּעֲזִרוּהוּ מְשׁוֹרְרִים מִכִּי בְּצַרְדָּה / וַיּוֹפֵג בְּמַדְרָשׁ וּכְתָבִי תַעֲזִידָה
 וְעַל הָרִצְפָּה יִהְיֶה לְקוֹדֶה / וְהָעִיר תִּהְיוֹם שְׁנָתוֹ לְנִדְּדָה

The question of the nature of the correspondence of the *avodah* poems to the Rabbinic sources, especially in the realm of the halakhic passages, the problem of deviations between the poems and the Talmud (mainly the

26 For the first three quotes see Yosse ben Yosse (note 1), pp. 152, 190, 233. The next three are found in Malachi's dissertation (note 10), pp. 157, 179, 184. The last two are by Nechemiah (note 10, p. 230) and Meshullam ben Kalonymus (note 10, p. 453), respectively. For the word גִּהָץ = joy, light, in the quote from Malachi, p. 184, see Menahem Zulay, *Eretz Israel and Its Poetry* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995), pp. 465-466, 518, in Hebrew.

27 *Ibid.*

According to the Tosefta and the Babylonian Talmud, it was Psalm 127 that was said (sung?) to the accompaniment of the sound produced by אצבע הצרדה. It is, of course, just speculation, but perhaps there existed some connection between the reading of the Biblical books, including the book of Psalms, perhaps to some special tune, and the melodic recitation of Psalm 127.

There is an additional "musical" event associated with keeping the High Priest awake. The Tosefta and the Babylonian Talmud report that some of the nobility of Jerusalem (מיקירי ירושלים) did not sleep the entire night and produced some kind of noise (קול הברה).²³ The section containing this statement is found in some versions as part of the Mishnah itself.²⁴

The nature of this noise is not described explicitly in the sources. Still, we can learn something about it from the statement reported in the name of Abba Shaul. Abba Shaul relates that the practice of staying up all night and creating קול הברה was continued even after the destruction of the Temple, to keep the Temple's memory alive. According to Abba Shaul's statement, this observance led to sinful behavior and we may presume that it was stopped not too long after the destruction of the Temple. Rashi, to the passage in the Babylonian Talmud Yoma 19b, comments that the sinful behavior consisted of ונשים ונשים יחד ובאין לעבירה, men and women were participating together in amusement which led to sinful behavior.²⁵ One may assume on the basis of this meager information that toward the end of the Second Temple period some merriment took place on the night of Yom ha-Kippurim in Jerusalem. When this practice continued afterwards, it led to lewdness. One may surmise that human behavior during such merriment may not have been much different at the time when the Temple still stood.

Interestingly, there was another Day of Atonement observance of merriment about which the Mishnah reports. The Mishna in Taanith 4:8 tells us that on the Day of Atonement the maidens of Jerusalem used to go out to the vineyards to dance in order to induce eligible young men to marry them. We have no source to indicate that this observance had anything to do with the noise created at night in Jerusalem to keep the High Priest awake, but, one may surmise, that during the end of the

23 See on this phrase Lieberman, *op. cit.*, pp. 732-733.

24 *Ibid.*, and Y.N. Epstein, *Mavo le-nussah ha-Mishnah*, p. 967.

25 See Lieberman, *ibid.*, p. 733 who explains the Tosefta passage according to this interpretation of Rashi.

The passage in the Jerusalem Talmud, נעימה הנאמרת באצבע צרדה, influenced the authors of *sidrei avodah* to write that whatever was done through אצבע הצרדה was tied to singing:²²

- 1 נְטֵה לָנוּם שְׁנָתוֹ יִפְרִידוּ בְנוֹעַם שִׁיר צָרְדָּה בִּפְהָ וְלֹא בִכְנוֹר
- 2 שִׁיר יִשְׁוֹרְרוּ לוֹ פְּרָחִי כְהוֹנָה בִּפְהָ וּבְחִיךְ עֶרֶב וּבְנְעִימַת צָרְדָּה
- 3 מַכִּים בְּאֶצְבַּע מְשׁוֹרְרִים לְעוֹרְרוּ עַד נַחֲלֵק לַיְלָה וְאֹסְפוֹ בְּרוּרִים
- 4 אִם תִּגְבֹּר עָלָיו שָׁנָה וּבִקֵּשׁ לְהִתְנַמֵּנָם בְּחִיךְ נוֹעַם צָרְדָּה מְשׁוֹרְרִים יַעֲזִירוּהוּ
- 5 נוֹעַם צָרְ[דָּה] בִּפְהָ מְשׁוֹרְרִים יִמְתִּיקוּ
- 6 נוֹגְגִים צָרְדָּה בְּאֶצְבַּע הַיָּכוֹ
- 7 לְנוֹעַם צָרְדָּה וְקוֹל זֶמֶר רוֹגְגִים יִלְמְדוּ לֶקֶח
- 8 נוֹגְגֵי דוּכָן גַּם הֵם יִשְׁמִיעוּ
נְעִימַת צָרְדָּה בִּפְהָ וְלֹא בִכְנוֹר
- 9 נִצְנִי לוֹיָהּ, מְנַצְחִי עַל שׁוֹשְׁנִים
נִמְנוֹמוֹ לְהַעֲבִיר, קוֹל צְרֹדְתָם יִשְׁפִּירוּ
...
- נִבֵּל וְכְנוֹר לְהַעֲסִיקוּ לֹא יִנְעֲנְעוּ,
נוֹצֵר וּבִנְאֵי אֲדוֹן שִׁיר יִנְגְּנוּ
- 10 נְעִימוֹת צָרְדָּה יִסּוּבְבוּהוּ...
נִצַּח נוֹעַם מְנַעֲיִמִים לְפָנָיו...
- 11 וַיַּעֲזִירוּהוּ מְשׁוֹרְרִים מִכִּי בִצְרָדָה...
- 12 מִזָּה מִכְבֵּד בְּקוֹל תְּשׁוּאָה וְנוֹעַם צָרְדָּה בִּפְהָ בְּלִבָּד
- 13 ...וּבִצְרָדָה מַכִּים לְפָנָיו פְּרָחִי נוֹגְגִים

22 For #1-4 see Yosse ben Yosse (note 1), pp. 152, 190, 207, 233; #5-6 are from the poems quoted above (see note 10, #6-7); #7 is from Saadia Gaon, see *Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon*, ed. I. Davidson, S. Assaf, B.I. Joel (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1941), p. 284; for #8 see Nachum Weissenstern, *The Piyyutim of Johanan ha-Kohen Birabbi Jehoshua* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Dissertation, 1983), p. 138; for #9 see Shlomo ha-Bavli (note 1), p. 174; #10 is by Joseph ibn Abitur, see *Kovetz maasei yedei geonim kadmonim*, ed. by Y. Rosenberg (Berlin: 1856), part 2, pp. 22-23; #11 is by Meshullam ben Kalonymus, see *Mahzor for Yom Kippur*, ed. Goldschmidt (note 10), p. 453; #12 is by Ibn Gabirol, see ed. Jarden (note 10), p. 266; and #13 is by Isaac ibn Giat, see his *seder avodah* in Yonah David, *The Poems of Rabbi Isaac ibn Ghiyyat: A Tentative Edition* (Jerusalem: Ah'shav, 1987), p. 146.

in Masoretic literature, as seen from the expression *ספרי אמ"ת*, where *אמ"ת* stands for *איוב משלי תהלים*. These three have a common cantillation system, different from that of other Biblical books. When one reads in the statement in the Jerusalem Talmud that Psalms and Proverbs were chosen to be read *מפני שטעמן מפיג את השינה*, because their *טעם* dispels sleep, the suggestion comes to mind that *טעם* here may mean the tune of recitation of these books, as in *טעמי המקרא*. Now, this suggestion may sound anachronistic, but we should bear in mind that the term *טעמים*, in connection with the mode the Bible was recited, does occur both in the Jerusalem as well as the Babylonian Talmud.¹⁷ What the exact meaning of the term in the Talmud is and what its connection to its later Masoretic sense is, remain, however, unclear.¹⁸

The proposal that in our passage *טעם* may refer to some kind of musical rendering may be strengthened by other statements in the sources that bear testimony about the role music and noisemaking had played in the attempts at keeping the High Priest awake on the night of the Day of Atonement.

As seen above, some kind of noise was produced with a finger (*אצבע*)¹⁹ or vocally, imitating the snapping of a finger, by young priests (or Levites)²⁰ to keep the High Priest awake. The Rabbinic sources emphasize that this was vocal and not instrumental music (*בפה, לא בנבל ולא בכנור*). It was necessary to point this out because, apparently, there was a tradition according to which the noise making was "by hand" (Rabbi Yohanan's view in the Jerusalem Talmud). So, as a conclusion, the latter source establishes that the *נעימה* (tune, song, melody) produced through the finger was not accompanied by harp and lyre.²¹

17 On the earliest mentions of *טעמים* in this sense in Talmudic literature see *Encyclopaedia Mikra'ith*, vol. 3, col. 395-396 (in Hebrew). On the *טעמים* for Job, Proverbs and Psalms see *ibid.*, col. 400-401. See also Israel Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah* (Scholars Press, 1980), pp. 157-158, 163-164.

18 *Ibid.*

19 See about the various definitions of *אצבע הצרדה* in Lieberman's *Tosefta ki-fshutah*, vol. 4, pp. 731-732.

20 In the standard Mishnah editions we read: *פרחי כהונה*, but in manuscripts and in some *sidrei avodah* the reading is: *פרחי לריה*. See Yahalom (above note 1, p. 142, comments to line 722). This is also the reading of the Mishnah with the commentary of Maimonides, see Yosef Kafih's edition, *Moed* (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1964), p. 240.

21 See the commentary of Professor Lieberman on these passages in his *Tosefta ki-fshutah*, vol. 4, pp. 731-732. Zvi Malachi, in his dissertation (see above note 10), vol. 1, chapter 6 [pp. 351ff] collected and discussed the passages in *piyyutim* where the matter of *אצבע הצרדה* is included.

If the use of *kitve kodesh* is interpretive in nature, which is quite likely, we may resort to an explanation of the phrase offered by a relatively late Rabbinical commentator, Isaac Nunez-Vaez (Leghorn, 18th century). In connection with the Maimonides passage, Nunez-Vaez suggests¹⁵ that Maimonides, in using *kitve kodesh*, wanted to combine two traditions: that of the Mishnah and that of the Jerusalem Talmud. As we recall, the Mishnah names Job, Ezra and Chronicles as the books read before the High Priest, while the Jerusalem Talmud quotes a *baraita* according to which Psalms and Proverbs were the books read to keep the High Priest awake. The existence of these two traditions may have been the impetus for the *payyetanim*, too, for their employment of the phrase *kitve kodesh*, rather than just mentioning the books by name as in the Mishnah.

Now, if we examine the two Tannaitic traditions, we may first ask whether they are independent from each other, contradicting each other, or rather they complement each other. In the Mishnah's statement it is strange that the historical books of Ezra and Chronicles (and Daniel, according to Zekhariah ben Kabutal) were joined by Job as the reading materials for the occasion. The historical books have much in common, not only in their very nature of being chronicles of events, but also in their concentration on the Second Temple period and on the service of the priests and Levites in the Second Temple.¹⁶

The book of Job is different altogether. It would be more fitting to group it with the other two books, Psalms and Proverbs. Much is in common among these three: they are poetic, ethical and fully or partially belong to Wisdom literature. Therefore, perhaps, one may suggest that originally Psalms and Proverbs (the books mentioned in the Jerusalem Talmud) were listed together with Job (the book mentioned in the Mishnah) and these three served as one type of book read before the High Priest. At some point, however, Job was detached from the original group of three and was added to the group of historical books about which the Mishnah reports.

The three books, Job, Proverbs and Psalms, are also regarded as a unit

15 In his *Siah Yitzhak* (Leghorn, 1766; reprinted in Tel Aviv 1969, as part of the collection: *Asefat Zekenim* on Yoma), f. 23a.

16 The practices relating to the High Priest, reported in Rabbinic literature, reflect the situation at the end of the Second Temple period. See Shmuel Safrai, *In Times of Temple and Mishnah: Studies in Jewish History*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1994), p. 36 (in Hebrew). Books dealing with this period may then have served eminently as amusing to the High Priest.

10 מוֹרְגֵל הָיָה בְּמִקְרָא / קוֹרֵא בְּדָת מִקְרָא
וְאֵם נִמְנָע מְסִיבָהּ / קוֹרְאִים לְפָנָיו לִיקְרָה
נוֹאֲמִים לְפָנָיו קְדְמוֹנִים / חִידוֹת נְבִיאִים וּקְצִינִים
מִפְעֵל יוֹשֵׁר כְּהֲנָנִים / הָיוּ לְפָנָיו מְשַׁנְנִים

11 שִׁיחַ מְדַרְשׁ בָּפָה וּבִכְתָּב הַגִּיּוֹן סְבִיבּוֹ יִשְׁנֶנּוּ לְעוֹרָרוֹ עַד חֲצוֹת

12 מְכַבֵּד נְכוּחִים יְהִגּוּ לְפָנָיו בְּסִפְרֵי קֹדֶשׁ אוֹ בְּשִׁיחִים

The repetition of *siah* (*sihat*) *melakhim* in so many works, either exactly in these words or in a close paraphrase, indicates that the original source used by the *payyetan* did indeed contain this phrase. It is not likely that the *seder avodah shivath yamim* was the original source from where *siah melakhim* was derived; it is much more plausible to assume, as Shalom Spiegel suggests, that it may have been part of a rabbinic text which is not extant anymore.¹¹

Another phrase, *kitvei kodesh*, Scripture, in general, or Hagiographa, in particular—instead of the enumeration of the three (or four) Biblical books that are explicitly named in the Mishnah—occurs in several of the texts quoted above. Interestingly enough, Maimonides, in this context, also speaks about *kitve kodesh* and not about the books mentioned in the Mishnah by name.¹² Whether this choice of language reflects some old, alternative Rabbinic variant relating to the Mishnah or, rather, it is an interpretation offered by the *payyetan* and by Maimonides, albeit independently from each other,¹³ remains unclear.¹⁴

11 *Op. cit.*, *ibid.*: ...שלא הגיע אלינו? דומה, ניתותר בפי פייטנים שריד ממקור חז"ל.

12 *Mishne Torah*, *Hilkhot avodath yom ha-kippurim*, chapter 1, *halakhah* 8.

13 It is well-known that Maimonides was not favorably inclined toward poetry, see Jefim Schirmann, *The History of Hebrew Poetry in Christian Spain and Southern France*, edited, supplemented and annotated by Ezra Fleischer (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1997), pp. 281-283 (in Hebrew). Accordingly, it is not to be assumed that Maimonides borrowed this phrase from a liturgical poem. See, however, the recent article by Joseph Yahalom, "הרמב"ם והמליצה העברית", *Pe'amim* 81, 1999/2000, pp. 4-18, where Yahalom presents a more complex picture about Maimonides' attitude to poetry, in general. Still, this does not change the basic truth about Maimonides' aversion to *piyyut*.

14 Some commentators also find the use of *kitve kodesh* difficult. They point out that it would have been expected that Maimonides names the books, Job, Ezra and Chronicles (and Daniel) as it is done in the Mishnah. The question, apparently, is first asked in the *Lehem Mishneh* by Rabbi Abraham di Boton (16th century) and various attempts at resolving the difficulty are being offered by later commentators. See *Sefer ha-mafteah* at the end of the Shabse Fraenkel edition of the *Mishneh Torah*, vol. 7, *Avodah*, p. 885.

- 1 שְׁעֵשׂוּעַ מִדְּרָשׁ וְהִגָּא כְּתָבִי קֹדֶשׁ אִם יִחַפֵּם לְפָנָיו יִשׁוּחָהוּ
שָׁנוֹן שְׁחֹת מַלְכִּים קְדָמוֹנִים אִם יִהְיֶה כְּעַר בָּם יַעֲסִיקוּהוּ
- 2 גֵּשׁ לְדְרוֹשׁ שְׁכָל כְּחֶכֶם וְנִבּוֹן [וְלִפְנֵי] גְדוֹלִים אֶל יִגְבִּיָּה לֵב
בְּהִיּוֹת לְבוֹ צָפוֹן מִשׁ[כָּל] בְּהִגִּיָּה כְּתָבִי קֹדֶשׁ בְּפֶה יַעֲסִיקוּהוּ
בְּעַר אִם יִהְיֶה וְלֹא לְמַד לָקַח בְּשִׁיחַ מַלְכֵי קֹדֶם לְבוֹ יַפִּיגּוּ
- 3 ...עוֹד הֵם פָּרְשׁוּ וְנָהוּ וּבְשִׁיחַ מַלְכִּים עוֹרְרוּהוּ
- 4 עָנּוּ וּבִשֵּׁם הַשְּׁבִיעוּהוּ וּבְשִׁיחַ מַלְכִּים עוֹרְרוּהוּ
- 5 פִּיתוּהוּ בְּסִיחַ טוֹב זְקֵנֵי שְׁבֹטוֹ וְעֵינָגוּהוּ בְּשִׁיחָה...
- 6 ...נִיגַשׁ לְהַשְׁתַּעֲשֹׁעַ בְּחֻקִּים וְלֹא כְּבַעַר
סִיחֹת יַפִּיגּוּהוּ...
- 7 נְכוּחִים פִּילֵשׁ הִדְרוֹשִׁים לְכָל חֶפֶץ נִמְצָא שִׁיכָח אוֹ לֹא בֶן שְׁמוֹעַ
נִבּוֹנֵי סוֹד שִׁיחַ מַלְכִּים יִרְגִּילוּ נִמּוּגוֹת בְּטַעַם אֲמָרָיו יַפֵּץ
נִיב פֶּה הִמְתִּיקוּ בְּכֹתֵב קוֹדֶשׁ לְהַשְׁתַּעֲשֹׁעַ
נִגְדוּ בְּכַבּוֹד וְנִפְשׁוּ הִיגִילוּ
- 8 נֶפֶשׁ וּבִיָּאֵר שִׁינוֹן מִדְּרָשׁ נוֹאֵם... קוֹדֶשׁ עַל פֶּה פֶּרֶשׁ
נַחַת תּוֹשִׁיָּה אִם [לֹא הִי]תְּבוֹנֵן נִגְדוּ מִפְּעַל מַלְכֵי קֹדֶם יִשׁוּנָן
- 9 נֶאֱמָרוּ יִנְעִימוּ תַחֲכָמוֹנִים בְּשִׁינוֹן מַלְכִּים קְדָמוֹנִים
נִיצוּחַ אֲרַבְעָה כְּתָב...אֲמוֹנִים קוֹרְאִים לְפָנָיו נֶאֱמָנִים

Avodah for Yom Kippur (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1973), vol. 2. #3 is on p. 108 (from *ekra be-garon* by Pinchas ha-Kohen, see Yahalom (above note 1), p. 57, note 79); #4 is from a fragmentary *avodah* by the poet Joshua, see in the unpublished file in the archives of Shalom Spiegel, folder 183. #5 is in Malachi, p. 157 (from the anonymous tenfold *avodah*); #6 see *ibid.*, pp. 173-174 (from an incomplete, anonymous *avodah*, cf. Elbogen, above note 3, pp. 96, 163); #7 see *ibid.*, p. 179 (from an incomplete, anonymous *avodah*, cf. Elbogen, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98, 175); #8, *ibid.*, p. 184 (from another anonymous, incomplete *avodah*); #9, *ibid.*, p. 193 (from the second *avodah* of Shlomo Suleiman al-Sangari, cf. Jefim (Hayyim) Schirmann, *New Hebrew Poems from the Genizah* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1965), pp. 46-47, in Hebrew); #10 see Nehemiah ben Shlomo Ha-Nassi's *seder avodah*, see M. Zulay's edition in *Studies of the Research Institute for Hebrew Poetry in Jerusalem* (= *Yedioth ha-makhon le-heker ha-shira ha-ivrit bi-yerushalayim*), 4, 1938, p. 230; #11 see Meshullam ben Kalonymus in *Mahzor* for Yom Kippur, ed. D. Goldschmidt (Jerusalem: Koren, 1970), p. 439; #12 see Solomon ibn Gabirol, *Liturgical Poetry*, ed. Dov Jarden (Jerusalem, 1971), p. 267. See also Shalom Spiegel, *The Fathers of Piyyut*, ed. M. Schmeltzer (New York-Jerusalem: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1996), p. 35, note 24 (in Hebrew), where Spiegel first calls attention to the phrase *siah melakhim* and lists its repeated appearance in *sidrei avodah*.

Yahalom, in his notes to this text, calls attention to the fact that it represents an extension of the original (Mishnah) tradition and he refers to *shivath yamim*, as well as to a *seder avodah* by Yosse ben Yosse, *azkir gevuroth*, where the same extension occurs.

*Azkir gevuroth*⁷ recounts the “entertainment” of the High Priest as follows:

נְעִימוֹת מְדֻרָּשׁ	וּמִקְרָא יְשׁוּחָחוּ	אוֹ בִּכְתָּבֵי קֹדֶשׁ	הֵם יַעֲסִיקוּהוּ
נִפְשׁוּ יְשׁוּבָבוּ	בְּשִׁיחַ מַלְכֵי קֹדֶם	אִם בַּעַר הוּא	וְלֹא לְמַד לְקַח

Aharon Mirsky notes the discrepancy between these lines and the tradition in the Mishnah and suggests that the poet's version may indicate that not only the four books enumerated in the Mishnah, but also other Biblical books as well, used to be recited for the High Priest. Secondly, he comments that the phrase *siah malkei kedem* may be a poetic designation for the Book of Daniel, the book that Zekhariah ben Kabutal used to read before the High Priest on the eve of the Day of Atonement. Mirsky does not explain why he equates *siah malkei kedem* with the Book of Daniel. Of course, one can justify this identification, because of the role that King Nebuchadnezzar plays in Daniel. Accordingly, it would be fitting to call the book *siah melakhim*, perhaps best translated as *royal chronicle*.⁸

Still, other Biblical books could also qualify for this designation, particularly the books of Ezra and Chronicles which are mentioned in our Mishnah, too.⁹ So, the exact meaning of this phrase is not clear.

That the High Priest was kept awake by the telling of *siah melakhim* is mentioned in a number of other *sidrei avodah* as well:¹⁰

7 Mirsky (as above note 1), p. 151.

8 In an incomplete, anonymous *avodah* we read: ...נחת דברי חכמים/ בין דברי הימים... דברי חכמים refers to דורשין of the Mishnah while דברי הימים seems to stand for all the Biblical books mentioned there, and not only for the Book of Chronicles. For the quote see Z. Malachi (note 10), p. 168.

9 In a poem doubtfully attributed to Shimon bar Megas we find the following lines: נער אם יהי או/ בער במורשה/ לפניו יסוחחו ספרים שלושה. It seems that this poet understood *siah [melakhim]* to mean the three Biblical books mentioned in the Mishnah. For the quote see Joseph Yahalom, *Liturgical Poems of Sim'on bar Megas* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1984), p. 281 (in Hebrew).

10 The first two citations are from Yosse ben Yosse's *sidrei avodah*, see Mirsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 189, 233. Most of the other texts are found in Zvi Malachi's unpublished doctoral dissertation, *The*

תניא:

אבא שאול אומר:

אף בגבולין היו עושין כן, זכר למקדש,
אלא שהיו חוטאין.

In *Tosefta ki-fshuta*, Professor Lieberman deals with the Tosefta passage in all its aspects.²

In this note, I shall first focus on a section of this Mishnah that has no parallel in the Tosefta but to which there are many allusions in the *sidrei avodah*. The earliest known *seder avodah* is called *shivath yamim*.³ Unlike the later *Avodah* texts, this one is not yet in poetic form and in language and content it quite closely adheres to Mishnah Yoma. In *shivath yamim* we read:

אם היה חכם דורש ואם לאו תלמידי חכמים דורשין לפניו
אם רגיל לקרות קורא ואם לאו קוראים לפניו. ובמה קוראים לפניו?
באיוב ובעזרא ובדברי הימים
ואם עם הארץ הוא מסיחין לפניו סיחת מל' סיחת חסידים הראשונים וכו'.

The last line is not found in the Mishnah nor in other rabbinic sources. The question whether the author of *shivath yamim* had before him a different version of the Mishnah or rather added this line on the basis of other traditions, cannot be answered. As noted by Joseph Yahalom, this line introduces an additional degree of ignorance to what is listed in the Mishnah.⁴ If the High Priest is not even capable of understanding Scripture as read before him, let his entourage tell him stories about the royal and pious heroes of the distant past. The expression *siah melakhim*⁵ appears repeatedly in subsequent *avodah* poems. In the early Palestinian *seder avodah*, *az be-ein kol*, we read⁶

ובאַרְבַּעַת סְפָרִים חוֹקְרִים לִימָ[ו]דוֹ
אִם לֹא יִחַפּוּ בְּסִיחַ מַלְכִּים יִשְׁעֲשֹׂעֵהוּ.

2 *Tosefta ki-fshuta*, vol. 4, pp. 731-733.

3 Ismar Elbogen, *Studien zur Geschichte des juedischen Gottesdienstes* (Berlin: Mayer & Mueller, 1907), p. 104. See Yahalom (above note 1), pp. 16-17 and p. 142 comments to line 721.

4 *Ibid.*

5 The phrase *סיחת חסידים הראשונים* that appears in *shivath yamim* is not found, as far as I can determine, in later *sidrei avodah*. Compare, however, Nehemiah ben Shlomo Ha-Nassi's *seder avodah* (below note 10) where *קצינים*, *כהנים*, *נביאים* are mentioned in this context.

6 Yahalom, *op. cit.*, p. 142. See also Spiegel (below note 10), p. 35 note 24.

The Tosefta cites the following on this subject:

כפורים פ"א ה"ט, מהד' הגר"ש ליכרמן, עמ' 223-224 :
 אי זהו אצבע הצרדה?
 זו אצבע גדולה של ימין.
 בפה, לא בנבל ולא בכנור.
 מה היו אומ':
 שיר המעלות לשלמה אם ה' לא יבנה בית וגו'.
 לא היו ישנין כל הלילה אלא שוקדין כנגד כהן גדול
 כדי לעסקו בהבראה.
 כך היו נוהגין בגבולין אחר חורבן הבית, זכר למקדש,
 אבל חוטאין היו.

The Jerusalem Talmud's discussion is as follows:

ירושלמי, פ"א ה"ו-ה"ז, ל"ט ע"ב:
 תנן: במשלי ובתילים
 מפני שטעמן מפיג את השינה.
 ...
 רב הונא אמר:
 באצבע צרדה — בפה
 ור' יוחנן אמר: באצבע צרדה — ביד.
 מתניתא פליגא על ר' יוחנן:
 בפה, לא בנבל ולא בכנור!!
 פתר לה:
 נעימה הנאמרת באצבע צרדה
 אומרה בפה, לא בנבל ולא בכנור.

Finally, in the Babylonian Talmud the relevant discussion includes:

בבלי יומא י"ט ע"ב:
 תנא:
 לא היו מעסיקין אותו לא בנבל ולא בכנור אלא בפה.
 ומה היו אומריין:
 אם ה' לא יבנה בית שוא עמלו בוניו בו.
 מיקרי ירושלים לא היו ישנין כל הלילה
 כדי שישמע כהן גדול קול הברה
 ולא תהא שינה חוטפתו.

How Was the High Priest Kept Awake on the Night of Yom Ha-Kippurim?

The late Professor Saul Lieberman, of blessed memory, in his commentary on Tosefta Kippurim utilized the texts of the *sidrei avodah* (liturgical poems describing the Temple Service on the Day of Atonement) whenever these shed light on a relevant Tosefta passage. His comments gave new meaning to many lines of *avodah* poems and scholars in their respective works routinely quote Professor Lieberman's observations when trying to elucidate the often obscure sense of these liturgical/literary texts.¹

The Rabbinic sources, Mishnah, Tosefta, the Jerusalem and the Babylonian Talmud report briefly on how the High Priest was kept awake on the night preceding the Day of Atonement, so as to avoid accidental ritual defilement. In the Mishnah we read:

יומא פ"א מ"ו-ז:
אם היה חכם דורש ואם לאו תלמידי חכמים דורשין לפניו
ואם רגיל לקרות קורא ואם לאו קורין לפניו.
ובמה קוראין לפניו?
באויב ובעזרא ובדברי הימים.
זכריה בן קבוטל אומר:
פעמים הרבה קראתי לפניו בדניאל.
בקש להתנמנם, פרחי כהונה מכין לפניו באצבע צרדה,
ואומרים לו:
אישי כהן גדול, עמוד והפג אחת על הרצפה!
ומעסיקין אותו עד שיגיע זמן השחיטה.

¹ E.g. Ezra Fleischer in his commentary to Shelomo ha-Bavli's *seder avodah*, in his: *The Poems of Shelomo ha-Bavli* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1973), pp. 153-189 (in Hebrew); Aharon Mirsky in his edition of Yosse ben Yosse's poems, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1991), p. 127ff.; Joseph Yahalom in his: *Priestly Palestinian Poetry: A Narrative Liturgy for the Day of Atonement* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996) (in Hebrew).

is part of the Biblical proof-text, the *payyetan* changes it. Since עומד is too pedestrian, the *payyetan* prefers to avoid it. He chooses instead a word for which *payyetanim* have a special fondness: the verb נצג and uses it in its shortened forms, hence צג for עמד.¹⁹ When Kalir uses his own *payyetic* voice, even a Biblical quotation is subject to his stylistic transformation.

Further in the same *piyyut* we read: בַּהֲדָר לְחֶשֶׁב בְּלִיַּת עֲדָנָה. The corresponding passage in the Midrash has: פְּרִי עֵץ הָדָר, זֶה אֲמַנּוּ שָׂרָה שֶׁהִיָּדָה. The Midrash makes good sense in playing on הדר which is used in connection with old age (cf. Leviticus 19:32) (and therefore applies to matriarch Sarah) and which is also a keyword in the passage dealing with the four species (Leviticus 23:40).

On the other hand, Kalir's בְּלִיַּת עֲדָנָה not only lacks the element of analogy, but also creates a contrast²⁰ (דָּבָר וְהִפּוּכּוֹ) with הדר of the four species. It seems that Kalir here chose to use an emblematic expression, בְּלִיַּת עֲדָנָה, instead of following the analogy of the Midrash, because his esthetic sense demanded an adherence to deep-rooted *payyetic* practice. This practice preferred an emblematic expression, often riddle-like and surprising, even though it was not connected to the midrashic analogy directly. Exactly the same applies to another line in the *piyyut*: בַּעֲרֵבָה לְהִזְכִּיר: וְעֵרָבִי נָחַל, זֶה יוֹסֵף. מִה עֲרָבָה זֶה כְּמוֹשֶׁה: אַח לַעֲבָד הִקְנָה which replaces the midrashic: יְבִישָׁה בְּפָנֶי שְׁלֹשָׁה הַמִּינִים, כִּךְ מֵת יוֹסֵף לִפְנֵי אָחִיו.

It is to be hoped that a systematic, comprehensive study of liturgical and *payyetic* texts for search of patterns of stylistic reworkings of Biblical and Rabbinic sources will yield results for further understanding of the esthetic standards which guided their authors.

19 On the frequent use of this verb by the *payyetanim*, see: Yahalom, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88, where he also quotes our passage.

20 On the use of the hermeneutical rule דָּבָר וְהִפּוּכּוֹ in *piyyut* see: Mirsky, "Mahazavtan" etc., (see above, note 1), pp. 68-80.

frequently referred to as בעלי דברים, Kalir rephrased שם בניהן עד שיהו as בני שבע או שמונה בעת יפרחו כבעלי דברים. Thus Kalir's *piyyut* provides further testimony to the correctness of the Tosefta emendation.

In this example, in addition to the features which were already mentioned, we find an attempt by the *payyetan* to provide some kind of setting for an event which the sources mention in the most rudimentary fashion only and we see him trying to replace some crass phrases by more elegant ones. Finally, his rephrasing helps us to understand the original passage properly.

VI

A section of Kalir's composition for Passover¹⁵ is clearly based on an old Midrash. In the Mechilta¹⁶ (and parallel sources) we read: וכן אתה מוצא בכל מקום שגלו ישראל כביכול גלתה שכינה עמהם, גלו למצרים... גלו לבבל... גלו לעילם... גלו הרבאו, גלו, repeated four times, we find in Kalir's composition: ובגלותם, גלו, נדו, and only once: נדו. Through this simple change, Kalir avoided monotonous uniformity.

VII

The *silluk* to Kalir's *kerova* for Sukkoth¹⁷ is based on a midrash in *Pesikta Derav Kahana*¹⁸ and parallels. Both sources contain a series of analogies concerning the four species.

Let us examine a few of these. In the Midrash we read: פרי עץ הדר, זה פרי עץ הדר, זה פרי עץ הדר, זה פרי עץ הדר. Kalir, on the other hand, has: פרי עץ הדר, זה פרי עץ הדר, זה פרי עץ הדר, זה פרי עץ הדר. It is possible that Kalir here had a different version of the statement. Instead of the prooftext just quoted, he may have had a version with a prooftext: מי כמכה נאדר בקדש (Exodus 15:11). Accordingly, Kalir's formulation may be an indication of a variant text of the Midrash. Kalir continues: ענפי הדסים/ לצג בין ההדסים. The midrashic source has: וענף עץ. עבות, זה הק' והוא עומד בין ההדסים (זכרי' א' ח'). Despite the fact that the word עומד

15 *Be-Eser Makoth Patrusim Hifrakhta, Mahzor Pessah*, ed. Y. Fraenkel (Jerusalem 1993), p. 123.

16 Ed. Horovitz-Rabin, pp. 51-52.

17 *Ekekha ba-Rishon, Mahzor Sukkoth*, ed. D. Goldschmidt and Y. Fraenkel (Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 106-107.

18 Ed. Mandelbaum, pp. 414-415.

invented by the rabbis at the time of the return of the exiles from Babylonia. These methods were used by them when they were confronted with the problem of preparing the first red heifer, an act which requires ritual purity, at a time when the exiles were in a state of ritual defilement. The anonymous authorities alluded to by Rabbi Yehuda become *אצילי עם* in the *piyyut*. Their behavior is described as joyous when they learn about the impending redemption. Nothing of this is found in Rabbi Yehuda's statement. Again we find the substitution of simple phrases by more unusual ones, the phrase *על גבי סלע* of the Mishna and Tosefta source appears in the poem as *על צחיה סלע* quoting Ezekiel 24:7. In the Tosefta we read about *שוורים שכריסם רחבה*, a rather crass expression. Kalir turns this into a much more elegant *איתני שוורים*, hinting at the Biblical quote *איתן מושבך* in Numbers 24:21. Similarly, for the Mishna's *זכר של רחלים* Kalir prefers *מקורן איל* (cf. Psalms 69:32 *מקורן*).

The passage *בעת יפרחו כבעלי דברים* is not only stylistically new, but is also useful for the proper understanding of the sources on which it is based.

According to Tosefta Parah 3:2 children were reared in isolation until they reached the age of 18 so that they should not be ritually defiled and should be mature enough to perform the tasks required of them. The late Professor Saul Lieberman, on the basis of the text as quoted by some *Rishonim*, emended the passage to read 7 or 8 years old instead of 18 years old. He explained that the error crept into the text as a result of misreading the original *י"ח* for *ז' ח'*.¹³ Why was the age 7 or 8 established for these children for this particular ritual action? Elsewhere in the Mishna (Gittin 5:7) we read: *הפעוטות מקחן מקח וממכרן במטלטלין*. Lieberman explained the meaning of the word *פעוטות* deriving from the Greek and meaning seven-year-old children.¹⁴ At that age minors were deemed capable of transacting certain kinds of business with some degree of competence. The same age was chosen for the children who were involved in the preparations for the red heifer. Kalir knew an uncorrupted version of the Tosefta passage according to which the required age of the children was to be 7 or 8. Being aware of the Mishna passage in Gittin and of the fact that in Talmudic literature parties to a business transaction are

13 *Tosefeth Rishonim*, vol. 3 (Jerusalem, 1939), pp. 215-216.

14 *Siphre Zutta* (New York, 1968), pp. 137-139 and *Tosefta ki-Fshutah, Nashim* (New York, 1973), pp. 847-848.

Kalir has *פרה בת שתים עגלה בת שנתי*. Finally, *יהי רצון שיהי מחלציי* is expressed as *נא מני יפרה*. For the Rabbinic *יהי רצון* we have the Biblical *נא* and for *מחלציי* we find the Biblical *מני יפרה*. *מני יפרה* occurs in this particular grammatical form only once, in Isaiah 11:1. We can detect here a subtle allusion to the contents of the Isaiah verse and the one following it, *ונצר משרשיו יפרה ונחה עליו רוח ה' וגו'*, and we can relate it to the message of the midrashic passage in which Moses prays for and is promised an offspring upon whom the spirit of wisdom shall rest. Despite this conspicuous use of the Biblical idiom within the confines of the *piyyutic* genre, the overall midrashic mood and contents of the passage are retained, as are some phrases from the Midrash (*שמועה, מורה הלכה*).

Kalir presented us here with a *piyyutic* fusion of Biblical and Rabbinic allusions and vocabularies.

V

In another *piyyut* by Kalir dealing with the red heifer we read:

אַצִּילִי עִם עוֹלֵי גוֹלָה
כָּחַשׁ בּוֹא קֶץ גְּאוּלָּה
עָלוּ בְנוֹת בֵּית בְּגִילָה

...

זָמְמוּ בְנוֹת בְּתֵי חֲצָרִים
עַל צָחִית סֶלַע מְבוֹצָרִים

...

בְּתוֹכָם נוֹלָדִים וְשֵׁם בָּרִים
עַד יוֹגְדָלוֹ בְּכַח כְּגִיבּוֹרִים
בָּעֵת יִפְרָחוּ כְּבַעֲלֵי דְבָרִים
יִגִּישׁוּ לָמוֹ אֵיתָנִי שְׁוָרִים

...

יָבִיאוּ אֵיל מוֹקֶרֶן כְּמִטְרָה¹²

This poem is based on Mishna and Tosefta Parah, chapter 3. It is instructive to examine how Kalir transforms these legal texts into a *piyyutic* one. There is a brief statement of Rabbi Yehuda in the Tosefta: *מעשים אלו עשו כשעלו מן הגולה*, which refers to the ingenious methods

IV

Eleazar birabbi Qilir, commonly known as Kalir, in one of his compositions which deals with matters concerning the red heifer and which is recited on *shabbath parah*, says:

רַעַד כְּהִסְכִּית טַעַם תַּחֲלַת מִשְׁנֵתָהּ, / פָּרָה בֵּת שְׁתִּים עֲגֻלָּה בֵּת שְׁנֵתָהּ
בְּצֵר צִיר תַּחֲן כְּקֶשֶׁב שְׁמוּעָתָהּ / נָא מִנִּי יִפְרָה מוֹרָה הִלְכָה לְשַׁעֲתָהּ

...

רַמְזוּ בְּיִקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַיּוֹת פָּרְתוּ מִתְמַדָּת / שְׁכַל-הַפְּרוֹת כָּלוֹת וְשִׁלְךָ לְעַד עוֹמְדָת.⁹

Compare this to the following passage in *Pesikta Derav Kahana*:

ויקחו אליך פרה... א"ר יוסי בר' חנינה רמזו שכל הפרות בטילות ושלך קיימות.
ר' אחא בשם ר' יוסי בר' חנינה בשעה שעלה לשמי מרום שמע קולו של הקב"ה
יושב ועוסק בפרשת פרה ואומ' הלכה משם ואמרה, "ר' אליעזר או' עגלה בת
שנתה ופרה בת שתיים", אמ' משה לפני הקב"ה, רבון העולמים, העליונים
והתחתונים ברשותך ואת יושב ואו' הלכה משמו של בשר ודם? אמ' לו הקב"ה,
משה, צדיק אחד עתיד לעמוד בעולמי ועתיד לפתוח בפרשת פרה תחילה, "ר'
אליעזר אומ' עגלה בת שנתה ופרה בת שתיים". אמר לפניו, רבון העולמים, יהי
רצון שיהי מחלציי וכו'.¹⁰

There is no doubt that Kalir used Rabbi Yosef berabbi Hanina's statement and adopted it poetically. He composed it in rhyme and employed acrostics. He further enhanced the poetic character of the piece by exchanging Rabbinic expressions for Biblical ones and by using rare, lofty words instead of common ones. שכל הפרות in the phrase בטילות thus became the Biblical כלות and קיימת turned into עומדת¹¹ alluding to such Biblical verses as Psalms 19:10: עומדת לעד and Ecclesiastes 1:4: לעולם עומדת. The reworking of the rest of the passage is even more interesting. Here Kalir does not refer to Moses by name, but calls him by the emblematic expression ציר. Instead of the simple שמע we have קשב, a poetic synonym of the former. The word order of the statement of R. Eliezer is reversed for the sake of the rhyme: in place of פרה בת שנתה ופרה

9 *Atzurah u-Mufrashah*, Davidson, *Thesaurus*, alef 7260 [*Seder Avodath Yisrael*, ed. S. Baer, Berlin 1937, pp. 692-693].

10 Ed. Mandelbaum, pp. 72-73.

11 Leopold Zunz, *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie* (Berlin, 1865), p. 19 mentions the passage שכל הפרות וכו' as one in which Kalir reworks a certain *pesikta* almost word for word.

II

In the *Amidah* for *mussaf* for the New Moon we read *זכרון לכולם יהיו* and *ונזכרתם לפני ה' אלקיכם*. This is based on Numbers 10:9: *ונזכרתם מאויביכם*. The author of the prayer subtly reworks the verse. He changes the text from the second person plural to third person plural, the verbal forms *ונזכרתם* and *ונזשעתם* to the nominal forms: *זכרון* and *תשועת* and *נפש*, he adds the word *נפש* and substitutes *מיד שונא* for *מאויביכם*. In Numbers it is God who is speaking to Israel and the context, although it mentions the New Moon, is God's delivery of Israel from its enemies. In the liturgical passage a statement is made in the third person plural about Israel and New Moon is associated with atonement. Atonement for sins, and not delivery in battle, is the subject of the prayer. This is then the reason for the introduction of *נפש*, which appears in: *ותשועת נפשם*. Perhaps the substitution of *שונא* for *אויב* takes place so as to create phonetic assonance with *תשועת נפשם*. This example shows us how a liturgical-Rabbinic reformulation shifts the emphasis of the Biblical verse and gives it a new, midrashic, meaning.

III

We read in one of the *Avodah* poems of Yose ben Yose: *קדושים יבדילו איש מפרישין*.⁶ This line is, of course, a paraphrase of Mishna Yoma 1:1: *כהן גדול מביתו*. For the Rabbinic *מפרישין* the poet gives us the Biblical *יבדילו* and the grammatical form is changed from the participle, which is common in Rabbinic style, to the Biblically favored imperfect.⁷ The word *איש* designates the High Priest, according to Mishna Yoma 1:3: *ואומרים לו: איש כהן גדול*. Finally, the prosaic *מביתו* becomes the poetic *מנוהו*.⁸ Thus, the simple statement in the Mishna is transformed into a quasi-Biblical and allusive poetic line.

6 *Piyyutei Yosse ben Yosse*, ed. Mirsky, p. 183.

7 See Rabinovitz, *Mahzor Piyyutei Rabbi Yannai*, Vol. 1 pp. 30-31 and note 21.

8 In Isaac ibn Ghiyyat *Seder Avodah*, we read: *לשבעה לקחתך להטהר וכי מן הנוה אני לקחתך*. *Shirei Rabbi Yizhak ibn Ghiyyat*: tentative edition by Yonah David (Jerusalem, 1987), p. 144. This, of course, is based on 2 Samuel 7:8, but it seems that ibn Ghiyyat also had Yosse ben Yosse's passage in mind.

two words in each verse of a poetic line which divides into four parts.³ The lines are based on the following biblical verses.

1. Psalms 33:6: בדבר ה' שמים נעשו/ וברוח פיו כל צבאם
2. Psalms 148:3-6: הללוהו שמש וירח/ הללוהו כל כוכבי אור/ הללוהו שמי השמים...כי
הוא צוה ונבראו/ ויעמידם לעד לעולם/ חק נתן ולא יעבר

They contain two word-for-word quotations, *וברוח פיו כל צבאם* and *חק נתן*. The rest is paraphrase.

Now let us analyze the text: the usual liturgical blessing formula requires that it begins with *אשר*. One would expect this word to continue with a slightly adjusted first part of Psalms 33:6, such as e.g.: *אשר בדברו שמים*; however, this is not the case. Instead of *בדבר ה'* we have *במאמרו*; the common *שמים* is replaced by the loftier *שחקים*, while *ברא* becomes a substitute for *נעשו*. The choice of *ברא* is predicated on the frequent use of this verb in liturgical blessings, on its occurrence in the just quoted Psalms 148:5, and perhaps on such Rabbinic models as e.g.: *בעשרה מאמרות נברא* which parallels the phrase *במאמרו ברא* of the blessing. The second part of Psalms 33:6 fortuitously contains exactly four words: *כל וברוח פיו כל צבאם* and accordingly it fits into the poetic scheme perfectly. The next line *ויעמידם לעד לעולם חק וזמן נתן בהם/ שלא ישנו את תפקידם* paraphrases Psalms 148:6: *חק נתן*, wherein the phrase *שלא ישנו* is in the liturgical style of the Rabbis.⁵ Otherwise the line retains two key words from the Biblical verse: *חק נתן*.

We may formulate the principles emerging from the above reworking:

1. The use of the common two word/four part poetic line and the clever embedding of a verbatim quote from the Biblical verse into it.
2. The use of "loftier" words instead of "common" ones.
3. The mixing of Biblical, Rabbinic and liturgical vocabulary.

3 See: Mirsky, *Piyyutei Yosse ben Yosse*, p. 47ff; Benjamin Hrushovski "Note on the Systems of Hebrew Versification," *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*, edited and translated by T. Carmi (New York, 1981), pp. 60-61.

4 Pirkei Avot 5:1.

5 Cf. Mirsky's analysis of the style of the Alaiu prayer in his: *Piyyut: Hitpathuto be-Eretz Yisrael* (Jerusalem, 1990), pp. 72-73 (originally published in the periodical *Jerusalem*, Vol. 2, 1967, pp. 161-179). He calls attention to *שלא וכו'* constructions in liturgical passages.

Some Examples of Poetic Reformulations of Biblical and Midrashic Passages in Liturgy and Piyyut

It is a commonplace that newer layers of Hebrew literature are stylistically dependent on quotations from Bible and Rabbinic literature. Sometimes the later work quotes the Biblical verse or the Rabbinic passage word for word, sometimes it reworks it. When the text is reworked, it is interesting to examine what the principles are, if any, which guide the authors when they substitute new words for the ones that appear in the original.

Several scholars gave examples of this practice in the literature of *piyyut*¹ A few more examples, from standard liturgy as well as from early *piyyut* are provided in the following, with the hope that perhaps in the future a more comprehensive treatment of the subject could be offered.

I

In the blessing over the new moon, we read אשר במאמרו/ ברא שחקים/ וברוח חוק וזמן/ נתן בהם/ שלא ישנו/ את תפקידם² These lines are composed in one of the favorite meters of ancient Hebrew poetry, namely

1 On the uses of the Biblical idiom in the works of early *payyetanim* in general, see: Ezra Fleischer, *Shirath ha-Kodesh ha-Ivrith Bimei ha-Benayyim* (Jerusalem, 1977), p. 98-104; esp. pp. 103-104; *Piyyutei Yosse ben Yosse*, ed. by Aharon Mirsky (Jerusalem, 1977), p. 42ff, where he formulates four basic rules which characterize Yosse ben Yosse's employment of Biblical language. On the language of *piyyut* in general, see: Yosef Yahalom, *Sefat ha-Shir Shel ha-Piyyut ha-Eretz Yisraeli ha-Kadum* (Jerusalem, 1985). The particular phenomenon which is the subject of this paper is discussed in connection with Yannai's poems by Z.M. Rabinovitz in the introduction to his edition of *Mahzor Piyyutei Rabbi Yannai* (Jerusalem, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 30-33. See also: A. Mirsky, "Mahazavtan Shel Zuroth ha-Piyyut," in *Yedioth ha-Makhon le-Heker ha-Shira ha-Ivrith*, vol. 7, 1958, p. 29 and Yahalom, *op. cit.* p. 145.

2 This is an early text which is already found in the Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 42a.

Where do we go from here? Is there still room for further Genizah studies? As in the area of standard liturgy, so in the field of *piyyut*-literature, in Eretz Yisrael and in the Orient, there are still untold unedited fragments of the work of known as well as unknown poets. Zulay once wrote about his dream of 30 volumes of poetry that could be published on the basis of the Genizah.⁴⁹ Much of it still awaits identification, analysis and publication. As mentioned above, a critical edition of the *piyyutim* of Eleazar Kalir is still to be accomplished. New editions of Golden Age Hebrew poetry in Spain should also be undertaken. Judah Halevy's religious and secular poetry and Moses ibn Ezra's religious poems are chief candidates for such new editions. The accessibility of Genizah collections from the former Soviet Union, particularly that of the Firkovich collection in St. Petersburg,⁵⁰ pose new opportunities in Genizah research as do the advanced technologies of photography and computer science.⁵¹

The dreams of David Kaufmann and Menahem Zulay are still far from being completely fulfilled. If we could come back for a celebration of the bi-centennial of the Genizah, we would still possibly be told that the long journey of research in the inexhaustible treasure trove of the Genizah is not yet quite over.

49 Zulay, *Eretz Israel* (above note 6), p. 34.

50 Joseph Yahalom, "Ginzei Leningrad ve-heker shirath hayyav shel Rabbi Yehudah ha-Levi," in: *Pe'amim* 46-47 (1991), pp. 55-73. Ezra Fleischer, "Shirim ve-shivrei shirim hadashim le-Rabbi Yehudah ha-Levi," in: *Mehkerei Yerushalayim be-sifruth ivrith* 13 (1992), pp. 65-94.

51 The Friedberg Genizah Project (see above note 19) will utilize these new technologies.

through a steady stream of Genizah discoveries.⁴⁵ It is also significant to note that even in the case of poems that had been known previously from conventional sources, the Genizah has often yielded manuscripts, written in the lifetime of the authors, that changed readings and supplied information on the circumstances in which they were composed, the latter mostly through the Arabic superscriptions appearing at the head of the poems.⁴⁶

There is one particular *genre* of Hebrew poetry for which the Genizah is the main source. Hebrew *muwashshahs*, metrical strophic poems (also called girdle poems), many with a final strophe in Arabic or in a mixture of Arabic and Romance vernacular, are richly represented among the Genizah fragments. An extensive literature deals with the artistic, linguistic and cultural import of this popular form. This typical Andalusian poetic composition, first used for secular poetry only, later became part and parcel of religious and liturgical poetry as well, albeit without the vernacular endings, and it spread from Spain to other centers of Jewish creativity.⁴⁷

The steady flow of new information, the constant enrichment of the field with new discoveries, some revolutionary and some more routine, enabled scholars to produce large and significant syntheses.

Ezra Fleischer's history of liturgical Hebrew poetry in the Middle Ages, and the history of Hebrew poetry in Spain, by Hayyim Schirmann, complemented by Ezra Fleischer's up-to-date notes, would not be the books that they are, if not for the drastic transformation of the discipline of both secular and religious Hebrew poetry, caused by the century-long intensive Genizah scholarship.⁴⁸

45 See J. Schirmann, "Poets Contemporary with Mose ibn Ezra and Jehuda Hallevi," in: *Studies of the Research Institute for Hebrew Poetry = Yediat ha-Makhon le-Heker ha-Shira ha-Ivrit*, vol. 2 (1936), pp. 117-212. On Ibn Abitur see Ezra Fleischer, "Behinoth be-shirato shel Rabbi Yosef ibn Abitur," in: *Asufoth*, 4 (1990), pp. 127-188. On Ibn Ghiyat's work see Menahem H. Schmelzer, *The Poetic Work of Isaac ibn Giyat*. Doctoral dissertation (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1965) (unpublished) and his article, above note 4.

46 See Schirmann in his article mentioned above in note 4, pp. 101-102.

47 *Ibid.*, pp. 102-105.

48 Ezra Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975) (in Hebrew); Jefim Schirmann, *The History of Hebrew Poetry in Muslim Spain*. Ed., supplemented and annotated by Ezra Fleischer (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995) (in Hebrew).

ibn Labrat and other Spanish Hebrew poets were regarded as the founders of a new school of poetry, shaped and influenced by Arabic poetical form and contents. Now, Saadia's poetic work is considered to have been path-breaking in introducing new forms and subjects and is judged to have been the foundation on which his followers in the Spanish school developed their work. Saadia is thus credited with having exerted lasting influence on poetry as he did in Jewish philosophy, exegesis and law.⁴²

The Genizah has also been the source of new texts and new understandings in the field of Hebrew poetry, liturgical as well as secular, during the Golden Age in Spain. Poems by famous as well as obscure poets came to light and documentary evidence on some of the major figures of the period have surfaced from the Genizah. The best known of such discoveries in this respect is the material identified by S.D. Goitein on the life of Judah Halevi and on his pilgrimage from Spain via Alexandria on the way to the Holy Land. Besides Goitein, who discovered and published autograph letters by Judah Halevy, Shraga Abramson and Hayyim Schirmann contributed greatly to the reconstruction of minute details of the great poet's life.⁴³ The poetic oeuvres of the classic poets, Samuel hanagid, Solomon ibn Gabirol, Moses ibn Ezra and Abraham ibn Ezra were enlarged and transformed quantitatively and qualitatively.⁴⁴ The work of less famous poets, such as Joseph ibn Abitur and Isaac ibn Ghiyat and many others, especially those who were active in the generation of Moses ibn Ezra and Judah Halevi, has also become much better known and understood as a result of the large number of poems added to their oeuvres

Poetry of R. Hai Gaon," in: *Papers on Medieval Hebrew Literature Presented to A.M. Habermann* ed. by Zvi Malachi (Jerusalem: R. Mass, 1977), pp. 239-274 (in Hebrew).

42 Fleischer, *ibid.*, 4-17.

43 See S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*. Volume V: *The Individual* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 448-468. These materials are collected and analyzed in a forthcoming book by Moshe Gil and Ezra Fleischer. [See now: Moshe Gil and Ezra Fleischer *Yehuda ha-Levi and his Circle: 55 Geniza Documents* (Jerusalem, World Union of Jewish Studies, 2001; in Hebrew).]

44 *Divan Shmuel Hanagid*, ed. by Dov Jarden (Jerusalem: Hebrew Union College Press, 1966), List of Genizah Manuscripts: pp. 345-346; *Solomon Ibn Gabirol: Secular Poems*, ed. by H. Brody and J. Schirmann (Jerusalem: The Schocken Institute, 1974), List of Manuscripts: pp. 315-318; *The Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Solomon ibn Gabirol*, ed. by Dov Jarden (Jerusalem: n.p., 1972), List of Manuscripts: pp. 665-686; *Moses ibn Ezra, Shirei ha-Hol*, ed. by H. Brody (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1942), vol. 2, List of Manuscripts: pp. 17-24; *The Religious Poems of Abraham ibn Ezra*, ed. by Israel Levin (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1975), vol. 1, List of Genizah Manuscripts: pp. 17-18.

poetry of various poets is in the process of being assembled and prepared for edition, among them the poems of Pinehas ha-Kohen of Tiberias and of the Babylonian poet, Joseph Al-Baradani.³⁹

Along with the discovery of brand new texts by hitherto unknown authors, Genizah scholars have also unearthed unknown works by well-known writers. The work of the enigmatic poet, Eleazar Kalir (or Kilir), to be distinguished from that of a poet with a deceptively similar name, Eleazar berabbi Kilar, mentioned above, has been part of the synagogue liturgy throughout the Middle Ages and into modern times. Numerous poems of his were recited on holidays and fastdays in Italy, France, Germany, and, later, in Eastern Europe. The Genizah, however, contains many unknown compositions by him, and although some have been published, many of them still await editing, and a critical edition of all his poems, from conventional as well as Genizah sources, is still a great *desideratum* and is a long time away.⁴⁰ The poetic work of Saadia Gaon and Hai (Hayya) Gaon became known to a great extent as a result of Genizah discoveries; and the role played, especially by Saadia, in the emergence and development of a new style of Hebrew poetry in tenth and eleventh century Spain, forced scholars to re-evaluate previous conceptions concerning the birth of Golden Age Hebrew Poetry.⁴¹ Before Saadia's poetry was published, mainly from Genizah fragments, Dunash

Magnes, 1987) and *Palestinian Vocalised Piyyut Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections* (Cambridge: University Press, 1997). Among Shulamit Elizur's publications are: *Rabbi Jehuda Berabbi Binjaminis Carmina Cuncta* (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1988); *Shiv'atot for the Weekly Tora Readings* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1993); *Poet at a Turning Point: Rabbi Yehoshua bar Khalfa and his Poetry* (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi, 1994); *She'erit Yosef: The Piyyutim of Rabbi Yosef Ha'levi he-haver* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1994).

39 "Pinehas" by Shulamit Elizur, see *Tarbiz*, vol. 66 (1997), p. 586, note 11 and Al-Baradani by Tovah Beer, see Fleischer (above note 9), 260. [See now: Tova Beer, *The "Great Cantor" of Baghdad: Ther Liturgical Poems of Joseph ben Hayyim al-Baradani* (Jerusalem, Ben-Zvi Institute, 2002), The edition of Pinehas' *Piyyutim* by Elizur, is scheduled to be published in 2004.]

40 See the various publications of Shulamit Elizur, among them: *Kedushah ve-Shir: Kedushatoh le-Shabbatoh ha-Nehamah le-Rabbi Eleazar berabbi Kilir* (Jerusalem: n.p., 1988) and *Be-Todah ve-Shir: Shivatoh le-Arba ha-Parashiyot le-Rabbi Eleazar berabbi Kalir* (Jerusalem: R. Mass, 1991). See also Ezra Fleischer, *The Yozer: Its Emergence and Development* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984), pp. 29-30 (in Hebrew).

41 On Saadia's poetry see Menahem Zulay, *Ha-Askolah ha-Paytanit shel Rav Saadya Gaon* (Jerusalem: The Schocken Institute, 1964) and the various works published by Joseph Tobl, listed by Ezra Fleischer in his "Mekomo shel Rav Saadya Gaon be-Toledoth ha-Shirah ha-ivrit," in: *Pe'amim*, 54 (1993), 4, note 2. On the poetry of Hai Gaon see Ezra Fleischer, "Studies in the

ship, Yannai emerged as a central figure in ancient Jewish literature. A great innovator, the one who introduced rhyme into Hebrew poetry in a systematic and consistent fashion, Yannai, through his language, poetry, use of Rabbinic material, presentation of religious belief and practice, polemics with Byzantine Christianity, and references to the realia of his times, offers a fresh, new picture of the life of the Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael, some time around the fifth-sixth century. Shalom Spiegel, in his inimitable Hebrew, characterized Yannai as follows:

זה כחו של ינאי, ששרשיו משולחים אל מעמקי הדורות ויונקתיו יוצאות על עיינות בראשית. מקורות המורשה הקדמונית טרם דללו בימיו... עוד יש בהם כדי לרוות נפש הדור ולכלכל צרכי תקופה. כמעט כל הניצוצות, שנתחלקו מתורותם של ראשונים, מבריקים בזיום ומבהיקים בעיזוזם עוד גם מתחת פטיו של ינאי, יורש הגדת חז"ל, ויוצר בצלמה ובצביונה... תום של כיבוש ראשון לו... זה חינו של ינאי, שהוא כלו ישן ואינו אלא חדש, וצמודים ילכו בו אחרון וגם ראשון. קשי זריעה ורינת קציר נפגשו, בשורת מחרשה וברכת חרמש נשקו.³³

Yannai had some predecessors and, of course, many successors. It was again the Genizah that yielded the works of many poets and that enabled scholarship to establish criteria for classifying their poetry as pre-classical, classical, and late. The activity spans half a millennium, from ca. 500 to ca. 1000, in Eretz Yisrael, Babylonia and other Mediterranean centers. The names and works of poets during this long period of time were totally unknown before the Genizah discoveries revealed them. Today, we have scholarly editions of the works of such poets as the Anonymus,³⁴ Simeon berabbi Megas,³⁵ Yehudah,³⁶ Eleazar berabbi Kilar,³⁷ and others, as well as editions of related materials.³⁸ The work continues and the liturgical

33 Shalom Spiegel, *The Fathers of Piyyut: Texts and Studies Toward a History of the Piyyut in Eretz Yisrael*. Selected from his literary estate and edited by Menahem H. Schmelzer (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1996), pp. 385-386 (in Hebrew).

34 *The Pizmonim of the Anonymus*. Critical edition with introduction and commentary by Ezra Fleischer (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974).

35 *Liturgical Poems of Sim'on bar Megas*. Critical edition with commentary and introduction by Joseph Yahalom (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1984).

36 *Wouter Jacques Van Bakkum, Hebrew Poetry from Late Antiquity; Liturgical Poems of Yehudah*. Critical edition with introduction and commentary (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

37 Shulamit Alizur (sic!) [= Elizur], *The Piyyutim of Rabbi El'azar birabbi Qillar* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988).

38 Joseph Yahalom published, among others: *Mahzor Eretz Israel: A Geniza Codex* (Jerusalem:

to a large extent based on Genizah manuscripts. While studying Genizah fragments in search of materials relevant to Masoretic studies, Kahle and his assistants encountered many poetic texts, some of them employing the system of Palestinian vocalization, a subject of great interest to them. Zulay started out working with Kahle and probably it was in Kahle's seminar that his involvement in the research of ancient Palestinian *piyyut* began.²⁸ As a consequence of the work in Kahle's seminar, a number of doctoral dissertations in early *piyyut* were published in the 1930s.²⁹

The crowning achievement of this scholarly activity was the publication, by Schocken, of Zulay's edition of Yannai's poems, in Berlin, in 1938, one of the last Hebrew books to appear in Nazi Germany.³⁰ While Davidson's edition in 1919 contained the text of ten compositions, Zulay's included 138, albeit most of them fragmentary. The major feat of Zulay's work was the reconstruction of the text, as far as it was possible, out of hundreds of Genizah fragments, many of them tiny scraps. Building on Davidson's pioneering work, Zulay provided the corpus of Yannai's poems, but he did not write a commentary to the poems. Soon after Zulay's edition appeared, Saul Lieberman published a major study on it, in which he discussed the affinity between Yannai's poetry and Talmudic and Midrashic literatures. Lieberman regarded these newly discovered texts as primary sources for new insights into Rabbinic literature and he expressed the hope that the day will come when Yannai's poetry will occupy its rightful place among the folio volumes of Talmud and Midrash, because, as he put it, that is where it belongs!³¹ Some forty years after Zulay's edition, Zvi Meir Rabinovitz had at least partially fulfilled the hope expressed by Lieberman. He prepared an edition of Yannai's poems, including some unpublished texts, and accompanied it by a detailed commentary and introductions.³² Through these long decades of scholar-

28 Zulay, *op. cit.* (note 27), p. 40.

29 E.g. Zulay's dissertation, *Zur Liturgie der babylonischen Juden* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933) and R. Edelman, *Zur Fruehgeschichte des Mahzor* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1934).

30 *Piyyute Yannai. Liturgical Poems of Yannai*. Collected from Geniza Manuscripts and other sources and published by Menahem Zulay (Berlin: Schocken/Jewish Publishing Company, 1938).

31 *Hazzanut Yannai*, now included in Saul Lieberman, *Studies in Palestinian Talmudic Literature* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), pp. 123-152, (in Hebrew). The quote is on p. 152.

32 *The Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Yannai according to the Triennial Cycle of the Pentateuch and the Holidays*. Critical edition with introductions and commentary by Zvi Meir Rabinovitz, 2 volumes (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1985-1987).

not only by their quantity, but also by a curious document found in the Genizah. True, this document is from a much later time than the period of early *piyyut*, still it shows the demands a community placed on a cantor to produce new compositions in order to please his audience. The document, a letter from 1214, probably written in Alexandria, tells about the efforts of obtaining new poems, even surreptitiously, from as far as Marseilles.²⁵ This letter, but, of course, much more the evidence of tens of thousands of poems, written by hundreds of poets, most of them totally unknown before the discovery of the Genizah, clearly prove the popularity and centrality of poetic creativity in medieval Jewry.

With the publication of *Mahzor Yannai* in 1919, the interest in the subject increased. The 1920s, but especially the 1930s, may be considered as a most influential period in Genizah research in medieval Hebrew poetry, both religious and secular. A pivotal figure in sponsoring and promoting scholarship in this area was Salman Schocken, a visionary patron of art and culture.²⁶ First in Germany, and later in Palestine, Schocken enabled young scholars to devote their time and talent to the study of medieval Hebrew poetry. A precondition of such study was the exploration of the thousands of Genizah fragments scattered in the various libraries. In 1930, Schocken established the Institute for the Study of Medieval Hebrew Poetry in Berlin and engaged the services of Hayyim Brody, Hayyim Schirmann, Menahem Zulay and A.M. Habermann to assemble the manuscript materials, mainly in photographs, to carry out research and to publish the poetic texts. The productivity of the Institute was amazing. In a relatively short period of time, many volumes and studies of ancient *piyyut*, of medieval Hebrew poetry in Spain, Germany and Italy appeared.²⁷ Mention should also be made of another factor that promoted interest in the field. In the post-World War I years, Paul Kahle, a German gentile scholar, attracted some Jewish students to his seminar at the University of Bonn. Kahle was mainly interested in Masoretic studies,

25 See S.D. Goitein, *Jewish Education in Muslim Countries Based on Records from the Cairo Geniza* (Jerusalem: The Ben-Zvi Institute, 1962), pp. 97-103 (in Hebrew).

26 On Schocken see Volker Dahm, *Das juedische Buch im Dritten Reich*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Beck, 1993), pp. 220-501 and *Der Schocken Verlag/Berlin. Juedische Selbstbehauptung in Deutschland. 1931-1938*. Hrsg. von Saskia Schreuder und Claude Weber (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994).

27 See Zulay, *Eretz Israel*, (above note 6), pp. 41 and 78, note 4 and Peter S. Lehnardt, "Das Forschungsinstitut fuer hebraeische Dichtung und sein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der hebraeischen Dichtung des Mittelalters," in: *Der Schocken Verlag* (above note 26), pp. 299-320.

On the other hand, there exist a number of important papers evaluating the significance of the Genizah for the study of medieval Hebrew poetry, and *piyyut*, liturgical poetry, in particular.²¹ The sheer quantity of poetic texts in the Genizah made scholars focus on them from the very beginning of Genizah research. The internal catalogue of the Institute for Medieval Hebrew Poetry at the Hebrew University, under the directorship of Ezra Fleischer, contains references to 56,000 items.²² And this number does not yet include all the poetic Genizah texts! There is no doubt that the Genizah had added tens of thousands of poems to the corpus of Hebrew poetry. Such a huge mass of new texts commanded the attention of scholars and a constant flow of publications has kept appearing from the very beginning of Genizah scholarship. The vast quantity of poetic pieces in the Genizah is a testimony to the central importance of poetry in the society that is mirrored by it.

Arguably, the most revolutionary discovery in this respect was Israel Davidson's reconstruction of the liturgical poetry of the ancient Palestinian poet, Yannai.²³ The publication of *Mahzor Yannai* by Davidson in 1919 startled the scholarly community. One of the chief features of the surprising character of Yannai's poetry was the fact that it included lengthy, elaborate and intricate poetic compositions for each and every Shabbath of the year. Before Yannai's weekly *piyyut* compositions were published, only poetic embellishments for the holiday services were known. The regular recitation of extensive religious poetry on a weekly basis was taken as an indication of a true appreciation of, and taste for, poetic creativity in Hebrew language and literature. That such creativity existed in Yannai's time, sometime toward the end of Byzantine rule in Palestine, speaks volumes on the cultural conditions of the community. Other Genizah discoveries produced additional rich materials that bear testimony to the popularity of the *genre* in the various Jewish communities. These texts were used as frequent, sometimes daily, insertions (or perhaps in earlier times substitutions) in the standard liturgy.²⁴ The seemingly insatiable desire for new *piyyutim* is documented

21 See above notes 4-6.

22 Fleischer (above note 9), p. 253.

23 Israel Davidson, *Mahzor Yannai: A Liturgical Work of the VIIth Century* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1919).

24 See Zulay, *Eretz Israel*, (above note 6), pp. 65-118.

Genizah, about which more later, touches upon many aspects of the standard liturgy, directly or indirectly.

It is legitimate to ask at this point: Where do we stand today in the full utilization of Genizah fragments, particularly in the study of the liturgical practices of Eretz Yisrael? Ezra Fleischer, in his major study of this topic, evaluates and surveys the research and takes account of the major advances and great strides taken since the initial publications of Schechter. Still, Fleischer is blunt in pointing out the limits of what had been achieved and presents the *desiderata* for a future agenda of research that still requires attention. Fleischer explicitly states about his own book — a book containing the richest collection of relevant Genizah materials, much of it discovered by Fleischer himself — that it does not offer a synthesis on the subject. He writes that “a legitimate summary of the subject is still very far away.”¹⁷ The reason for this, after 100 years of scholarly research, is that there are still large quantities of unpublished materials in the Genizah, and even the published ones are often so enigmatic that they defy proper interpretation.¹⁸ This situation, of course, is characteristic of other fields of Genizah research as well. The enormous amount of material, its fragmentary and scattered nature, the lack of comprehensive catalogues,¹⁹ make it impossible, even after a century of diligent labor, to gain and to give a full picture of the significance of the Genizah for liturgical (and other) study. Perhaps this explains why there were no papers devoted to a survey of this branch of learning at the Genizah conferences mentioned above and why even Fleischer omitted a discussion of this issue in his address delivered before the plenary session of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies.²⁰

pp. 15-16, who urges caution in using Geonic halakhic materials for the understanding of the actual practice and text of liturgy.

17 Fleischer, *ibid.*, p.11.

18 *Ibid.*, Recently, under the direction of Dr. Uri Ehrlich at Ben Gurion University in Beer Sheva, a project was launched for the purpose of collecting and identifying the information on liturgical fragments from the Cairo Genizah.

19 See now Danzig, *Catalogue* (above note 16), pp. 3-31, for an extensive discussion of the various Genizah collections and the literature about them. Also, recently, the Friedberg Genizah project at New York University was established for the study and cataloging of all Genizah collections.

20 Published in *Haaretz*, October 22, 1997 (*Tarbut ve-sifrut* section, 3). See now: *Jewish Studies*, vol. 38 (1998), pp. 253-265 (Hebrew section).

Alongside the discoveries and studies of the liturgy of the Jews in Eretz Yisrael, fragments relating to other rites and other aspects of liturgical history came to light from the Genizah. Our knowledge and understanding of the liturgy of the Jews of Babylonia, and other later rites, were deepened by Genizah discoveries, made mainly by Wieder.¹² Besides texts relating to individual prayers or liturgical practices, the Genizah enabled scholars to reconstruct entire prayerbooks. Most important of such reconstructions was that of the prayerbook of Saadia Gaon in the original Judeo-Arabic, although based on a conventional manuscript, but complemented and completed by an extensive array of Genizah fragments.¹³ Another discovery of great importance was that of a polemical work by a scholar named Pirkoi ben Baboi, a staunch defender of Babylonian customs, many of them in the area of liturgy, who harshly criticized the customs of the Palestinians. Pirkoi ben Baboi's treatise is a very important source, shedding light on various liturgical practices.¹⁴ A later, but equally fascinating document from the Genizah, deals with a covenant signed by members of a Fostat synagogue who pledge in the year 1211 that they will continue to adhere to their particular Palestinian customs.¹⁵ In the various works emanating from the Geonic period, many of them first published or reconstructed on the basis of Genizah fragments, there are many passages that deal with liturgical matters and ultimately contribute to our knowledge of liturgical phenomena.¹⁶ Needless to say, the rich literature of *piyyut* from the

12 "Leheker minhag Bavel ha-kadmon," in: *Tarbiz*, vol. 37 (1968), pp. 135-157, 240-264; his *The Formation of Jewish Liturgy in the East and the West* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1998) vol. 1, pp. 13-64 (in Hebrew).

13 *Siddur R. Saadia Gaon*, ed. I. Davidson, S. Assaf, B.I. Joel (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1941). Naftali Wieder published additional fragments of the Siddur, see his "Fourteen New Genizah Fragments of Saadya's Siddur." In: *Saadya Studies*, ed. by E.I.J. Rosenthal (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1943). See also his *Formation* etc. (above note 12), vol. 2, pp. 648-658.

14 On Pirkoi see now: Robert Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture* (New Haven: Yale, 1998), pp. 113-117, and the literature mentioned there, p. 113, note 45.

15 Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel*, (above note 9), pp. 218ff.

16 See, e.g., Neil Danzig, *Introduction to Halakhot Pesuqot with a Supplement to Halakhot Pesuqot* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1993) (in Hebrew), index, s.v. "tefillot u-verakhhot u-keriath ha-tora," pp. 654-655. See now also Neil Danzig, *A Catalogue of Fragments of Halakhah and Midrash from the Cairo Genizah in the Elkan Nathan Adler Collection of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America* (New York: JTS, 1997), p. 72 (introduction), pp. 328-329 (index). Compare, however, Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel*, (above note 9),

Among the first sensational publications from the Genizah was Solomon Schechter's modestly titled "Genizah Specimens."⁷ In a short sentence, Schechter introduced the publication of the fragments by claiming that the "fragments represent as it seems portions of the liturgy *in their oldest form*"⁸ (emphasis mine). Thus, Schechter immediately catapulted the newly discovered fragments into a position of central importance for the early history of Jewish liturgy. The new texts included, among others, versions of the *Amidah* for weekdays, which in their brevity and economic, concise style clearly ring with the tone of antiquity. Schechter identified the fragments as reflecting the rite of Eretz Yisrael and with this he launched the long efforts of the reconstruction of its standard liturgy. In subsequent years and decades, leading scholars such as Israel Levi, Ismar Elbogen, Jacob Mann, Simha Assaf, Alexander Scheiber and Naftali Wieder⁹ discovered and published many new texts that changed the scholarly perception of the development of Jewish liturgy. Elbogen, in his history of Jewish liturgy, first published in 1913,¹⁰ offers a synthesis of its development, utilizing the newly discovered materials for the first time. The emergence of the contours of the Palestinian rite was greeted with great curiosity and enthusiasm, since this rite, in juxtaposition to the Babylonian one, had become almost totally forgotten during the Middle Ages. The new Genizah texts did not only reveal unknown prayer texts, but also showed how Palestinian prayers offered a much livelier variety of parallel liturgical formulations than anything that was known previously. This variety was taken as an indication of an ongoing, somewhat unchecked, creativity and flexibility and it was looked upon as a welcome change from the more frozen and canonized manifestations of liturgical practice.¹¹

7 *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 10, 1898, pp. 654-659. Reprinted in: *Contributions to the Scientific Study of Jewish Liturgy*, ed. by Jakob J. Petuchowski (New York: Ktav, 1970), pp. 373-378. This was Schechter's second publication in this series, the first being his publication of the famous Ben Sira fragments, *ibid.*, pp. 197-206.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 654 (= *Contributions*, 373).

9 See Ezra Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer and Prayer Rituals as Portrayed in the Geniza Documents* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988), pp. 9-11.

10 Ismar Elbogen, *Der juedische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Leipzig: Fock, 1913). A Hebrew translation, with additional notes, was published in 1972. The book appeared in Raymond Scheindlin's English translation as *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History* (Philadelphia-New York: JPS-JTS, 1993).

11 See Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel* (above note 9), p. 14, and his criticism of this view.

studies, we would not be able to recognize our field. Many fundamental conceptions in the various disciplines of Judaic studies would have to be altered and immense black holes would gape at us in history, literature, Rabbinitics, linguistics, and other areas of learning.

In no field would the gap be larger than in the study of liturgy and poetry, for since the earliest days of Genizah publications, these fields have been continuously enriched by discoveries that revolutionized them.

The contributions of the Genizah to various branches of Jewish studies have been examined previously. Fifty years ago, the American Academy for Jewish Research held a series of lectures on the subject. Louis Ginzberg presented a paper on the importance of the Genizah for Talmud and Rabbinitics, Shalom Spiegel on its value for religious and secular poetry and Alexander Marx on its significance for Jewish history. Unfortunately, only Marx's paper was published.³ In 1976, a conference was held at Tel Aviv University devoted to Cairo Genizah research and the papers delivered at the conference were published in book form.⁴ In 1996, Tel Aviv University and the Hebrew University arranged jointly to commemorate the centennial of Genizah discoveries with a three-day conference. Finally, in the summer of 1997, the World Congress of Jewish Studies, during its sessions in Jerusalem, celebrated the centennial by a number of lectures and keynote addresses.⁵ Inevitably, any attempt to survey Genizah contributions to any field of Jewish studies will have to rely heavily on similar surveys and summaries presented previously. This, of course, applies with equal force to a review of the milestones of Genizah research over the last one hundred years in liturgy and poetry.⁶

3 See *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, vol. 16, 1946-1947, VII-VIII, pp. 183-204.

4 *Te'uda: I. Cairo Geniza Studies*. Ed. by Mordechai A. Friedman (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1980). The volume contains the following relevant articles: Ezra Fleischer, "The Contribution of the Geniza to the Study of Medieval Hebrew Religious Poetry" (pp. 83-87); Menahem Schmelzer, "The Piyyutim of Isaac ibn Giat" (See in the Hebrew Section, pp. 93-98); J. Schirmann, "Secular Hebrew Poetry in the Geniza Manuscripts" (pp. 97-123). All articles are in Hebrew, with English summaries.

5 See the articles listed in the *Program of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies*. Jerusalem, 1997, p. 232.

6 On the *Genizah* and its significance for the history of Hebrew poetry, see the various articles by Menahem Zulai, now collected in his: *Eretz Israel and its Poetry: Studies in Piyyutim from the Cairo Geniza*, ed. by Ephraim Hazan (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995), pp. 3-124 (in Hebrew). See also: Hayyim Schirmann, *New Hebrew Poems from the Genizah* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1965) (in Hebrew). For Fleischer's lecture on the subject see note 19.

The Contribution of the Genizah to the Study of Liturgy and Poetry

One hundred years ago, David Kaufmann, a giant of a scholar, whose genius and manifold scholarly contributions place him among the most outstanding representatives of modern Jewish scholarship in the nineteenth century,¹ foretold the immense research potential of the then freshly discovered treasures of the Cairo Genizah. In a Hebrew article, prompted by Solomon Schechter's removal of the Genizah from Cairo to Cambridge, and by Kaufmann's own acquisition of a significant collection of Genizah fragments, Kaufmann wrote:

At the time when the publication of these treasures will begin, my words will be proven to be true and it will become evident that I did not err and my hope will not remain vain. There will come to light matters about which we did not even dare to dream in our wildest dreams. After long periods of time, when all the treasures of the Genizah will become revealed, it will become possible to match the discoveries against my expectations, and then it will be seen what has become of my dreams.²

After a century of Genizah research, Kaufmann's expectations of undreamt of discoveries have become a reality. If some *jinn* would remove all knowledge derived from the Genizah from the works on Jewish

1 On Kaufmann's life and work see Samuel Krauss, in David Kaufmann, *Mehkarim be-sifruth ha-ivrit shel yeme ha-beinayim* (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1962), pp. 7-35. Dov Schwartz, "On the Contribution of David Kaufmann to the Study of Medieval Jewish Philosophy," in *Jewish Studies*, vol. 36 (1996), pp. 163-173; H.I. Schmelzer, "David Kaufmann (1852-1899): Denker, Gelehrter, Visionar," in: *Judaica*, vol. 55 (1999), pp. 212-219.

2 *Ginzei Kaufmann*, vol. 1, ed. by D.S. Loewinger and A. Scheiber. Budapest, (n.p., 1949), Hebrew dedication page, quoting from Kaufmann's article, "Or ha-ganuz," *Hashiloah*, vol. 2, 1897, pp. 385-393, 481-490. The quotation is on p. 489.

On all the floors there are provisions for display areas of different kinds, enabling the Library to exhibit its holdings in a variety of settings.

With the completion of the new building, it became necessary to strengthen the Library staff. Therefore, the positions of assistant librarian, administrative librarian for public services, administrative librarian for technical services, and curator of graphic materials were established.

Looking to the future, we hope that the excellent collection of materials relating to all aspects of Jewish studies, now housed in an attractive, comfortable, and modern building, will enable the Seminary Library to develop and adopt systems of information retrieval and bibliographical control through automation. This would make available to scholars, as well as the general public, all the accumulated knowledge stored among the pages of the treasures of the Library. This endeavor, as well as the equally important efforts of preserving and restoring the precious originals, will be planned and carried out, whenever possible, in friendly cooperation with other major Jewish libraries in this country. Thus, it is to be hoped that the vast resource of materials relating to the Jewish past, accumulated in American institutions, will become a major source of knowledge and renewal in the life of generations to come.

Modern Facility

The new Library, which adjoins the Seminary's old buildings, occupies 55,000 square feet, has a book capacity of close to 400,000 books, and a seating capacity of 300. The first floor is used by the Library staff for acquisition, cataloguing and technical activities. It also provides space for a large room for sorting and storing duplicates. Next to this room is a bookstore for the sale of surplus duplicates to students and faculty. The staff offices also include facilities for computer terminals. The next two floors house the Library's regular collection which is available to the public on open shelves. This part of the collection contains some 100,000 books. Large desks for reference and circulation services dominate the center of the second floor. Around them are to be found the reference, bibliography, and periodical collections. On the same floor are shelved books in the fields of language and literature. The third floor houses the circulating, open-shelf collection of the Library, mainly in the areas of Philosophy, Religion, Bible, Rabbis, Liturgy, and History. On both floors, a variety of types of seating is available for the readers. In two corners of each floor there are semi-enclosed reading rooms. Along the perimeters of the two floors, rows of carrels for individual study are located. In addition, lounge tables and chairs are available on both floors, with many in the area of the periodical display cases and newspaper racks. The second floor also includes office space for the public services staff as well as two large rooms for microfilm and music centers. On the third floor, in an enclosed area, space-saving, high density shelving is installed for the storage of lesser used materials.

The top floor is reserved for the special collections. These include: manuscripts, *Genizah* fragments, incunabula, rare printed books, archives, and graphic materials (prints, photographs, *Ketubbot*, etc.). Readers may use these materials in a reading room adjacent to the special collections stacks. The stacks are equipped with the most up-to-date safety devices and are temperature and humidity controlled. The shelving provides space for a variety of forms and sizes; there are map cases, scroll cabinets, and shelves of a diversity of width and height for folio, regular size, and miniature books. On this floor there are also library offices, individual private studies that will be made available, upon application, to visiting scholars, a small auditorium for lectures, which is equipped with projection facilities, and rooms for binding and photography.

Italy in 1492; a Spanish *Haggadah*, written and illuminated around the year 1300; and a richly illuminated prayerbook, written in Pforchheim, Germany in 1720. Selected pages of the magnificent *Rothschild Manuscript* were reproduced and published in 1983, with an introduction and essays in honor of the dedication of the new Library building.

During its attempts to modernize its collections and bring the richness of its holding under bibliographical control, the Library initiated a number of projects. It received funding for two such projects from the National Endowment for the Humanities: *Recording and Microfilming of Newspaper and Periodical Collections* and *Support for the Archival Activities at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*. As a result of these projects, the Seminary's archival holdings and periodicals collection became more easily accessible to the scholarly public. The latter grant also provided funds for the preservation on microfilm of some runs of rare titles. A recent grant from the Perlow Foundation will make it possible for the library to catalog and preserve its old Yiddish and hasidic books from Eastern Europe. The publication of a catalog is planned upon the successful completion of the project.

For a period of seventeen years, most of these activities took place in a temporary prefabricated structure that was erected in the courtyard of the Seminary for the reconstruction effort. The erection of this structure became imperative as a result of the total internal damage that the Library tower suffered at the time of the fire. Soon after 1966, planning began for a new Library building. In fact, plans for such a building were made even before the fire and Nahum Sarna's above-mentioned article concludes with the following words: "It is hoped that the greatest Jewish Library of all time, and one of the great cultural assets of the United States, will, in the not too distant future, be housed in a building worthy of its importance and fully equipped to fulfill its role as the mecca of Jewish scholars." Still, it was not until the year 1980 that ground was broken for the erection of a new Library structure. In 1983 the building was completed and the Library's holdings were moved into the new quarters. At the dedication, the Library was named the Ivan F. & Seema Boesky Family Library. [Subsequently, its original name: The Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, was restored.]

incunabula, were also included in this project. University Microfilms has issued printed reel guides, arranged by subjects, to most of the collection, and these now provide, for the first time, lists to most of the Seminary's rich holdings of Hebrew and related manuscripts. The overwhelming majority of the Seminary's manuscripts have been made commercially available on microfilm to interested libraries and scholars. A complete set is on deposit at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem, and microfilms of the *Genizah* collection, in its entirety, were acquired by Cambridge University Library. Through this measure, the manuscript collection of the Seminary Library is now widely available to the scholarly world in Europe, Israel, and throughout the United States.

As an additional guide to the rare books and manuscripts, a reprint of the late Alexander Marx's annual reports on unusual acquisitions was published (A. Marx, *Bibliographical Studies and Notes on Rare Books and Manuscripts in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, N.Y. 1977).

New Acquisitions

Although preoccupied with the task of reconstructing its damaged holdings, the physical restoration of the volumes, and the modernization of library practices, the Library continued to acquire important collections of books, and individual rare and unusual volumes. Among these collections thus acquired, mention should be made of those assembled by Rabbi Solomon Goldman, Rabbi Felix Levy, both of Chicago, and the Yiddish writers, Yehoash and N.M. Minkoff. Recently, the library received, as a gift, the collection of books that had belonged to Rabbi Hayyim Wasserzug (Filipower), a Lithuanian rabbi of the 19th century, whose library had been moved to this country a long time ago. This may be among the very few private libraries that remained together as a unit over such a long period of time, thus preserving a scholarly Eastern European rabbinic library relatively intact. Important Hebrew manuscripts, as well as rare printed books, were consistently acquired on a selective basis. Special mention should be made of such major manuscript acquisitions as the gift to the Library of the *Rothschild Manuscript*, a beautifully illuminated Hebrew codex written in Florence,

typewritten theses and the school's student records and correspondence files, were completely destroyed. This collection had been transferred to the Seminary Library in 1940 and became the Seminary's property in 1950.

Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Collection. After the Second World War, the Seminary received about 5,000 books from European collections whose owners could not be located. Many of these had been incorporated into the regular collections and suffered water damage, but the remaining volumes, mostly duplicates, were destroyed.

Moritz Steinschneider Collection. With the exception of his correspondence, his own works with handwritten notes, and his manuscript collection, the irreplaceable library of some 5,000 volumes of the great scholar was completely burned.

Tausner Collection. Several thousand Hebrew, Yiddish, and Russian books and pamphlets, published mainly in Russia and Poland.

Zemachson Collection. Manuscripts of music and scores of liturgical compositions.

Zilberts Collection. Manuscripts and liturgical manuscripts.

The rest of the collection suffered considerable water-damage and the entire stacks, containing approximately 150,000 volumes, had to be evacuated. The books were dispersed into various locations. After the evacuation, the arduous task of drying out the books began. Although some of the water-damaged books were beyond repair, the great majority of them could be restored, rebound, and returned to use.

As a result of the fire, it was decided to recatalog the entire collection according to the Library of Congress system and to abandon the old classification scheme based on the system devised by A.S. Freidus.

Special Treasures

Fortunately, the rare book and manuscript collection of the Library, which was housed in a different part of the building, remained intact. Immediately after the fire, arrangements were made with University Microfilms for the microfilming of the collection of manuscripts containing some 10,000 items, including 40,000 *Genizah* fragments. Certain sections of the rare book collection, especially the Hebrew

The New Jewish Theological Seminary Library

Twenty years ago, the *Jewish Book Annual* (vol. 21, 1963-1964, pp. 53-59) published an article on the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America by the then librarian, Professor Nahum Sarna. In it, Sarna described the main features of the Seminary Library and its significance. In the twenty years that have elapsed since then, the Seminary Library's history has been marked by tragedy and renewal. In 1966 a fire occurred in the Library stacks. Ten stories of book stacks were located in the Library tower and the fire struck the three upper floors destroying approximately 70,000 books. Particularly tragic was the loss of the following collections:

Cyrus Adler Papers, representing a great portion of his papers and correspondence during his presidency of the Seminary (1915-1940).

Benaïm Collection. This collection was acquired in 1965 and it contained books and manuscripts from North Africa. The majority of the 2,000 printed books was completely destroyed. About 105 manuscripts were partially damaged but can still be used for scholarly purposes. Of the remaining 45, only fragments have survived.

Danzig Collection of Torah Scrolls. Some forty scrolls, formerly the property of the Jewish Community of Danzig, deposited with the Seminary in 1939.

Israel Davidson Collection (on permanent loan from the College of the City of New York). The great scholar's complete collection of 8,000 volumes, which was especially rich in rare liturgical and poetical material.

Louis Ginzberg and Alexander Marx Collection of Books. Many of the books had the learned owners' marginal notes. Their papers, and those books which were in the Ginzberg-Marx Faculty Library and the Manuscript Room, remained intact.

Graduate School for Jewish Social Work. The collection of 5,000 books and pamphlets in the fields of social science, education, and psychology and much rare typewritten material, as well as about 145 bound,

libraries of Hebrew Union College, Yeshiva University, New York Public Library, Columbia University, YIVO (the Yiddish Scientific Institute), and the Leo Baeck Institute provide materials that render the Seminary library less central and less responsible for the acquisition of a “complete” collection of Judaica and Hebraica. The establishment of the State of Israel and the explosion of publishing activities in Hebrew in the new country made it impractical to try to collect “all” books printed in Hebrew. So, it was not only necessary in the 1950s to turn attention to the reorganization of the library’s services, but also prudent.

The new realities forced a reassessment of the mission of the Seminary library. With full recognition of the importance of the collections, the library began its move toward the modernization of its functions and the cataloging of its resources. With this, the first half century of the library’s history came to a close—a glorious history of great dreams, daring visions, and tremendous achievements, but also one that left as a bequest to the next half century very taxing tasks.

continuing *study* of the Seminary to *study* its educational program, the Chancellor has approved a *study* of the functions, services, facilities and operation of the library."¹³⁷

The purpose, as formulated here, is distinctly service-oriented. Indeed, Tauber devoted most attention to this aspect. Although he did describe the resources of the library, his main concern was to determine how the library could be reorganized to become an effective instrument in fulfilling the Seminary's objectives. The report's summary of recommendations,¹³⁸ in itself quite extensive, included many salient points. The library, despite its collections and great strengths, "has definite weaknesses in its current acquisition policy."¹³⁹ Deficiencies were noted in "such areas as modern Hebrew literature, current Jewish life, educational practices and problems, and music."¹⁴⁰ The report observed that there were many other institutions in Manhattan with large holdings in various areas of Jewish studies and it suggested that the Seminary library formalize its relations to the other institutions "so that reciprocal use may be developed to the utmost."¹⁴¹ Most important were the report's recommendations for new library quarters, a modern system of circulation and acquisition, a total reclassification and recataloging of the collection according to the rules of the American Library Association and the Library of Congress, a huge preservation and binding operation, and the appointment of professional librarians to the staff. Tauber also wrote extensively about the relations between the library and the Seminary administration and about the involvement of the faculty, especially in the development of an acquisition policy for the library.

The tone and thrust of the Tauber Report were a far cry from the optimistic pronouncements early in the library's history, when the great treasures of the collections and its global importance were highlighted. So many things had changed since then. Other Jewish libraries had developed and grown; in Manhattan alone there existed a number of collections that, if combined, probably would constitute the largest conglomeration of Jewish books in the world. From downtown Manhattan to uptown, the

137 *Ibid.*, p. 138.

138 *Ibid.*, pp. 3-14.

139 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

140 *Ibid.*

141 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

the staff remained the same, except for one additional *page*, while the collection more than doubled in size. The library had to compete with the Seminary's many other expanding activities. Moshe Davis and Simon Greenberg, representing the library administration on the library committee, expressed opposing views as to the policy to be followed. Davis advocated a "complete overhauling," while Greenberg recommended that the changes be carried out gradually.¹³⁴ It appears that Louis Finkelstein supported Greenberg's position because, until 1953, the year of Marx's death, drastic steps to reorganize the library never were taken. Despite much deliberation over the problems facing the library, it was only in 1958 that Nahum Sarna, then the librarian, persuaded the Seminary administration to invite Maurice F. Tauber, a professor of library service at Columbia University, to undertake a thorough survey of the library and to submit his evaluation and recommendations. His 153-page report and its recommendations marked a distinct turning point in the library's history.¹³⁵

Tauber worked carefully for about a year on his report. He conducted extensive interviews with the library staff, Seminary administrators, faculty, students, members of the library committee, and general users of the library. Questionnaires were distributed to students and faculty. The preambles of these questionnaires are revealing of a new orientation: in the questionnaire intended for the faculty, the claim was made that the purpose of the survey was "to assist [the library's] staff in developing services to meet more fully the needs of the faculty, students, and the various academic departments in carrying out their instructional and research programs."¹³⁶ The student questionnaire began with these words: "It is the purpose of the Jewish Theological Seminary to make the best possible library available for its students. Consequently, as part of the

134 Library committee minutes, 16 February 1947.

135 On the situation in the library prior to the commissioning of the Tauber Report and on Sarna's efforts to invite Tauber, see excerpts from a letter by Sarna in Dicker, *The Seminary Library*, pp. 67-68. Simon Greenberg, representing the Seminary administration on the library committee, continued to express his cautious policy. When Tauber presented his report to the library committee on 22 October 1959, Greenberg made the following statement, according to the minutes of the meeting: "We must view the needs of the library against the background of the total needs of the Seminary as a whole. Priorities must be established, and it is possible that the sums required for a new library building may not be forthcoming immediately."

136 Tauber Report, p. 133.

generated on the basis of the Seminary library's highly significant collection of Franco-Jewish historical documents.¹³² Another major purchase was that of the collection of old Yiddish books from Judah A. Joffe, a scholar of Yiddish language and literature. He had assembled over the years an outstanding collection of rare printed books and some manuscripts in Yiddish, mainly from the 16th to the 18th centuries. Early Yiddish books are of the utmost rarity. They were printed for the use of the community at large and not only for the community of scholars. They covered popular fields, translations from Hebrew, ethical works, and literature for entertainment and reading pleasure. Since they were intended for popular use, they quickly became worn out and, often, no great care was taken to preserve them. Through the Joffe collection, the library became one of the foremost centers of scholarship in the field of Yiddish.¹³³

In 1947 a library committee was formed. Representatives of the Seminary administration and the library, as well as lay leaders, participated in the regular meetings of the committee. Its members — Julius Silver, H.G. Friedman, Harry K. Cohen, Arthur Rosenbloom, Louis Silver—and others provided the funds for the purchase of the French and Yiddish collections as well as important and expensive individual rare books and manuscripts. But more important, the minutes of the meetings of the library committee reveal that its members realized, fundamental changes would have to be introduced in the library in order to cure the many ills that had affected it over the years. It is most illuminating to read the minutes of a committee meeting from 1947. Alexander Marx and members of the library staff who had been associated with the library for many years called attention to the situation in the library. Marx pointed out that, during the depression, the library's budget for buying current books dropped from \$4,000 to \$250(!) annually, and even in 1947, the allocation was only \$2,000. Boaz Cohen, who at the time had been with the library for twenty three years, and Isaac Rivkind, after twenty four years of service, complained that throughout all their years,

132 See Roger S. Kohn, *An Inventory to the French Jewish Communities Record Group 1648-1946* (New York: Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, 1991). Rabbi Arthur Herzberg was instrumental in raising the funds for the acquisition of this collection.

133 On the negotiations leading to the purchase of the Joffe collection, see librarian's report, 1 March 1959 — 12 May 1959, pp. 4-5.

of books were given to the Seminary library by the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Organization. This organization, headed by Salo W. Baron and administered by Hannah Arendt, was responsible for the distribution of tens of thousands of Judaica and Hebraica works looted by the Nazis and recovered after the war by the allied forces in a warehouse in Offenbach.¹²⁸

In 1955, the librarian, Gerson D. Cohen, reported that twenty-eight thousand volumes arrived in the library in one year.¹²⁹ No wonder then that in 1958, the new librarian, Nahum Sarna, referred to fifty thousand uncataloged books and an equal number of books in need of binding.¹³⁰

Efforts toward Reorganization

The challenge of the library's reorganization, the adjustment of its direction to changed circumstances in the postwar period, became the task of a new, young leadership. Under the direction of Gerson D. Cohen and, later, Nahum Sarna, the late 1940s and especially the 1950s¹³¹ were years of renewed and bustling energy, growth, and, most significantly, careful, well-thought-out, long-range planning for the library. The long-standing problems of the library were confronted and tackled even as the collections were considerably enhanced.

After the end of World War II, major departments in the library were expanded through important acquisitions. A large collection of French documents relating to the history of the Jewish communities in France in the 18th and 19th centuries was purchased. Some of the documents were of great rarity, but particularly important was the fact that they represented primary source materials for the understanding of the history of the Jews of France and Europe particularly during the period of emancipation and enlightenment. Indeed, in subsequent years much original research was

the collections is found in my article in *Jewish Book Annual* 42 (1984-85), pp. 183-84 [see in the present volume, pp. 000-000.]

128 Dicker, *The Seminary Library*, pp. 54-58; 107-12.

129 Library committee minutes, 6 October 1955, p. 1.

130 Library committee minutes, 26 March 1958.

131 Gerson D. Cohen served as librarian from 1950 to 1957. In the years between 1950 and 1953, Marx's title was Director of Libraries. Nahum Sarna was appointed librarian in 1957 and he served until 1963. On the Cohen and Sarna years, see Dicker, *The Seminary Library*, pp. 64-69.

same year, other collections that could possibly be saved were mentioned:

I take this opportunity of bringing to your attention a proposal of Leo Winz, former editor of *Ost und West* in Berlin, and now a resident of Tel-Aviv, Palestine. Mr. Winz, in a letter recently received, states that the Jewish library in Vienna was burned by the Nazis, and that other great Jewish libraries and cultural collections in the Reich stood in similar danger.

Mr. Winz suggests that such valuable collections as those in the Rabbinical Seminary at Breslau, the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the Hildesheimer Seminary in Berlin, as well as the library of the *Jüdische Gemeinde* in Berlin could be ransomed for a moderate sum and brought to this country or to Palestine. He cites the German need for foreign exchange as a probable inducement for the Nazis parting with these collections at a reasonable figure, and thinks a committee should be formed in this country to collect the monies. I do not know whether you have already been approached on this matter or you thought it practicable.¹²⁵

These salvage efforts never succeeded and it is not known what steps, if any, were taken by the Seminary or other organizations in this direction.¹²⁶

Other collections also became available in this period. Thirteen thousand books from the personal libraries of Louis Ginzberg and Alexander Marx were added in 1953 and, prior to that, many collections reached the library as gifts.¹²⁷ In the post-World War II years, thousands

125 Extract from letter of Dr. Israel Schapiro of the Library of Congress to Marx, 15 February 1939.

126 On 16 May 1938, Adler wrote to Marx about the fate of the collection of the Berlin Jewish Community. Adler did not see a possibility to intervene with the American ambassador in Berlin. In the minutes of the Board of Directors, 31 May 1939, it is related how Louis Finkelstein met with a Mr. Teterka who stated that he could bring the library of the Breslau Seminary to the United States for 75,000 marks. The following remark is added to this report: "It would be understood that the Breslau community would not ask any compensation for the transaction." On 21 February 1939, Marx wrote to Adler: "I heard the other day that the Museum of the Berlin Jewish Community could be ransomed for \$25,000." Stating that he realized it "was absolutely against our policy to send American money to Germany." Marx suggested that perhaps steps could be taken to salvage the "irreplaceable treasures" by individuals.

127 Some of these collections, since they were not cataloged, were stored on the upper floors of the library tower, and the bulk of them were destroyed or damaged in the 1966 fire. A partial list of

moment that the best thing we can do now is to concentrate on getting it in good running order in our new building and make it as accessible as possible.¹¹⁸

I do not feel that we have a moral right to have assembled the greatest collection in the world and then deal with it as though it were only available to a privileged class... In the old building, our principal effort was at collection and conservation. In the new building, our principal effort must be in the direction of use.¹¹⁹

Although Felix Warburg had supported the library generously, he also expressed reservations about the race to become the largest collection: “The argument that we would, at least in numbers, be far ahead of other collections of Hebrew manuscripts, does not appeal to me.”¹²⁰ Marx, of course, did not give in, and he replied to Warburg, “I am of the opinion that since here is the largest Jewish community that ever existed in one place, it is our duty to establish a spiritual center and that we ought to have a library as complete as we can make it of all the treasures of our past.”¹²¹

Warburg continued to support the library and participated in the drive for the purchase of the Adler collection in 1922.¹²² Still, he remained concerned with the one-sidedness of the library’s policy: “I feel that until our library has caught up in every respect in regard to cataloging, binding, etc., we had better leave new things alone.”¹²³ Warburg’s advice was not followed and, actually, could not have been followed. “New things” always surfaced and the acquisitions could not be stopped, although they continued to contribute to the ever growing backlog of uncataloged and unbound books.

In the 1930s, the rescue of European Jewish treasures also moved onto the agenda. The transfer of the ritual objects and *Sifrei Torah* of the Danzig Jewish community to the Seminary in 1939 is well known.¹²⁴ In the

118 Adler to Marx, 18 May 1931.

119 Adler to Marx, 25 September 1931.

120 Felix Warburg to Marx, 19 February 1919, Cyrus Adler Papers, JTS library archives.

121 Marx to Warburg, 20 May 1919, Cyrus Adler Papers, JTS library archives.

122 Warburg’s role in the acquisition of the Adler collection is documented in note 42.

123 Warburg to Marx, 29 January 1935.

124 See *Danzig 1939: Treasures of a Destroyed Community*, catalog for the Jewish Museum exhibit by Vivian B. Mann and Joseph Guttman (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1980).

Another issue that surfaced had to do in general with the appropriateness of spending huge amounts of monies for the purchase of large collections of manuscripts and rare books. This must have been a point of discussion at the time of the deliberations about the purchase of Baron Gunzburg's library (1914) and again when the acquisition of the Adler collection was considered in 1919. Here is how Marx presented Jacob Schiff's (and quite clearly, his own) point of view:

When Mr. Schiff had decided to purchase the Gunzburg Library he told me at the next graduation, shortly afterwards, that just then a request for \$100,000 for Jewish primary education had been made, but that he had decided rather to buy the library which no one else would do, while for education funds would be made available through others. While one cannot know how Mr. Schiff feels now towards this question, I think his interest in the growth of our library is quite strong and that he looked at the Gunzburg collection from a broader point of view than Mr. Warburg seems to assume.¹¹⁴

As the years went by, Cyrus Adler gave vent to his opposition, although somewhat mutedly, to Marx's policies: "The Library is not simply intended as an aid to research. It is of course, also for the use of students."¹¹⁵ This statement must be understood against the background of Marx's practice of including in his reports, at least since 1924, extensive sections entitled "The Library as an Aid to Research,"¹¹⁶ which listed publications based on the library's manuscripts and other rare materials. The number of such publications over a period of twenty years, ending in 1947, reached seven hundred.¹¹⁷ Adler apparently felt that too much emphasis was placed on the research aspect of the library and that insufficient attention was paid to general library service.

In 1931, we have the following two statements from Adler:

I am sure you know that I want and always have wanted the library to grow as fast as possible, but I somehow have the feeling at the

¹¹⁴ Marx to Adler, 7 Sept. [1919]. See also Cyrus Adler, *Selected Letters*, vol. 1, pp. 390-91; vol. 2, pp. 55-58.

¹¹⁵ Adler to Marx, 3 May 1926.

¹¹⁶ *Bibliographical Studies*, pp. 476-548.

¹¹⁷ Librarian's report, 6 May 1947, p. 3.

The other divisions are all in order, although it is necessary to go over the books from time to time. Since the books are placed according to authors, *but are not numbered* [emphasis added], such revision at regular intervals is indispensable...

A great many pamphlets, fragments, incomplete volumes of periodicals and duplicates have gradually accumulated. All these which had been scattered in various places in the old building have now been brought together on the 8th and 9th floors of the stacks. Doctor [Boaz] Cohen uses his spare time in going over this accumulation, sifting and arranging them...

We are handicapped by the lack of funds for binding which prevents us from placing these volumes in their proper places. The longer these papers are left unbound, the more they deteriorate.

The cataloging has also greatly progressed. In the Judaica department there are very few books left uncatalogued, and many of the smaller pamphlets have already been attended to... In the Hebraica division the number of uncatalogued books is larger.¹¹¹

This state of affairs was characteristic of the Seminary library for the next two decades.

Early in the Seminary's history, some voices called for a different approach to the library and for a change in its priorities. In 1905, Schechter wrote to Cyrus Adler: "I intend altogether to interest myself a little more with library matters. As it seems to me a little more discipline and a little more exactness might be productive of good results."¹¹² It is not clear to what situation Schechter was actually referring, but one could surmise that he was unhappy with the lack of direction in the collection policy of the library as well as with the inadequate service provided to students and other users. In 1908, Marx was mildly apologetic and defensive when he tried to explain "the large number of purchases" and the fact that he "was obliged somewhat to anticipate the appropriation of the coming year."¹¹³

It was not only the question of internal library priorities that from time to time occupied the minds of the people who were entrusted to lead it.

111 Librarian's report, 1 December 1932, pp. 4-6.

112 Schechter to Adler, 15 September 1905.

113 Librarian's report, 1 June 1908, p. 4.

the Bible and liturgy sections had to be revised because they “had become considerably disarranged owing to the constant additions and the great lack of space.”¹⁰⁹ And again, in 1924:

Leaving aside the question of a proper building which, I understand will be taken up as soon as feasible, there is a most urgent necessity for an increase in the staff of the library. Many important branches of the library are being neglected at the present time on account of the inadequacy of our staff. Thus we are not able to go over our shelves in order to ascertain whether the books are all in their proper places and how many have been lost in the course of years.¹¹⁰

When the new building was erected in 1932, the space situation improved immeasurably, but some of the problems plaguing the library’s management remained unsolved. Freshly settled in the new quarters, Marx submitted the following report to the board:

After having worked under the most unfavorable conditions in the congested quarters of the old building, it is a great relief to have the spacious stacks where all the books can be placed to the best advantage. A considerable rearrangement was necessary after the books had been transferred in order to place them properly.

Because of lack of space in the old building it was necessary to separate many divisions, limiting them to books most frequently in demand and placing others on less accessible shelves. Now all the books have been put together in their proper places. While the division between Hebrew and non-Hebrew books has been maintained, care has been taken to keep on one floor all the books of the same subject in all languages. Only the Hebrew liturgical collection which offers a particularly difficult problem is still in the process of being arranged, but this task will be finished very soon.

Seminary, 1991). See Jay Rovner’s introduction, vol. 1, pp. v-x. This list does not include the manuscript fragments of the *Genizah* collection. For these, one still must use the *Adler Manuscript Catalog*. A catalog of halakhic and midrashic *Genizah* fragments, prepared by Neil Danzig, is, however, forthcoming. [See now: Neil Danzig, *A Catalogue of Fragments of Halakhah and Midrash from the Cairo Genizah in the Elkan Nathan Adler Collection of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, New York-Jerusalem, JTSA, 1997.]

109 Librarian’s report, 15 November 1916, p. 5.

110 Librarian’s report, 15 May 1924, p. [9].

books arrived, he appointed Isaac Rivkind,¹⁰⁵ a scholarly member of the staff, to examine the Adler copies of rare Hebrew books and compare them with the older copies of the very same books already in the library. Rivkind discovered a number of important typographical differences in these copies of rare Hebraica, in the title pages and elsewhere, and Marx observed, “Mr. Rivkind has become a real expert in these matters... Owing to the large number of rare Hebraica and the necessity of carefully comparing the copies *page by page* [emphasis added] this work is naturally proceeding very slowly.”¹⁰⁶ True, Rivkind’s discoveries created a new area of bibliographical inquiry, because until that time few, if any, bibliographers had at their disposal two or more copies of extremely rare Hebrew books from the same edition for comparison. Still, the preoccupation with such tedious scholarly detail slowed considerably the integration of the Adler collection into the library and contributed greatly to the increase in the backlog. With the receipt of the Enelow collection, the situation further deteriorated. In 1934, Marx anticipated that “it will take years” before the Enelow collection could be made accessible to readers.¹⁰⁷

Other aspects of the library’s management also suffered. Significantly, the catalog of manuscripts to which Marx himself devoted many years of labor was never completed.¹⁰⁸ As early as 1916, the librarian reported that

105 On Rivkind (1895-1968), see *Minha L'yitshaq: A Bibliography of the Writings of Isaac Rivkind*, compiled by Mordechai Kosover and Abraham G. Ducker (New York: Jewish Librarians Association, 1949), English section v-xv, Hebrew section 7-26.

106 Librarian’s report, 15 May 1924, p. [7]; on Rivkind’s publications based on these comparisons, see his article “*Dikdukei Sefarim*” in *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*, Hebrew section, pp. 401-32.

107 Librarian’s report, 23 May 1934, p. 2.

108 Librarian’s report, 10 November 1913, p. 9, and repeatedly in subsequent years. Interesting is a statement in the librarian’s report, 1 December 1932: “A catalogue of the manuscripts possessed by the library ten years ago... was also copied... The... Adler manuscripts are roughly listed in the printed catalogue of the former owner. The most important manuscripts received in recent years have been recorded annually in the Registers... A copy of the bookseller’s catalog of the recent donation [Enelow collection]... has also been deposited.” Marx’s difficulties in describing the manuscripts are frequently mentioned in his letters to Aron Freimann, see e.g., Freimann file, Marx papers, 13 January 1921, 27 March 1923, 27 April 1923. The first full, albeit very tentative and brief, list of the Seminary library’s Hebrew manuscript collection was first published in 1991: *A Guide to the Hebrew Manuscript Collection of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, 5 vols. (New York: Library of the Jewish Theological

able by the greatest exertions to cope with the regular work... As a consequence, the cataloging, for the first time, is getting behind.⁹⁹

In 1913 Marx pointed out that the library lacked a subject catalog: "At present there are no subject catalogs of Hebraica and Judaica, and the man interested in research work must inevitably lose a great deal of time before he is able to gather together his material."¹⁰⁰

Subsequently, we read about the "considerable" number of uncataloged Judaica and the "even larger" number of such Hebraica.¹⁰¹ A few years later there is a report about finishing "the cataloguing of the accumulation of the past years" and beginning "the difficult work of cataloguing the rare broad sheets and occasional publications." But, in the same year, the complaint about the large number of uncataloged books recurs: "Owing to the constant influx of new books," the cataloging lags behind.¹⁰² At one point, Cyrus Adler requested funds from the board to hire an assistant and a secretary to help out Marx, because:

Professor Marx is so entirely engrossed with the detail of the library that his bibliographical and scientific work in general perforce suffers... it seems almost a waste of energy for a man of his excellent capacities to give so much of his time to ordinary routine.¹⁰³

Marx, after the receipt of the Adler collection in 1923, described the difficulties in unpacking and checking the books and the time-consuming comparison of Adler's copies with copies of the same editions already in the library, and he concluded: "It is a duty of honour after we have received this wonderful gift to attend to it properly and promptly."¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately, the backlog remained with the library for a very long time. The reasons for this situation were manifold: the small and non-professional staff, a fact to which Marx called attention constantly, could not handle the numerous library tasks adequately. Marx's obsession with bibliographic detail was also a contributing factor. When the Adler

99 Librarian's report, 20 October 1911, pp. 3-4.

100 Librarian's report, 16 November 1913, p. 10.

101 Librarian's report, 25 November 1914, p. 5.

102 Librarian's report, 15 May 1918, p. 6; and librarian's report, 7 November 1918, p. 5.

103 Board of Directors' report, 19 May 1918, p. 15.

104 Librarian's report, 10 May 1923, p. 6.

separating the library from the Seminary by any physical distance, but I feel that in view of the fact that this is not merely an ordinary working library, but a great collection of books and manuscripts, it should be used in such a way that students and scholars who desire to use it for research purposes should be able to do so without encountering the almost necessary distraction that occurs in a building which is used by students, who may sometimes even have the right to shout and sing.⁹⁸

Decline and Reorganization

The library's dynamic expansion during these years, and the plans for a semi-independent or perhaps totally autonomous library, came to a halt in the 1930s. The Great Depression, the rise of Nazism in Germany, as well as personal circumstances—such as Marx's growing anguish over the fate of his family and friends in Germany and his only daughter's illness, and also the death of Mortimer Schiff in 1931—dissipated the tremendous energy that was invested in the great vision for the library.

The phenomenal growth of the library also caused severe problems. As new collections and individual items continued to pour in, the library gradually became unmanageable. Ever since the early years of his association with the Seminary, Marx had continually complained about the fact that the catalog of the library was not complete and the staff not adequate. As time passed, and especially after the receipt of the Adler collection in 1923 and the Enelow collection in 1932, the situation assumed crisis proportions. Not only the cataloging, but also binding, shelving, reader services, and ordinary acquisitions suffered.

The library could not keep pace with the demands imposed upon it by its unprecedented, spectacular growth. In 1911, we find the first serious admission about the staff's inability to cope:

Owing to the constant increase of our library, the rapidity with which accessions are being made and the much greater use by the students and other scholars and institutions, the library staff is only

98 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 75.

Indeed, the first decades of the library's existence were marked by the dominance of Judge Mayer Sulzberger's vision of building a great bibliographic center at the Seminary and by the massive acquisitions efforts of the library. Sulzberger's determination and Marx's scholarship and contacts won the blessing of Jacob Schiff, Felix Warburg, and Louis Marshall. The scholarly interests of Schechter, Ginzberg, Friedlander, Davidson, and Marx himself helped shape the perception of the library as an indispensable agency for advancing the Seminary's standing as the leading Jewish academic institution in the United States.

By the 1920s and early 1930s, the library's reputation was already firmly established. This was the time when attempts were made to lend an independent identity to this great collection. Mortimer Schiff, especially, wanted the library to become an institution that, although connected to the Seminary, stood on its own organizationally, financially, and even architecturally. In 1924, the library was incorporated as a separate organization.⁹⁶ In 1932-34, major bequests from members of the Schiff family were made for the library: \$25,000 from the estate of Mortimer Schiff and a fund of approximately \$227,000, to be turned over to the library for its general purposes, by Felix Warburg and John Schiff, Mortimer's son.⁹⁷

By this time the new building of the library was already erected, and it was an architectural symbol of the library's relationship to the Seminary. The tall library tower, flanked by two lower buildings of Seminary classrooms, offices, and a dormitory, signaled the dual status of the library: a part of the larger Seminary, but also distinct from it. Cyrus Adler articulated this ambiguity in 1923:

With regard to the library building, I have had a further interview with Mr. [Mortimer] Schiff... Mr. Schiff agrees with you and me that [Arnold W.] Brunner's plan is inadequate and something more comprehensive ought to be created. There is no thought of

96 *Semi-Centennial Volume*, pp. 105-8.

97 Minutes of the library corporation, 12 December 1932, pp. 2-5; 23 May 1934, pp. 1-2. See also minutes of the Board of Directors, 9 June 1933. In the latter, mention is made of \$150,000 left for the general purpose of the library by Therese Schiff, Jacob's widow. It is not clear whether or not this sum is included in the \$227,000 turned over to the library by Warburg and John Schiff. See also Cyrus Adler, *Selected Letters*, ed. Ira Robinson (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985), vol. 2, p. 147.

The Library's Mission

This broad understanding of the mission of the library was never challenged nor formally and publicly debated, and it was generally accepted by subsequent Seminary administrations, at least tacitly. There was no written acquisition policy in existence: "There never has been any official book-buying policy adopted by the library" wrote Gerson D. Cohen.⁹² Neither was there any open opposition to the comprehensive conception of the library's mission, except at the very beginning of its history:

Originally some of the Trustees were of the opinion that the library should be limited to the immediate needs of the Seminary and should be kept within the bounds of an ordinary college library. We are grateful to Judge Sulzberger that such a policy was not accepted.⁹³

Echoes of a more limited conception of the library's mission may also be detected in what Marx wrote to Sulzberger in 1918:

When American Jewish scholarship in time will take the rank it ought to in proportion to the number of American Jews, your name will always be connected with its advance as the one who furnished the tools *at a time when no one else foresaw that they might ever be needed*" [emphasis added].⁹⁴

Or in the words of Boaz Cohen:

The library was originally founded for the purpose of serving the Seminary faculty and students, but it soon outgrew its original design and began to minister to the wider circle of scholars who are engaged in scientific research. In addition, the library was to be a storehouse where everything printed in Hebrew or Hebrew characters, as well as anything published in any tongue pertaining to the Jews and Judaism, was to be preserved forever against the ravages of time.⁹⁵

92 Maurice F. Tauber, *A Report on the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary* (New York: mimeographed, 1959) p. 79. Quoted as *Tauber Report*.

93 *Semi-Centennial Volume*, p. 92.

94 *Sulzberger-Marx Correspondence*, p. 148.

95 *Jewish Forum* 17 (1934), p. 20.

der — the Editor], Steinschneider added “(nur bis 1865!)” above the word “Freunde.” Underneath there is another note by Steinschneider stating that this was a special copy printed for him on large paper.⁸⁸

Finally, the library under Marx also diligently collected broadsides, etchings, woodcuts, photographs, and postcards. In 1921, with the Israel Solomons collection, eleven hundred prints were acquired. The Solomons collection, a gift of Mortimer Schiff, was particularly famous for its pamphlets relating to the history of the Jews in England. Among these pamphlets were many of great rarity, some not found even in the British Library, and equally rare prints: portraits of Jewish personalities, depictions of Jewish scenes and sites, and anti-Semitic caricatures.⁸⁹ The library at once turned into a central place of research for such graphic materials. In the division of broadsides, the large collection of wedding and other poems and riddles from Italy, collected by the Italian scholar, Moise Soave, should be singled out.⁹⁰ The Jewish marriage contracts, many of them profusely decorated, constitute one of the finest such collections in the world.⁹¹ In the first decades of the library, all of these categories, as well as ceremonial objects, were handled by the administration of the library as a unit. The aim of the library's leadership was to collect and preserve under one roof all printed, handwritten, graphic, and artistic manifestations of the Jewish past. It was only in 1943 that the museum part of the library was physically removed from the Seminary to the Jewish Museum on Fifth Avenue. A distinct graphic collection was, at least administratively, separated from the rest of the library first in the 1970s.

In conclusion, the library's policy of acquisition resulted in the accumulation of materials in practically all forms of the written or graphic media of the Jewish past.

88 *Semi-Centennial Volume*, pp. 93, 114.

89 *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97. See also *The Jew as Other* (cited above, note 50), introduction.

90 *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95. Many of these broadsides were analyzed by Dan Pagis, *A Secret Sealed: Hebrew Baroque Emblem-Riddles from Italy and Holland* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1986) (in Hebrew).

91 A detailed catalog of the Seminary library's marriage contract collection is presently being prepared by Dr. Shalom Sabar, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

efforts are extremely rare and Sulzberger encouraged Marx to acquire them for the library: “The Russian prints are desirable too” and “missing Russian prints... I am also willing to buy, provided you think the prices right.” As a result, Marx could write: “Our Russian division is growing very satisfactorily and in a few years we may excel all in this line.”⁸⁵

Another dimension of collection building at the Seminary library was dictated by the bibliophilic passion for collecting of Sulzberger, E.N. Adler, Mortimer Schiff, H.G. Enelow, later Harry G. Friedman, and, of course, Marx himself. Not only “ordinary” books but also special editions were sought out. Deluxe editions of books printed on parchment or on colored paper (mainly on blue—an expensive paper considered to be particularly attractive), large paper copies, artistic bindings (including silver ones), and association copies (signed or owned by distinguished people) were constantly added to the library. It was with great enthusiasm that Marx included acquisitions of this type in his reports. Characteristic is a short note by Marx in 1911 about the library’s holdings of Hebrew books printed on parchment and his mention of “a unique copy of the third edition of Maimonides’ Code, Constantinople 1509, printed on vellum, which was found in the interior of Yemen.”⁸⁶ Similarly, in his reports on the library there are special sections on “Luxus Editions:” “To our collections of Editions deluxe one on vellum, seven on blue paper and ten large paper copies were added by Mr. [Mortimer] Schiff,” “the collection of deluxe editions of Hebrew books was enriched this year by eight volumes printed on blue paper, one on yellow and eight large paper copies.”⁸⁷

References to decorative bindings, including silver ones that were usually given as presents by bridegrooms to brides, are also quite frequent in the reports, as are descriptions of association copies. One of the features of the Steinschneider collection, repeatedly emphasized by Marx, was that it contained “numerous dedication copies showing Steinschneider’s relationship with Jewish and non-Jewish scholars.” The following is a characteristic example of both dedication and annotation: To D. Cassel’s dedication of his *Kore ha-Dorot*, 1846: “Meinem lieben Freunde M. Steinschneider—der Herausgeber” [To my dear friend M. Steinschnei-

85 *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 47, 73.

86 *Bibliographical Studies*, pp. 409, 413.

87 *Ibid.*, pp. 194-95, 244-46.

the history of Jewish culture and life around the Mediterranean and in the Middle East in medieval times, the Enelow manuscripts covered modern times, ranging from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Through these efforts, the Seminary library became one of the most important places for the study of Yemenite, Judeo-Persian, and Moroccan manuscripts. It was fortunate that the biblical commentaries and *Midrash* manuscripts of the Yemenite holdings found utilization very soon in the work of Rabbi M.M. Kasher, who incorporated in his *Torah Shelemah*, an encyclopedic commentary to the Pentateuch, the new discoveries from the Seminary's Yemenite materials.⁸²

The library, from its inception, tried to assemble as full a collection as possible of printed Hebrew books. Hebrew books printed in the 15th century, the first products of Hebrew presses, the incunabula, were especially sought out. Marx included in his reports statistics on Hebrew incunabula. He counted them, compared their numbers with the holdings of other libraries until, finally, he was able to declare that the Seminary's collection of Hebrew incunabula surpassed that of every other library.⁸³

A further bibliographical consideration in assembling books for the library was the desire to own books from each and every place where Hebrew books were ever printed. "I do like to have gradually represented as many different presses as I can in our collection if they produced books in our line."⁸⁴ Marx made this statement in connection with Latin incunabula, but it applied even to a greater degree to Hebrew presses. Next to the products of major centers of Hebrew printing, such as Constantinople, Venice, Amsterdam and many others, particular attention was paid to books printed in tiny towns and villages, especially in Russia where, at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, Hebrew books were printed in very small editions in order to elude Czarist censorship. Books produced through these short-lived

82 First volume published in 1949.

83 *Semi-Centennial Volume*, p. 98. See also F. Goff, *Incunabula in American Libraries*, 3rd census (New York: The Bibliographical Society of America, 1964), pp. 316-25. Of the 127 items listed there, only one was not represented in the Seminary library. A detailed catalog of the library's collection of Hebrew incunabula, prepared by Shimon Iakerson of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, will be published in the near future. [Sh. Iakerson, *Catalogue of Hebrew Incunabula from the Collection of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, New York and Jerusalem, 1-2, 2004-2005.]

84 *Sulzberger-Marx Correspondence*, p. 191.

promised to defray.”⁷⁷ Wilhelm Bacher in Budapest utilized, in his pioneering studies of Yemenite Jewish literature, manuscripts lent to him by the Seminary.⁷⁸ In 1915, the library received an illuminated Judeo-Persian manuscript, its first manuscript of this kind, and, when the Adler collection arrived, it became one of the largest, if not the largest, depository of Hebrew and Judeo-Persian manuscripts from Persia and Bukhara.⁷⁹ Materials relating to the Jews of China, including a Sefer Torah used in Kaifeng, were also added to the collection and were proudly mentioned and displayed.⁸⁰

The largest and most diverse collection of this kind of manuscript was added to the library in 1932. Eleven hundred Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic manuscripts, assembled by the Viennese bookseller Jacob Halpern, were bought for the library by Linda Miller in honor of Hyman G. Enelow, rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in New York. Mrs. Miller desired to remain anonymous at the time of the purchase and only later did her identity as the donor become public. The collection was gathered together in Yemen, Persia, Asia Minor, and North Africa. The manuscripts were purchased in, among other places, Fez, Mequinez, Agadir, Oran, Algiers, Jerba, Tripoli, and Gardaia (in the Sahara), Tokat (Anatolia), Aleppo, and Damascus. The Yemenite manuscripts largely stemmed from Sanaa.⁸¹ As a result of this purchase, the global coverage of cultural treasures of the far-flung Jewish communities was enlarged and brought closer to being as extensive as possible. The Enelow collection, added to the library's already existing holdings, especially the Adler collection that was bought exactly a decade earlier, expanded the chronological span of the materials considerably. While the Adler library, particularly the part that contained the famous collection of Cairo *Genizah* fragments, provided sources for

77 Librarian's report, 20 May 1910, p. 2.

78 Librarian's report, 4 February 1912, p. 3.

79 Board of Directors' report, 21 November 1915, p. 3, and W. Bacher, "Zur jüdisch-persischen Litteratur," in E.N. Adler, *About Hebrew Manuscripts* (London, 1905; reprint New York: Hermon Press, 1970), pp. 136-68.

80 On the Kaifeng Torah Scroll, see Michael Pollak, *The Torah Scrolls of the Chinese Jews* (Dallas: Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University, 1975), esp. pp. 49-53. On other Kaifeng materials, see *Bibliographical Studies*, p. 2.

81 *Bibliographical Studies*, pp. 411-43. See also Jacob Halpern's file in the Marx papers. Librarian's reports, 1 December 1932, pp. 10-11, 18-25; 23 May 1934, pp. 1-2; minutes of the library corporation, 23 May 1934, p. 3, and 21 April 1936, pp. 1-2.

Judeo-Spanish section,⁷¹ or as the latter put it, the library should buy “Judeo-*anything*” [emphasis added].⁷² The geographic dispersion of the Jewish Diaspora and its linguistic diversity invited the ingathering of documents originating in distant Jewish communities. Interest in far-flung Jewish groups grew in the 19th century as Western European Jewish travelers reached exotic places where they discovered Jews living in communities with their own language, culture, and religious customs. One of these travelers was Elkan Nathan Adler, who diligently and skillfully tracked down the books and manuscripts of the places that he had visited. Many treasures in his collection were acquired during his trips to North African and Asian Jewish communities.⁷³ Judah Magnes was also among those Jewish scholars who acquired literary remnants of Jews living in faraway places.⁷⁴ Encouraged by the interest of scholars and collectors, such learned booksellers as Ephraim Deinard, the Toledano Brothers, Lippha Schwager, David Fraenkel, and Jacob Halperin (who traveled for eight months in search of books and manuscripts) went on long trips to obtain objects, manuscripts, and other materials of remote and exotic Jewish communities.⁷⁵ As a result of these efforts, the knowledge about the Jews of Yemen, Persia, Bukhara, Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, Kurdistan, and China had greatly increased. The Seminary library availed itself of the services of these itinerant booksellers and tried in many ways to enrich its collections with materials pertaining to and originating in non-European Jewish communities. Thus, books were bought from Tiberias and Aleppo and from the Orient, notably Damascus and Southern Arabia, including “a large number of hitherto unknown books.”⁷⁶ Marx reported about his negotiations with a bookdealer in Aleppo “for several very important books and mss, the expenses of which Mr. Louis Marshall kindly

71 See above, note 60, and *Semi-Centennial Volume*, p. 94.

72 *Sulzberger-Marx Correspondence*, p. 47.

73 See preface to *Adler Manuscript Catalog* (above, note 70), p. v.

74 *Bibliographical Studies*, p. 44.

75 See *Adler Manuscript Catalog*, p. v; *Bibliographical Studies*, pp. 411-412, *Semi-Centennial Volume*, p. 102. The Marx papers contain extensive files of correspondence, invoices, and lists relating to these booksellers. They provide important source materials about the provenance of some of the library's holdings, their prices, rarity, etc., and they deserve to be studied for their value for bibliographical information. JTS library archives.

76 Librarian's reports, 1 June 1908, p. 4, and 30 October 1910, pp. 1-2.

Wearing a different hat, not as librarian but as a member of the board of the Jewish Publication Society, Marx discussed with Sulzberger, Henry Malter's critical edition of the Talmudic Tractate *Taanith*. Marx described the nature of Malter's work as the "first serious effort to produce a critical text of a part of the Talmud according to modern scientific principles" and urged the publication of the work: "It will be no mean matter for our community if the first serious work along this line will be undertaken by American scholars."⁶⁸ It was the view of Marx that work that is held to be so important must be supported by making primary sources available to the largest possible extent. In 1919, Marx wrote to Cyrus Adler: "The possession of different manuscripts of important works enables us to prepare critical editions without having in every instance recourse to the great European libraries."⁶⁹ After the acquisition of the Adler collection in 1923, Marx clearly formulated the utility of various manuscripts and printed books for producing critical editions:

I have mentioned above [in his description of books and manuscripts in the Adler collection] quite a number of books which are often printed but it is a fact that our editions, even of the most important works, are so full of mistakes and misprints that it is of the greatest importance that their text should be carefully revised and corrected on the basis of old manuscripts. The classics should be as carefully and correctly edited as is being done since a century and longer with the Greek and Roman classics.⁷⁰

It was in this spirit that the library attempted to collect extensively *all* editions of *all* Jewish texts, resulting in many manuscripts and multiple printed editions of one and the same biblical, rabbinical, philosophical, ethical, and other works.

In addition to the concentration on relatively well-defined subject areas, the library's development policies were also driven by other considerations. According to Marx and Sulzberger, the library needed a strong

68 *Sulzberger-Marx Correspondence*, pp. 143-44.

69 *Adler-Marx Correspondence*, 24 February 1919.

70 Copy of letter to Mr. Dolidowsky (dated 10 August 1923), apparently a correspondent of the Yiddish newspaper, *Tageblatt*, bound with a copy of *Catalog of Hebrew Manuscripts in the Collection of Elkan Nathan Adler* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921) JTS library SRR Z 6605 H4A19 c.8.

literature, both published and unpublished, in critical editions, based on all available manuscript and printed materials. The editions, at least in principle, followed the models established by German classical philological scholarship. Solomon Schechter's edition of *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan* was a pioneering work in this field. Schechter determined that this early Rabbinic work was transmitted in two distinct versions and, in his introduction, dealt with the history of this transmission. Alexander Marx, while still a student, became personally acquainted with Schechter as a result of his interest in preparing critical editions of two fundamentally important Hebrew works: the *Seder Olam Rabba* and the *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*. Schechter's reputation as the editor of *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan* and his proximity to the treasures of the great libraries of England, attracted Marx to Schechter. Ultimately, Marx followed Schechter to America.⁶³ In the sources about the development of the Seminary library's collections, the need for assembling books that would serve as the basis for text editions is repeatedly stressed. Sulzberger encouraged Marx to "keep on buying" rare Talmud editions so that, in time, the library would have complete sets of them all.⁶⁴ He urged Marx that copies of tractates of the rare Pesaro (early 16th century) and Constantinople (late 16th century) Talmud editions, "ought to be got."⁶⁵ In the exchange between Marx and Sulzberger, the Bible Commentary of Immanuel of Rome, covering Genesis and Exodus, was raised. This manuscript was offered to the library, and Marx, unable to agree with the bookseller on the price, was reluctantly ready to return it. Schechter strongly opposed allowing "such a valuable manuscript to leave our library," and Marx asked Sulzberger's advice on how to proceed. Sulzberger replied: "If Dr. Schechter thinks it wise, buy the Immanuel manuscript for £40 and charge it to me."⁶⁶ Schechter himself, in emphasizing the library's prominence, pointed out that there were in the library five different commentaries to the Tannaitic Midrash *Sifre*, when "ordinarily" he would have been able to find only one.⁶⁷

63 See Goldman's article on Marx mentioned in note 43. See also Marx, *Studies*, pp. 380-81 and pp. 393-94.

64 *Sulzberger-Marx Correspondence*, p. 20.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 47.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

67 See Mel Scult, *Tradition Renewed* (above note 17, p. 75).

added to or inserted within the standard prayers.⁵⁹ Zunz cataloged them comprehensively in his *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie* on the basis of manuscript and printed sources. Marx wanted to make as many of them accessible to American Jewish scholarship as possible. The liturgy department of the library grew so rapidly that when, in the 1910s, Israel Davidson set out to work on his monumental four-volume *Thesaurus of Medieval Hebrew Poetry*, the library's resources made it possible for him to bring it to completion as one of the greatest achievements of Jewish scholarship in the United States.⁶⁰ In 1910, Marx enumerated eight areas which "are, so far as I am aware, the largest of their kind in the world."⁶¹ Of course, liturgy was one of them. Passover *Haggadahs* constituted the strongest component of the liturgy section. In 1908, it was reported that the Seminary's *Haggadah* collection was "almost equal in numbers to the St. Petersburg collection," a collection which at that time was considered to be the richest in the world, including 116 items "of which no other copy is known."⁶²

In the same statement, the sections on responsa, codes and hasidic literature were identified as being "the largest of their kind in the world," while Jewish history, Talmud commentaries, and Talmud editions were not singled out as such. Still, there are many references in the reports and elsewhere to the acquisition of classical rabbinic texts, in various editions and versions, to facilitate another important item on the agenda of *jüdische Wissenschaft*. Since the 19th century, Jewish scholars in Europe had become heavily engaged in the publication of the texts of rabbinic

59 For a small sampling of the variety of liturgical books in the library, see *Bibliographical Studies*, index, under *Mahzor*, *Selihot*, *Siddur*.

60 The four volumes of the *Thesaurus* were published between 1924 and 1933. Most of the liturgical books listed as sources for the *Thesaurus*, in vol. 1, pp. liii-[xcvi], and in vol. 4, pp. 1-23, were owned by the Seminary library. See Davidson's remarks in vol. 2, p. xvii: "My indebtedness to the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America is, of course, self-evident, since the greater part of this work is based on the literary treasures gathered by my friend and colleague, Professor Alexander Marx."

61 Librarian's report, 16 February 1910, p. 5.

62 Librarian's reports, 15 January 1908, p. 1, and 1 June 1908, pp. 1-2; *Semi-Centennial Volume*, p. 94. Testimony to the excellence of the library's *Haggadah* collection is Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's *Haggadah and History: A Panorama in Facsimile of Five Centuries of the Printed Haggadah from the Collections of Harvard University and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1975). In this book most of the oldest and rarest pre-19th-century *Haggadot* are from the Seminary library.

By this, Marx did not mean the actual physical collecting of these records, but rather their publication. In the framework of the library, however, he worked on the acquisition of the records themselves. Many of these materials were archival in nature, and, indeed, after many decades, it became necessary to separate them from the rest of the collection, and a special archival division was created within the library. The historian's ken came to the fore also in Marx's reports on these sources, which were often miniature gems of original scholarship.⁵⁴

The energetic and successful drive by Marx to develop the library's collections in areas of the history of science, mathematics, and medicine, the works of Christian Hebraists, polemics and apologetics and historical sources in general, was his way of translating Steinschneider's pioneering ingathering of knowledge into the ingathering of the physical evidence itself. The sources that Steinschneider analyzed, recorded and described in his publications were the kinds of manuscripts and books that Marx wanted to have in the library. *Hebraische Übersetzungen*⁵⁵ (Hebrew Translations in the Middle Ages), *Bibliographisches Handbuch*⁵⁶ (Bibliography of the Works of Christian Hebraists), *Polemische und apologetische Literatur*⁵⁷ (Polemical and Apologetical Literature), and *Geschichtsliteratur der Juden*⁵⁸ (Historical Literature of the Jews) became blueprints for the holdings of the Seminary library.

If Steinschneider's works may be seen as guiding Marx in acquiring materials in the areas mentioned above, Zunz's studies on *Midrash* and Jewish liturgy served the same purpose in the departments of Rabbinics and liturgy. The reports of the library are full of recording the acquisition of liturgical books, not only from the more general, well-known rites, such as Ashkenaz, Sefarad, Italy, and Yemen, but also from local and lesser-known ones, such as Aleppo, Algiers, Sicily, Tripoli, and many others. These liturgies covered the standard services as well as services for special events. They also contained thousands of *piyyutim* (liturgical poems),

54 For example, in *Bibliographical Studies*, pp. 54-55, 102-03, 152-53.

55 Published in Berlin, 1893.

56 Leipzig, 1859.

57 Leipzig, 1877. Marx published a catalog of the Seminary's polemical manuscripts; see *Bibliographical Studies*, pp. 444-75. While Steinschneider's work is on polemics with Islam, Marx's catalog lists polemics with Christianity.

58 Frankfurt am Main, 1905.

Marx, the historian, of course, had an abiding interest in collecting in the area of Jewish history. We have an explicit and detailed programmatic statement from him about what he thought to be the aims and tasks of Jewish historiography, especially as it pertains to political, economic, and social history.⁵¹ Against the background of 19th and early 20th-century developments, Marx outlined an ambitious research agenda for Jewish historical scholarship. Historical consciousness and the awakening of interest in preserving historical documents became prevalent in Europe in the 19th century. Societies were established and archives founded for the gathering of documents such as communal record books, decrees, laws, letters, *memorbooks*, records of commercial transactions, etc.⁵² These types of source materials were not usually among the items that were well represented in the great Jewish departments of general libraries. Many of these documents were still in situ: in synagogues, community archives, and family collections and not in public depositories. They were still fulfilling a living function, as record books of active Jewish communities. With assimilation and emancipation and the transfer of many registerial and record-keeping functions from religious to secular bodies, these documents became more the subject of historical and antiquarian interest than active, practical records. The diminution of various communal functions and the focus on the synagogue and the temple as loci for religious worship services, but not as autonomous bodies of self-government, made some of these documents superfluous in their original setting. The Seminary library, along with collecting printed books, medieval manuscript codices, and other materials, also started to concentrate on the acquisition of communal and individual records. *Pinkasim* (record books), *memorbooks*, broadsides, letters, laws, etc. were acquired whenever possible. Marx valued these sources greatly: "The basis of all historical investigation is free access to all sources. To attain this end large collections of historical records for all the countries of the world are necessary."⁵³

rare holdings of the library on the case of Jud Süß. See the recent *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage, and Power, 1600-1800*, ed. Vivian B. Mann and Richard I. Cohen (Munich and New York: Prestel, 1996), catalog numbers 206, 210-212, 216, 217a, 218, 220, 222.

51 A. Marx, "Aims and Tasks of Jewish Historiography," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 26 (1918), pp. 11-32.

52 Marx, *ibid.*; Fishman, *Embers Plucked from the Fire*.

53 Marx, *ibid.*, p. 18.

the Directors will see their way to seize this valuable opportunity, and place the Biblical section of our library, which is, naturally, of utmost importance to a theological institution, in the position it ought to hold.

Marx's appeal to the board was persuasive and, as already mentioned, Jacob Schiff provided the funds for the purchase. By September 1911, the boxes containing the Kautzsch books were delivered to the Seminary.⁴⁸

The Kautzsch collection, indeed, was especially strong in its holdings of works by German Protestant Bible scholars in the fields of biblical criticism, biblical archaeology, the geography of Palestine, and biblical Hebrew linguistics. Interestingly, no one expressed reservations about this acquisition, and the proximity of Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University did not play any role in the decision that led to the purchase of the collection. Parenthetically, the library endeavored to add to its shelves translations of the Bible in as many languages and dialects as possible. These translations were close to the heart of Judge Sulzberger, and he purchased such from time to time for the Seminary library.⁴⁹

Another aspect of Jewish-Gentile relations always served as a focus of collecting for the library. This was, to some extent, the mirror image of the positive cultural and intellectual cross-fertilization that existed between Jews and non-Jews. Polemics, apologetics, anti-Semitism, and the defense of Judaism were phenomena that manifested themselves throughout the Middle Ages as well as in modern times. Source materials dealing with these issues, from everywhere and in any language, constituted a large section of the library, and no effort was spared when appropriate opportunities for acquisitions arose. Again, the library's holdings of manuscripts, books, pamphlets, documents, broadsides, and graphic materials—especially older ones—on this painful subject became extraordinarily rich.⁵⁰

48 Librarian's report, 12 February 1911, pp. 2-4 and supplements; 16 April 1911, p. 2, and 20 October 1911 (supplement).

49 For a partial list, see *Bibliographical Studies*, index, pp. 554-56; *Sulzberger-Marx Correspondence*, pp. 11, 40, 97, 121, etc.

50 On anti-Semitic caricatures in the JTS library, see the exhibition catalogue, *The Jew as Other: A Century of English Caricature, 1730-1830* (New York: Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, 1995); on inquisition materials, see *Bibliographical Studies*, pp. 62, 226-31, and index. As an example of the wealth of the library's collection in this area, I mention the extensive and

ordinarily full and strong. The interest in the use of Hebrew by Christians went so far as to cover the occasional use of Hebrew type in general works. In one of Marx's reports we read:

Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach presented a fine, beautifully bound copy of *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, printed by Aldus in Venice, 1499. This is perhaps the most famous book ever issued from the Venice presses and attracts our special attention by over 150 remarkable illustrations. In one of these *a few words of Hebrew* [emphasis added] were found together with Arabic, Greek, and Latin and in two places Aldus, perhaps for the first time, uses Hebrew characters. It is for this reason that the volume is of special significance for our library.⁴⁶

A good illustration of this broad conception is evident in the decision to purchase the Kautzsch library. Already in the early years of the library, the books of Christian scholars of Bible and Semitic philology, such as the libraries of Bernhard Stade and of Theodore Noeldeke, were mentioned as possible acquisitions, but ultimately, it was Emil Kautzsch's that was purchased.⁴⁷

In 1911, a bookdealer in Leipzig, Gustav Fock, offered Kautzsch's library for sale. Marx brought the matter to the attention of the Seminary's Board of Directors immediately. He described the Kautzsch library as "probably the finest private collection of modern works and pamphlets on Biblical literature and Hebrew philology." The collection consisted of twenty-five hundred books and twenty-seven hundred pamphlets. Fock offered the collection for \$2,400; Marx estimated that it could be obtained for \$1,800. In support of his recommendation Marx added:

Now, it has been the avowed policy of President Schechter to look out for such a collection in order to obtain a proper apparatus of modern works on Bible and Hebrew... The Kautzsch Collection would at once place the Biblical section of our Library on the same high level as our post-biblical departments... I trust, therefore, that

46 *Bibliographical Studies*, p. 70.

47 On Stade's library, see *Sulzberger-Marx Correspondence*, p. 23 (26 January 1907); on Noeldeke's, *Cyrus Adler — Marx Correspondence*, 30 November 1909 and 7 December 1909.

by them. Cultural and intellectual contacts between Jews, Christians, and Muslims were at the center of Steinschneider's interest. The study of mutual influences, of translations from one culture into another, became significant aspects of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.

These new preoccupations among Jewish scholars in the 19th century in Europe denoted a cardinal shift from previous, inward directed scholarly pursuits, and it broadened the parameters of Jewish studies immensely. It was not only "indigenous" Jewish works that fell under the category of Jewish literature but also translations into Hebrew, mainly from the Arabic and to a lesser extent from Latin. These works, frequently going back to Greek originals, were widely studied by learned Jews in the Middle Ages, and it was Steinschneider who mapped the vast literature of this extensive philosophical, scientific, medical, and mathematical activity. Marx regarded these works as highly important and, as librarian, he tried to acquire medieval manuscripts and books relating to these areas. The library became a rich depository of such materials. It was with great pride that Marx pointed out from time to time that the American scholars working on the history of the sciences and medicine made use of the Seminary library. It brought him a great deal of satisfaction when George Sarton, the prominent historian of medieval science, acknowledged the library's importance in the field. In a report in *Isis*, the journal of the History of Science Society, Sarton wrote that the Seminary library "will soon be one of the greatest centers of information on Judaica and Hebraica."⁴⁴ When, in 1913, manuscripts of Maimonides' medical works from the Seminary library were requested on loan by a German scholar, Sulzberger remarked: "Not only is it to the credit of our institution that its treasures should be used in the interest of science, but it contributes to the cultural reputation of our country that scholars living in Europe should come to America as a source of instruction."⁴⁵

Similarly, the work of early Christian Hebraists and, later, non-Jewish scholars on the Bible, Hebrew grammar, and any other Jewish subject in all languages became targets of the collection development policy of the library. As a result of this policy, the library's collection of Hebrew grammars and dictionaries, particularly of the 16th century, is extra-

44 *Isis* 11 (1928), p. 513.

45 *Sulzberger-Marx Correspondence*, pp. 85-86.

These people held the view that part of the endeavor of making the Seminary an institution of great influence in American Jewry was the developing of its library to dimensions that surpassed the ordinary function of an institutional library. Inspired greatly by the fervor of Alexander Marx for such an expanded, broad vision, the lay leaders of the Seminary were willing to lend support to Marx's activities as he proceeded to augment the holdings of the library energetically and rapidly.

The Role of Alexander Marx

Although historical circumstances were right for the development of the library, a personal factor played a role as well. Alexander Marx, through his personality, his scholarly orientation, his relationship with practitioners of Jewish studies in Europe—especially with his teacher, Moritz Steinschneider—was singularly equipped and inclined to be the driving force behind the growth of the library.

Without Marx's conception of what *jüdische Wissenschaft* entailed and what a library that was supposed to serve it should contain, the Seminary library would not have become what it did. Marx was a product of German Jewish scholarship. He was well connected through family ties and friendship to many prominent European Jewish scholars. He was greatly devoted to Steinschneider. His father-in-law was David Zvi Hoffman, the head of the Orthodox rabbinical seminary in Berlin. S.Y. Agnon was his brother-in-law. Marx was deeply rooted in traditional Jewish life, in the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, and in the methodology of German philological and text-critical scholarship. His attachment to Steinschneider and the similarity of their scholarly goals prompted the quip: "Europe had its Steinschneider and America now has its Marx."⁴³

For Marx, the study of Judaism encompassed, besides rabbinical sources, the history of sciences, philosophy, medicine, and mathematics as pursued and practiced by Jews, mainly in the Middle Ages. These were subjects of Steinschneider's many studies, and Marx was deeply influenced

43 On Marx's life, see Rebekah Kohut's and Solomon Goldman's appreciation in *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*, English section (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1950), pp. xi-xxiii and pp. 1-34. For the quip, see A.S.W. Rosenbach's foreword to Marx's *Studies*, p. ix. See also A.S. Halkin in *American Jewish Year Book 56* (1955), pp. 580-88.

present the Steinschneider collection to the Seminary library, and it was incorporated into its holdings in 1907.³⁷ In addition to this gift, Schiff provided funds for other acquisitions as well. In 1911, the collection of the German Christian Bible scholar, Emil F. Kautzsch, was offered for sale and was purchased with funds provided by Schiff.³⁸ In 1914, he pledged the bulk of the sum needed for the purchase of the Hebrew manuscript collection of Baron David Gunzburg, a transaction that was not consummated due to the outbreak of World War I.³⁹ Jacob Schiff and Mayer Sulzberger, examples of philanthropists and bibliophilic collectors, played the most pivotal role in the shaping of the Seminary library. Although Sulzberger expressed his reservation about unlimited purchases, "until some Carnegie or Rockefeller turns up,"⁴⁰ he, Schiff, and others were generous in expanding funds for the acquisition of individual items and of collections. Again, in the words of Marx:

I am deeply grateful for the generosity with which the library has been treated, both by the Board as a whole and by its individual members, especially Judge Sulzberger and Mr. Schiff, whom I have so frequently had occasion to mention in previous reports... Hitherto, we have been dependent, in large measure, for the magnificent growth of our collection, on the generosity of private benefactors, like Judge Sulzberger and Mr. Schiff.⁴¹

The examples of Sulzberger and Schiff inspired others as well. Felix Warburg, Louis Marshall, and somewhat later, Mortimer Schiff were generous supporters of the library. Besides their numerous gifts, they jointly contributed \$70,000 of the total \$100,000 in 1922 for the purchase of the Elkan Nathan Adler library, and Mortimer Schiff gave \$4,000 annually for special acquisitions in the 1920s.⁴²

37 *Semi-Centennial Volume*, pp. 92-93.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

39 Michael Stanislawski, "An Unperformed Contract: The Sale of Baron Gunzburg's Library to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America," in Herman Dicker, *The Seminary Library*, pp. 89-106.

40 *The Mayer Sulzberger — Alexander Marx Correspondence, 1904-1923*, edited and annotated by Herman Dicker (New York: Sepher-Hermon, 1990), p. 46.

41 Librarian's report, 16 February 1910, pp. 2 and 4.

42 Board of Directors' reports, 1923, p. 4. See also note 113. On Mortimer Schiff's annual allocation to the library, see library committee minutes, 13 February 1947.

The New York Public Library was founded in 1895, and it grew by leaps and bounds in the first decades of the 20th century, due to the support and influence of philanthropists, among them Jacob Schiff.³⁵ Schiff was, of course, also one of the main supporters of the Seminary and its library. Schiff's interest in the acquisition of major collections of Hebraica and Judaica preceded his commitments to the Seminary library. In 1898, Schiff acquired the library of Dr. Moritz Steinschneider of Berlin for ten thousand marks with the understanding that the books would remain with Steinschneider during his lifetime. Schiff did not decide until 1899 which American institution would receive the Steinschneider collection. Sulzberger, in 1899, responding to an inquiry from Schiff, presented him with a number of options as to the appropriate library in the United States that could serve as the right place for Steinschneider's books. These included the New York Public Library, the Cincinnati [Hebrew Union] College, the not yet established but planned Dropsie College in Philadelphia, and the Jewish Theological Seminary. Sulzberger anticipated the possibility of a union between the last two. He advised Schiff to defer the ultimate disposition of the Steinschneider library until a center for Jewish scholarship in America, and in New York in particular, became a reality:

New York, too, is, and I think is destined to remain, the centre of Jewish population in this country. Whatever may be its shortcomings at present I have a firm faith that it will in time be a great rallying-place for Jewish learning and thought. There it is wise to build up a treasure-house of Jewish lore ready for the generation that will rise to use it.

Across the first page of Sulzberger's letter, Schiff wrote diagonally over Sulzberger's script: "My intention is to give the Steinschneider collection to the N. York Public Library, unless the Seminary herein referred has become established prior to either Professor Steinschneider's or my own death, and is approved by myself or my inheritors."³⁶ Ultimately, Schiff decided to

35 See *Biblion: The Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 3, no. 2 (Spring 1995), 100th Anniversary Commemorative Issue.

36 Correspondence concerning the Steinschneider collection, JTS archival Group 62, box 6; see also Dicker, *The Seminary Library*, p. 23. There reference is made to Schiff's plans of giving the Steinschneider library to the New York Public Library, Columbia University, or Harvard University. See also Rebekah Kohut in her appreciation of Marx, mentioned in note 42, pp. xiv-xv.

be looking for. Negative answer to an inquiry whether we possess a certain book of Jewish interest in many instances means that the scholar desiring to consult it will not be able to obtain it anywhere in this country. We therefore ought to continue in our efforts to make our library as rich and therewith as useful as possible.³²

The shift of the population center of the Jews to America, the awakening of Jewish nationalism, the crises that befell European Jewry, first in Russia and Poland and later in Germany and in the rest of Central Europe, the growing interest in the exploration of the Jewish past in all its aspects, the increasing awareness of Jewish scholarship of the great cultural wealth and diversity of North African and Middle Eastern Jewish communities, all combined, were driving the expansion of the Seminary library in many directions.

The realization of this vision required a great deal of thought, labor, and, particularly, money. Fortunately, the American scene at the turn of the century was conducive to the achievement of these goals. America at that time had many "obsessed" collectors who used their new wealth to buy up great European libraries and bring them to the United States. Philanthropic book collectors cooperated with scholars and established vast libraries containing bibliophilic treasures and immense research collections. Private libraries were acquired en bloc; bookdealer emissaries were authorized to trace and purchase rare treasures. Henry E. Huntington, Henry C. Folger, Walter L. Newberry, and J. Pierpont Morgan assembled at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries the most valuable, expensive, and extensive libraries of rarities, treasures, and special collections. These collections later were opened to the public as book museums and research libraries.³³ Thanks to these activities by American magnates, public and university libraries experienced immensely rapid expansion in this period. Academic libraries in America doubled in size every sixteen years. Columbia University, for example, owned 750,000 books in 1898 and three million in 1934.³⁴

32 Librarian's report, 10 May 1920, p. 10.

33 See the recent popular book by Nicholas A. Basbanes, *A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes and the Eternal Passion for Books* (New York: Holt, 1995), index and chaps. 4 and 5.

34 Elmer D. Johnson and Michael H. Harris, *History of Libraries in the Western World*, 3rd ed. (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1976), p. 275.

incorporated into the collection at the advice of the board. Marx explained that these books and pamphlets were important for “the defence [*sic*] of Judaism against the recent anti-semitic attacks” and that, unfortunately, the subject, the Jewish question, had become timely again. The same report mentioned the acquisition of Hebrew periodicals published in Palestine under English rule.²⁸ In this post-World War I period, the library also endeavored to acquire publications dealing with the participation of Jewish soldiers of the various armies in the Great War.²⁹ In 1925, a substantial collection on Palestine and Zionism was received.³⁰ The class of 1922 donated money for the purchase of books in modern Hebrew, and, in 1937, the Morris Levine Memorial Collection, consisting of modern Hebrew literature, was created.³¹

These acquisitions suggest that, despite reports that the library was interested only in rare and esoteric books and manuscripts, current issues affecting the state of the Jewish people were not overlooked. The numerical growth of the holdings of the library reflected the systematic addition of materials on modern and contemporary Jewish affairs. Thus, over the years, the library came to serve multiple purposes: it was the library of the school, of the students and faculty, as well as a center of scholarly research in *jüdische Wissenschaft* and a depository of materials on current Jewish affairs for the public at large. Those who guided the Seminary library wanted to catch up and even supersede the European libraries as repositories of Hebrew manuscripts and rare books, but they also sought to create an information center on current Jewish affairs, providing reference services to all. A statement in the librarian’s report in 1920 spoke clearly about these all-encompassing goals:

The growth of the library has involved the creation of new lacunae which ought to be filled. By the nature of things these lacunae are greater in a collection as important and many-sided as ours has become in its field, than they are in a lesser library since people expect to find in our library all the important Jewish publications they may

28 Librarian’s report, 26 October 1920, p. 2.

29 Librarian’s report, 10 May 1920, p. 2.

30 Librarian’s report, 19 October 1925, p. 5 (also in *Bibliographical Studies*, p. 70).

31 Librarian’s report, 19 October 1925, p. 5 (also in *Bibliographical Studies*, p. 72) and librarian’s report, 1 April 1937, p. 4 (also in *Bibliographical Studies*, p. 270).

“national” library, serving “all” people and preserving and making available “all” books. The collection development policies of the library betray these purposes and ambitions. From its beginning the library attempted to cover areas of contemporary Jewish concern as well. It received books issued by the Jewish Publication Society, and a reference collection, for which funds were donated by the Ottinger brothers, prominent New York lawyers and politicians, was created.²² In a report to the Board of Directors, Solomon Schechter wrote in 1903:

There is still, and will for a long time remain, the need of securing the recent modern literature which is constantly growing... and I recommend the appropriation of \$1,000 for the coming year, this of course, to include payment for current periodicals.²³

In an estimated budget submitted by Marx in 1910, he requested \$1,280 for current purchases (new works, periodicals, reference books) and \$1,010 for special collections.²⁴

When Marx argued the need for new quarters for the library in 1916, the library's holdings had already surpassed fifty thousand books. He referred to the library as one “which is destined to supply the wants of this ever-increasing center of Judaism.” In the same report, he mentioned that Eliezer Ben-Yehudah had used the library regularly, “collecting material for his great Hebrew dictionary.”²⁵ In 1917, Marx reported the receipt of “an important collection of Russian newspapers dealing with the Jewish question during the time of the war until the outbreak of the revolution, including sets of the important anti-semitic Russian dailies.”²⁶ In 1920, the library received \$50 from the class of 1919 to purchase books dealing with sociology.²⁷ In the same year, large numbers of anti-Semitic and pro-Semitic publications, many of them of an ephemeral nature, were

22 *Proceedings of the Fourth Biennial Convention of the Jewish Theological Seminary Association, 1894*, pp. 15, 21-22 (excerpted in librarian's reports to Board of Directors, 1904-14, summary of pre-1904 reports); *Semi-Centennial Volume*, p. 95. On the Ottinger brothers' relation to the new Seminary, see Mel Scult, above note 17, pp. 54-55.

23 Board of Directors' reports, 1903, p. 9.

24 Librarian's report, 16 February 1910, pp. 3, 5.

25 Board of Directors' reports, 15 November 1916, p. 6.

26 Librarian's report, 20 April 1917, p. 2.

27 Librarian's report, 10 May 1920, p. 5.

books from private possession into the public realm. Also, manuscripts and books from the Mediterranean and the Middle East started to reach Europe and America in large numbers. Libraries were created in order to assure that these books, some of them precious, would be preserved in Jewish hands.

The emergence of a large population center of Jews in the United States and the growth of Jewish settlements in Palestine made it desirable to create Jewish cultural centers, including a “public library on Jewish topics” at the Seminary “to be free for the use and for the benefit of all interested” persons.²⁰ Such a library would serve the wider community as well as scholars and would be a place where materials becoming abundantly available would be preserved. In Palestine and in the United States, the idea of a national Jewish library was vigorously promoted. The Seminary library was never officially called a national library, but its aims, as carried out by Marx and others, were so comprehensive in the area of collecting Jewish manuscripts, books, and related materials that little doubt remained about its ambitions to serve not only one institution but also the Jewish people at large. Marx came closest to formulating this purpose when he wrote: [The Library] “performs today a distinct national function in American Jewish life.”²¹

How the Library Grew

The growth of the library came at a propitious time. Andrew Carnegie was spending many millions of dollars for the building of public libraries across the nation. A Jewish public library, providing free access to books for all, corresponded to the general mood of the period. The availability of materials, thanks to Jewish bookdealers who roamed the Jewish communities of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East acquiring many Hebrew books, and the desire to build libraries for the masses as well as for scholars, came together in this period. The results were the laying of plans for a library which, if not in name but in function, was to assume the role of a

20 *Proceedings of the Fourth Biennial Convention of the Jewish Theological Seminary Association, 1892*, pp. 32-33 (excerpted in librarian's reports to Board of Directors, 1904-14, summary of pre-1904 reports).

21 *Semi-Centennial Volume*, p. 120.

November 1903, developed their blueprint for the future of the Seminary library. Sulzberger's donation of his library of eight thousand volumes and seven hundred fifty manuscripts in 1904 made the library the "largest... in the Western Hemisphere and one of the largest and most valuable in the world." With this gift, "the Seminary library" came to be regarded as "one of the notable Hebrew libraries of the world."¹⁴ Sulzberger himself expressed his hope for the library in a letter formally presenting the collection to the Seminary: "My hope is that the Seminary may become the centre for original work in the science of Judaism, to which end the acquisition of a great library is indispensable."¹⁵ This hope was quickly fulfilled. In 1907, Marx wrote that the library was "the greatest Jewish library in the world in Jewish hands" and "the most important on the American continent."¹⁶ In the words of Schechter: "It [the Seminary] is in the possession of a library, collected and donated by Judge Sulzberger, a book collector with the best of judgement and with the greatest of sacrifices, such *as no other seminary in the world* can show [emphasis added]."¹⁷

Besides laboring to make the library the "centre for original work in the science of Judaism,"¹⁸ there was another motivation that drove the Seminary's leadership in the direction of building a comprehensive library. With the awakening of nationalism among the Jews of Europe, the idea of creating a national library in Jerusalem came into being. By the turn of the century, activities on behalf of such a library intensified. Solomon Schechter served on an international committee on behalf of a Jewish national library in Jerusalem.¹⁹ The need for libraries under Jewish auspices gained in importance for an additional reason: the dissolution of many small communities in Eastern and Central Europe and the assimilation of many Jewish families released large numbers of Hebrew

14 Librarian's report, 14 March 1904; *Semi-Centennial Volume*, pp. 89-90; Board of Directors' reports, 1903, p. 9. For a partial catalog of the Sulzberger collection, see E. Deinard, *Or Meir* (New York: n.p., 1897) (in Hebrew); see also *Biblical Manuscripts and Books in the Library of Jewish Theological Seminary* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1913 and 1914).

15 *Semi-Centennial Volume*, p. 90.

16 Librarian's report, 24 May 1907, p. 4.

17 See the essay on the Schechter era by Mel Scult in *Tradition Renewed*, ed. by Jack Wertheimer, vol. I (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1997), pp. 43-102. The quote is on p. 75.

18 *Semi-Centennial Volume*, p. 90.

19 Schidorsky, *Libraries and Books*, pp. 236, 288.

materials, folklore, and ethnography were established.¹⁰ This accumulation of knowledge was pursued almost exclusively on the basis of Jewish resources preserved in European institutions under non-Jewish auspices.

In the United States, where original research in the field of Jewish studies just started at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, the situation was entirely different. There were simply no libraries of Judaica and Hebraica comparable to the European collections. No wonder then that plans for the emancipation of American Jewish scholarship from Europe also encompassed the establishment of comprehensive Jewish libraries.¹¹ Such libraries would make it possible for American Jewish scholars to work independently, without having to rely upon the major collections of Hebraica and Judaica in Europe. This was a concern of the Seminary leaders, already prior to Sulzberger's address in 1903. When, in 1893, the old Seminary marked the seventieth birthday of Sabato Morais, arrangements were made for establishing a library carrying his name. This library incorporated Morais' own valuable books, and it was conceived of as a "centre of Hebrew learning and research."¹² Other donations of collections and of individual items came to the library, including three thousand volumes of the German Jewish scholar David Cassel; the goal was to make it "the most perfect collection of Hebraica and Judaica in this country."¹³ This policy served as the basis on which Sulzberger and Alexander Marx, who arrived at the Seminary in

10 On Jewish historical societies, see A. Marx, "Societies for the Promotion of the Study of Jewish History," in *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 20 (1911), pp. 1-9. On the efforts to collect and preserve Jewish historical documents in Eastern Europe, see David E. Fishman, *Embers Plucked from the Fire* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1996), pp. 1-3.

11 On the beginnings of Jewish studies in America, see Jonathan D. Sarna, *JPS: The Americanization of Jewish Culture, 1888-1988* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989); Shuly R. Schwartz, *The Emergence of Jewish Scholarship in America: The Publication of the Jewish Encyclopedia* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1991), and Paul Ritterband and Harold S. Wechsler, *Jewish Learning in American Universities: The First Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). Very little, if any, attention was paid by these authors to the emergence of Jewish libraries in America. Schwartz (p. 14) quotes Cyrus Adler: "At the present we have no libraries, no publications and no independent scholars."

12 Letter of trustees to Morais, 17 April 1893. *Proceedings of the Fourth Biennial Convention of The Jewish Theological Seminary Association 1894*, p. 14 (excerpted in librarian's reports to Board of Directors, 1904-14, summary of pre-1904 reports), JTS library.

13 On Cassel, see *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 5, col. 229. On his library, see *Semi-Centennial Volume*, p. 89. For the quote, see the source cited in the previous note, p. 15.

Accordingly, while in the 19th and early 20th centuries Jewish scholars were engaged in a great many original scholarly endeavors to gather and interpret information on practically all aspects of the Jewish experience, there was no attempt to assemble under one roof the sources of this information, namely, the books and the manuscripts themselves. The recovery, collection, organization, and preservation of knowledge were primary goals of the pioneers of modern Jewish scholarship, but the establishment of "complete" collections of the written and printed word was not among those ambitions. The leading scholars of *jüdische Wissenschaft* focused their attention on the utilization of the Jewish resources in general libraries. Moritz Steinschneider devoted much of his scholarly life to the cataloging of the collections of the Bodleian, the Royal Library in Berlin, the City and University Library of Hamburg, the State Library of Munich, etc.⁶ Abraham Berliner studied the Hebrew manuscript collections of the Vatican and the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma.⁷ Jewish copyists were hired by scholars to copy Hebrew manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and elsewhere. Baer Goldberg and others earned their living by providing scholars of the period with transcripts of Hebrew manuscripts found in various European collections.⁸ Leopold Zunz, in the introduction to his *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie*, refers to twenty libraries in Europe where he had worked during the preparation of the volume and to an additional thirteen places from which he obtained manuscripts or copies.⁹ The labors of Zunz, Steinschneider, and others resulted in many basic and monumental works: comprehensive surveys of various aspects of Jewish literature and history were produced, with extensive, almost full utilization of manuscript and printed sources; bibliographies were compiled and journals launched; organizations for the collection and publication of archival

6 *Catalogus librorum hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, 1852-60; *Verzeichnis der hebraeischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, 1878-97; *Catalog der hebraeischen Handschriften in der Stadtbibliothek zu Hamburg*, 1878; *Die hebraeischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München*, 1875.

7 Abraham Berliner, "Siyyur be-sifriyot Italia," in his *Selected Writings* (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1969), vol. 2, pp. 83-105 (in Hebrew).

8 On Baer Goldberg and his copying activity in Oxford and Paris, see *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 7, col. 700.

9 L. Zunz, *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie* (Berlin: L. Gerschel, 1865), pp. VI-VII.

its possible fullness. The Seminary library, according to the vision of Judge Sulzberger, should aspire to the same breadth in the area of Jewish culture. It should become a Hebrew book museum, containing everything available and accessible in the field.

It is noteworthy that Sulzberger's examples were not taken from collections under Jewish auspices. Although at the time of Sulzberger's address, European Jewish life, learning, and scholarship were at a peak and full of great achievements and plans, no European Jewish library existed that met this stated ideal. There were Jewish communal libraries and collections at seminaries in Vienna, Berlin, Budapest, Paris, Cracow, Vilna, Warsaw, and elsewhere, and the library of the Breslau seminary was quite well known for its good collection of Hebrew manuscripts and printed books, containing, in 1904, eighteen thousand printed books and four hundred manuscripts.⁴ Still, neither of these libraries matched the major Hebraica collections nor could have aspired to rival those of the Bodleian or the British Museum. Libraries of Jewish organizations and institutions could not and did not reach the level of Hebraica collections in royal, ecclesiastical, state, or university libraries in Europe. Historically, no public Jewish libraries existed before the 18th century; Hebrew books were owned by individuals, and frequently, significant private collections of Jewish owners were acquired by non-Jewish libraries. Thus, two of the finest private Jewish collections, David Oppenheimer's and Heimann Michael's, were purchased in the 19th century by the Bodleian and by the British Museum; the important private collection of Abraham Merzbacher was acquired by the City Library of Frankfurt and that of David Kaufmann by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences—both at the beginning of the 20th century.⁵ Jewish scholars and institutions simply lacked the desire to establish "complete" collections of Hebraica and Judaica in Jewish hands: they were surrounded in Europe by numerous large general libraries with rich Jewish holdings.

4 Dov Schidorsky, *Libraries and Books in Late Ottoman Palestine* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1990), p. 191 (in Hebrew); on Breslau, see M. Brann, *Geschichte des jüdisch-theologisches Seminars (Fraenckel'sche Stiftung) in Breslau* (Breslau: Jüdische-Theologisches Seminar, [1905]), p. 79.

5 Marx, *Studies*, pp. 238-55 (on the Oppenheimer Library), pp. 221-24 (on Michael's collection). On Merzbacher and Kaufmann, see *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 11, col. 1395 and vol. 10, cols. 842-43.

in the 1960s that the Seminary library in New York served as a *genizah* (a storage place for books that have become unusable) for the Cairo *Genizah* fragments it housed. The library's inadequacies in the areas of library technology and organization, coupled with its surprising riches, rendered it a hunting ground where the curious and adventurous scholar was rewarded by many new finds—but at the cost of much frustration. Despite this situation, it was providential that the Seminary library had the wisdom to acquire its vast treasures prior to World War II, at a time when this was still possible. Gaining bibliographical control, however essential, could be achieved later, as indeed it was in the postwar years.

What Is a Great Judaica Library?

The best-known formulation of the ambitious plans set for the library was publicly expressed in an address by Judge Mayer Sulzberger, delivered at the dedication of the Seminary's new building in 1903:

The Bodleian Library at Oxford and the British Museum at London are, and perhaps will always remain, the most magnificent and complete Hebrew book museums in the world. But it is our business on this side of the Atlantic to hope and to work, undaunted by the magnitude of others' achievements; we should hold in view the purpose to make our collection as nearly complete as the resources of the world may render possible, and in so doing, we should spare neither thought nor labor nor money.³

Two things stand out in this statement: the naming of the most accomplished, most famous, and richest collections of Hebraica as models for the fledgling Seminary library and the declared goal of creating a "Hebrew book museum." Although the Bodleian Library is situated at Oxford and serves Oxford University, it is not conceived of as a university library, and the British Museum, now the British Library, is not a university library either, but rather a *universal* library. These two major libraries do not serve the instructional needs of any single institution but stand as depositories of the written record of the past in all

3 *Semi-Centennial Volume*, p. 91.

Seminary's instructional program. Rather, its avowed purpose was to collect manuscripts, printed books, and other materials to serve the emerging research projects of Jewish scholarship in the United States and to provide materials on all aspects of the Jewish experience. Unabashedly, the Seminary's lay and professional leaders proclaimed their goal of creating in the Seminary's library the foremost, first-ranked, strongest possible collection of Hebraica and Judaica ever assembled by a Jewish institution. We shall examine the forces that motivated this plan and try to determine to what degree the library succeeded (or failed) to achieve the ideal.

Despite the fact that the public statements about the library always emphasized its greatness as the premier collection for original research, internal reports and correspondence between the various officers of the Seminary reveal a tension concerning the library's central mission. Some argued that the library must be more responsive to the day-to-day demands of students and less concentrated on the abstract idea of creating an all-inclusive collection of books and manuscripts. Still, the conception of the Seminary library as a research center prevailed, although occasional doubts continued to be voiced about the wisdom of investing in yet more expensive acquisitions.

This essay will demonstrate how the one-sided, sometimes obsessive orientation toward expansion and acquisition diverted attention, energy, and resources from other aspects of library service—chief among them preservation, cataloging, classification, and the publication of library catalogs. Over the decades an imbalance developed: the library became an immensely rich depository of the rarest and most valuable materials and a deplorably poor place for a properly classified and cataloged, accessible collection of Hebraica and Judaica. This imbalance lasted until the 1950s, when the reorganization of the library was begun.²

Prior to that reorganization, the library provided few tools for scholars to find their way around the collection. One frustrated researcher quipped

2 The reorganization of the library that began in 1959, the 1966 fire, the opening of the new library building in 1983, and the entry into the era of computerization of library services, which reached advanced stages in the 1990s, form an entirely new period in the history of the library. This period deserves to be studied, but the present writer, who served in the library from 1961 to 1987, feels that the task of writing the history of the second half century of the library, is better left to others.

Building a Great Judaica Library—at What Price?

Among scholars and laypeople alike, the Seminary library has, for a long time, enjoyed a reputation as one of the most important collections of Hebraica and Judaica not only in the United States, but also in the world. In the highly complimentary, albeit well-justified characterizations of the library, it has been customary to describe the thousands of outstanding rare and valuable manuscripts, books, and graphic materials—in other words, the great treasures of the collection.¹ With the exception of some random remarks, however, very little has been said about the conception that lay behind the ambitious endeavor of creating a major research library and book museum at the Seminary. The library, almost from the onset, was envisioned as an institution that transcended the needs of the

1 Among the descriptions of the library and its history, the following should be mentioned: Alexander Marx, in *The Jewish Theological Seminary of America: Semi-Centennial Volume*, ed. Cyrus Adler (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1939), pp. 87-120 (henceforth cited as *Semi-Centennial Volume*); Marx's library reports and some of his other writings on the library were collected and published as Alexander Marx, *Bibliographical Studies and Notes on Rare Books, and Manuscripts in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, ed. Menahem H. Schmelzer, foreword by Gerson D. Cohen (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary and Ktav Publishing, 1977) (cited hereafter as *Bibliographical Studies*). Not included in that volume are A. Marx, "What Our Library Offers to Our Students," in *Students Annual of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America* 1 (1914), pp. 218-26. For other smaller publications by Marx relating to the library, see the bibliography of his writings in *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*, English section (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1950), pp. 35-59, nos. 106, 114, 173, 174, 203, 209, 219, 233. Of course, Marx's volume, *Studies in Jewish History and Booklore* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1944) also contains many references to the library's holdings. See also Boaz Cohen in *Jewish Forum* 17 (1934), pp. 20-22, 26, 58-61. On later developments, see Nahum M. Sarna, in *Jewish Book Annual* 21 (1963-64), pp. 53-59; and Menahem Schmelzer, in *Jewish Book Annual* 42 (1984-85), pp. 183-88 [pp. 182*-187* in the present volume]. For an overview of the library's history, see Herman Dicker, *Of Learning and Libraries: The Seminary Library at One Hundred* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1988). The recent library exhibition catalogue, *Great Books from Great Collectors* (New York: The Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, 1996), provides information on the private collectors whose books became part of the Seminary library. Various other catalogs of sections of the library's collections will be cited below.

people: craftsmen, wage earners, agriculture and fishery; professions of women;" "The world of commerce and finance: producers, dealers, brokers, auctioneers, travel and sea faring, types of vessels;" "Communal organization and institutions, medieval democracy, social services, education, interfaith relations;" "The family: marriage, the nuclear family, the extended family, the world of women;" "Daily life: the city, domestic architecture, clothing and jewelry, food and drink;" "The individual: gatherings, poverty, illness, death, awareness of personality, the ideal person, rank and renown, sex, the true believer, the prestige of scholarship." At the end of the fifth volume, Goitein paints the portrait of seven prominent personalities, among them that of Abraham, the son of Maimonides.

Besides the brilliance and hard work, what made this monumental achievement possible? Goitein himself was not reticent in speaking and writing about the forces that shaped him. Among other things, he wrote:

Last, and strangest of all, I believe I would have missed many aspects of the *Genizah* documents had I not been granted the opportunity of observing the American scene for many years. Authoritarian Germany, where I spent my childhood and youth and the Jewish society in Palestine and later Israel with its socialist, welfare and protectionist tendencies which saw most of my working life, were utterly different from the *Genizah* society, which was loosely organized and competitive in every aspect. This vigorous free-enterprise society of the United States, which is not without petty jealousies and often cheap public honors, its endless fund-raising campaigns and all that goes with them, its general involvement in public affairs and deep concerns (or lip service, as the case may be) for the under dog all proved to be extremely instructive. We do not wear turbans here; but while reading many a *Genizah* document one feels quite at home.⁴⁴

American institution-building, collecting zeal, scholarly ambition, concern for the preservation of our heritage—all contributed to *Genizah* research world-wide and made American Jewish scholarship a proud partner in the ongoing effort of unraveling the multitude of documents preserved among the treasures of the *Genizah*.

44 *A Mediterranean Society* (see above note 41), vol. 2, p. IX.

volumes containing Goitein's brilliant *Genizah* research, a word is in place on Goitein's role in cataloging, classifying and organizing *Genizah* fragments and the data derived from them. Goitein himself regarded this aspect of his activity "not less vital than [his] published work."³⁹ He acquired an almost complete collection of photostats of the fragments and arranged them in order of the manuscript collections, creating a subject catalog, arranged around groups such as letters on trade between the Mediterranean and India, accounts, and marriage contracts. The following indexes were devised: persons, families, honorific titles, Arabic words and phrases, dated manuscripts in chronological order, and occupations.⁴⁰ This catalogue is now at Princeton University, where *Genizah* research is being continued by Goitein's student, Professor Marc Cohen.

The undisputed crowning achievement of 100 years' non-literary *Genizah* research is Goitein's five volume *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Genizah*.⁴¹ These large volumes provide a panoramic sweep, based on the most minute attention to detail, of the life of the Jewish communities and their coexistence with the Arab world. Goitein created a new term to describe his scholarly specialization: he called himself a sociographer.⁴² The main feature that grabs the reader is the liveliness of the society described through his discussions. In the masterly portrayals, his subjects, their lives, and their mentalities become vivid and palpably concrete. Goitein presents a picture of the totality of an active, dynamic, living community, or rather communities: the Jewish, the Arab and the Christian. As Amitav Ghosh, the author of a semi-fictional, semi-anthropological book, inspired by the *Genizah*, writes: "a trapdoor into a vast network of foxholes where real life continues uninterrupted" was opened by Goitein and his colleagues.⁴³

Just a brief glance at the table of contents of the five volumes gives an idea of the richness of this work. Here are some chapter headings: "The working

39 See *Religion in a Religious Age*, edited by S. D. Goitein (Cambridge, Mass: Association for Jewish Studies, 1974), p. 143.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 141-146.

41 Published by the University of California Press, 1967-1988 [Volume 6, the index volume was published in 1993].

42 See *Shelomo Dov Goitein* (above note 38), p. 9.

43 Amitov Ghosh, *In an Antique Land* (New York: Knopf, 1993), pp. 15-16.

chronological sequence in three monumental works, each of two volumes: *The Jews in Egypt and Palestine*,³⁴ *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*,³⁵ and *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue*.³⁶ Mann reconstructed events, restored forgotten names, and described the communal, political and organizational aspects of the life of the Jews, both Rabbinites and Karaites. Mann provided the raw materials for the continuing exploration of the history of the Jews in those areas. From Cincinnati, Jacob Mann dominated the field and provided the solid bricks needed for future work. As he himself put it: "The more the material stored up in manuscripts is made accessible in a scientific manner, the better will the history of the Jewish life and activities in the course of the past ages be reconstructed anew."³⁷

With his familiarity with all aspects of the *Genizah*, literary, Halakhic, and documentary, Jacob Mann avoided the pitfalls of narrow specialization and provided the outlines of a synthesis of the life of the Jewish communities in the Near and Middle East that would later serve as the foundation of the scholarly achievements of the fourth scholar, S.D. Goitein.³⁸ Goitein, where the G could stand for *Genizah*, has spent his life, more or less equally divided, between Germany, Israel and the United States. A native of Germany, the son of a rabbi, he was trained in traditional Jewish sources, and also acquired highly advanced knowledge in Semitic and classical philology. In Palestine, in the 1920s and later, Goitein immersed himself in Arabic studies, especially Islamic law, as well as in research on the Yemenite communities. Around 1950, his single-minded devotion to *Genizah* studies had begun, a preoccupation that lasted until his death in 1985. In the United States he was associated with the University of Pennsylvania and, later, with the Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton University. He was also the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship. Before turning to the majestic

34 Jacob Mann, *The Jews in Egypt and in Palestine under the Fatimid Caliphs*. Two volumes (Oxford University Press, 1920-1922). New edition with Preface and Reader's Guide by S. D. Goitein (New York: Ktav, 1970).

35 See above note 33. Original edition: Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College, 1931-1933.

36 Jacob Mann, *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue*. Volume 1 (Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1940). Volume 2: with Isaiah Sonne (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1966).

37 *Texts and Studies* (see above note 33 and 35), vol. 1, p. VIII.

38 On his life and work see *Shelomo Dov Goitein 1900-1985* (Princeton: The Institute for Advanced Study, 1985).

the content mirrored the conditions of *Eretz Yisrael* toward the end of the Byzantine period; and the function revealed a synagogue practice of including creative new poetry into the weekly Shabbat service. Davidson's discovery opened up a new area of study of ancient Hebrew poetry. Scholars expressed their admiration for Davidson's work and stood in awe of the rich and beautiful poetry discovered by him; one scholar remarked that Yannai's work belongs alongside the folio volumes of the classics of Talmud and Midrash.²⁹ In the last seventy years and more, the field of Hebrew poetry in *Eretz Yisrael* has indeed exploded with many important new discoveries, which were ultimately started by Davidson's initial identification and publication of Yannai. Davidson received the recognition of his colleagues in Europe and *Eretz Yisrael*, was honored by the Bialik Prize,³⁰ and a street was named after him in Jerusalem.³¹ The immigrant boy, the City College graduate, the American scholar became a central figure in the still unfolding scholarship of *Genizah* poetry.

The third scholar I want to mention is Jacob Mann. For a change, Mann was not from Lithuania, but from Galicia. He came to England in 1908 and then to the United States in 1920. First Mann taught at the Baltimore Hebrew College and later, until the end of his life, at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.³² Examining the holdings of *Genizah* in the various libraries, he became, in the words of Gerson D. Cohen, "an insatiable investigator of manuscripts" and "a hunter who was determined to confine his quest to new game,"³³ the new game being the *Genizah*. While Ginzberg and Davidson were mainly interested in literary and halakhic texts, Mann wanted to find and utilize documentary evidence: letters, contracts, court records. These shed light on the communal life of the Jews in Babylonia, Palestine and Egypt in the classic *Genizah* centuries, namely, from ca. 900 until ca. 1200. The non-literary fragments of the Cairo *Genizah* moved into the forefront through the work of Jacob Mann. He organized the huge quantities of data in

29 Saul Lieberman, *Studies in Palestinian Talmudic Literature* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991) (in Hebrew), p. 152.

30 C. Davidson (see above note 26), pp. 174-177.

31 In the *Nayot* section.

32 On Mann see Victor E. Reichert in volume 2 of Mann's *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1966), pp. XI-XVII.

33 Gerson D. Cohen, *Reconstruction of Gaonic History*, Introduction to Jacob Mann, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*. Two volumes (New York: Ktav, 1972), p. XLVII.

study of Judaism and contributed toward the gradual transfer of Jewish learning from Europe to America, already in the pre-Holocaust period. In subsequent *Genizah* research of Rabbis, particularly Geonic literature, Ginzberg remained the pioneering authority, whose work still constitutes the starting point in every serious study of the topic. Historical, Halakhic and sociological research of the Geonate builds on the foundations Ginzberg had laid.

Another major American figure in a different discipline of *Genizah* research was Israel Davidson.²⁶ He was also a native of Lithuania, who arrived in America in 1888. Among various occupations of his early career, being a chaplain in the Sing Sing prison deserves mention. A product of City College and Columbia University, Davidson became a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and specialized in medieval Hebrew literature. His best known work is the four volume *Thesaurus of Medieval Hebrew Poetry* in which he listed more than 35,000 poems.²⁷ In terms of originality, however, his discovery of Yannai was most decisive. Yannai's name as a composer of liturgical poems had been known for a long time. His poetry, however, was unknown and no facts were available about his life or times until Davidson published his findings in 1919.²⁸ About twenty years before Davidson's book appeared, one of the first and more sensational *Genizah* finds was made by the English scholars, F. Crawford Burkitt and Charles Taylor. In one of the fragments at Cambridge University, the two scholars identified, underneath some Hebrew script, remnants of a lost Greek translation of the Bible. They edited the Greek, without paying attention to the Hebrew written over it. Davidson, observing the facsimiles of these manuscripts, became attracted to the Hebrew text and found, to his great amazement, that it contained poems that were connected to the weekly Bible sections, divided according to the ancient triennial cycle of public Torah reading. He recognized in the texts the signature of Yannai and was able to reconstruct the structure of these poetic compositions. The language was innovative, fresh and supple;

26 On his life see his wife's memoirs: C. Davidson, *Out of Endless Yearnings: A Memoir of Israel Davidson* (New York: Bloch, 1946).

27 The work was published in New York by the Jewish Theological Seminary, between the years 1924-1933.

28 Israel Davidson, *Mahzor Yannai: A Liturgical Work of the VIIth Century* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1919).

European Jewish centers in Spain, Italy, France and Germany, contained the seeds of many later developments in Jewish life, culture and religion. The knowledge on this period was meager, scattered and fragmentary. Ginzberg, in the second volume of *Geonica*, entitled *Genizah Studies*, published and analyzed for the first time many manuscripts relating to this subject. In Ginzberg's words: "There is no exaggeration in maintaining that the discovery of the *Genizah* by Prof. Solomon Schechter was in no other department of Jewish learning so epoch making as in the history of the Geonim."²² Ginzberg continued to enrich this field and, in 1929, published a further volume of *Genizah* studies on Geonic Halakhah. In the introduction to this volume, Ginzberg maintained that the results of his 1909 publications were still valid and listed some of the major scholarly challenges posed by the Geonic period: "the evolution of the Talmud from a literary compilation to the molder of Jewish thought and feeling, the hegemony of Babylonian Jewry over all Israel, the rise of sects, the growth of mysticism, and the attempts at an interpretation of Talmudic Judaism by the light of Graeco-Arabic philosophy."²³

The *Genizah* documents, as deciphered and analyzed by Ginzberg, and others, played a major role in contributing to the solution of these scholarly challenges. Ginzberg also published a major work containing *Genizah* manuscripts that elucidate many obscure passages of the Talmud of Jerusalem.²⁴ Ginzberg consciously chose to write his Geonic history in English: "having cast in my lot with American Jewry, I felt myself bound to write in the language of the land of my adoption, and trust I shall not suffer in regarding myself as an American Jew."²⁵ This remark must be understood against the background of his times: most modern Jewish scholarship in the first decades of our century was written in German, often referred to as the second-most-used Jewish language. The important discoveries of Ginzberg, achieved in America and published in English, placed American Jewish scholarship into the mainstream of the academic

22 Louis Ginzberg, *Geonica*. Volume 1 (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1909), pp. VIII-IX.

23 *Genizah Studies in Memory of Doctor Solomon Schechter*. Volume 11: *Geonic and Early Karaitic Halakha* by Louis Ginzberg (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1929).

24 *Yerushalmi Fragments from the Genizah*. Edited by Louis Ginzberg (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1909).

25 Eli Ginzberg, *Keeper of the Law* (see above note 21), p. 94.

was once owned by Johann Krengel, who served as rabbi in several Central European communities.¹⁹ Krengel received these fragments in the early years of the century and wrote an article on some of them.²⁰ They disappeared during World War II and were found in the Seminary Library in the 1970s in an old, worn, leather briefcase, mixed up with Krengel's typewritten sermons in German. The collection is now called the Krengel *Genizah*.

The easy availability of these collections in American libraries, combined with the great impact of the magnetic personality of Solomon Schechter and the lure and challenge of the opportunity for a veritable treasure hunt among the dispersed leaves, inspired many leading Jewish scholars in the United States to devote their lives to the exploration of this immense accumulation of old Hebrew, Aramaic, and Judeo-Arabic fragments.

I would like to single out four great scholars who were closely associated with American institutions of learning most of their lives and whose work had an immense impact on *Genizah* scholarship. There were others, whose names I can only mention: Henry Malter, S.L. Skoss, Benzion Halper, Richard Gottheil, Moshe Zucker, Shalom Spiegel, all deceased; and Norman Golb, Marc Cohen, Norman Stillman, the Friedman brothers, Shamma and Mordecai (now in Israel), Elazar Hurvitz, and Neil Danzig, who fortunately are still with us and continue to be active in *Genizah* research.

Let us start with Louis Ginzberg, best known in the general community for his monumental *Legends of the Jews*. A native of Lithuania, a descendant of the Gaon of Vilna, a student of Lithuanian *yeshivoth* and German universities, he came to this country in 1899. For the next half a century, he taught at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and was regarded as the foremost scholar of his generation.²¹ In 1909, Ginzberg published a two volume work, *Geonica*. In the first volume he provided a synthesis of the Geonic era, an approximately 500 year period in Jewish history, mainly in Babylonia. This span of time, between the end of the Talmudic period and the beginning of the emergence of the great

19 See the brief entry about him in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, (German), vol. 10, col. 405-406.

20 See *Festschrift zu Israel Lewy's Siebzigsten Geburtstag* (Breslau: Marcus, 1911), pp. 36-46.

21 On his life see the personal memoir by his son, Eli Ginzberg, *Keeper of the Law: Louis Ginzberg* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1966) [with a new afterword, 1996].

take away with me a sackful of paper and parchment writings — as much in fact as I could gather up in the three or four hours I was permitted to linger there.”¹⁶

What was in the sack that Adler called a very Benjamin’s sack?¹⁷ The best description of the original state and contents of the *Genizah* is still one that comes from the pen of Schechter:

One can hardly realize the confusion in a genuine, old *Genizah* until one has seen it. It is a battlefield of books, and the literary productions of many centuries had their share in the battle, and their *disjecta membra* are now strewn over its area. Some of the belligerents have perished outright, and are literally ground to dust in the terrible struggle for space, whilst others, as if overtaken by a general crush, are squeezed into big, unshapely lumps, which even with the aid of chemical appliances can no longer be separated without serious damage to their constituents. In their present condition these lumps sometimes afford curiously suggestive combinations; as, for instance, when you find a piece of some rational work, in which the very existence of either angels or devils is denied, clinging for its very life to an amulet in which these same beings (mostly the latter) are bound over to be on their good behavior and not interfere with Miss Jair’s love for somebody. The development of the romance is obscured by the fact that the last lines of the amulet are mounted on some I.O.U., or lease, and this in turn is squeezed between the sheets of an old moralist, who treats all attention to money affairs with scorn and indignation. Again, all these contradictory matters cleave tightly to some sheets from a very old Bible. This, indeed, ought to be the last umpire between them, but it is hardly legible without peeling off from its surface the fragments of some printed work, which clings to old nobility with all the obstinacy and obstructiveness of the *Parvenu*.¹⁸

Another interesting collection of *Genizah* fragments in the United States

16 *Jewish Quarterly Review*, old series, IX (1897), pp. 672-673.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 673.

18 Solomon Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, Second Series (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1908), pp. 6-7.

not be located. They were rediscovered in the Seminary Library in the late 1960s among huge, long sheets of paper on which Schechter himself transcribed the original texts. The late Professor Louis Finkelstein asked me to return them, in person, to Cambridge, which I did; and obviously, I received a royal treatment at the Cambridge University Library as the bearer of such treasures.

In the first two decades of our century, Detroit joined Philadelphia and New York as a depository of *Genizah* fragments. Charles Freer, the famous collector of oriental art objects, purchased *Genizah* documents in Egypt from a dealer. In all likelihood, the dealer had acquired them earlier from the *Genizah* synagogue. An alternative source could have been an ancient cemetery where they had been originally buried. Be that as it may, the documents are now in the Freer Gallery of the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. A detailed and elegant catalogue of the fragments was published, describing some fascinating aspects of Jewish life in the Middle Ages, relating to trade, travel and marriage. The Freer catalogue is, in itself, a model work, as it includes photographs, transcriptions, and full translations of the texts.¹³

The major boost to the *Genizah* collection in America came in 1922 through the purchase by the Seminary Library of the library of Elkan Nathan Adler, the famous British traveler, collector and scholar, who was mentioned above. Elkan Adler traveled to Cairo in 1888 and again in 1895-1896, still before Schechter's 1897 trip. On Adler's second journey, "The Cairo synagogue authorities accompanied me to the *Genizah* and permitted me to take away the first sackful of fragments from that famous hoard. Neubauer¹⁴ rated me soundly for not carrying the whole lot away, Schechter admired my continence but was not foolish enough to follow my example."¹⁵ Elsewhere, Elkan Adler wrote the following on his visit to the Cairo *Genizah* synagogue: "I... was conducted... to the extreme end of the ladies' gallery, permitted to climb to the topmost rung of a ladder, to enter the secret chamber of the *Genizah* through a hole in the wall, and to

13 See Richard Gottheil and William H. Wottel, *Fragments from the Cairo Genizah in the Freer Collection* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), esp. p. XIV.

14 Adolf Neubauer (1831-1907), a well-known Jewish scholar, librarian at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, England.

15 *Catalogue of Hebrew Manuscripts in the Collection of Elkan Nathan Adler* (Cambridge University Press, 1921), p. V.

availability of this collection in the United States spurred great activity among scholars in this country, who devoted themselves to studying the treasures hidden in these fragments.

Solomon Schechter's arrival in New York as president of the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1902 made New York into a capital of *Genizah* research. Schechter himself continued to publish his discoveries, and others joined him. Many of these discoveries were first published in the scholarly journal, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, which was issued since 1910 under the auspices of Dropsie College in Philadelphia, and was edited by Adler and Schechter. The transfer of the prestigious journal from England, where it had been published from its inception in 1889 until 1910, to the United States, was another important step in the development of Jewish studies in this country.¹¹ Schechter also brought with himself several important fragments that were owned by him personally. One of them was a famous letter signed by Maimonides' own hand. In the letter, Maimonides pleads for funds for the redemption of Jewish prisoners who were captured in a caravan in *Erez Yisrael* and were held for ransom by the Crusader King of Jerusalem. Maimonides describes how he and the *dayyanim* (the judges of Rabbinical courts), the elders and learned people (*talmidei hakhamim*), worked day and night, in the synagogues, in the market places, and in private homes, to gather together the sums needed to ransom the captives.¹² At Schechter's death, his own *Genizah* fragments became part of the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

There is an interesting episode that is connected with Schechter's coming to America and the *Genizah*. The manuscripts that Schechter removed from Cairo in 1897 had become part of the library of Cambridge University in England. When Schechter prepared his move to New York, he borrowed from the library more than a hundred documents on which he intended to work; the manuscripts were given call numbers as Cambridge Loan Fragments. Some of them were indeed published. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Cambridge authorities turned to the Seminary Library in New York and asked for the return of the original of these "Loan" manuscripts. Despite diligent searches by the then Librarian, Alexander Marx, the originals could

11 See *The Seventy Fifth Anniversary of the Jewish Quarterly Review*, ed. by Abraham A. Neuman and Solomon Zeitlin (Philadelphia: *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1967), pp. 62-64.

12 See S. D. Goitein, *Palestine Jewry in Early Islamic and Crusader Times in the Light of the Genizah Documents* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 1980), pp. 312-314.

But indicating an interest in the whole lot I purchased them, big and little, some of the pieces only one sheet, some of them forty or fifty pages, at the enormous price of one shilling per unit and thus brought back to Europe what was probably the second largest collection from the *Genizah*, certainly the first to America, out of which has come at least one book and several important articles. These are now in the Dropsie College... I showed these documents to Dr. Schechter of Cambridge in 1892. He promptly borrowed a few, and I have always flattered myself that this accidental purchase of mine was at least one of the leads that enabled Dr. Schechter to make his discovery of the Cairo *Genizah*.⁷

That Adler did a good job of arousing Schechter's interest in the *Genizah* is obvious. When Adler returned to Cairo in 1929 and wanted to see the *Genizah*, the *shammash* told him: "Schechter carried it away."⁸ But what did Adler carry away? Fortunately, we do have a catalogue of the Dropsie College *Genizah* fragments, now at the University of Pennsylvania. This relatively small collection is a kind of microcosm of the *Genizah* as a whole. By the way, in the Dropsie collection, in addition to the Cyrus Adler acquisition, there were also manuscripts that several other American collectors, Mayer Sulzberger, Herbert Friedenwald, David Werner Amram, and Camden M. Cobern obtained in Cairo. In the Dropsie collection there are fragments of Bible and Talmud, liturgy and poetry, documents and letters, amulets and philosophical texts.⁹ The oldest known text of the Passover Haggadah is the proud possession of the collection, as is a 4,000 word letter from Sicily, from the year 1064, in which various business matters and a civil war in Tunisia where the writer faced death, are described. The Dropsie Haggadah is not only old, but also very different from the text that we are using today.¹⁰ The

7 Cyrus Adler, *I Have Considered the Days* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1941), pp. 116-117.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 364.

9 See B. Halpern, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Genizah Fragments in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Dropsie College, 1924).

10 On the Haggadah see *The Passover Haggadah: Its Sources and History*, ed. by E.D. Goldschmidt (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1960), pp. 73-84 (in Hebrew); on the letter see S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, Volume 1 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), plate 1 (after p. 20).

alike. It is well known how two Scottish tourist ladies, returning from a trip to Egypt, showed Schechter some old Hebrew manuscript fragments that they had acquired there, and how Schechter, in great excitement, identified these fragments as part of the long-lost original of the ancient Hebrew work, the Book of Ben Sira. Schechter, with the full support of the authorities of Cambridge University, journeyed to Cairo and removed the contents of that old chamber, called the *Genizah*,⁴ and transferred it to Cambridge.⁵ With this event, a century of exciting discoveries began.

Solomon Schechter was the most influential figure in *Genizah* discoveries, but he was not the only one.

Cyrus Adler, an American scholar and public leader, played an important role as well in this endeavor. Grace Cohen Grossman recently painted an intricate portrait of Cyrus Adler, who, among his many public Jewish and non-Jewish roles, was instrumental in acquiring Judaica items for the Smithsonian Institution, where he served as secretary. In 1890, Adler became involved in the preparation of a large scale exposition to take place in Chicago to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America. He was asked to travel to the Orient to secure objects for the exposition.⁶ On his way to the Middle East, he stopped for a few days in England where he met, for the first time, two men who later became important in *Genizah* history, Solomon Schechter and Elkan Nathan Adler. Cyrus Adler, no relation to Elkan, proceeded on his trip and spent the spring of 1891 in Cairo. In his memoirs, he recorded his acquisition of *Genizah* fragments:

I was always looking out for Museum specimens that could be bought within reason, and I wandered about the shops very often. I happened one day to find several trays full of parchment leaves written in Hebrew, which the merchant had labeled *anticas*. I saw at a glance that these were very old. As I wore a pith helmet and khaki suit, like every other tourist, he thought I wanted one as a souvenir.

4 The *Genizah* was the repository for Jewish religious texts — Torah scrolls, prayer books, Bibles, rabbinic literature, and other religious and ritual Judaica — which under religious law must not be destroyed.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 140-144.

6 Grace Cohen Grossman with Richard Eighme Ahlborn, *Judaica at the Smithsonian: Cultural Politics as Cultural Model* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), esp. pp. 28-31, 42-61.

One Hundred Years of Genizah Discovery and Research in the United States

Not long ago, Frank Rich wrote an interesting column in *The New York Times*. It was called “Reverse Exodus” and was subtitled “American Jews go back downtown.”¹ The main thrust of the article was that American Jews should not have to seek their roots or identity in the “old country” or Israel or the Holocaust, because there is pride to be derived from their rich American Jewish heritage. He pointed out that the past of American Judaism could well serve as a source of inspiration for younger generations of Jews. The story told here of a little known chapter of American Jewish scholarship, is for sure glorious, rich of great achievement, and part of the proud American Jewish past.

Nineteen ninety-seven marked the centennial of the removal of hundreds of thousands of old and worn Hebrew manuscript fragments from a chamber—the *Genizah*—of the ancient Ben Ezra synagogue in Old Cairo.² This feat is forever tied to Solomon Schechter,³ whose name has indeed become a household word, mainly because of the success of the network of Schechter schools named after him. However, Solomon Schechter’s name is memorable for the reasons of his own watershed achievements. Schechter, a hundred years ago, was a teacher of Rabbinics at Cambridge University in England, enjoying fame as a scholar, whose pioneering publications made a great impression on Jews and non-Jews

* [See now: Jacob Lassner, “Geniza Studies in the United States”, in: *A Gateway to Medieval Mediterranean Life: Cairo’s Ben Ezra Synagogue* (Chicago, Spertus Institute, 2001.)]

1 *New York Times*, May 15, 1997 (Op Ed Page).

2 On the Ben Ezra Synagogue see Phyllis Lambert (ed.), *Fortifications and the Synagogue: The Fortress of Babylon and the Ben Ezra Synagogue, Cairo* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994).

3 For a biography of Schechter, see Norman Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter: A Biography* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1938). [See now also: Ismar Schorsch, “Schechter’s Seminary: Polarities in Balance”, in: *Conservative Judaism* 55 (2003), pp. 3-23.]

booktrade, illustration, censorship, technical and esthetic aspects of typography, copyright and Rabbinic approbation, Christian-Jewish relationships in the scholarly and commercial aspects of Hebrew publishing and printing, and the impact of the introduction of printing of Hebrew books on the various Jewish communities and on the Jewish mind are subjects that should invite the curiosity of the researcher.

In our times, when interest in the Jewish book is so keen, careful thought should be given to planning, coordinating, and executing worthy projects in the field of Judaica bibliography and booklore. In addition to supporting the few single-minded, highly dedicated individuals who devote themselves to research in this area, we must make provisions for directing promising young scholars toward Judaica bibliography and booklore as worthy, stimulating, and challenging scholarly endeavors. In the words of Shimeon Brisman:

During his years as a Jewish Studies librarian and lecturer in Hebrew bibliography, the author has noticed with disappointment that the average Jewish scholar, student, or even librarian is totally unaware of the existence of such [reference] tools; but he has been pleasantly surprised as a lecturer to notice students' fascination with Jewish bibliography, a subject usually considered "dry." It seems that Jewish bibliography when presented in the realm of Jewish cultural and literary history, can become an exciting topic for scholars and students. (*Jewish Research Literature*, vol. 1, p. IX)

The time may have come for considering the establishment of an Institute for Judaica Bibliography and Booklore that would serve as an international clearinghouse for the field and eventually grow into a center for the training of scholars and for the realization of some of the projects that would benefit Jewish studies the world over. The great progress achieved in the last quarter of a century, so dramatically symbolized in this country by the magnificent contributions of the Judaica Department of the Harvard College Library to the field of Judaica librarianship, should serve as an inspiration to the entire profession when it looks to the future.

manuscripts could be cataloged not only according to the depository where they are kept but also by country of origin. In this manner, manuscript collections stemming from a particular culture and tradition can be brought together. Examples of this kind of catalog are Amnon Netzer's *Manuscripts of the Jews of Persia in the Ben Zvi Institute* (1985) and Norman Golb's *Spartus College of Judaica Yemenite Manuscripts* (1972). The foundation for the preparation of catalogs of Hebrew manuscripts is already in place through the efforts of The Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts of the Jewish National and University Library, the Hebrew Paleography Project, and the Index of Jewish Art: Iconographical Index of Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts, the latter two joint Israeli-French projects. These projects, when completed, will undoubtedly make the task of anyone setting out to catalog individual, public, or private collections of Hebrew manuscripts much easier.

It would also be desirable to publish catalogs of the rare printed Hebraica holdings of major Judaica libraries (similar to the fine catalog of the Mehlman Collection [*Ginzei Yisrael*], in the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem, prepared by Isaac Yudlov, 1984). Furthermore, good, reliable guides to individual collections should be made available so that a researcher can know what kind of materials to expect in each library.

On a more general level, Hebrew manuscripts and printed books deserve scholarly exploration in their own right. Studies in paleography, in scribal traditions and practices, in the selection of works to be copied, the dissemination of manuscripts, the textual traditions they reflect, the esthetic aspect of the handwritten book and its survival—or unfortunately, frequently, its destruction—are all challenging fields for investigation. The first and last general introduction to all aspects of the lore of Hebrew manuscripts is still Moritz Steinschneider's *Vorlesungen ueber die Kunde hebraeischer Handschriften* (1897, Hebrew translation with additions by A.M. Haberman in 1965) [see now: B. Richler, *Hebrew Manuscripts: A Treasures legacy*, Cleveland, 1990 and of B. Richler, *Guide to Hebrew Manuscript Collections*, Jerusalem, 1994]. Undoubtedly, in view of the great advances and changes in the field, a new handbook providing information on Hebrew manuscripts is needed.

The history of the Hebrew printed book also offers many research opportunities. Histories and records of local printing presses, publishing,

A large number of publications in the post-Holocaust period have dealt with the history of Jewish communities in various geographical locations. Though good bibliographies are available on the history of the Jews in many countries, there are still some areas where reliable, accurate, comprehensive works would be helpful. Just as one example, the history of the Jews in Hungary is not bibliographically well documented, and a "Hungaria Judaica," modeled after the excellent *Germania Judaica* (1917-1968), would be an important contribution. The same applies to individual, important Jewish communities of the past and the present.

The standard and still extremely useful encyclopedia of beginning lines of Medieval Hebrew poetry (*Otzar ha-shira ve-ha-piyyut*), the work of Israel Davidson (published in 1924-1938), has never been updated. [For a partial update see: *J. Schirmann's Bibliography of Studies in Hebrew Medieval Poetry 1948-1978*, Compiled and edited by E. Adler, G. Davidson, A. Kehath and P. Ziv (Beer-Sheva, 1989).]

Accordingly, in all areas of bibliographies and reference works in Jewish studies, one could suggest projects to complement the many fine tools already at our disposal or to bring such tools to fields that lack them.

Bibliographical work and thoughtful indexing could also facilitate the work of students through study guides and bibliographies to such monumental achievements of scholars of the previous generation as Saul Lieberman's *Tosefta ki-feshuta* or M.M. Kasher's *Torah shelema*. These works embody an immense number of references to Rabbinic and other literature, and their use is quite complicated for those who are not well versed in this type of literature.

Similarly, there are great gaps in the field of cataloging important collections of Hebrew manuscripts and rare books. The collections of Hebrew manuscripts in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Hebrew Union College, and the Jewish National and University Library are not described in printed catalogs, while great and famous collections of Hebrew manuscripts in the old European libraries are frequently known only through nineteenth- and eighteenth-century catalogs (e.g., Florence, Parma [see now: *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Palatine in Parma*, Edited by Benjamin Richler, Palaeographical and codicological descriptions by Malachi Beit-Arié (Jerusalem, 2001)] and such German libraries as Hamburg and Munich, which had their collections of Hebrew manuscripts cataloged by the great Moritz Steinschneider). Hebrew

Printing until 1960 (Jerusalem, 1997)] and Nahum Rakover's *Otsar ha-mishpat* (a bibliography on Jewish law), published in 1975.

There are also *desiderata* in the field of periodical indexing. All users appreciate the comprehensiveness and the detailed and easy classification of the *Index of Articles on Jewish Studies*, but the fact that there are now twenty-seven volumes of this important work makes cumulative indexes, arranged by author and subject and published at regular intervals, desirable. [There are now 50 volumes and a cumulative index is available on-line.] Passage indexes to classical Jewish literature in periodicals, going back to the emergence of modern Jewish scholarship, are also important. The Saul Lieberman Talmudic Research Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary in Jerusalem is in the process of preparing such a passage index to Talmudic literature, and it is to be hoped both that the work will be completed soon and that other similar projects will be planned and carried out.

Annotated critical bibliographies on well-defined subjects or influential authors would also fill gaps. Louis Feldman's masterly bibliography on Josephus (1986) could serve as a model, and one hopes that Jacob Dienstag's labors in the field of Maimonides bibliography will ultimately be published in a suitable form.

The field of Jewish studies needs an up-to-date, accurate, comprehensive biographical encyclopedia. The most comprehensive one available is in German, is not always accurate, and is hopelessly outdated (S. Wininger's *Grosse juedische National-biographie, 1925-1936*). As Shimeon Brisman writes:

The number of Jewish biographical encyclopedias and lexicons, arranged in alphabetical order, is substantial. Unfortunately, some are incomplete, defective, or unreliable. This situation prompted some scholars, beginning in the early 19th century, to propose the production of a national Jewish biography. Several attempts to produce such a work were made, none too successful. A national Jewish biography is still a dream of the future. (*Jewish Research Literature*, vol. 2, pp. 253-254)

Obviously, such a project could be carried out only as a cooperative venture and over a long period of time.

tentativeness in many other aspects of Jewish bibliography and booklore. Malachi Beit-Arie, in the foreword to his *Specimens of Medieval Hebrew Scripts* (1987), states, "We have not yet forged a clear methodology, morphological or quantitative, for differentiation between models of the same type [of Hebrew script], and even our classification into types is tentative." In short, two challenges confront the Jewish bibliographer and scholar of Jewish booklore: the complexity of the field of Jewish studies, in general, and the frequent lack of authoritative reference books and handbooks that are commonly available in other disciplines. Accordingly, despite the significant achievements, many ambitious and innovative new projects in research services still await the attention and dedication of competent Judaica librarians.

In a broader sense, Judaica librarianship research services may be divided into two major categories: direct services, such as bibliographies, indexes, catalogs, guides and reference works; and indirect services, of a more abstract scholarly nature, that encompass works dealing with the history of the Hebrew manuscript and printed book, the history of publishing, Jewish book collections, etc. Obviously, in some ways the two areas overlap.

The following are examples of a few projects that seem worthy of being continued and completed or planned and carried out.

The National Hebrew Bibliography Project began in 1964 at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. This most ambitious, first national Hebrew bibliography is now nearing completion of its editorial stage. The international Jewish library community is eagerly awaiting the publication, in one form or another, of this monumental work and should be ready to offer any help needed to promote its speedy completion and distribution.

A systematic and sustained effort should be applied to the consistent, periodic updating of standard Jewish bibliographies and reference works. Some important examples are: Shunami's *Bibliography of Jewish Bibliographies*, the last edition of which is from 1975; M.M. Kasher and J.B. Mandelbaum's *Sarei ha-elef* (a millennium of Hebrew authors [500-1500 C.E.]; a complete bibliographical compendium of Hebraica... new edition, 1978); Abraham Yaari, *Bibliography of the Passover Haggadah*, 1960, for which a number of supplements have been compiled by various bibliographers, but which has not been issued in a new, cumulative, revised edition [See now: Isaac Yudlov, *The Haggadah Thesaurus: Bibliography of Passover Haggadoth from the Beginning of Hebrew*

well as through facsimiles and reprints, and the proliferation of special collections of Judaica throughout the world are all to be credited for making the present period the best of times for researchers in Jewish studies. If one considers Manhattan alone, from 4th Street to 185th Street one finds an unprecedented accumulation of Judaica books in such fine libraries as that of Hebrew Union College, New York Public Library, Yivo, Leo Baeck Institute, Jewish Theological Seminary, and Yeshiva University.

Therefore, the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Judaica Department of the Harvard College Library, an exemplary model for innovations and substantial contributions, provides us with an opportunity to rejoice in the remarkable development of the field. More significantly, it allows the practitioners of Judaica librarianship to look forward and assess the *desiderata* for the future.

The difficulties a Judaica bibliographer faces in his or her tasks are succinctly formulated by Robert Singerman in the introduction to his *Jewish Serials of the World* (1986):

At first glance, it is somewhat surprising to note that there does not yet exist an authoritative, book-length study of the three-hundred-year-old history of Jewish serials and press since the founding of the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* in 1675. This lacuna, while regrettable, is certainly understandable when the linguistic diversity of the thousands of Jewish serials is recalled. Undoubtedly, a command of at least eight languages (Hebrew, Yiddish, Judezmo, German, French, English, Russian and Polish) would be required of the ideal historian of Jewish journalism. The expert would also need to be fully knowledgeable in Jewish culture and intellectual history with additional training in modern Jewish history, content analysis, and the historical development of journalism. Another major handicap, while not insurmountable, is the lack of a comprehensive, global checklist of all known Jewish serials with their publishing and editorial genealogies fully described and with the titles located in holding repositories.

Similar demands could be placed on bibliographers in Jewish studies in many other areas and the status of available resources is not always different from the situation that Singerman describes.

A quotation from another recently published book demonstrates the

On Judaica Research Services

In the last twenty-five years, Jewish studies in this country, in Israel, and elsewhere have experienced tremendous growth, and Judaica librarianship, in its own manner, has tried to keep up with the giant strides of the discipline it serves.

Obviously, it is impossible to enumerate all the achievements of the last quarter of a century here; therefore, my mention of a few outstanding accomplishments in this field should be regarded as a highly selective sampling. The multivolume dictionary catalogs of the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library (1960), of the Klau Library of Hebrew Union College (1964), and the *Catalogue of Hebrew Books of Harvard University Library* (1968) have put at the disposal of scholars and librarians the records of hundreds of thousands of Hebraica and Judaica publications. *The Index of Articles of Jewish Studies* (1969 ff.) has become an indispensable reference tool. Shlomo Shunami's standard *Bibliography of Jewish Bibliographies* (2nd edition enlarged, 1965) was enhanced in 1975 by a *Supplement* that includes over 2,000 entries (the 1965 volume has 4,751 entries). In other words, the *Supplement* that represents basically the bibliographical output of only ten years contains almost half of the total number of bibliographies published over a period of some 300 years, since the first Jewish bibliographies started to appear in the seventeenth century! The Hebrew Paleography Project (established in 1965) has published a number of volumes of pioneering importance for the study of medieval Hebrew manuscripts. The two volumes of Shimeon Brisman's *Jewish Research Literature* (1977, 1987) [there is now a third volume (Volume Three, Part One), 2000] place in the hand of the interested and serious reader the best, most reliable and concise guide to the subject.

Not only the published bibliographies and reference works bear testimony to progress in Judaica librarianship. Sophisticated new technologies such as automation and microfilming, on site in Judaica libraries, the wide availability of library materials through these measures as

nineteenth century. What was the book production in Tel Aviv in 1956? Look it up in the catalog, under the appropriate heading in the place index, and you will find an amazing quantity of publications. The panorama of Jewish and Israel publications is as fascinatingly diverse as life itself. What distinguishes this catalog from other similar works is that it exhibits strengths in so many areas, from the rare to the standard, from the ephemeral to the central, from the old to the new, from seminal to the trivial. This was achieved by good and careful planning, not chance. As stated in the brochure describing the catalog, this is the "first Hebraica catalog of its type and magnitude to be produced from machine readable cataloging data." An extraordinary rich collection was made accessible by the most advanced current technology.

The catalog has other features that make it valuable in ways that other bibliographical works lack. The Harvard Catalog covers materials published up to the 1990s, while Vinograd's bibliography extends until 1863 and the Jerusalem project until 1960. Neither of the latter has a subject index. The subject index points up the most important and unique aspect of the Harvard Catalog: its all-encompassing nature. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the Harvard collection goes well beyond traditional Hebrew literature to cover material that does not even touch directly upon Jewish studies, as long as it is in Hebrew. The Hebraica collections of other major universities limit themselves to materials relating mainly to traditional, Rabbinic works. Harvard, by including secular works, becomes the first university that truly integrates its Hebraica collection into the university's general program. Jewish studies are no longer segregated, and Hebrew language publications have become an integral part of the general collecting profile of a great university library.

In conclusion, the Harvard Catalog is a complete, faithful record of the holdings of a great collection. Its aim is to serve and to stimulate scholarship. By grouping together by author, place, subject large segments of related materials, the scholar is invited to partake of the delicacies of a *Shulhan Arukh*, that is, a set table. Using another metaphor, the catalog provides the building blocks; the researcher can use them as he or she wishes to create new knowledge, new learning, and new scholarship. And as to the rest: go and study!

and the volumes are attractively produced.²⁹ The most innovative feature of this publication is that it contains a listing arranged by places of printing, in addition to the title listing. Thus, almost simultaneously, we have two computer-produced bibliographies, besides the one whose appearance we celebrate, the *Catalog of the Hebrew Collection of the Harvard College Library*.

This latter is unique and extraordinary. The Harvard Catalog is the culmination of two major processes. I have in mind the process of Harvard's collection development, on the one hand, and its pioneering use of technology, on the other hand. Building on a solid historical foundation, the Harvard College Library, over the last three decades and more, under the leadership of Dr. Charles Berlin, has systematically and wisely strengthened its holdings of older material, but it has at the same time endeavored—successfully—to collect Israeli publications as extensively as possible. As a result, Harvard has become the most comprehensive depository of all kinds of Israeli publications, not only those relating to literary, religious, and cultural matters, and not only ones in the field of Jewish studies, but also publications relating to the scientific, political, economic and other aspects of Israeli life. These newer areas of interest, beyond Jewish and Rabbinic studies in the more traditional sense, have also been covered by collecting related materials from outside of Israel, from the Jewish diaspora in general. A cursory perusal of randomly selected pages of the new catalog easily demonstrates the variety and wealth of the collection. The subject section provides access to topics ranging from *afforestation* to *rock music* and from *aeronautics* to *kitchen utensils*. At the same time, it takes more than eighty columns to list the works in Jewish ethical literature, for there are at least 1,500 of them.

A very useful and highly significant index of the printing places occupies a large part of the catalog. If, for example, one looks up Fano, one finds that Harvard has six books printed in that small Italian city; produced in the first decade of the sixteenth century, they represent some of the rarest of Hebrew books. Does one want to know whether Hebrew books were ever published in Oran, Algeria? The answer is five books, all from the

29 Yeshayahu Vinograd, *Thesaurus of the Hebrew Book; Listing of Books Printed in Hebrew Letters Since the Beginning of Hebrew Printing circa 1469 through 1863*, 2v. (Jerusalem: The Institute for Computerized Bibliography, 1993-1995).

In the early 1950s, a team of scholarly catalogers started to describe the books in the Jewish National and University Library. The work was done by hand, each volume was painstakingly examined, every detail was recorded, and the secondary literature was searched for references to each item. Lengthy notes dealt with disputes concerning attributions and datings. The staff knew that their labors would take a long time, but they were quite optimistic that sooner or later the printing of the multi-volume bibliography would begin and that the project would be finished. A very nicely typeset sample brochure was issued, containing a few well-chosen entries.²⁷ The promise of the beautiful brochure was, however, never fulfilled. More than thirty years after the start of the project, the people and institutions involved were in despair over ever being able to bring it to publication in the form originally planned.

Fortunately, the thirty years passed at a time when it became feasible to transfer the information from the cards onto CD-ROM. A project that began in the traditional, conventional mode and that was supposed to produce an elegantly printed, multivolume national bibliography, turned into an electronic publishing venture. For book lovers some of the original appeal was lost, but for the average librarian, user, and reader much has been gained. The bibliography, which currently contains Hebrew books printed before 1960, became an open-ended project, one that can be instantly updated. Moreover, the retrieval of information became immeasurably more flexible and rapid than it would have been in the traditional book format. Thus, the National Hebrew Bibliography has turned into a practical instrument that serves a large constituency of scholars, students, and librarians.²⁸

Computerization is a tremendous lure to the initiation of ambitious undertakings. The Institute for Computerized Bibliography in Jerusalem, a private enterprise under the directorship of Yeshayahu Vinograd, launched a project called *Otzar ha-sefer ha-ivri* (Thesaurus for the Hebrew Book). The result of the enterprise is a book that is presented as a continuation and modernization of Benjacob's *Otzar ha-sefarim*. It contains Hebrew books printed until 1863, the cut-off date of Benjacob's *Otzar*. The entries are accompanied by short bibliographical references,

27 See above, note 22.

28 *The Bibliography of the Hebrew Book: 1473-1960*. From the Institute for Hebrew Bibliography, User manual, Temporary Edition (Jerusalem: C. D. I. Systems, 1994).

of Sciences in St. Petersburg, of the Jewish Community in Vienna,²⁴ have all been modeled, to a greater or lesser degree, on Steinschneider. Their Hebrew collections consisted of traditional, older, and rarer literature assembled before the publishing explosion of the twentieth century. The number of books in them was relatively small, and they were treated with great scholarly precision. Similarly, a few private collections established in the second part of the twentieth century, such as Yisrael Mehlman's, now at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem, or Manfred Lehmann's private collection in New York, were cataloged with all scholarly detail.²⁵ The authors of these catalogs were motivated by academic aspirations: to contribute by full bibliographical documentation to scholarly research in the field of the history of Hebrew printing and booklore.

This orientation changed in the 1960s in the United States. The availability of new technology made it possible to reproduce entire card catalogs in book form. The New York Public Library, Hebrew Union College, the Harvard College Library, and YIVO all made available to the public a reproduction of their cards in multi-volume sets.²⁶ In these cases the purpose was not to create original scholarly works, but, instead, to provide help to a wide audience. The card catalogs of these collections represented much larger quantities of books than those mentioned before, and they also offered more access points, both of which aspects well compensated for what they lacked in scholarly apparatus.

The next stage in the progress of recording, processing, and making accessible large collections was reached by the introduction of computer technology. How this has changed the creating of bibliographies and catalogs may perhaps be best illustrated by the fate of the National Hebrew Bibliography Project to which I have referred previously.

24 For the British Museum see above, note 16; for the Rosenthaliana, see M. Roest, *Catalog der Hebraica und Judaica aus der L. Rosenthalscher Bibliothek* (Amsterdam, 1875); for the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, S. Wiener, *Kehilloth Moshe*, (St. Petersburg, 1893-1936).

25 *The Israel Mehlman Collection in the Jewish National and University Library: An Annotated Catalogue*, by Isaac Yudlov (Jerusalem: The National and University Library, 1984) and *Ohel Hayim: A Catalogue of Hebrew Manuscripts of the Manfred and Anne Lehmann Family*: vol. 3: *Printed Books, Incunabula and Sixteenth Century Books*. Prepared by Shimon M. Iakerson (New York: Manfred and Anne Lehmann Foundation, 1996).

26 The New York Public Library in 1960; Hebrew Union College in 1964; Harvard University Library in 1968; and YIVO in 1990.

of books have been destroyed while centres in which important discoveries might have been expected have been liquidated... Under these circumstances the renaissance of the Jewish people in its own country made it mandatory for it to undertake a task which, by its very nature, could not be performed by individuals. Thus took shape the idea of compiling a comprehensive National Bibliography."²³ Of course, we do not claim that Scholem did not realize that the primary function of a comprehensive bibliography is to be a research instrument. Much of his early work was bibliographical in nature, and he knew full well that without systematic, solid bibliographies, research only limps along. Still, it is quite interesting to note Scholem's articulation of the aims of the comprehensive Hebrew bibliography project. First, it should serve as a memorial to the destroyed and dispersed Jewish books in the wake of the Holocaust and the exodus of Jews from Islamic countries. At the same time, it should become a symbol of the revival of the Jewish people in its national home. A national home demands a national bibliography.

Three centuries, three centers, three bibliographies, three motivations. Amsterdam, Vilna, Jerusalem, each with its own goals and aspirations. The compilation of Hebrew bibliographies sprang from emotions of piety in the seventeenth century, was promoted by historical consciousness and a striving for emancipation in the nineteenth, and in the twentieth century was inspired by the need of erecting a memorial and by a national renaissance.

The technological revolution of our own days has brought immense changes to the field of Hebrew bibliography and cataloging. It has reached an entirely new stage of development with the publication in 1995 of the *Catalog of the Hebrew Collection of the Harvard College Library*.

Other prestigious libraries have over the years published very fine catalogs of their Hebraica holdings. Steinschneider's catalog of the Hebrew books in the Bodleian Library in Oxford has already been mentioned. This highly detailed and scholarly work adds to the description of each entry a full bibliography relating to the work, its author, place of publication, and other relevant matters. It is not just a catalog, but a bio-bibliographical encyclopedia. The catalogs of the Hebrew collections of the British Museum in London, of the Rosenthaliana in Amsterdam, of the Academy

23 Institute for Hebrew Bibliography, *Specimen Brochure* (Jerusalem, 1964), p. 47.

ve-Tumim (oracle) of every Jewish student."¹⁸ It was considered to be "the reference tool on all questions of Jewish literature."¹⁹ It was this work, along with others, that was utilized by Benjacob. No wonder then that the *Otzar* has remained up to our own days an important and reliable tool of research. Still, despite its great value, the *Otzar* is an imperfect instrument. It is arranged alphabetically by title, and it did not originally have indexes by author, subject, or place of publication. One of these deficiencies was corrected as recently as 1965 by Menahem Mendel Slatkine's author index.²⁰ Jacob Benjacob, the son, who died in 1926, spent many years on the preparation of a new edition, but his vast manuscript fell victim to the Holocaust.²¹

The third general Hebrew bibliography is Bernhard Friedberg's *Bet Eked Sefarim*, which has gone through two editions, the first published from 1928 to 1931, the second in 1956. Friedberg was a dealer in books and later in diamonds. Recording Hebrew books was for him more a hobby and a means of livelihood than a scholarly pursuit, so his bibliography, though quantitatively much larger than that of Benjacob, is less accurate. Friedberg was not an ideologue, he was simply interested in the book trade and in printing history. Still, despite its limitations, until recently the *Beth Eked* has served as the most frequently consulted general Hebrew bibliography.²²

After the Holocaust, and particularly after the establishment of the State of Israel, new justifications were advanced for the creation of an inclusive, general Hebrew bibliography. In 1954, Israeli governmental and educational institutions joined in a partnership to plan and produce a bibliography of all printed Hebrew-language books before 1960. Gershom Scholem formulated the goals of the project and the reasons for carrying it out. He wrote: "The catastrophe which overtook European Jewry during the Second World War and the mass exodus of the Jews living in the Moslem countries have created an entirely new situation. Great treasures

18 Solomon Schechter, *Seminary Addresses* (New York: Burning Bush, 1959), p. 122 (quoted by Brisman, *History and Guide*, p. 277, note 33).

19 Alexander Marx, *Essays in Jewish Biography* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1947), 150 (quoted by Brisman, *History and Guide*, p. 42).

20 *Otzar ha-sefarim, helek sheni* (Jerusalem, 1965).

21 Brisman, *History and Guide*, pp. 22-23.

22 Brisman, *History and Guide*, pp. 24-26.

phrase of Ismar Schorsch, is one of the most important developments in the nineteenth-century movement of the Jews toward emancipation and modernization.¹⁵ Jacob Benjacob sees bibliography as a discipline that provides the foundation for study, understanding, and appreciation of Jewish history. It is, to him, an essential element in the move toward emancipation of the Jews, because it will foster Jewish historical consciousness. Some of the subsequent points of Benjacob must be understood against the background of the times as well. Becoming acquainted with the entire range of Hebrew literature, that is, with the sciences, philosophy, and literature, and not only Rabbinic works, will fill the Jews with pride; no more will they stand embarrassed before other nations, and the common human heritage of the Jewish people with other peoples will lead to an era when *kineath amim ve-shinnuye ha-datot taavir [taavor] min ha-aretz*, “jealousy among nations and differences among religions will be removed from the earth.”¹⁶ What a difference in ideology between the professed motivation of this general Hebrew bibliography and that of its older model and predecessor!

Ideology is, of course, not the only difference between the two works. The *Otzar* is immeasurably richer and better than the *Siftei Yeshenim*. Books were more carefully examined and more precisely described, and the resources at Benjacob's disposal were much greater than those of Bass. The most significant of these were the catalogs of two major collections of Hebraica, those at the Bodleian in Oxford and the British Museum (now British Library) in London. The Judaica sections of both of those libraries grew throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and, especially, the nineteenth centuries into the most comprehensive and richest collections of Hebraica heretofore assembled. Great care was also extended to the proper cataloging of these collections. The Bodleian invited Steinschneider himself to catalog its Hebraica; in the British Museum, the scholarly and precise Joseph Zedner prepared the catalog of Hebrew books.¹⁷ Steinschneider's catalog, in Latin, is regarded, in Solomon Schechter's words, as “the *Urim*

15 See Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Hanover, N. H.: Brandeis University Press, 1994). See also Y. H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1982).

16 *Otzar ha-sefarim*, xviii

17 *Catalogus librorum hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana* (Berlin, 1852-1860); *Catalogue of the Hebrew Books in the Library of the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1867).

thesaurus of books. Moreover, besides the Hebrew title page are three others: in Latin, in German and in Russian. The Latin title is *Thesaurus librorum hebraicorum*, and the German and Russian ones read (in translation): A Bibliography of the Entire Hebrew Literature. But even more significant is a letter printed in German on the verso of the German title page: signed in Berlin in 1880 by Leopold Zunz, the founder of modern Jewish scholarship, it states that Jacob Benjacob's father deserves for his *Otzar* the highest possible praise and that the work will become indispensable to every scholar who occupies himself with Jewish literature.

Indeed, although *Otzar* formally follows earlier models, it incorporates in its entries the accomplishments of decades of modern Jewish scholarship. The father of modern Jewish bibliography, Moritz Steinschneider, a friend of Zunz, and together with him a founder of "jüdische Wissenschaft," shared with Benjacob the results of his own research. Information forwarded by Steinschneider, and signed Ramshash, i.e., the initials of Rabbi Moshe Steinschneider, is on practically every page of the *Otzar*. Thus, Benjacob's work integrates modern Jewish scholarly information with traditional learning. Benjacob himself, deeply steeped in Talmud studies as a youngster, pursued the study of Hebrew language and poetry and became an advocate of Enlightenment (*Haskalah*). Accordingly, *Haskalah*, modern Jewish scholarship, and traditional Rabbinic learning shaped Benjacob and led him to the labor of many decades that resulted in his "indispensable" bibliography of the entirety of Hebrew literature.

It is instructive to spend a moment comparing the so-called benefits that are enumerated in Benjacob with those found in Bass. Bass lists ten, Benjacob six, but the most striking difference is that the *Sifte Yeshenim* emphasizes the religious-mystical value of recording the works of saintly authors, whereas in Jacob Benjacob's first benefit, history replaces religion: "It is well known that every person should know the history of his country and land. A nation without history cannot be counted among the nations. This is even more so in regard to the nation of Israel. The only remnant of its glorious history is its literature; it is its land, its government, it is its only monument of the past. From it one can learn the sacred and secular history of the Jewish people."¹⁴ The "turn to history," in the

14 *Otzar ha-sefarim*, xviii (the translation is a slightly abbreviated version of the original).

Amsterdam to Vilna. The new bibliography bore the imprint of Vilna in more than one sense. Its author, Isaac Benjacob, was born in 1801 in a small town near Vilna, was educated in that city, and spent much of his life there. When he died in 1863, his only son, Jacob, who was also living in Vilna, completed the Hebrew bibliography that his father had started. When Jacob Benjacob submitted his father's work for publication, he obtained the approbations of members of the rabbinical court of his city. In them the *dayyanim* of Vilna heap praise on the author for his scholarship, diligence, and piety, calling his book *melekheth shamayim*, "heavenly work." These rather lengthy statements contain arguments that the bibliography is important because of its benefits to serious scholars of Talmud. Rabbi Shelomo ben Yisrael Moshe ha-Cohen, the author of one of the approbations, lists ten instances in various rabbinic works where the standard editions contain errors that may be corrected upon consultation with other, rare editions of the same works. For example, he points out that twelve lines are omitted from the common editions of Josef Karo's commentary of Jacob ben Asher's code, which can be restored by using the early Venice edition of the same work.¹¹ Since such reconstructions can be achieved only with the aid of a good Hebrew bibliography, the rabbis are placing Benjacob's bibliography in a religious framework: a help in arriving at correct interpretations of passages in Rabbinic literature.

Originally Benjacob planned to revise and supplement the *Siftei Yeshenim* of Bass. The son's German preface states this explicitly: "The author, of blessed memory, had originally intended to publish as complete a revision as possible of the only Hebrew bibliography, the *Siftei Yeshenim*."¹² In preparing for his work, Benjacob also issued a rearranged edition of the bio-bibliographic *Shem ha-Gedolim* by Rabbi Hayyim Yosef David Azulai.¹³ In his conception, he was only extending the work of Rabbis who preceded him; rather than offering something radically new, his work was just another link in the chain of Rabbinic literature. But in truth, Benjacob's work differs significantly from the *Siftei Yeshenim*. The title pages alone are testimony to the great differences that divide this work from its predecessor. Gone is the flowery, Biblical title of Bass's work. Benjacob's title is simple and describes the contents accurately: *Otzar ha-Sefarim*, a

11 *Ibid.*, xi.

12 *Ibid.*, "Vorbemerkung" (immediately following the title pages).

13 Vilna, 1852.

means of helping to convince the reader that bibliography, though a new genre of Hebrew literature, ought not to be rejected as a non-religious innovation: it does fulfill a religious purpose and therefore can be recommended even to a deeply traditional and conventional audience.⁸

In my view, the matter is much more complicated. A comparison of the subject divisions in *Siftei Yeshenim* with the structure of the *Shelah* yields some surprising similarities. Bass divides all Hebrew books into two categories: Written Law and Oral Law. Within each category there are ten sub-divisions, alluding to the Ten Commandments. The *Shelah* is similarly structured, having two main divisions called Oral Law and Written Law, hence the allusion in the title to the Two Tablets of the Covenant. Within the two main divisions are various sub-sections, some further divided into chapters of ten, others arranged alphabetically. Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz's highly influential book is an encyclopedic work, containing an enormous amount of mystical, homiletical, liturgical, and halakhic materials, and likewise the bibliography of Bass is encyclopedic in scope, with references to all sorts of books on a variety of subjects. Although Bass mentions the works by their titles alone, do we not know by now, from the *Shelah*, that the mere mention of a title or an author serves as a substitute for the understanding and study of the books themselves? I hope to develop fully this argument elsewhere; here it suffices, to suggest further that Bass, who came from Prague, tried to imitate Horowitz, the famous Rabbi of Prague. One additional point: Bass frequently refers to his brother, a kabbalist who settled in the Land of Israel, as did the kabbalist Horowitz. According to my line of reasoning, the first Hebrew bibliography was a product of the religious-mystical atmosphere of its times under the impact of the *Shelah*, and it was produced with the goal of being an instrument of religious efficacy and teaching.⁹

Exactly two hundred years later, in 1880, the second major general Hebraica bibliography appeared.¹⁰ During these two centuries, the center of Jewish publishing activity shifted from the West to the East, from

8 See M.M. Slatkine, *Reshith bikkurei ha-bibliografiyah be-sifruth ha-ivrit* (Tel Aviv, 1958), pp. 65-68; A.M. Habermann, *Anshei sefer ve-anshei maaseh* (Jerusalem: R. Mass, 1974), pp. 6-7.

9 For the classification according to Written and Oral Law and for fitting the books into the scheme of the Ten Commandments, see *Siftei Yeshenim*, ff. 6b-7a; for the brother of Shabbathai Bass, see Slatkine, *Reshith bikkurei*, p. 12.

10 *Otzar ha-sefarim*, by Isaac Benjacob (Vilna, 1880).

Shabbethai Bass Meshorer, in compiling his book, the *Siftei Yeshenim*. I followed the author's admonition, emphatically stated on the title page, and read his lengthy introduction carefully. There, Bass enumerated the "benefits," ten in number, that one may derive from his book, and he explained what it contained and how it is arranged.

The practical benefits of the *Siftei Yeshenim* are obvious. It provides help to authors, scholars, publishers, printers, and booksellers in identifying various editions of Hebrew titles and informing them about what exists in the field. Because Bass himself was an author, printer, and bookseller, he must have known from his own experience how useful such a bibliography could be, especially one in Hebrew, as opposed to the earlier bibliographies in Latin.⁵

Every scholar who writes about Bass and his *Siftei Yeshenim* observes that the so-called first benefit is based on a pious, mystical, almost magical concept, quoted from one of the most influential Jewish books of the last three centuries, the bulky *Shnei Luhoth ha-Berith* (The Two Tablets of the Covenant), by Isaiah Horowitz (1555-1630).⁶ (Incidentally, the public, with its healthy sense of proportion and propriety, refused to refer to this book by its full title, feeling that The Two Tablets of the Covenant by Rabbi Horowitz was presumptuous, using instead the acronym, *Shelah*.) The concept borrowed from the *Shelah* is that the recitation and remembrance of titles of sacred books and their saintly authors by lay people, especially the ignorant, may be regarded by the Almighty as worthy of reward. Those who are not capable of learning themselves, should at least pronounce the names of the holy books, as a kind of substitute for learning, and God will grant them merit for their sincere effort despite their deficiency. Bass adds that these acts are recommended to the pious as instruments of intercession with the deceased, and he offers the prayer: "and may the recitation of your names and the names of your books that you composed be considered as if I had studied and understood them and may my prayer be counted as more than even a visit to your graves."⁷ In the scholarly literature this benefit is discounted as self-serving. It is claimed that Bass advanced it to prove his own piety as a

5 Brisman, *History and Guide*, pp. 3-8.

6 First edition: Amsterdam, 1649. On Horowitz see the forthcoming book by Miles Krassen, *Isaiah Horowitz: The Generations of Adam* [Published by the Paulist Press (New York 1996)].

7 *Siftei Yeshenim* (see above note 1), f. 9a.

translation, "the lips of those who slumber." Hebrew books with such titles as *Penei Yehoshua* (The Face of Joshua), *Mahatzit ha-Shekel* (Half a Shekel), *Hafetz Hayyim* (One who Desires Life), *Hazon Ish* (The Vision of Man), and thousands similar, are still common today. Who were their authors? What were their names? Furthermore, to distinguish among authors bearing common Jewish names is not so simple. How many Isaacs and Cohens, and how many Isaac Cohens do we have? In how many countries and in how many different periods did they live? And how can we distinguish between the Shapiras and the Rabinowitzes whose names appear in so many variant forms, depending on the country in which they lived? Indeed, the author of the first Hebrew bibliography found it necessary to establish rules for the entry of authors with Sefardi and Ashkenazi names. Ashkenazim with double names, such as Abraham Aron, are entered under the second name, while Sefardim, for example, Moses Rafael, are entered under the first, according to their respective customs in referring to a person.

Subject classification and added entries posed other problems. A single edition of a Hebrew Bible or of a Haggadah for Passover could have multiple commentaries, some seeking to explain the so-called simple meaning, others the philosophical, homiletical, or mystical; some contain illustrations, and some music. Translations may call for dozens of author, title, and subject entries. A particularly complex example is the standard Vilna edition of the Babylonian Talmud, in which there are 243 various commentaries.³ Add to these complexities the fact that Hebrew characters have been used for Yiddish, Ladino, Judeo-Arabic, and other languages, and the number of bibliographical challenges multiply exponentially. In 1680, as well as in 1995, creators of Hebrew bibliographical records have had to strive to bring order to this huge array of deceptively similar data, albeit never in a totally and absolutely satisfying way.

Let us now, turning to the widely differing attempts to create general bibliographies and catalogs of Hebraica, examine the motivation that led their authors in their labors.⁴ In the case of the first Hebrew bibliography, already referred to, it is quite easy to know the aims of its author,

3 Y.S. Weinfeld, *Mavo le-shas Vilna* (Jerusalem, 1994), p. 403.

4 Among the secondary literature on Hebrew bibliographies and their authors, first and foremost is Simeon Brisman's relatively recent and most excellent and reliable *A History and Guide to Judaic Bibliography* (Cincinnati and New York: Hebrew Union College Press and Ktav, 1977).

array of data in well-arranged order. These works and many others of a similar nature have an identical aim. Their technique, scope, dimension, and mode of presentation, however, are as different as a horse drawn wagon is from a spaceship. Furthermore, the motivation for creating these instruments of information reflects the spirit and culture of their times and the corresponding ideologies of their authors.

In general I shall refrain from rattling off either titles, authors, places, and dates or lots of statistics, though I cannot resist mentioning that in the 1680 bibliography 1,900 Hebrew titles were listed, while in the new Harvard Catalog there are entries for more than a hundred thousand Hebrew monographs, plus thousands of sound recordings, videotapes and scores. Size alone would make it a monumental work, and here, in honor of the new Harvard Catalog, I shall call attention to the other monumental landmarks in the field, locate them on the map of Jewish intellectual and scholarly history, and characterize their specific features briefly.

All general bibliographies and catalogs of Hebraica, old and new, face a series of common problems and challenges. One of the major problems results from the dispersion of the Jewish people. Hebrew book production through the ages took place in many localities over the globe. Under pre-modern communication and transportation conditions it took a long time for a book printed in one part of the world to reach another part, and it might never do so. Even as late as the nineteenth century, Rabbi Bezalel Ranschburg, in his commentary to the Talmudic tractate *Horayoth*, reports that he had heard rumors of the existence of a similar commentary by Rabbi Hayyim Yosef David Azulai, printed some thirty years earlier in Italy, but that he could not obtain a copy.² The maps of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, as well as those of India and America, are dotted with places, large and small, where Hebrew books were printed. Collecting information on books from all these places, even identifying the names of strange, exotic localities, occasionally distorted in Hebrew characters, was and remains a formidable task. Another difficulty relates to a characteristic feature of much of traditional Hebrew literature: a book's title often conveys no meaning whatsoever about its subject matter or content. Thus, the title of the first Hebrew bibliography, *Siftei Yeshenim*, is a quote from the Song of Songs (7:10), which reads in

2 *Sefer Horah Gever* (Prague, 1802), introduction, paragraph beginning "u-va-sheviith."

Guides to the Perplexed in the Wilderness of Hebraica: From Historical to Contemporary Bibliographies and Catalogs of Hebraica

In it you shall find the names of the books of Scripture and of all the commentators, designated by their names, and the titles of all books, arranged in the order of the alphabet, their authors and the subjects upon which they deliberated. I listed them in two main divisions and prepared twenty indexes, each in brevity. The books of the Mishnah, commentators, novellae — old and new — responsa, Talmud, Tosafot and codes, astronomy, philosophy and grammar, ethics, kabbalah, stories, reference works and prayerbooks, all are there. Anyone who wishes to study, do research or find something, should turn to them and shall find everything, the root and the branch. O dear reader, read my introduction carefully and you will realize that my aim is to serve you with all my soul and all my might.

At the outset I would like to dispel any possible misunderstanding: the above quotation is not a description of the *Catalog of the Hebrew Collection of the Harvard College Library*! Rather, it is a translation, almost verbatim, of the rhymed foreword of the first Hebrew bibliography, *Siftei Yeshevim* by Shabbethai Bass, published in Amsterdam in 1680.¹ More than three hundred years later, the substantial message of these words could equally apply to the catalog whose publication we celebrate.^{1a} Both were created to provide easy access, to offer guidance, service, and help, and to present a bewildering

1 For a bibliography on Bass, see Herbert Zafren in *Studies in Jewish Bibliography, History and Literature in Honor of I. Edward Kiev* (New York: Ktav, 1971), pp. 546-47.

1a The Catalog of the Hebrew Collection of the Harvard College Library (Munich, 1995), 11 volumes.

ware without actually doing any work in presenting a new text?

In view of our limited knowledge of the events in Venetian Hebrew publishing in the fifteen-twenties and fifteen-thirties, no definitive answer can be given to the many questions relating to apparent contradictions, conflicting designations, and sequence of editions of the period.

Only a thorough new investigation, and the possibility of discovering hitherto unknown documents, perhaps in the archives of Venice, can throw much needed new light on this very important period of early Hebrew publishing history.³⁷

ויעתר לו, ולא לה	ויעתר לו, לו ולא לה	21. ויעתר לו, ולא לה
לדרוש את ה', להגיד לה מה תהא בסופה	לדרוש את ה', להגיד לה מה תהא בסופה	22. לדרוש את ה', להגיד לה מה תהא בסופה
ואין זו שיבה טובה שהבטיחו הקב"ה לפיכך קצר הקב"ה ה' שנים משנותיו שיצחק חי קפ' שנה וזה קע"ה	ואין זו שיבה טובה שהבטיחו הקב"ה לפיכך קצר הקב"ה ה' שנים משנותיו שיצחק חי קפ' שנה וזה קע"ה	30. ואין זו שיבה טובה שהב- טיחו הקב"ה לפיכך קצר ה' שנים משנותיו של יצחק חי ק"פ וזה קע"ה
הנה אנכי הולך למות, אמר עשו מה טיבה של עבודה זו	הנה אנכי הולך למות, אמר עשו מה טיבה של עבודה זו	32. הנה אנכי הולך למות, אמר מה שר של עבודה זו

37 It was only after this article was set in type that Meir Benayahu's important book, *Copyright, authorization and imprimatur for Hebrew books printed in Venice* (Jerusalem, 1971, in Hebrew), appeared. Therefore, it was not possible for me to make use of his materials and conclusions. However, it should be pointed out that Benayahu's suggestion that Judah Kulpa converted to Christianity. [Actually, Benayahu only suggests that Kulpa may have been demanded that he converts.] around the year 1545 (p. 23, note 2), is not convincing. Cf. the colophon to ס' יחוס Mantua 1561:

והוגה בעיון רב ע"י כמ"ר יהודה הלוי יצ"ו בכמ"ר יצחק הלוי זצ"ל מברנקבורט המכונה ליבא קולפה
אשכנזי

It is obvious that an apostate could never have been referred to in this manner.

imprint 1538 and the other two undated ones are all mentioned by Kulpa, tend to invalidate Rabinowitz's view that no real printing of these tractates took place in 1538-9. On the other hand, a cursory examination of three editions of tractates *Aboth* (1521, 1526, 1539), *Moed Katan* (1521, 1526, 1538/9) and *Makkoth* (1520, 1529/30, 1538/9) shows that there is no significant textual difference between the second and third(?) editions.³⁴

Similar problems arise in connection with the 1538 edition of the Rashi text. Kulpa boasts in his colophon about the superiority of his text in relation to all previous editions. He also mentions Elijah Levita's assistance in the establishment of the text. He especially singles out the 1525 Soncino Rashi as being full of mistakes.³⁵ Now, on the title page, we read that this is the second Bomberg edition of Rashi. The first one was printed in 1522, i.e., three years before Soncino's. A comparison between the three editions shows that the first and second Bomberg editions are almost identical, and that of Soncino is different from the two. Is there any merit, then, in Kulpa's claim of presenting a new text? Similarly, why does he claim that his edition is far better than Soncino's because it also contains Rashi on the Five Scrolls, when the commentary on the Five Scrolls is already printed in the first, 1522, Bomberg edition? Furthermore, the two texts are again identical.³⁶ Is it possible that Kulpa, counting on the naiveté of his contemporaries, was only praising his

34 The third edition of *Aboth* contains a number of misprints in passages where the first and second editions are correct; e.g. f. 2a: 'ה' (!) תבין ירתא (read: הענינים); 2b: ' (!) אז תבין ירתא (read: הענינים); 5c: 'ה' (!) תבין ירתא (read: הענינים); 9c: 'ה' (!) תבין ירתא (read: הענינים).

35 See above, note 8.

36 A few examples will show the almost complete identity of the two Bomberg texts versus the Soncino text (the passages are taken from Genesis, 25. 19ff.), the text being used by Sonne, *HUCA*, v. 15, pp. 49-56 (Hebrew part), for his model of a new edition of Rashi on Pentateuch:

<i>Soncino 1525</i>	<i>Bomberg 1522</i>	<i>Bomberg 1538</i>
ומשנולד יצחק עד שמתה שרה	ומשנולד יצחק עד שמתה שרה	20. ומשנולד יצחק עד שמתה שרה
שלשים ושבע היו ובת צ' היתה	ל"ז היו ובת צ' היתה כשנולד	שרה ל"ז שנה היו בת צ'
כשנולד ובת קכ"ז כשמתה	ובת קכ"ז כשמתה שנאמר ויהיו	היתה כשנולד ובת קכ"ז
שנאמר ויהיו חיי שרה וגומר	חיי שרה וגומר הרי ליצחק ל"ז	כשמתה שג' ויהיו חיי שרה
הרי ליצחק ל"ז שני' וכו' בפ'	שנים ובפ' (!) נולדה רבקה	וגו' הרי ליצחק ל"ז וכו'
נולדה רבקה המתין לה עד	המתין לה עד שתהא ראוי'	בפרק נולדה רבקה המתין
שתהא ראוי' לביאה שלש שנים	לביאה שלש שני' ונשאה	לה שתהא ראוי' לביאה
ונשאה		שלש שנים ונשאה

as having stopped his work, "and he will not work again."²⁸ However, there are quite a large number of books printed between the years 1543 and 1548 bearing Bomberg's imprint.²⁹

A special problem is presented by the different editions of the Talmud on which Bomberg's name appears. R.N. Rabinowitz was at a loss to explain the confusion of dates, sequence, number, and designation of editions of the Babylonian Talmud after the first one.³⁰ He also refers to the contradiction relating to the printing of the Jerusalem Talmud.³¹ According to Rabinowitz's suggestions, it seems likely that tractates of the Talmud with the imprint 1538-9 were actually printed between 1526 and 1531 and that in 1538-9 Bomberg removed the old title pages and printed new ones with the current date. Rabinowitz admits that he cannot find a reason for this fact and for the lack of Bomberg's activity between 1533 and 1538.³² About a hundred years have passed since Rabinowitz expressed his aforementioned views and we are still in no better position to solve these problems. In fact, the 1538 Rashi colophon only adds to the confusion. Kulpa mentions there that he had finished the careful correction of six tractates of the Talmud: *Baba Kama*, *Baba Bathra*, *Shebuoth*, *Hagiga*, *Taanith* and *Megilla*, and that he plans to print an additional three (unnamed) tractates. Indeed, we know of the tractates *Baba Kama*, *Hagiga*, *Taanith*, *Megilla*, *Makkoth*, *Moed Katan* and *Aboth*, bearing the imprint date 1538-9. Rabinowitz lists also an undated second (or third?) edition of *Baba Bathra* and *Shebuoth*.³³ This brings the total of tractates from 1538-9 to nine (including the two undated ones), thus equalling the nine tractates mentioned by Kulpa (six finished in 5238 = 1537/8 and three more in preparation at the beginning of 5239 = 1538). This, and the fact that four of the tractates bearing the

28 Cf. Elijah Levita in his introduction to his *תשבי*, Isny: 1541.

29 Cf. *ZfHB*, v. 10, pp. 86-88. Incidentally, an interesting testimony to the rather chaotic conditions of Hebrew printing in Venice in the 1540s is the edition of *Midrash Rabba* (Venice, 1545). There are copies of this book with Bomberg's title page and others with that of Giustinian. Cf. *Bereshit Rabba*, ed. Theodor-Albeck, introduction, p. 129; *ZfHB*, vol. 9, pp. 61-62, 159; *Kirjath Sepher*, vol. 4, p. 227.

30 *Op. cit.*, pp. 43-45 (above note 10); cf. also Rivkind, *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*, Hebrew section, pp. 410-414. [See now: Marvin J. Heller, *Printing the Talmud; A History of the Earliest Printed Editions of the Talmud* (Brooklyn, 1992) and see now also the detailed study of Bomberg's Talmud editions by Milton McC. Gatch and Bruce E. Nielsen, "The Wittenberg Copy of the Bomberg Talmud", in: *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 78 (2003), pp. 296-326.]

31 *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

32 *Ibid.*

33 *Ibid.*

David Kimhi. In addition to this interesting and useful anthology of selected comments, Kulpa included in his book notes to the Masorah and the order of the 613 precepts. He also planned to append at the end an index of all the Biblical passages mentioned in the Talmud.²³

It is to be assumed that Kulpa, during his association with the Bomberg, dei Farri, and Giustinian printing houses, helped in the publication of numerous other books, though his name is not explicitly mentioned in them.

Some of the information contained in the colophon of the 1538 Rashi edition adds to the complexity of problems relating to the activities of the Bomberg press. Though the history of Bomberg's press was dealt with frequently,²⁴ we are still in the dark in regard to the chronology of events and to many aspects of the work done under Bomberg's auspices.²⁵ From 1516 to 1533, there is a continuity in Bomberg's work. This period can be divided into two: the "golden age" of his activities, between 1516 and 1525, when the most important editions, e.g., that of the *Biblia Rabbinica*, of the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud, and of important Rabbinic texts were printed, and the second period, from 1525 to 1533, when mainly second editions, frequently unchanged, were produced.

Bomberg resumed his activities in 1537 and issued a few minor books again until 1539. In the latter year, the only anti-Jewish book ever to be printed by Bomberg was published.²⁶ According to Elijah Levita's poem in the 1538 Rashi, dated Tishre 6, 5239 (1538), Bomberg returned to his native city of Antwerp.²⁷ Two years later, Levita again refers to Bomberg

23 ארבעה ועשרים עם באור כל מלה קשה... נעתק אות באות מלשון גדולי המפרשים... והם רש"י והרמב"ן וראב"ע ורד"ק ז"ל... ובחתימת כל הכ"ד ספרים יהיה מורה מקום מכל הפסוקים הנדרשי והמבוארי בתלמוד...

Cf. Steinschneider, CB, col. 23, no. 123; Zedner, p. 17; Van Straalen, p. 26; Roest, *הספר*, p. 175, no. 2425. According to all these bibliographies, the title page reads: *ארבעה ועשרים*. The same title appears in the copy seen by Sonne. See the latter's comments on this book in the *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*, Hebrew part, pp. 218-219. However, in the copy at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the title page is different; it reads: *חמשה חומשי תורה וחמש מגילות*. Apparently, the printers, after realizing that they will not be able to complete the entire Bible, changed the title page of some copies.

24 See the bibliography in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 4, col. 930.

25 Mehlman, *ארשת*, v. 3, pp. 93-98, establishes the date of the first book printed by Bomberg as 1511 instead of the generally accepted date of 1516.

26 *Ibid.*

27 1. 22.

היו לפנינו... ולכן את בן משק ביתו צוה להדפיס כל הספרים אשר עד הנה היו נסתרם... ואף כי זה הספר נעשה במלאכה חדשה וכל התחלה קשה...²⁰

The administrator of Giustinian's firm (בן משק ביתו), probably Cornelio Adelkind, also speaks about the partners:

בהתענן מאד מאד גבירי הנעלה בלשון הקדש לדבקה בו... פקד עלי... לחבר לולאות הזריזות בקרסי המפעלות להשתדל לתת התחלות להדפיס כל מיני הספרי רבי התועלות והיו למאורות ברקועים פחי הדפוסיות באותיות חרותות בעט ברזל ועופרת חקוקות בכתיבות היותר מאושרות ויפות וניירות ישרות ביותר מעולות וטובות אשר מעולם לא היו בפעל נדפסות... ויד הנכבדים באמצע כהן ולוי הנלוים להצדיק את הרבים... רבי יהודה הלוי ורבי יחיאל הכהן השותפים... מי בכם אוהבי התורה ולומדיה... והכינו עצמכם להשיג ממנו בקוצר זמן כל חפצכם עם התלמוד ערוך כלו והעשרי וארבע קטן כגדול עם כל המתיחס לו ורב אלפס עם חדר שכלו יחפש וכל חפץ מחופש משאר החבורים חדשים גם ישנים בשכבר נדפסו או לא נדפסו...²¹

From the above it is evident that the partners were engaged for many years in improving printing machinery and types and had introduced a new method in typography.

In addition to his technical and business skills, Kulpa had scholarly interests, too. Already in the 1538 edition of Rashi, he describes his method of establishing the text by using many manuscripts and printed editions. In the colophon to the same book, he also mentions his efforts in the printing of Talmud tractates. For the publication of these texts he claims to have used "correct and true copies such as those being studied by the heads of Yeshiboth" (ההעתקות מוגהות וצודקות אשר למדו בהם ראשי ישיבות). Kulpa's introduction to the 1548 Venice edition of *Halakhoth Gedoloth* was recorded as a proof of his scholarship by R.N. Rabinowitz and M. Horovitz.²² In this introduction, Kulpa tackles the problematic authorship of the book, reviewing the conflicting opinions of early Rabbinic authors.

In 1547 he published a commentary to the Pentateuch, culled from the Pentateuch commentaries of Rashi, Nahmanides, Abraham ibn Ezra, and

20 In the colophon to *ביאור על התורה להרמב"ן* (Giustinian, Venice, 1545). It also appears in other books printed by them, cf. Rabinowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 52, note 11, where excerpts from this colophon are quoted; on the phrase: *מעולם לא מצאנו וכו'* see Responsa of R. Simeon Duran, I. 72.

21 *Ibid.* On the identity of *בן משק ביתו*, see the works by Yaari and Sonne cited in note 10.

22 See above, note 10 and 11.

same name—apparently it was common in that family—and now the beginnings of the Kulp family can be dated at least some fifty years earlier than the date offered by Dietz. Kulpa was involved in many branches of the book business. Elijah Levita seems to refer to his activities as a book dealer who had in his stock a wide assortment of manuscripts and printed books.¹³ Whether the printed books were all products of Bomberg's press or also included other books cannot be determined.¹⁴

As a corrector, Kulpa started his work prior to the printing of Rashi. In his colophon to this book, he mentions six tractates of the Talmud which he had already corrected and printed. Elijah Levita also seems to refer to his previous work as a printer.¹⁵

The richest information about Kulpa is to be found in a number of books printed by him and his associate, Jehiel ben Jekuthiel ha-Cohen Rapa,¹⁶ between the years 1544 and 1548. In 1544 they worked for the Christian printers, the Brothers dei Farri and, from 1545, for Marc Antonio Giustinian. The books printed by them are listed by M. Steinschneider,¹⁷ R.N. Rabinowitz¹⁸ and D.W. Amram.¹⁹ Kulpa, the initiator of the enterprise, and his partner Rapa, announce their plans in the following words:

בהיות כי ראה ראינו כי הזמן הולך וסוער עלינו ולומדי התורה הולכים ומתמעטים... לכן אנחנו השותפים אשר בשמינו רשומים... קנא קנאנו לה' צבאות... והקרה ה' לפנינו איש גדול ורם מבחר הנוצרים והדרם... ובלשונינו הקדוש ידו גברה... הוא השר והאדון נקרא בשם מארקן אנטוניאו יושטיניאן ובראותו כי כמה שנים אנחנו עמלים בתקונים לעשות אותיות וכלים ובעזר האלהי מעולם לא מצאנו בעל מלאכה שנצחנו עם כי לטורח גדול ורב ההוצאה לא השגחנו והשכיל והבין ענינינו כי יש לנו שכס אחד על אחינו המדפיסים אשר

13 See above in his poem, 11, 4-8.

14 A book-list of Daniel Bomberg's firm, compiled after 1541, contains books from Bomberg's press as well as books printed in Constantinople and Bologna, cf. *ZfHB*, v. 10, pp. 38-42.

15 In his poem, 1, 13.

16 On Rapa, cf., Steinschneider, *CB*, col. 2933 and the works by Rabinowitz, Friedberg, Amram, Yaari, Sonne and Bloch quoted in note 10. Cf. also Friedberg, *op. cit.*, p. 23, note 7; Y.T. Eisenstadt, *דעת קדושים* (St. Petersburg, 1897-98), p. 136. On the role of the Rapa and Kusi families in introducing Hebrew printing to Italy, cf. A. Friemann in *Journal of Jewish Bibliography*, v. 1, pp. 9-11.

17 See above, note 10.

18 See above, note 10.

19 *Op. cit.*, p. 201 (above note 9).

שלם מראשו עד תומו	הוא הגיהו והכינהו
הסופרים שנו את טעמו	15 כי בספרים הראשונים
יש בשגגה יש באשמו	יש הוסיף בו יש גרע בו
מעולם לא נעשה דומו	אך זה נמצא בלתי שמצה
גם לפעמים ידי עמו	רובו הגיע הוא עצמו
ובראשי בתיו חותמו	אותו הכשיר בעל השיר
היום היה יום תשלומו	20 ובשם האל צור ישראל
ליצירת אל את עולמו	ששת תשרי בשנת פטר"י
ולאנוורשה שב למקומו ⁹	ויניצייה בית דניאל

Jehudah ben Isaac ha-Levy of Frankfort, called Loeb Kulpa, the corrector of this Rashi edition, was active in the Hebrew printing of Italy. His name appears in a number of books printed in Venice and Mantua between the years 1538 and 1561.¹⁰ M. Horovitz mentions him briefly among sixteenth-century Frankfort scholars.¹¹

From a study of the colophons signed by Kulpa, we can gain some knowledge, although fragmentary, of his life and work. He originates from a well-known family in Frankfort. The Kulpas (Kulps), a branch of the Gehlhaeuser family, are traced back by Alexander Dietz to the sixteenth century. Members of this family were affluent and some were known as learned and active men in the community. The first bearer of the Kulp name appears in 1592 with a certain Loeb (Jehudah) Kulp, the son of Samuel Gehlhaeuser.¹² The corrector of the 1538 Rashi edition bears the

9 On Elijah Levita in general and on his role in Bomberg's publishing house see: G. Weil, *Elie Levita* (Leiden, 1963) (where this poem is not mentioned). A few lines of the poem are quoted by Steinschneider, *ibid.* Reference to the last line is made by A. Freiman, in *ZfHB*, vol. 10, p. 34; D.W. Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy*, p. 193; J. Bloch, *Venetian Printers of Hebrew Books*, p. 14; Ch. B. Friedberg, *תולדות הדפוס העברי באיטליה*, p. 66 note 16; I. Mehlman, in *ארשת*, v. 3, p. 98. [See now: A.M. Haberman, *Ha-madpiss Daniel Bomberg u-reshimath sifre beth defusso. The Printer Daniel Bomberg and the first of Books Published by his Press*. Zefat, Museum of Printing Art [1978], p. 20 and p. 71, number 154 (in Hebrew).]

10 Cf. Steinschneider, CB, col. 2937; Nepi-Ghirondi, *תולדות גדולי ישראל*, p. 182; Mortara, *מוזכרת מאמר על הדפסת התלמוד* (ed. A.M. Haberman), p. 53, note: Friedberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68; Amram, *op. cit.*, pp. 201, 253; Bloch, *op. cit.*, p. 17; A. Yaari, *Kirjath Sepher*, v. 15, pp. 377-380; I. Sonne, *ibid.*, v. 16, pp. 134-7; the rejoinder by Yaari, *ibid.*, pp. 137-9 and the latter's *מדפיסים*, pp. 129-131.

11 In his *Frankfurter Rabbinen*, v. 1, p. 23.

12 Alexander Dietz, *Stammbuch der Frankfurter Juden*, pp. 102-3, 174-4. Dietz's assumption that the Kulpas were not Levites (*ibid.*, p. 103) is contradicted by the fact that our Jehudah Kulpa always signs his name as Ha-Levy.

חשב לתקן המעוות והוא עות את המתוקן ויצא משפטו מעוקל/ והוא לא פנים קלקל/ ובדרך הזה הלכו שאר המגיהים/ ואני לא עשיתי כן מפני יראת האלהים/ ועוד יתרון לפירושי זה על פירוש השונצ"ן כי הוא לא הדפיס רק פירוש חמשי תורה לבד ואנכי הוספתי עליו פירוש של חמש מגלות ואת כלם הגהתי ושפטתי משפט צדק/ עד שלא נמצא שם בדק/ ובמקומות שהיתה ידיעתי קצרה/ מלהבין ראייה או סברא/ על בינתי לא נשענתי/ ושאלתי מה שלא הבנתי/ ועל הרוב על דברי רבי אליהו המדקדק נסמכתי/ וכו' יתדותי תמכתי/ כי במקרא ובפירושי יש לו יד ושם/ והוא ידע ולא אשם/ ובכן אודה לאל אשר עד הנה הגיעני והחיני וקיימני להשלים הספר הזה עד תומו/ ולהעביר חסרונו ומומו/ כן יהיה עוד בעזרי להגיה בתלמוד כאשר החלתי ועד הנה נדפסו מסכתות ששה/ היינו בבא קמא בבא בתרא שבועות חגיגה תענית מגילה ואגיע בע"ה להגיה עד תשעה/ ויהיו נקיות מכל טעות ורשעה/ כאשר עיינתי בהעתקות מוגהות וצודקות/ אשר למדו בהם ראשי ישיבות/ בעיון רב ובחשיבות/ והנה היתה השלמת הספר הזה בחדש תשרי שנת רצ"ט לפר"ק פה ווינצ"ה בבית השר דניאל בומבירגי יר"ה אנכי המגיה הצעיר מבית אבי יהודה המכונה ליביא ב"ר יצחק הלוי המכונה אייזק קולפא מורנקבורט.⁸

After this lengthy and interesting colophon, we find a poem by Elijah Levita:

ויהי כאשר ראה רבי אליהו הלוי האשכנזי את המלאכה והנה היא עשויה כהלכה מערכה לקראת מערכה לא נעשה כן בכל ממלכה ולא נשאר בה טעות או מבוכה וישם על המגיה ברכה ויפתח את פיו בשירה ערוכה וישא משלו ויאמר ככה

את ליב"א קולפ"ה יודה כל פה	כי טוב עושה הוא תוך עמו
לבו תואב אל ספרי בין	אל כל אחד קורא בשמו
יתן למבקש למודו	וספרים אתו אינימו
הוא המשביר אל כל העם	יפתח אוצרו ואסמו
5 ובתוכו כל ספרי משנה	גם המקרא עם תרגומו
לו פירושים גם מדרשים	מה טוב לאכול את פרימו
ובסדורים ובמחזורים	ימציא כל עם מנהגימו
יש נחקקים יש נכתבים	יש נקשרים בעבותימו
המה לרוב אך מקרוב	נעדר פירוש של שלמה
10 היצחקי הרב בקי	על כל אדם תטוף נואמו
כל הגולה שותה מימיו	כל ישראל לוחם לחמו
ופעמים רבים נדפסו	אכן תמו אזלו למו
לכן בחר ליב"א הנזכר	גם הפעם בדפוס שמו

8 Part of this colophon is quoted by Sonne, *ibid.* See also: M. Marx, in *HUCA*, v. 11, p. 481.

בהיות כי כל השכנים/ אשר סביבותי ישנים/ ושכחי לא יגידו/ ועל טובי לא יעידו/ לשבח את עצמי אתעורר/ אף שאמר המשורר/ יהללך זר ולא פין/ אקרא מלת ולא במשיכה/ ועם פין אותו לא אחבר/⁵ והישר אדבר/ ואגיד מישרים/ ודברי אמת נכרים/ הנה כאשר זממתי/ ובלבי הסכמתי/ להדפיס הספר הזה שהוא באור תורתנו הקדושה מהנשר הגדול הרב המובהק רבינו שלמה יצחקי ז"ל כי באמת על כל דברי התורה הזאת/ פירוש זולת פירושו לא יאות/ וכל המפרשי' שפירשום ודרשום/ נחשבים כנגדו כקליפת השום/ כי כל התלמוד הארוך/ היה לפניו כשלחן ערוך/⁶ לכן פירוש המצוות ודקדוקם/ לא יצאו מתחת ידו רקם/ ועליו אמרו המושלים/ בדרך מליצה אלו המלים/ כל פרש"תא תרמוס לאשפתא/ חוץ מן פרש"נדתא ופר"תא/⁷ והנה אף כי נדפס הספר הזה כמה פעמים בכל המקומות אשר נמצא שם בית דפיסה/⁸ אכן לרוב טובו ותועלתו/ ושאיין מי יעמוד בלתו ספו תמו מן הארץ וכל מבקשיו לא ימצאונהו ואני בראותי כי כן/ ולעמוד בלתו לא יתכן/ שנסתי את מתני לרגל המלאכה אשר לפני ואמרתי עת לעשו' לה'/ והסכמתי להדפיסו/ אף הפעם והשתדלתי בהגהתו/⁹ בעיון רב וקבצתי העתקו' היותר מוגהות וטובות/ מן המחוקקות ומן הנכתבו'/ אך מצאתי בהם שנוי והפרדה/ שניין דא מן דא/ יש שבא בארוכה/ ויש שבא בקצרה/ וזה לסיבת מיעוט ידיעת המגיהים ושלא הבינו עצתו ומה טובו/ שמו בו דברים אשר לא צוה ולא עלו על לבו/ וכן קם אחד מבני שונצי"ן/ חשב עצמו ראש וקציץ/ והתפאר לאמר כי הוא ידפיס פירוש רבינו שלמה/ שבכל העולם לא יהיה דומו/ וכל שלפניו נחקקו ונכתבו/ מאפס ותהו לו נחשבו/ והנה ראיתי את אשר כבר עשהו/ והב"ל הביא גם הוא/ ובמקומות אין חקר/ העיד עדות שקר/ ובמקצת מקומות

5 On this well-known, humorous interpretation of Proverbs 27,2, cf. Eshtori Farhi, *כפתור ופרח*, ch. 44, ed. J. Blumenfeld, v. 2, p. 833; Ratner, *אהבת ציון וירושלים*, v. 12, p. 231; cf. also Zohar, v. 3, f. 193b and N. S. Libowitz, *פניני הזהר*, pp. 23-4.

6 Cf. Moses ibn Danon, *כללים*, MS. JTS, Rab. 959, f. 101a-b and MS. JTS, Rab. 955, f. 68a: כת' גברא רבא על ר"ת וז"ל שאני ר"ת דרב גובריה והיה כרש"י ור"ת ובה"ג והיה כאחד מהם ואולי יותר מהם בחריפות ובקיאיות לפי מה שנראה ממה שחידש בתלמוד וכל חכמי ישראל הנמצאים היום כלם כקליפת השום וכגרגיר שומשין נגד אחד מתלמידיו הקטנים וכו'; cf. also Responsa of R. Isaac bar Sheshet, no. 394:

המאור הגדול רבינו שלמה זכר צדיק לברכה גלה עמוקות התלמוד מני חשך לא עממוהו כל סתום ובזולת פירושו היה כדברי הספר החתום והמאור השני רבינו יעקב איש תם אשר כמוהו בפלפול לא נהיה מאחר שהתלמוד נחתם תלמוד ערוך בפיו וכו'.

The first statement is quoted, the second is mentioned by Azulay in his *s.v. R. Jacob ben Meir*, "no. 241.

7 This saying is found in a slightly different version in Moses ibn Danon's *כללים*, MS. Oxford, no. 850, f. 14b (this section is missing in the two JTS MSS. mentioned in the preceding note). Azulay, op. cit., s.v. Rashi, "no. 35 quotes it from Ibn Danon's work. Cf. Aptowitzer, *Bitzaron*, v. 2, p. 324 note 1; Wellesz, *Rasi* (Budapest, 1906), p. 111, 187 (in Hungarian); A. Geiger, *פרשנרתא* p. 5.

7a Apparently the writer, who was from Germany, rhymes "tav" with "samekh" according to the Ashkenazi pronunciation.

7b See n. 7a.

Rashi's *Commentary on the Pentateuch and on the Five Scrolls*, Venice, Bomberg, 1538

The Hebrew Union College Library in Cincinnati owns a very rare printed edition of Rashi's *Commentary on the Pentateuch and on the Five Scrolls*.¹ There are only three other copies known of this book: one in the British Museum,² another in the Schocken Institute in Jerusalem, and a third in a private collection in the same city.³

The late Isaiah Sonne, in an article on the text-criticism of Rashi's *Commentary on the Pentateuch*, has called attention to this rare, 1538 edition and to its many interesting features.⁴ An examination of the volume, indeed, reveals some new information and, at the same time, raises some questions relating to the activity of Daniel Bomberg's famous Venetian printing house.

On the title page we read:

פירוש רש"י על התורה ועל
חמש מגילות נדפס שנית עם רב העיון ע"י
השר דניאל בומבירג מאנווירש"ה
בשנת רצ"ח לפ"ק
פה ויניציאה

The book, in small quarto, contains 197 leaves. At the end there is the following colophon, in rhymed prose:^{4a}

1 I wish to express my thanks to Prof. H. Zafren for providing me with a microfilm copy of the book.

2 Cf. M. Steinschneider, Supplement to *CB*, p. 506; Van Straalen, p. 225.

3 I am grateful to Mr. A. Rosenthal of the Schocken Institute in Jerusalem for calling these copies to my attention.

4 זנה, לביקורת הטכסט של פירוש רש"י על התורה, *HUCA*, v. 15, p. 40 (Hebrew section).

4a The rhymes are indicated by a slash.

75. המאמר הז' והח' והט' והי' ממה שאחר הארוך מחצי פול'
76. חי בן יקטן ואגרת אפשרות הדבקות

מלמודיות

77. מספר מן עזרה אחד מקלף ואחד מנייר וקלף מחצי פול'
78. אלפרגני מפול' מנייר

מספרי התלמוד ופסק

42. ראשונה משניות כל התלמוד
43. מסכת עירובין ויומא מקלף מרובעת ופולייה גדולה
44. מסכת בכורות וערכין בקובץ אחד מקלף והוא ביד ר' דוד
45. פי' מבכורות וערכין בקובץ אח' מקלף והוא ביד ר' דוד
46. ברכות ותעניות מקלף
47. מסכת יבמות וגיטין וכתובות וקידושין מקלף בקובץ אחד מר' יצחק אלפסי
48. תלתא בבות וסנהדרין ושבועות וע"ז בקובץ אחד מקלף מהאלפס
49. מסכת כתובות ויום טוב מנייר מפול' הפי' מפול' ג"כ
50. מדע אהבה זמנים מקלף בקובץ אחד
51. פי' מרש"י בערובין פסחים מקלף מפולייה קטנה
52. ספר זרעים עבודה וקרבנות בקובץ א' מקלף
53. ספר משפטים ושופטים מנייר וקלף בקובץ אחד
54. פי' מרש"י מיבמות מפול' קלף ונייר
55. אורח חיים מנייר מפול'
56. יורה דעה מנייר ואינו שלם השלמתיו
57. קיצור א' ממצוות מקלף
58. עמודי גולה מקלף
59. סדר מועד מרב הגדול מקלף ונייר מפול'
60. סדר נשים מרב הגדול מקלף ונייר מפול'
61. מסכת שבת וערובין מרב הגדול מקל' מנייר מפול'
62. פסחים סוכה מגילה תעניות מרב הגדול מפול' מנייר
63. סדר נשים מרב השני מקלף... סדר נזיקין מקלף

מפילוסופים

64. ראשונה שמע טבעי האמצעי מקלף ונייר מחצי פול' בקובץ אחד
65. שמים והעולם הקצר
66. הויה והפסד אותות עליונות ספ' הנפש ממאמר י"ג מס' כ"א עד סוף הס' מקלף ונייר בקובץ אחד
67. פי' משמע מר' לוי בן גרשום מקלף ונייר מחצי פול'
68. כונות מאבוחמד מהעתקת אלבלג
69. [בצד] מפול'...
70. [בצד] : ...מחצי פול' מהעתקת...
71. פי' משמע מר' לוי בן גרשום מקלף ונייר מפול'
72. העיוניות (?)
73. הקיצורים ממה שאחר מחצי פול'
74. האמצעים ממה שאחר מחצי פול'

[תפילות]

10. תפילות שלימות עם עניינים אחרים מטושטשות
11. תפילות אחרות שלימות עם משלי ואיוב ואיכה ורות ושיר השירים וסביב הספר וסביב הספ' תלים ורות
12. עוד תפילות אחרות כפי סדר ליצי
13. עוד תפילות אחרות כפי סדר ליצי
14. מחזור מסודר כפי סדר פרובינצא מקלף
15. עוד מחזור מסודר כפי סדר ליצי מקלף

מביאורי התורה

16. ראשונה פי' רבינו שלמה בקלף
17. [בצד]: עו' רב' שלמה מבראשית שמות (?) ויקרא
18. [בצד]: עוד אחד מקלף ונייר וה' מגילות
19. ר' אברהם נ' עזרא בקלף בכתיבה מרובעת
20. זכרון טוב מחצי פול'
21. מר' לוי גרשום ביאור על דניאל ואיוב מקלף ונייר מחצי פול'
22. פי' שיר השירים ומשלי מר' לוי בן גרשום מחצי פול'
23. שרשים מר' יונה מפולייאה שלימה
24. מלות מתילים וד' נביאים אחרונים
25. פי' משמואל ומלכים מקמחי מקלף ונייר מחצי פול'
26. ספרים תורניים מעורבים עם עיון פילוסופי
27. מורה הנבוכים מקלף מפול'
28. מלחמות השם מנייר מפול'
29. ר' יוסף אלבו מקלף ונייר מחצי פול'
30. חובת הלבבות מחצי פול'
31. פי' מאי' וידאל על מורה הנבוכים מנייר וקלף עם דברים אחדים מקבלה
32. קצת מביאור ר' זרחיה על מורה הנבוכים מחצי פול' מק' ונייר
33. ספר כוזר מקלף
34. מאמר יקוו מנייר וקלף
35. ...
36. ... הרקמה פתח דברי מחצי פול'
37. מבראשית עד קדושים תהיו פול'
38. ... מחצי פול'
39. פירושים על רבנו שלמה מקלף ונייר חצי פול'
40. ביאורים אחרים (?) מקלף ונייר
41. ... סוד ה' ועניינים אחרים

circles" of southern Italy; it is known that the work had been copied in southern Italy several times.⁵⁰

In the last category, mathematics,⁵¹ Abraham ibn Ezra's ספר המספר⁵² appears in two copies. The list closes with a manuscript by Al-Farghani, probably one of his astronomical works.⁵³

To summarize: this book list, containing manuscripts probably owned by Abraham de Balmes, the elder, in Lecce, southern Italy, from the middle of the fifteenth century, bears testimony to the wide intellectual interests of the owner. The fact that the number of books of general philosophy more or less equals that of Talmud and Codes is an indication of an intriguing balance of cultural and religious interests. The inclusion of Jewish works of philosophy in the division of Bible commentaries not only shows the owner's interest in the subject, but also the high value he placed on these works, putting them on the same level as the most popular and respected Bible commentaries. Finally, the book list and, for that matter, the entire JTS manuscript 2061, reflects local, southern Italian cultural tastes and interests, particularly those of the city of Lecce.⁵⁴

...אשר לי בשנת אלף...

[מקרא]

1. ראשונה מקדשיה אחת... מכתובה (!) טולידאנו עם מסורה גדולה וקטנה
2. חומש אחר קטן עם הפטרות וה' מגילות
3. חומש אחר עם הפטרות וחמש מגילות
4. חומש עם חמש מגילות
5. חומש עם חמש מגילות
6. כתובים שלימים מטושטשים
7. איוב ומשלי בקובץ אחד
8. נביאים ראשונים מנייר וקלף מכתבת משקה
9. נביאים אחרונים מקלף מכתובה (!) טולידנו עם מסורה גדו' וקטנ'

50 See above, note 47.

51 Mathematics is called הלימודית in medieval sources, see Jacob Klatzkin, *אוצר המונחים* in medieval sources, see Jacob Klatzkin, *הפילוסופיים*, v. 2 (Berlin, 1928), p. 121.

52 See Israel Levin, *Abraham ibn Ezra Reader* (New York-Tel Aviv, 1985), pp. 23, 397 (in Hebrew).

53 See Moritz Steinschneider, *Hebr. Uebersetzungen* (Berlin, 1893), pp. 554-557.

54 Upon completion of my article I came across: Gerard E. Weil, *La Bibliothèque de Gersonides: d'après son catalogue autographe* (Louvain-Paris: E. Peeters, 1991). It was too late to refer in detail to the points of mutual interest that exist between the book list of *Gersonides* and the one published here, but I want to call the attention of the reader to this important publication.

The last five entries in this category (nos. 59-63) refer to works on Talmudic orders or tractates by authors who are designated as "רב הגדול" or "[רב] השני", respectively. There is no doubt that by these references the compiler meant Rabbi Isaiah di Trani, the Elder, and his grandson, Rabbi Isaiah di Trani, the Younger. This is the way these authors had been referred to in many medieval sources.⁴⁵ The relatively prominent place these works occupy on our list is an indication of their popularity in Lecce; after all, Trani and Lecce are two communities not too far from each other on the Adriatic Coast in southern Italy.

The next division contains general philosophical works, mainly parts of Aristotle's philosophical *oeuvre*, with the commentaries of Averroes. Mentioned here are: Aristotle's *Physica*, with Averroes' middle commentary (no. 64), *De Caelo*, with the short commentary (Epitome) (no. 65), *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *Meteorologica*, and parts of *De Anima* (no. 66), *Metaphysica*, with short commentary (Epitome) (no. 73); *Metaphysica*, with middle commentary (no. 74), and parts of *Metaphysica*, with long commentary (no. 75).⁴⁶ Also mentioned are two copies of the commentary on *Physica* by Levi ben Gershon (Gersonides) (nos. 67 and 71).⁴⁷ Other philosophical works listed here are the following: Al-Ghazali's *Intentions of the Philosophers*, in Isaac Albalag's translation (no. 68)⁴⁸ and, finally, Ibn Tufayl's *הי בן יקטן* and Averroes' *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction* (no. 76), perhaps both with Moshe Narboni's commentary.⁴⁹ Albalag's translation was "read with interest in the Jewish intellectual

45 See Zedekiah ben Abraham min ha-anavim, *שבלי הלקט*, ed. S. K. Mirsky (New York, 1966), p. 29, esp. notes 1-2. These works are now in the process of being published under the title *פסקי הרא"ה ופסקי הר"ד*, Makhon ha-Talmud ha-Yisra'eli ha-shalem (Jerusalem, 1964) ff.

46 For a listing of these (and other) commentaries by Averroes on Aristotle, see H.A. Wolfson, "Plan for a Corpus Commentariorum Averrois in Aristotelem," *Speculum* 6 (1931), 415-416.

47 See Levi ben Gershon (Gersonides), *The Wars of the Lord*; translated with an introduction by Seymour Feldman (Philadelphia, 1984), vol. 1, 25.

48 See G. Vajda's article about Albalag in *Enc. Jud.*, vol 2, pp. 520-521. See also Vajda's introduction to his edition of Albalag's *ספר תיקון הדעות* (Jerusalem, 1973), pp. 9-13 (and the literature listed there).

49 See *The Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect by Ibn Rushd with the Commentary of Moses Narboni*; a critical edition and annotated translation by Kalman P. Bland (New York, 1982). For Narboni's commentary on *הי בן יקטן*, see pp. 1 and 14, note 12.

In this section one also find Gersonides' *מלחמות השם* (no. 28),³⁶ Albo's *עקרים* (no. 29),³⁷ Bahya's *חובות הלבבות* (no. 30),³⁸ Judah Halevi's *כוזרי* (no. 33),³⁹ as well as Samuel ibn Tibbon's *מאמר יקו המים* (no. 34),⁴⁰ and an unidentified philosophical work (no. 26). The work *זכרון טוב* (no. 20) is probably Nathan ben Samuel Tibbon's mystical commentary on the Pentateuch.⁴¹ Finally, it is most likely that the entry *סוד ה'* (no. 41) refers to Ezra Gatigno's book by the same title.⁴² Now, it is interesting to note that the last two works are known to have been copied by a scribe who was active in Lecce. This scribe, Elijah ben David, copied a manuscript of *זכרון טוב* in 1381 (the place of copying is not mentioned) and Gatigno's *סוד ה'* in Lecce in 1414 and 1423.⁴³ These two works appearing on our list actually may have been the ones that were written by this Lecce scribe but, of course, this is just speculation. In any case, a link exists among the titles entered on our list and the products of known scribal activities in Lecce.

The next group contains Talmudic and Rabbinic works: a full set of the Mishnah (no. 42), various Talmudic tractates (nos. 43, 44, 46), unidentified commentaries on various Talmud tractates (nos. 45 and 49), Rashi's commentary on some Talmudic tractates (nos. 51 and 54), Isaac Alfasi's *הלכות* on some Talmud tractates (nos. 47 and 48), parts of Maimonides' *משנה תורה* (nos. 50, 52, 53), the first two parts of Jacob ben Asher's *ארבעה טורים* (nos. 55 and 56), and two books on the Commandments, probably both by Isaac of Corbeil (nos. 57 and 58).⁴⁴

37 In many manuscripts and printed editions.

38 In many manuscripts and printed editions.

39 In many manuscripts and printed editions.

40 Published in Pressburg, 1837, the book is a philosophical treatise dealing with the first chapter of Genesis, esp. the creation of waters.

41 See on this work, Abraham Berliner, "Aus Handschriften," *Festschrift zum siebzigsten Geburtstag David Hoffman's* (Berlin, 1913), p. 290.

42 The full title of this work is *סוד ה' ליראיו*, but occasionally it was quoted as *סוד ה'*. See M. Steinschneider, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin, 1925), p. 5, note 13.

43 Berliner (see note 41) describes the Parma manuscript of *זכרון טוב* as having been written by Elijah ben David in 1381. [See now Parma Catalogue, above note 29, number 632.] On the two manuscripts of *סוד ה'* written in Lecce, see Freimann (above note 18), p. 256, no. 100. Freimann has separate entries for the scribe of the *זכרון טוב*, no. 99, and the scribe of *סוד ה'*, no. 100. There is no doubt that they are one and the same person.

44 All these works are known in many manuscripts and printed editions. *עמודי גולה* (no. 59) is the title of Isaac of Corbeil's *ספר מצוות קטן*, the *קט"ק*.

different from other rites, to what degree, and in what way. However, the mere fact that the existence of Lecce prayerbooks is recorded is an interesting addition to what we know about the prayer rites of medieval Jewish communities.

The next division includes Rabbi Jonah ibn Janah's Hebrew dictionary (no. 23),³⁰ his grammar, *ספר הרקמה* (no. 36),³¹ and the grammatical work *פתח דברי* (no. 36).³² A glossary on Psalms and the latter Prophets is listed under no. 24.³³ The standard Bible commentators are represented by Rashi (nos. 16, 17, 18), Abraham ibn Ezra (no. 19), Levi ben Gershon (Gersonides) (nos. 21 and 22), David Kimhi (no. 25), and super-commentaries on Rashi (no. 39). It is interesting to note that this division, Bible commentaries, includes, besides Bible commentaries proper, also grammatical and philosophical works. The compiler of the list considered works of Jewish philosophy and ethics, and grammatical works, as being, ultimately, instruments of Bible exegesis. On the other hand, Aristotelian and similar works are classified by him as philosophy, as distinct and separate from Jewish philosophical books. Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* occurs three times in this section. Besides a parchment manuscript without commentary (no. 27), there are two other copies of the *Guide* on the list; one with the commentary of Maestre Vidal (no. 31), who is better known as Moses Narboni,³⁴ and another one by Zerahiah (no. 32), who is identical with Zerahiah ben Isaac ben Shealtiel Gracian (Hen).³⁵ The commentary of Narboni is accompanied by some Kabbalistic matters (*דברים אחדים מקבלה*). It is well known that Narboni had an inclination toward mysticism. Therefore, it makes sense that a manuscript containing his works on the *Guide* should also contain additional Kabbalistic matters, although it is impossible to determine whether these were by Narboni himself or were drawn from some other source.

30 See Michael Wilensky's edition (Jerusalem, 1964) (2nd edition).

31 *ibid.*

32 See *Enc. Jud.* (Jerusalem, 1972), 16, 1389. no. 81A.

33 It mentions four (!) latter Prophets. Probably, under the fourth the Minor Prophets were meant as one unit.

34 Maestre Vidal is Moses Narboni, see *Enc. Jud.*, 12, 422.

35 See *Enc. Jud.*, 7, 842-843.

36 See Levi ben Gershon (Gersonides), *The Wars of the Lord*. Translated with an introduction and notes by Seymour Feldman (Philadelphia, 1984-1987).

on a list are found elsewhere as well.²² The phrase בקובץ אחד [in one volume] occurs in nos. 7, 44-45, 47-48, 50, 52-53, indicating that several works were included in one volume.

The first item on the list, a Bible, is called מקדשיה,²³ and it, as well as no. 9, are characterized as belonging to the Toledan type of Hebrew Bible manuscripts. Toledo was the home of the famous so-called Hilleli model codex of the Bible.²⁴ Other manuscripts are identified as having been written in square script (nos. 19 and 43) or in the script called *Mashq* or *Mashait*, a semi-cursive Rabbinic script (no. 8).²⁵

In the second division, six prayerbooks are listed. The rite of two of them is unidentified, although it may be assumed that they were of the usual Italian rite. Number 11 also contained Biblical texts on the margin.²⁶ Number 14 is a *Mahzor* following the usage of Provence.²⁷ Most interesting is the mention of three prayerbooks according to the order of Lecce. Very little information has come down to us about the prayerbooks of Sicilian and southern Italian Jewish communities²⁸ and there is no reference, to the best of my knowledge, to any prayerbook as following the order of the Jews of Lecce.²⁹ On the basis of this brief mention, it is impossible to determine whether the Lecce rite was indeed

22 E.g., קודם in the lists published by Sonne (see above, note 1), p. 11 and by Allony (see above, note 4), 198, p. 201.

23 On this term, see Allony, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-310 (originally published in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, 14), esp. p. 299, note 11 where Allony refers to Naftali Wieder's article, "Sanctuary as a Metaphor for Scripture," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 8 (1957), 165-175.

24 On the Toledan Hilleli codex, see Nahum M. Sarna's introduction to the facsimile edition of *The Pentateuch; Early Spanish Manuscript (Codex Hillely)* (Jerusalem, 1974). About Hebrew Bibles written in Toledo, see also Bezalel Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts in the British Isles* 1 (Jerusalem and London, 1982), p. 20.

25 Beit-Arié (see above note 21), p. 116, note 40. The term occurs in other book lists too. See e.g. in the lists published by E.E. Urbach, *ספר קרית*, 15 (1938-1939), 238-239 and by S. Assaf, *קרית ספר*, 24 (1947-1948), 248.

26 See above note 21. The repetition of וסביב הס' is simply due to dittography.

27 Stefan Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 167-168.

28 J. Sermoneta, "נוסח התפילה של יהודי סיציליה", *Jews in Italy; Studies Dedicated to the Memory of U. Cassuto* (Jerusalem, 1988), Hebrew Section, pp. 131-217, esp. 131 and 157, note 53.

29 But see manuscript Parma 89 (Freimann, "Jewish Scribes," p. 321, no. 477). In De Rossi's catalog, this manuscript is identified as *Seder, seu Ordo precum totius anni*. Freimann identifies it as a manuscript of Pentateuch and Psalms. The manuscript was written in Lecce in 1485. [See now in *The Biblioteca Palatina in Parma*, Ed. by B. Richler (Jerusalem, 2001), number 1089, where the rite is identified as "Romanian (south Italian) rite".]

fifteenth century and that the book list published here represents the books owned by Abraham de Balmes, the elder, of the same city. That Balmes was interested in Hebrew manuscripts can also be attested to by the fact that in 1452 he commissioned the copying of a compendium of Galen's medical works in Hebrew translation.¹⁸ These facts seem to indicate that Lecce in the mid-fifteenth century had a Jewish community whose members were actively engaged in commissioning, owning, and studying manuscripts of scientific and philosophic works.

Let us now turn to the book list itself. It is divided into subject categories: [Bible], [Prayer-books], Bible commentaries, Talmud and Codes, Philosophy, and Mathematics.¹⁹ "Classified" book lists are rather uncommon otherwise. The list identifies the material on which the manuscripts were written as parchment, paper, or a combination of the two.²⁰ The condition of the manuscripts is stated occasionally (nos. 6 and 10), as well as the fact that a certain manuscript was incomplete (no. 56). In this particular case, the owner added that he himself completed the book. The compiler remarks about two items (nos. 44 and 45) that they were with a certain R. David. It is not clear whether this R. David was a dealer in books, a scribe, or someone with whom these manuscripts were deposited for safekeeping as a pledge.

The size of the manuscripts is usually given as folio or half-folio. Some of the manuscripts did not contain complete texts, as noted in connection with entries no. 66 and no. 75. Number 11 was a "multi-layered" manuscript, containing a prayerbook in the middle surrounded by various Biblical texts.²¹ The first item in the various subject categories is designated as ראשונה (nos. 1, 16, 42, 64). Similar designations for the first book appearing

18 Aaron Freimann, "Jewish Scribes in Medieval Italy," *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*, English section (New York, 1950), p. 284 (no. 246a). About other Hebrew manuscripts written in Lecce, see nos. 100 ab.; 111 ab.; 164a; 295a; 477a. [See now: the Parma Catalogue, below note 29, numbers 1472, 1507.] The manuscripts listed under no. 100 are repeated under no. 111 as a result of a variance in the name of the scribe. Jacob ben Elijah, the translator mentioned above, may have had some connection with Lecce, too. See also note 29.

19 The numbers were added by me. Part of the page is water-damaged and some spots are illegible. Still, I was able to decipher some lines, especially 1-5, 35-41, with the aid of an ultra-violet lamp.

20 On the latter, see Malachi Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology* (Paris, 1976), pp. 37-39.

21 On this kind of Manuscript, see Malachi Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Manuscripts of East and West; Towards a Comparative Codicology* (London, 1992), (The Panizzi Lectures, 1992) pp. 86-88. A very beautiful fifteenth century manuscript in two volumes, at JTS (Ms. 4501-4502), contains the *Mahzor* according to the Roman rite, surrounded by the text of the Pentateuch, the Haftarothe, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the Five Scrolls, Ezra, Daniel, and Chronicles.

mentioned above, the book list and the birth register are written in the same script. Therefore, we may identify the person who made these notes, the owner of the books and the father of Moses, Meir, and Astruc, as one and the same; namely, Abraham de Balmes, the elder, of Lecce. The fact that the script of these notes is a Provencal cursive should not be surprising; we know that Abraham de Balmes came to southern Italy from Provence.¹²

There is additional support for placing our entire manuscript, and not only the book list and book register, in Lecce. The watermark in the paper, a pair of scissors, is documented from southern Italy (Palermo) and Provence from the years 1446 and 1448.¹³ But even more interesting is the fact that some of the treatises copied in the manuscript are connected elsewhere with Lecce. According to Moritz Steinschneider, Abu Ma'shar's *מבוא הגדול*, that appears as the first treatise in the JTS manuscript, had been known previously in only one manuscript, written in 1439 in Lecce, of all places.¹⁴ Alexander Marx, in a handwritten comment on Steinschneider's statement, notes the existence of two additional manuscripts: the one discussed here and one in Vienna.¹⁵ The connection of the JTS manuscript with Lecce was established above. The Vienna manuscript also leads to the same city: there is a reference in it to a natural phenomenon that took place in Lecce in 1473.¹⁶ The JTS manuscript (f. 165b) contains a similar entry concerning the observation of some strange natural apparition in Lecce in the same year. And if the above is not sufficient, it should be pointed out that the astrological work *Centiloquium*, the last treatise in our manuscript in the translation of Jacob ben Elijah, is included in the same Vienna manuscript to which we just referred.¹⁷ On the basis of all this, one can state with a great degree of certainty that the JTS manuscript was written in Lecce in the middle of the

document published by him in his *Between Renaissance and Ghetto* (Tel Aviv, 1989), p. 105 (in Hebrew). According to that document Abraham de Balmes, the Younger, died before 1520.]

12 Perles, *Beitraege*, p. 194.

13 C.M. Briquet, *Les Filigranes*, v. 3 (Amsterdam, 1968, Facsimile of the 1907 ed.), nos. 3665-3666.

14 Moritz Steinschneider, *Die hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1893), p. 570.

15 The note is found in the copy of Steinschneider's work mentioned in the previous footnote (Z 7070 S83 v.2. c.2). About the Vienna manuscript, see Arthur Zacharias Schwartz, *Die hebraeischen Handschriften der Nationalbibliothek Wien* (Leipzig, 1925), pp. 227-231 (no. 196).

16 Schwartz, *Hebr. Handschriften*, p. 231.

17 Steinschneider, *Hebr. Uebersetzungen*, p. 530 and Schwartz, *Hebr. Handschriften*, p. 227.

fifteenth century Provencal and Italian cursive and semi-cursive scripts.

In the booklist itself there appear three entries that are identified as orders of prayer according to the rite of **ליצי** (Nos. 12-13, 15). I consulted Dr. Seth Jerichower of JTS, who kindly and immediately identified the word as standing for the southern Italian city of Lecce. In searching for information about the Jews of Lecce in the fifteenth century, I learned that it was the birthplace of the well-known grammarian and physician, Abraham de Balmes, author of the grammatical work **מקנה אברם**. In Hebrew and Italian sources, the names of members of the Balmes family are also given. Three sons of an Abraham de Balmes in Lecce in the fifteenth century are recorded in Italian documents as Mayr, Moyses, and Struch. In the Seminary manuscript, on the page preceeding the book list, there is a register of births of children. The entries are in the first person singular, written by the father, without identifying his name, and are in the same hand as the book list. This register records the births of three sons: Moses, in 1440, Meir, in 1442, and Astruc, in 1444. There can be no doubt that these three sons are the same as the sons whose names were recorded in contemporary Italian documents.¹⁰

The Abraham de Balmes who authored **מקנה אברם** died in 1523. Accordingly, it is impossible that the father of the three sons whose births are registered in the 1440s should still be alive in 1523. It is clear, therefore, that there were two persons by this name, probably grandfather and grandson, and that the writer who registered the births of three sons in our manuscript was Abraham de Balmes, the elder.¹¹ As

10 On Abraham de Balmes and family see Nicola Ferorelli, "Abramo de Balmes di Lecce," *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane* 31 (1906), 632-654; on the sons, see esp. 637; Giovanni Guerrieri, "Gli Ebrei a Brindisi e a Lecce," *Studi Senesi nel Circolo Giuridico della R. Università* 17 (1900), pp. 225-252; H. Vogelstein and P. Rieger, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom* (Berlin, 1895-1896), vol. 2, pp. 20, 22-23. In the beginning of the introduction to his grammatical work, **מקנה אברם**, Abraham de Balmes gives his genealogy as follows: **נאום... אברהם... בן קדוש... מאיר דבלמש בן... אברהם בן... משה בן... מאיר בכר חזקיה מציף דבלמש**. See also A.M. Habermann, *The Printer Daniel Bomberg and the List of Books Published by His Press* (Safed, 1978) (in Hebrew), p. 23, note 30. For a recent bibliography on him, see Daniel Carpi, *Between Renaissance and Ghetto* (Tel Aviv, 1989), p. 106, note 26 (in Hebrew).

11 Joseph Perles, *Beitraege zur Geschichte der hebraeischen und aramaeischen Studien* (Munich, 1884), p. 194 assumes that there was only one Abraham de Balmes who reached a very old age. The entry: "Balmes de, Abraham ben Meir," in the German *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (vol. 3, Berlin, 1929, 1008-1009) also speaks about only one scholar by that name and gives his dates as ca. 1440-1523. We know that the younger Abraham de Balmes died in 1523 from the Venice 1523 edition of his book, **מקנה אברם**, f. l. IIb. [Profesor Daniel Carpi called by attention to a

chosen this area as the focus of her scholarly interest. Her book on the significance of the inventories of Hebrew books confiscated in Mantua in 1595 for the understanding of the reading habits of Mantuan Jews is very important.⁶ Still, Bonfil's assertion that "this entire area may still be considered as virgin territory"⁷ is basically true even today and a comprehensive search for Hebrew book lists, their study and interpretation is still a *desideratum*. Accordingly, every new find of a medieval Hebrew book list is welcome, particularly if it originated from a Jewish community about whose cultural life very little is otherwise known. The list published here, as will be shown soon, represents a collection of Hebrew manuscripts that were assembled in southern Italy, a geographical area that was excluded from Bonfil's study "due to the almost complete lack of internal Jewish documents pertaining to the Rabbinate in Sicily and the Kingdom of Naples."⁸ Our document, therefore, lifts the veil of darkness a little from an obscure corner of Jewish cultural history.

The list, published here for the first time, is found on f. 89b of Manuscript 2601 (E.N. Adler 1743) at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary [JTS]. The volume lacks beginning and end, as well as any explicit information about where, when, and by whom it was written. It contains translations into Hebrew of a number of Arabic and Latin astrological and astronomical treatises,⁹ copied in various

6 Shifra Baruchson, *Books and Readers; The Reading Interests of Italian Jews at the Close of the Renaissance* (Ramat-Gan, 1993) (in Hebrew).

7 Bonfil, *Rabbis*, p. 275.

8 See esp. Bonfil, *Rabbis*, p. 275 and note 18.

9 The late Alexander Marx, in a handwritten note on the flyleaf of the manuscript identified the contents as follows:

1-72: Abu Ma'shar, *מבוא הגדול לחכמת התכונה*, II-VIII. *H.Ueb.* 570.

73-80: List of Constellations.

81-82: Arnald de Villa Nova, *De judiciis astronomiae*, abridged by the translator, Jacob ben Judah Cabret. *H.Ueb.* 783. End missing.

83-85: Pseudo-Hippocrates, *De esse aegrotorum secundum lunam*. Leon Joseph's translation, without introduction? *H.Ueb.* 666.

86-88: *Sefer ha-Tekufah* = Neub. 2028.3. Notes.

89b: List of MSS.

90-147a: Levi Abraham, *ספר הכוול*, chs. 36-40.

147-151: Arnald de Villa Nova, *De judiciis astronomiae*, *פנים במשפט*, trans. by Sol Abigdor. *H.Ueb.* 782/783.

152: Immanuel, Notes on Ibn Ezra's astrol. writings.

153-155: Ptolemy, *Centiloquium*, *ס הפר*, trans. by Jacob ben Elijah. *H.Ueb.* 530.

A Fifteenth Century Hebrew Book List

Among the many achievements of Professor Herbert Zafren is his editorship, over the many years since its inception, of *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*. In the first volume of the journal, the late Isaiah Sonne published and analyzed some Hebrew book lists.¹ It seems appropriate to contribute an article on the same subject to the volume of *Studies* that is dedicated to honor Herbert Zafren. Sonne was not the first to publish such book lists.² It was he, however, who emphasized the significance of the inventories of Hebrew books from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as not merely sources for bibliographical knowledge, but also as documents that shed light on “general cultural patterns and trends.”³ Other scholars also worked on book lists, particularly the late Nehemia Allony who systematically collected relevant material on the subject and planned the publication of an entire *corpus* of Hebrew book lists. Unfortunately, the *corpus* has not yet been published and its present status is unknown.⁴

More recently, Robert Bonfil had been examining Hebrew book lists from Italy for knowledge that they can provide on the “cultural ambience” of Italian Jewry.⁵ Another scholar, Shifra Baruchson, had

1 Isaiah Sonne, “Book Lists through Three Centuries,” *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 1 (1953), 55-76; 2 (1955), 3-19. According to Sonne’s original plan, six such lists should have been published.

2 For a list of such publications, including book lists from the Cairo Genizah, see Robert Bonfil, רשימת ספרים עבריים מאימולה, *Scritti in Memoria di Umberto Nahon* (Jerusalem, 1978), pp. 48-49, notes 1-3.

3 *Studies* 1 (1953), 55.

4 See Robert Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford, New York, 1990), p. 275, note 18. Three of Allony’s articles in which he published book lists are included in his *Studies in Medieval Philology and Literature*, vol. 5; *Bibliography and Book Art* (Jerusalem, 1979), pp. 185-227.

5 Bonfil, *Rabbis* pp. 272-280, for quotation see p. 272. In the original Hebrew of Bonfil’s work, הרבנות באיטליה בתקופת הריניסאנס (Jerusalem, 1979), pp. 295-298, there is an appendix containing a list of 41 published and unpublished book lists from Italy, until 1540.

4453	20	8264	28
4467	21	8269	26
4477	17	8273	11
4478	13	8337	43
4558	30	8338	22
4789	4	8740	12
4866	39	8896	16
8093	27	8963	18
8183	19	9340	32
8222	46	9343	40
8230	3	9345	35
8232	1	9346	34
8252	5	9498	29
8253 (4452a)	15	9507	33
		Boesky Collection	24

Kalman, Fradche and Jacob 2	man and May
Kann, Hirschel Beer see Beer	Silberman, Samuel 29
Kasofsky, Jennie and Martin 29	Singer, Samuel, Selig and Betty 20
Katz, Abraham ben Aaron 42	Sulzbach (?), Braindel and Seckel see
Katz, Bernard 39	Braindel
Katz, Moses ben Abraham Bukim	Treni, Feiverl ben Simon Boaz and
and Elle in Duesseldorf 16	Vogel 40
Katzenbogen, Meshullam 44	Uri Feivish ben Joseph Moses ha-
Kosmann, A. 30	Cohen 34
Kossmann, ben Judah Jeremiah Segal	Warburg, Felix M. 15
38	Wilneritz see Gittele
Landsberg, Judah Loeb 38	Zagaysky, M. 41
Lezer N'S' 44a	
Lipman ben Saul see Ehrenfeld	Manuscript numbers
London see Itzig ben Nathan	
Marx, Alexander and Jacob Benjamin	The following are numbers of manu-
18	scripts in the Library of the Jewish
May, Gabriel 41	Theological Seminary of America
Menahem Mendel 30	3697 9
Mermelstein, Eliezer 29	4259 25
Neu... see Herschel	4334 42
Neustadt (?) see Lezer	4376 23
Neuwit, Jacob and Nahum 37	4385 41
Oppenheim, Hannah bath Isaac 1	4411 37
Oppenheim, Isaac 25	4426 44a
Oppenheim, Simon Wolf and Vogel	4428 7
32	4430 45
Prag, S. in Duesseldorf 18	4432a 2
Rabinowitz, Louis 34, 35, 40	4432c 36
Rosenthal, Aaron and Judah 42	4432d 10
Sacherles, Solomon ben Hirsch in	4432g 44
Pressburg 21	4432h 6
Samuel ben David Hils (?) 43	4433e 8
Sandrow, T.E. 34, 35, 40	4433f 38
Schlessinger, Miriam 32	4433g 31
Schweich, Klerche and Loeb 44	4446 14
Segal see Isaiah, Judah Loeb, Koss-	4452a (8253) 15

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shiviti 30, 32
shofar 40
 sick (visiting of) 1, 4
Simhath Torah 43
 Solomon 1, 3, 4, 11, 25, 26, 27, 31, 32, 38, 46
 Synagogue (practices, building) 33, 43, 44
 Time (personification of) 36
 Two tablets of Law 40
 well with pail and pitchers 37
 Zodiac signs 30, 32

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 Adler, E.N. 25, 30
 Adler, H. 4
 Adler, Marcus Nathan 25
 Anspacher, Florence Sutro 46
 Asch, Scholem 15
 Asher Anshel 4
 Bamberger, Louis 36
 Baruch ben Itzig 22
 Beer Eskeles, Bernard 28
 Beer, Hirschel 28
 Bella from Frankfurt 3
 Benguiat 1, 9
 Benjamin Zeev ben Zevi Hirsch of Sanok 28
 Ber Urschel (?) 19
 Berkessel, Esther 44
 Boesky, Ivan and Seema 24

Braindel, wife of Seckel Z'B' (= Sulzbach?) 5
 Brentelche, wife of Samuel in Mainz 45
 Bukim see Katz, Moses
 Cerfberr see Herz of Medelsheim
 Cohen, Harry K. 33
 Coopman, Benjamin Zeev 38
 Deutsch, Perez 24
 Ehrenfeld, Lipman ben Saul 11
 Elijah ben Loeb 20
 Elkan, Solomon Zalman 30
 Elsberg, Rebecca 16
 Engelman, Mordecai 46
 Eskeles, Bernard Beer see Beer
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 Friedman, Harry G. 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 28, 31, 37, 38, 42, 44, 44a
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 Gomperz, Baruch Moses 23
 Gruenfeld, Hayyim 11
 Gunzenhausen, Taube 45
 Herschel Neu... 33
 Herz ben Loeb Darmstadt 24
 Herz of Medelsheim 46
 Hils see Samuel ben David
 Isaiah ben Herz Segal 35
 Itzig ben Ber of Ergersheim 22
 Itzig ben Nathan London 19
 Itzig ben Solomon ben Azriel in Hamburg 9
 Janowitz, Lipman 33
 Joseph Nathan (son-in-law of Isaac Oppenheim) 25
 Judah Loeb ben Azriel Joseph Segal of Pappenheim 10

- Moses Loeb of Trebitsch¹³ 39
 Nathan ben Joseph of זלאטדרי 42
 Nathan of Mezeritsh¹⁴ 36, 38
 Nethanel ben Aaron Levi Segal¹⁵ 9
 Offenbach, Levi 44
 Perez ben Naftali Moses Abraham of Bingen 34
 Phinehas ben Pessah (Pessahson) of Trebitsch¹⁶ 21
 Raphael Neckarsulm 22
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12 See Scheiber's bibliography, numbers 842, 856, 1044, 1065, 1142.

13 See Naményi, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60; English version, *ibid.*, p. 158.

14 See Naményi, *op. cit.*, p. 64; English version, *ibid.*, p. 159; *Illustrated haggadot*, p. 32 and passim.

15 For facsimiles of two of his works see *The Tel Aviv Haggadah* (1971) and *The Moshe Bamberger Haggadah* (1972), both published by The Orphan Hospital Ward of Israel, with introductions by Tovia Preschel.

16 See Y. Shazar, Askolath Moravia, in: *Third World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem, 1965), p. 359.

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- Aaron Wolf Schreiber Herlingen of Gewitsch⁶ 1, 17, 18
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 Meshullam Zimmel of Polna¹¹ 25
 Mordecai ben Josel of Nyitra (Donath)¹² 11

- 6 [For literature on the scribes see the forthcoming book by Schrijver, above note 5.] See A. Naményi, "La miniature juive au XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècle, *REJ*, vol. 116 (1957), pp. 61-63 and the English version of the above, in: Cecil Roth, *Jewish Art: An Illustrated History*, rev. ed. B. Narkiss (New York, 1971), pp. 158-159; A.N.Z. Roth, *Yeda Am*, v. 5 (1958), pp. 73-79; *Illustrated haggadot of the eighteenth century* (Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 30-31 and passim; see Scheiber's bibliography, compiled by Róbert Dán (in Scheiber, *Folklór és tárgytörténet*, 2nd ed., v. 2 (Budapest, 1977), pp. 507-573, numbers 875, 894, 930.
- 7 See Naményi, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61; English version, *ibid.*, p. 158; *The book and its cover: an exhibit guide*, New York, The Jewish Museum, [1981], numbers 23-24.
- 8 See Scheiber's bibliography, *op. cit.*, numbers 436, 741, 1001, 1018, 1036 and his article in *Journal of Jewish Art*, v. 7 (1980), pp. 44-49; *Illustrated haggadot*, p. 31 and passim. For a facsimile reproduction of one of Hayyim's works see *The Kittsee Haggadah*, The Orphan Hospital Ward of Israel (New York, 1975), with an introduction by Tovia Preschel.
- 9 See Naményi, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67; *Illustrated haggadot*, p. 31 and passim. For facsimiles of two of Jacob's works see *First printed edition of Haggadah etc.*, The Orphan Hospital Ward of Israel (New York, 1961) with an introduction by Moses Lutzki and *The Hamburg-Amsterdam Haggadah of 1728*, The Diskin Orphan Home of Israel (New York, 1980), with an introduction by Tovia Preschel.
- 10 See Naményi, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65; English, *ibid.*, pp. 159-160; *Illustrated haggadot*, p. 31 and passim. For a facsimile of one of Leipnik's works see: *The Leipnik-Rosenthaliana Haggadah*, The Orphan Hospital Ward of Israel (New York, 1977) with an introduction by Tovia Preschel.
- 11 See Naményi, *op. cit.*, p. 63; English version, *ibid.*, p. 159; *Illustrated haggadot*, p. 31 and passim; Scheiber's bibliography, numbers 530, 956.

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Ownership entries: On frontispiece: Brentelche, wife of Samuel in Mainz (?)... Karlsruhe...; Taube, wife of Joseph Gunzenhausen of Bonn (?).

JTS 4430. Acc. number: 01948.

(46) *Four scrolls (Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes).*

No place, no date.

Vellum. 22f. 17 x 9.5 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. 1b: Judgement of Solomon; 5b: Ruth gleaning in the field; 9b: Temple of Jerusalem in flames; 14a: Satan in chains in front of Solomon.

Ownership entries: Herz of Medelsheim (= Herz Cerfberr); Mordecai ben Moses Engelmann.

JTS 8222. Acc. number: 01165. Gift of Florence Sutro Anspacher.

- (44) *Tikkun keriath shema al ha-mittah we-seder ha-mizmorim mi-kol yemoth ha-shavua we-gam tefillath ha-derekh.*

1760.

Scribe: Levi Offenbach.

Vellum. 27 f. 10 x 7.5 cm. Original leather binding, stamped: Belongs to Mendele

Decoration: Ink drawings, calligraphic letters. Frontispiece: portal with columns; initial words in elaborately decorated panels; 16a: in panels of initial letters: David; synagogue building.

Ownership entries: Klerche Schweich (on frontispiece); Loeb ben Kalman Schweich bought it from the estate of his mother, Esther bath Nathan Berkessel, 1846 (on flyleaf); received from Meshullam Katzenbogen, Marseille 1937.

JTS 4432g. Acc. number: 01054. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

- (44a) *Seder keriath shema al ha-mittah... u-mizmorim...*

זנקיווערט 1775.

Scribe: Baruch Bendet ben Samuel Segal of Werlau (?) (ווערלה), being with Lezer N'S' (Neustadt?) of זנקיווערט (colophon).

For the bride Gittele bath Zelig Wilneritz.

Vellum. 20 f. 9.5 x 5 cm. Embroidered silk binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures and ink drawings. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; 1b: drawing: portrait of a lady with violin (portrait of the bride, Gittele?); 11a: the guardian angel (Genesis 48:16).

JTS 4426. Acc number: 01962. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

- (45) *Sefirath ha-omer im tefillath minhah u-maariv u-mizmorim we-keriath shema al ha-mittah u-birkath ha-levanah.*

1771.

On frontispiece: *be-otiyoth Amsterdam.*

Vellum: 33 f. 9 x 6 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron. Days for counting of *omer* in colored roundels; 19a: *menorah*, formed from words of Psalm 67; 19b: *menorah*, formed from words of prayer: *ana be-koah.*

name is also indicated on frontispiece; f. 111b: Manuscript is donated to synagogue by Joshua Feivel ben Simon Boaz Treni and his wife, Vogel.

JTS 9343. Acc. number: 01720. Gift of Rabbi T.E. Sandrow and Louis Rabinowitz.

- (41) *Tikkun lel shavuoth ha-seder she-sidder ha-SheLaH... hoshana rabba... we-tikkun lel shevii shel pessah.*

Mannheim 1740.

On frontispiece: *be-otiyyth Amsterdam.*

For Gabriel May Segal.

Vellum. 84 f. 19.5 x 14 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Ink drawings. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron (faces erased), angels and lions.

JTS 4385. Acc. number: 01512. Gift of M. Zagayski.

- (42) *Seder birkath ha-kohanim.*

Berlin 1741.

Scribe: Nathan ben Joseph of זלאטדרי, in Berlin (f. 10b). 24 f. (1-10: vellum; 11-24: paper).

Vellum and paper. 11 x 7.5 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Ink drawings, gilded letters. Frontispiece: hands in posture of priestly blessing, lions and crowns.

Includes other prayers, too.

Ownership entries: Frontispiece: Abraham ben Aaron Katz; Front flyleaf: Judah Rosenthal of Cologne presented it to his father, Aaron Rosenthal of Wuerzburg, in 1905.

JTS 4334. Acc. number: 01789. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

- (43) *Seder me-arvith... be-lel simhath torah.*

Kittsee 1747.

Scribe: [Hayyim ben Asher Anshel of Kittsee].

Paper. 25 f. 15 x 9.5 cm.

Decoration: Ink drawings. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; 8a: man handing *Sefer Torah* to other man.

Ownership entry: Samuel ben David Hils (?) of...

JTS 8337. Acc. number: 03470.

Scribe: Nathan ben Samson of Mezeritsh in Moravia.

For Kossman ben Judah Jeremiah Segal of Leinz.

On frontispiece: *be-otiyyth Amsterdam*.

Vellum. 16 f. 16 x 10 cm. Original leather binding. Ink drawings.

Decoration: Frontispiece: David and Solomon; decorated calligraphic letters.

Ownership entry: Gift of Benjamin Zeev ben Jacob Coopman to Judah Loeb ben Moses Dr. Landsberg, Maastricht 1870.

JTS 4433f. Acc. number: 01585. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

Varia

- (39) *Seder yotzeroth... gam... massekhet avoth.*
1717.

Scribe: Moses Loeb of Trebitsch.

On frontispiece: *be-otiyyth Amsterdam*.

Vellum. 38 f. 15.5 x 9.5 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Ink drawings. Frontispiece: portal with columns. Initial words in decorated panels, calligraphic letters.

JTS 4866. Acc. number: 01294. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Katz.

- (40) *Seder ha-selihoth shel kol yemoth ha-shanah.*
Metz 1725.

Scribe: David ben Josiah Isaac Moses ha-Levi (colophon, f. 111a).

Corrector: Solomon *Hazzan* Lipschuetz, *Hazzan* of Metz (f. 111b).

Vellum. 111 f. 36 x 28 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures and ink drawings. Frontispiece: David; elaborate decorated panels surrounding initial words; calligraphic letters; 8b: hand holding cup; 9b: building surrounding word: *meshiah*; 10a: hand holding pen (above word: *sofer*); 26b: *shofar*; 36b: sacrifice of Isaac; 75a: hands holding candles; 80b: hand holding crown; 82a: hands in posture of priestly blessing; hand pouring water on hands of priest; hand holding incense; 97b: preparation for circumcision; 106a: outstretched hand with rod (Ahasuerus' hand?); bust and hand with hammer (meaning uncertain); 11a: breaking of two tablets of Law; Temple of Jerusalem.

Dedications on front flyleaf: Acrostic poem with name of Feivel ben Simon Boaz Treni from Metz who donated manuscript; donor's

Scribe: Abraham ben Mordecai Israel מריא (on the original text, see colophon); Gerson ben Zanwel Katz, *sofer* of Metz (frontispiece). For the Society for the Study of Mishnayoth through the generosity of Isaiah ben Herz Segal.

On f. 224b: list of 8 members of the Society for the Study of Mishnayoth who donated volume to the synagogue.

Vellum. 224 f. 32 x 26 cm.

Decoration: Frontispiece: columns and lions; some initial words in elaborate decorated panels; calligraphic letters.

JTS 9345. Acc. number: 01720. Gift of Rabbi T.E. Sandrow and Louis M. Rabinowitz.

Tikkun Erev Rosh Hodesh (Yom Kippur Katan)

(36) *Tikkun erev rosh hodesh.*

1723.

Scribe: Nathan Sofer of Mezeritsh.

On frontispiece: *be-otiyyth Amsterdam*.

Vellum. 21 f. 12.5 x 7.5 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Ink drawings. Frontispiece: two allegorical figures; at bottom: personification of Time, with book and sandglass (allusion to passing of time marked by the renewal of the new moon); 17a: two miniatures depicting men in posture of confession.

JTS 4432c. Acc. number: 76639. Gift of Louis Bamberger.

(37) *Erev rosh hodesh.*

No place, no date (ca. 1728).

Scribe: Judah Loeb ben Samson Segal.

Vellum. 16 f. 17 x 11 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron. On top: well with pail and two pitchers; 13b: man in posture of confession.

Ownership entry: Jacob ben Moses Neuwit (born on first night of *Pessah*, 1728) and his brother Nahum (born 1733).

JTS 4411. Acc. number: 01055. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

(38) *Tikkun erev rosh hodesh.*

1728.

Yotzeroth mi-kol ha-shanah. Vienna 1714 (f. 79a); 3: *Selihoth*. 1712 (f. 128a); 4: *Seder tehillim*. 1712 (after f. 155). At end of volume: Wolf Oppenheim of Vienna.

JTS 9340. Acc. number: 01929. Gift of Miriam Schlessinger.

(33) *Tefillah mi-reshith ha-shanah ad aharith ha-shanah*.

Forchheim 1717-1720.

Scribe: David ben Elijah Segal of Forchheim.

Vellum. 198 f. 10 x 6 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. First frontispiece: Moses and Aaron, David, Jacob tending his sheep; second frontispiece (f. 128a): 7 Biblical scenes and miniature depicting *seder* table; numerous miniatures throughout the volume depicting various synagogue practices; ff. 35b-40a: *Perek shirah*, with many miniatures of animals, birds, trees, etc.; ff. 128a-151b: Haggadah, with many miniatures relating to the Haggadah and to the lives of the Patriarchs and to the Exodus.

Date on first frontispiece: faded; on second frontispiece: 1717; date of colophon (f. 195b): 1720.

Ownership entry: Lipman Janowitz, who acquired it from Herschel Neu...

JTS 9507. Acc. number: 03487. Gift of Harry K. Cohen.

(34) *Tefillah shel kol yemoth ha-shanah*.

1729.

Scribe: Perez ben Naftali Moses Abraham, *sofer* of Bingen.

For Uri Feivish ben Joseph Moses ha-Cohen and his wife, who presented it to the Synagogue of Abraham G'B' (?).

Vellum. 178 f. 33 x 26.5 cm.

Decoration: Some initial words in elaborate decorated panels, calligraphic letters.

F. 179b: Acrostic poem with name of Uri Feivish ben Joseph Moses ha-Cohen. Also: colophon: completed before *Pessah*, 1729, Perez ben Naftali Moses Abraham, *sofer* of Bingen.

JTS 9346. No acc. number. Gift of Rabbi T.E. Sandrow and Louis M. Rabinowitz.

(35) *Tefillah mi-kol ha-shanah*.

Metz 1660 (f. 224a); restored: 1797 (frontispiece).

(31) *Seder tikkunei shabbath... me... Yizhak Luria...*

Place and date erased.

On frontispiece: *we-nikhtav ki-defus Amsterdam*.

Vellum. 59 f. 9.5 x 7 cm.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. Frontispiece: David and Solomon;

38b: Sabbath meal; 56a: *havdalah*.

JTS 4433g. Acc. number: 01287. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

Siddurim

(32) *Tefillah mi-kol ha-shanah*.

Vienna 1712-1714.

Scribe: Aryeh Judah Loeb ben Elhanan Katz of Trebitsch.

For Simon Wolf ben Daniel Moses Oppenheim from Worms and his wife Vogel bath Moses Zunz of Frankfurt.

On first frontispiece: *be-otiyyth Amsterdam*.

Vellum. 3 + 2 + 155 + 57 f. 33.5 x 23 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures, ink drawings and gilded letters. 1b: Wolf and scorio, alluding to name of Simon Wolf Oppenheim; bird and libra, alluding to his wife's name: Vogel; hands in posture of priestly blessing, alluding to scribe's name: Katz; 3b: *shiviti*, with geometric design of ten *sefirot*; frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; hand of scribe, writing in a book; 2a: *shiviti*, with *menorah*; f. 79a: second frontispiece: angels and crown; 127b: wolf and bird; 128a: third frontispiece: angels with crown; after f. 155: fourth frontispiece: Judgement of Solomon and other Biblical scenes relating to David and Solomon.

Dedications by the scribe are found on f. 1b and 2a: scribe states that his father, Elhanan, passed away in Jerusalem on Iyyar 28, 1708; a long acrostic poem giving the names of the Oppenheims, mentioning the great fire in the Frankfurt ghetto on Teveth 24, 1711. Date of dedication: Vienna 1713. On f. 127b: in small letters, within the contours of the letters forming the words: *selik* and *b'y'l'a'* (*barukh ha-shem le-olam amen*): this prayerbook belongs to Simon Wolf ben Daniel Moses Oppenheim and his wife, Vogel bath Moses Zunz of Frankfurt; signed: Aryeh Judah Loeb ben Elhanan Katz of Trebitsch, Kislev 14, 473 (= December 13, 1712).

There are four frontispieces in this manuscript: 1: see title above; 2:

Ownership entry: Bd (Bernard) Beer Eskeles, who inherited manuscript from his father, Hirschel Beer Kann (hence the initials H B on the spine of the binding). Hirschel Beer Kann died on *Rosh Hodesh Nissan* 1819.

JTS 8264. Acc. number: 01052. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

- (29) *Seder tikkunei shabbath... seder hanhagoth shabbath... me-Yizhak Luria... [im] zemiroth le-shabbath we-esrim we-arbaah perakim mimassekhet shabbath...*

Pressburg 1744.

Vellum. 29 f. 10.5 x 6 cm. Original leather binding, stamped: I.H.

Decoration: Ink drawings and gilded initial words. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron.

Ownership entries: Eliezer Mermelstein; Zvi Ackerman; Samuel Silberman.

JTS 9498. Acc. number: 04359. Gift of Jennie C. and Martin P. Kasofsky.

- (30) [*Seder ha-tefillah shel shabbath*].

The Hague 1744.

For Menahem Mendel.

Vellum. 107 f. 17 x 11 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Ink drawings. 5b, 9b, 11b, 14a, 26b, 28b, 31b: zodiac signs (on all these pages total erasures next to the zodiac signs of texts that must have been dedications); 20a: lighting of Sabbath candles; 86a: grape; 104b: *shiviti*, with *menorah* and lions. Additional frontispieces: 32a: *sefer ha-tefillah shel shabbath shaharith mussaf u-minhah u-motzaei shabbath*. Portal, with books and figure of David. 59a: *Seder tehillim u-maamadoth we-shir ha-yihhud shel shabbath... be-otiyoth defus Amsterdam* 504 (= 1744). Moses and Aaron.

Ownership entries: 70b: belongs to Zalman ben Elhanan Elkan from Frankfurt am Main, 1839; 106b: Solomon Zalman ben Elhanan Elkan from Frankfurt am Main presented this prayerbook to the synagogue, 1840. This dedication written by Lipman ben Aaron, *sofer* of Amsterdam; 107a: this prayerbook belongs to Zalman Elkan from Frankfurt am Main, in Paris, 1836. On flyleaf: Presented by A. Kosmann to the master E. Adler on the day of his confirmation.

JTS 4558. E.N. Adler 429.

- (26) *Seder tikkunei shabbath... me — ...Yizhak Luria... im zemiroth we-gam kiddush levanah.*
 Vienna 1724.
 On frontispiece: *be-otiyoyth Amsterdam.*
 Vellum. 61 f. 9.5 x 6.5 cm. Original leather binding.
Decoration: Ink drawings. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; 10b: lighting of Sabbath candles; 11b: Solomon; 20b: *kiddush*; 21a: Sabbath meal; 35a: Sabbath meal; 48a: the blessing of the moon; 54a: *havdalah*.
 JTS 8269. Acc. number: 01326. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.
- (27) *Seder tikkunei shabbath... me — ...Yizhak Luria... im zemiroth... hanhagoth.*
 Vienna 1725.
 On frontispiece: *be-otiyoyth Amsterdam.*
 Vellum. 43 f. 11.5 x 8.5 cm. Original leather binding.
Decoration: Ink drawings. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; 8b: lighting of Sabbath candles; 9a: Solomon; 14b: *kiddush*; 15b: Sabbath meal; 25b: Sabbath meal; 36 b: *havdalah*.
 Folios 42-43: ceremony for the blessing of the moon.
 JTS 8093. Acc. number: 01375.
- (28) *Seder olath shabbath: tefilloth u-zemiroth le-arvith we-shaharith shel shabbath we-yom tov we-rosh hodesh we-tikkunei shabbath im perush... al mishnayoth massekhet shabbath we-seder hanhagoth... u-pirkei avoth im perush...*
 Berlin 1742.
 Scribe: Wolff Hirschel von Tikotschin in Pohl[en] (in Roman characters). On frontispiece, within the contours of letters forming the words: *seder olath shabbath*: Benjamin Zeev ben Zevi Hirsch of Sanok.
 Vellum. 125 f. 10 x 6.5 cm. Original leather binding.
Decoration: Ink drawings. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron. Initial words surrounded by panels consisting of human, zoomorphic and floral figures and designs. 96a: micrography forming portal and lion from letters of I Kings 17 ff (the story of Elijah); 101b: David; 108b: zoomorphic figures within the contours of letters.
 100b: mention of Rabbi Bunem ha-Levi, rabbi of Rymanow.

Decoration: Ink drawings. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; 2a: heaven; 5b: vegetation; 6a: trees; 7a: reptiles; 9a: birds; 13a: animals. Ownership entry: Baruch Moses Gomperz. JTS 4376. Acc. number: 62225.

(24) *Seder perek shirah.*

1719.

For Herz (Hirz) ben Loeb Darmstadt of Frankfurt.

On frontispiece: *be-otiyyth Amsterdam.*

Vellum. 23 f. 9.5 x 7 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Ink drawings. Frontispiece: portal with columns; 6a: vegetation; 7a: trees; 8a: reptiles; 9a: birds; 15a: domestic animals; 17a: wild animals.

Folios 21-23 contain the *kiddush* for holidays.

Ownership entry: Perez Deutsch.

Ivan F. Boesky and Seema Boesky Manuscript Collection.

Sabbath Prayers

(25) *Seder tikkunei shabbath... me — ...Yitzhak Luria...*

[Vienna] 1719.

Scribe: Meshullam Zimmel of Polin [= Polna].

For Joseph Nathan, the son-in-law of Isaac Oppenheim.

Vellum. 53 f. 11 x 7.5 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Ink drawings. Frontispiece: Scenes from the story of Joseph (alluding to the name Joseph Nathan for whom the manuscript was written); top: Joseph's dreams; right: Joseph and his brethren; left: Jacob is shown Joseph's coat; bottom: Joseph's goblet found in Benjamin's bag; 13a: Solomon on his throne; 23a: Sabbath meal; 33a: Sabbath meal; 40b: Sabbath meal; 47a: Jacob and the angels (Genesis 32:4); 49b: *havdalah*; 52b: blessing of the moon.

Ownership entry: Marcus Nathan Adler. With list of *pideyon ha-ben* ceremonies performed by Adler.

JTS 4259. E.N. Adler Collection.

(20) *Seder haggadah shel pessah.*

Kittsee 1772.

Scribe: Hayyim ben Asher Anshel of Kittsee.

Vellum. 21 f. 29 x 20 cm. Original gilded leather binding.

Decoration: Colored floral panels surrounding initial words.

Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron.

Ownership entries: Elijah (?) ben Loeb... (frontispiece); Samuel Singer (flyleaf); Selig Singer of Bonyhád; Betty Singer (flyleaf and 3b).

JTS 4453. Acc. number: 01543. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

(21) *Haggadah shel pessah.*

Pressburg 1788.

Scribe: Phinehas ben Pessah Hazzan(?) of Trebitsch, *Sofer* in Pressburg.

Paper. 20 f. 28 x 20.5 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Ink drawings. Calligraphic letters. On frontispiece: David; the Rabbis of Bne Brak; Moses and Aaron.

Ownership entry: Solomon ben Hirsch Sacherles of Pressburg.

JTS 4467. Acc. number: 130857. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

(22) *Seder haggadah shel pessah.*

1797.

Scribe: Raphael Neckarsulm.

Paper. 31 f. 20.5 x 15 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Ink drawings (pasted on). 6a: the four sons; 10b: *pessah* meal with Passover lamb; 12b: meal; 18a: woman opening door, woman's dress made of cloth pasted on paper; 23a: David.

Ownership entries: Itzig ben Ber(?) of Ergersheim(?); Baruch ben Itzig of Ergersheim(?); Baruch ben Itzig of Kobersdorf(?).

JTS 8338. Acc. number: 01253. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

Perek Shirah

(23) *Seder perek shirah.*

1719.

On frontispiece: *be-otiyyth Amsterdam.*

Vellum. 16 f. 13 x 7.5 cm. Original leather binding.

of Jerusalem; miniatures for each verse of *Ehad mi yodea* and *Had gadya*.

Inscribed in medallion on top of frontispiece: Koppel Segal of Reschin.

JTS 4477. Acc. number: 01171. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

(18) *Seder haggadah shel pessah.*

Vienna 1751.

Scribe: Aaron Schreiber Herlingen.

Vellum. 14 f. 24 x 15 cm. Original gilded leather binding.

Decoration: Ink drawings. Gilded initial words. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron. Scenes relating to the text of the Haggadah; Biblical scenes from the lives of the Patriarchs and of the Exodus; the Temple of Jerusalem; miniatures for each verse of *Ehad mi yodea* and *Had gadya*.

Ownership entries: belonged to S. Prag in Duesseldorf (great-grandfather of Alexander Marx); Alexander Marx; Jacob Benjamin Marx (son of Alexander Marx).

JTS 8963. Acc. number: 04086.

(19) *Seder haggadah shel pessah im perush Abrabanel.*

Altona 1766.

Scribe: Elkanah P' H' ben Meir ben Elkanah, *Shammash* and *Sofer* in Altona.

On frontispiece: *be-otiiyyoth Amsterdam.*

Vellum. 24 f. 28 x 16 cm. Original leather binding, stamped on front: *Haggadah shel pessah.*

Decoration: Colored miniatures, many of them very crude. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; Passover lamb. Scenes of preparations for Pessah, scenes depicting the conducting of the *seder*; Biblical scenes from the lives of the Patriarchs and from the Exodus; scenes relating to the text of the Haggadah.

Ownership entries: Ber Urschel (?); Itzig ben Nathan London.

JTS 8183. Acc. number: 01327. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

(15) *Seder haggadah shel pessah.*

Darmstadt 1733.

Scribe: Joseph Leipnik.

Vellum. 23 f. 18 x 13.5 cm. Original leather binding, stamped on front and on back: 1733.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; David; Sacrifice of Isaac. Scenes relating to the text of the Haggadah; Biblical scenes from the lives of the Patriarchs and of the Exodus; the Temple of Jerusalem; miniatures for each verse of *Ehad mi yodea* and *Had gadya*.

On flyleaf: Formerly property of Scholem Asch.

JTS 4452a (8253). Acc. number: 0527. Gift of Felix M. Warburg.

(16) *Seder haggadah shel pessah.*

1739.

Scribe: Issachar Baer ben Jacob Hayyim of איליק.

Vellum. 46 f. 10.5 x 8.5 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; 2a: searching for *hametz*; 2b: *eruv*; 6a: meal; 7b: meal; 8b: invitation to needy; 10b: a wise man; 11a: the four sons and a wise old man; 13b: building Pithom and Ramses; 15b: the defeat of Sennacherib (with explanation on f. 15a); 19b-20b: *pessah*, *matzah* and *maror*; 21b: David; 26b: Messiah; 37b: the Temple of Jerusalem; 38a-42b: miniatures for each verse of *Ehad mi yodea*; 43a-45b: miniatures for each verse of *Had gadya*.

1b: Ownership entry: Belongs to Moses ben Abraham Bukim Katz in Duesseldorf. He presented it to his wife, Elle on the 13th of Nissan 509 (= 1809).

JTS 8896. Acc. number: 0621. In memory of Rebecca Elsberg.

(17) *Seder haggadah shel pessah.*

Vienna 1751.

Scribe: Aaron Schreiber Herlingen.

Vellum. 13 f. 23 x 15 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Ink drawings. Gilded initial words. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron. Scenes relating to the text of the Haggadah; Biblical scenes from the lives of the Patriarchs and of the Exodus; the Temple

(12) [*Milah book*].

No place, no date.

Vellum. 25 f. 10.5 x 7 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: colored miniatures: 1a: Outline of portal, no text; 3a: *mohel*, with box containing tools for circumcision; 6a: circumcision; 10a: meal; 22b: blessing of the moon.

JTS 8740. Acc. number: 0823. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

Haggadahs

(13) *Seder haggadah shel pessah*. With Judeo-German translation. 1729.

Vellum. 26 f. 33 x 19.5 cm. Original parchment binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. Most of the miniatures are very crude and poorly preserved. Scenes of preparations for Pessah, scenes depicting the conducting of the seder; Biblical scenes from the lives of the Patriarchs and of the Exodus; scenes relating to text of Haggadah.

On frontispiece: *hamtzaah hadashah arukha be-kol am mud we-am mud u-le-kol ha-nimtza bi-ketav naasu tzuroth...* (a novelty — with pictures on each page illustrating what is written there).

JTS 4478. Acc. number 40663.

(14) *Seder haggadah shel pessah*.

1732.

Scribe: Joseph ben David Aaron [*mi-Leipnik*] *bi-medinath Maehren* (of Leipnik in Moravia).

Written in the house of Moses Freudenburg.

On frontispiece: *be-otiyoth Amsterdam*.

Vellum. 19 f. 20 x 14 cm. Original leather binding, stamped: 492 (= 1732).

Decoration: Colored miniatures. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; David. Scenes relating to the text of the Haggadah; Biblical scenes from the lives of the Patriarchs and of the Exodus; the Temple of Jerusalem; miniatures for each verse of *Ehad mi yodea* and *Had gadya*.

JTS 4446. Acc. number 0286. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

For Itzig ben Solomon ben Azriel in Hamburg (see flyleaf). 22 f. (on vellum); 8 f. (on paper). 13.5 x 9.5 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; 9a: circumcision.

Contains 78 circumcision entries, 1763-1782.

JTS 3697. Acc. number: none. Benguiat collection.

- (10) *Dinim u-tefilloth we-seder ha-berakhoth... la-berith milah*. 1770.

Scribe: Zevi Hirsch Segal Sofer.

Owner: Judah Loeb ben Azriel Joseph Segal of Pappenheim. 12 f. (vellum); 4 f. (paper, last three blank). 12 x 9 cm.

Original leather binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron. Birds, lions and putti.

JTS 4432d. Acc. number: 01592. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

- (11) *Sefer sod ha-shem we-hu oth berith kodesh*.

1817(?).

Scribe: Mordecai ben Josel Sofer of Nyitra.

For Lipman ben Saul [Ehrenfeld] *משאפערני* (= of Sopron?). 18 f. (on vellum); 9 f. (on paper). 16.5 x 10.5 cm. Original leather binding, stamped in Hebrew: Lipman ben Saul.

Decoration: Ink drawings and micrography, some colored. 3a: David; 3b: calligraphic inscription written in five different types of script, signed: Mordecai ben Josel Sofer of Nyitra; 4a: Solomon, micrography of Song of Songs, signed: Mordecai ben Josel Sofer of Nyitra; 5a: Isaac and Jacob and geometrical figures in micrography of the text of the evening prayers, signed: Mordecai ben Josel Sofer; 5b: Abraham and the three angels; 6b: Moses, micrography of the text of the Blessing of Moses (Deuteronomy 33); 12a: circumcision; 14b: meal.

Circumcision entries, 1814-1841.

Folio 19a:... I acquired this book from my brother-in-law, Lipman Ehrenfeld...

Ownership entry on flyleaf: Hayyim Gruenfeld.

JTS 8273. Acc. number: 01494. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

(6) [*Seder birkath ha-mazon*].

Inscriptions and some miniatures on frontispiece erased.

Vellum. 20f. 6 x 4.5 cm.

Decoration: Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; 3a: meal; 4b: *Hanukkah menorah*; 5a: hanging of Haman and his sons; 7a: Jerusalem; 10a: blessing on grape (vineyard); 11a: blessing on fruit of trees; on vegetables; 11b: blessing on drinking water; on seeing strange creatures; 12a: on hearing good news; 12a: on hearing thunder; 12b: on seeing lightning; on seeing rainbow; 13b: prayer before retiring; 16b: the guardian angel (Genesis 48:16); 19b: David.

JTS 4432h. Acc. number: 01963.

Circumcision Books

(7) *Sefer sod ha-shem we-sharvit ha-zahav... we-seder birkath ha-mazon... we-seder pideyon ha-ben.*

Hamburg 1728.

Scribe: Jacob Sofer ben Judah Loeb Shammash from Berlin, presently in Hamburg, 1728 (colophon on f. 17b).

Vellum. 18 f. (f. 18 blank). 14 x 9 cm.

Decoration: Ink drawing of portal with columns on frontispiece; gilded initial words; 6b: blank space, probably intended for circumcision scene.

JTS 4428. Acc. number 2863.

(8) *Dinim u-tefilloth we-seder birkath ha-mazon la-berith milah.* 1758.

3 f. (on paper); 10 f. (on vellum); 9 f. (on paper). 14 x 9.5 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; 4a: circumcision.

Contains 273 circumcision entries, 1781-1809.

JTS 4433e. Acc. number: 01497. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

(9) *Sefer sod ha-shem we-sharvit ha-zahav.*

Hamburg 1763.

Scribe: Nethanel ben Aaron ha-Levi Segal (see colophon, f. 20b).

guardian angel (Genesis 48:16); 16a: David; 20a: the blessing of the moon.

JTS 8230. Acc. number 01160. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

- (4) *Seder birkath ha-mazon... im birkoth ha-nehenin we-tikkun keriath shema al ha-mittah im s[efirath] ha[-omer] u-perek shirah.*

Vienna 1736.

Given by the bridegroom Asher Anshel to... Inscriptions on frontispiece as well as the colophon erased.

Vellum. 46 f. 8 x 5.5 cm. Original tortoise-shell binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; 3a: Judith and Holofernes; 4b: Purim scene; 11a: blessing on vegetables (basket of vegetables); 12a: blessing on fruit of trees; on sweet scented wood; 12b: on fragrant plants; on spices and herbs (man in pharmacy); 13a: on seeing strange creatures; on beholding the sea (sea and boat); 13b: prayer for the sick (patient and doctor); prayer on recovery of sick; 14a: blessing on seeing lightning; on hearing thunder; 14b: on seeing rainbow; blessing on king; 15a: the taking of *Hallah*; 16a: *mikveh*; 16b: lighting of Sabbath candles; 29a: prayer before retiring; 33b: Solomon's couch encircled by warriors (Song of Songs 3:7); 35b: the starry sky; 39a: forest; 41a: fowl; 44a: animals. JTS 4789. From the library of Dr. H. Adler.

- (5) *Seder birkath ha-mazon ...u-birkoth ha-nehenin u-keriath shema u-birkath ha-levanah we-seder hadlakah niddah hallah u-sefirath [ha-omer].*

Fuerth 1793.

For Braindel, wife of Seckel Z' B' (= Sulzbach?).

Vellum. 65f. (the last three folios on paper). 8.5x6.5cm. Original velvet binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. 7a: *Hanukkah menorah* and hanging of Haman; 32b: the guardian angel (Genesis 48:16); 43b: the blessing of the moon.

JTS 8252, Acc. number: 01286.

Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

Books of Blessings

- (1) *Seder birkath ha-mazon u-birkoth ha-nehenin we-tikkun keriath shema al ha-mitta.*

Vienna 1724.

Scribe: Aaron of Gewitsch (f. 1a: *wa-yaas ken Aharon me-k[ehillath] Gewitsch*).

For Hanna, daughter of Isaac Oppenheim, *Rosh Hodesh Nissan* 1725, Frankfurt.

Vellum. 17 f. 8.5 x 6.5 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: Colored miniatures. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; 3a: lighting of *Hannukah menorah*; 3b: hanging of Haman and his sons; 8a: meal; 9b: blessing on king; blessing on seeing strange creatures; 10a: prayer on visiting the sick; 10b: prayer before retiring; 14a: Isaac's sacrifice; 18b: Solomon's couch encircled by warriors (Song of Songs 3:7); 16a: David.

JTS 8232. Acc. Number: 0588. Benguiat collection.

- (2) *Seder birkath ha-mazon we-tikkun keriath shema u-birkoth ha-nehenin.*

Mannheim 1735.

For Fradche (?), wife of Jacob Kalman.

Vellum. 76 f. 8.5 x 6 cm. Original velvet binding. The original part of this manuscript consists of ff. 1-31. Folios 32-76 containing prayers for women in Judeo-German were added. The first part is written in square characters, the second part in "weiber Deutsch."

Decoration: colored miniatures. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; 1b: meal; 2b: *Hannukah menorah* and hanging of Haman; 4b: Jerusalem; 11a: the guardian angel (Genesis 48:16).

JTS 4432a. Acc. number: 01051. Gift of Harry G. Friedman.

- (3) *Seder birkath ha-mazon... im tikkunei keriath shema.*

Mannheim 1736.

For Bella from Frankfurt.

Vellum. 23 f. 10 x 7.5 cm. Original leather binding.

Decoration: colored miniatures. Frontispiece: Moses and Aaron; David and Solomon; 3a: meal; 4a: *Hanukkah menorah* and hanging of Haman; 6b: Jerusalem; 10b: prayer before retiring; 14a: the

Decorated Hebrew Manuscripts of the Eighteenth Century in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America

An important segment of Alexander Scheiber's multifaceted and prodigious scholarly activity has been his contribution to the study of eighteenth century¹ Hebrew manuscript art. In scores of articles,² he focused on the systematic description of the *oeuvre* of Jewish scribe-artists of Central European origin who, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, created an amazing and imposing corpus of calligraphic and decorated Hebrew manuscripts. Building on the foundations laid by his Hungarian Jewish scholarly predecessors, David Kaufmann³ and Ernest Naményi,⁴ Scheiber expanded the field and stimulated a growing scholarly and bibliophilic interest in this manifestation of Jewish artistic creativity.⁵

The following list, containing a brief description of 47 Hebrew manuscripts in this area of study, is offered in deep gratitude by one of Scheiber's students as a modest tribute to the Master.

* The author wishes to express his thanks to Evelyn N. Cohen, Curator of Graphic Materials at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, for her assistance during the writing of the present article and for her many valuable suggestions and corrections.

1 An exception is his work on Marcus Donath who was active in the nineteenth century. Accordingly, the present article also includes a work by Donath, see number 11.

2 See the bibliography compiled by Robert Dán (in Scheiber's *Folklor és Targytörténet*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Budapest, 1977), pp. 507-573), numbers 530, 601, 619, 633, 649, 741, 794, 808, 827, 830, 835, 842, 856, 875, 888, 894, 930, 954, 956, 963, 976, 1000, 1001, 1018, 1036, 1044, 1065, 1142.

3 "Zur Geschichte der juedischen Handschriftenillustration," in *Die Haggadah von Sarajevo*, ed. Dav. Heinr. Mueller and Julius v. Schlosser (Wien, 1898), pp. 253-311.

4 "La miniature juive au XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècle," *REJ*, v. 116 (1957), pp. 27-71.

5 See the most recent survey of this activity in the introduction by Iris Fishof to *Grace after meals and other benedictions: facsimile of Cod. Hebr. XXXII in the Royal Library, Copenhagen* (Copenhagen, 1983). [See now: Iris Fishof, *Jüdische Buchmalerei in Hamburg und Altona* (Hamburg, 1999). A comprehensive inventory and study of 18th century Hebrew manuscript illumination will be found in the forthcoming book of Emile G.L. Schrijver on this Subject.]

One more aspect of the period's great interest in publishing was the discovery and utilisation of Hebrew manuscripts for the editing of texts which had been unpublished previously. The most significant personality in this respect was David Oppenheim. His great collection of manuscripts served not only antiquarian interests, but also furthered the publication, for the first time, of important works. It was Oppenheim who published the first edition of Samuel ben Meir's commentary on the Pentateuch, and we have evidence that he made available his manuscript collection to contemporary scholars.⁸³ Many manuscripts were utilised for the various Talmud editions and, in general, old Hebrew manuscripts were used for critical text studies and for the establishment of an apparatus of variant readings.⁸⁴ This trend culminated in the activities of Rabbi Isaiah Pick Berlin in the second half of the eighteenth century.⁸⁵

The interaction of many social, economic and political forces, the prominence of Court Jews in the community and outside of it, the contacts between Jews and Gentiles in the commercial as well as in the scholarly realm, the mobility of Jewish scholars and the migration from East to West and back, the growth of *yeshivoth* and the establishment of the *Klaus* in many communities where rabbis had the opportunity of undisturbed study, made the period outstandingly productive in many areas of Jewish learning. The phenomenal development of Hebrew printing in a relatively short period of time in so many German cities is a testimony to this vitality. Accordingly, the second part of the seventeenth and the first part of the eighteenth century were not only crucial, economically and socially, but also culturally and religiously. Further competent and detailed research in the diverse aspects of the history of the Jewish book in Germany in the period before the emancipation may reward us with many new insights and with a reappraised image of the intellectual profile of pre-modern German Jewry.

83 See Yitzchok Dov Feld in his introduction to Oppenheim's *Nishal David*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 5736 [1976]), pp. 36-39.

84 See Rabinowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-105, note 1, quoting at length from the Introduction to the Frankfurt a. Main 1720-1722 edition of the Talmud.

85 See Abraham Berliner, *Rabbi Jesaja Berlin; eine biographische Skizze* (Berlin, 1879).

The proliferation of Hebrew and Yiddish books carried with it negative phenomena as well. Criticism was levelled against some rabbis who published their work, of limited scholarly or educational value, mainly for reasons of self-aggrandisement and financial benefit. Rabbi Joseph Samuel of Cracow, who was active in Frankfurt a. Main, advocated the prevention of the publication of books of homilies and novellae on codes, at least for a period of ten years, because the quality of the books in those areas had declined and their authors were only interested in promoting themselves. Rabbi Joseph Samuel was quite blunt: "there are sufficient books in existence and we do not need any more."⁷⁹ Rabbi Hirsch Charif of Halberstadt was perhaps even more outspoken about the work of some of his contemporaries: "the publication of books of inferior quality is actually harmful, they cause students to neglect the study of Talmud and their publication should be prevented."⁸⁰

It was not only the contents of the books that was found wanting, but also their external appearance. The Council of Four Lands thundered against those printers who produced shabbily printed, inaccurately proof-read books, on cheap paper. The poor readability and the corrupt text were considered to be detrimental, especially in teaching children proper reading and understanding of the basic Jewish texts.⁸¹

Perhaps as a reaction to the deterioration of mass-printed books, especially in the area of liturgical books, some of the affluent Court Jews began to commission beautifully written and decorated calligraphic manuscripts and expensively printed books produced on vellum or on blue paper.⁸²

79 In his approbation to Hayyim Krochmal's *Mekor hayyim* (Fürth, 1697), f. [3a].

80 In his approbation to *Nezer ha-kodesh* (see above note 67) and elsewhere. See Benjamin Hirsch Auerbach, *Geschichte der israelitischen Gemeinde in Halberstadt* (Halberstadt, 1866), p. 66. In general, see also Heilprin, *loc. cit.*, *Kirjath Sepher*, vol. 11 (1934-1935), pp. 105-110 and Rakover (note 35), index, s. v. *nimmukim neged mattan haskamah*.

81 See Heilprin, *loc. cit.*, *Kirjath Sepher*, vol. 9, p. 373.

82 On eighteenth-century manuscript illumination, a very popular topic lately, still the best survey is Ernest Naményi, "La miniature juive au XVIIIe et au XVIIe siècle," in *Revue des études juives*, vol. 116 (1957), pp. 27-71 and its English version in *Jewish Art*, ed. by Cecil Roth, rev. edn. (Jerusalem, 1971), pp. 149-162. See also Chaya Benjamin, Introduction to the facsimile edition of the *Copenhagen Haggadah*, 1986, and my list, "Decorated Hebrew Manuscripts of the 18th Century in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America," in *The Alexander Scheiber Memorial Volume* [in the present volume, pp. 58*-82*]. On books printed on vellum and on coloured paper in this period, esp. those commissioned by David Oppenheim, see Alexander Marx, *Studies in Jewish History and Booklore* (New York, 1944) (reprint: 1969), pp. 217-218.

quantities of books exchanged hands there.⁷³ Of course, there were also local booksellers and various other methods of promotion and sale.

The rabbinate in Poznań, in 1733, imposed upon the Jews of the district the compulsory acquisition of copies of *Even ha-shoham*, by the local rabbi, Eliakum Goetz ben Meir.⁷⁴ In a different vein, the Gentile printer, Johann Koelner of Frankfurt a. Main, planned to finance his edition of Alfasi's *Halakhoth* by selling lottery tickets that entitled the purchaser to a set as well as to a prize.⁷⁵ For some unknown reason, Koelner's edition of this work never appeared. It is to be assumed, on the basis of general impressions and especially because of the large quantities of Hebrew books available, that the Hebrew book occupied a central place in the average Jewish household. Again, the data are very scarce and not collected, but some limited observations may be appropriate. It was pointed out in a recent study that, in the estate of normal, seventeenth-century Gentile German citizens, book collections did not constitute, either relatively or absolutely, a quantifiable portion; books are rarely mentioned in estate inventories and if they are included, their value is usually less than 1% of the total estate.⁷⁶ This state of affairs could be compared to what is known to us about the estates of Viennese Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where books are regularly included.⁷⁷

Although the following is a far from typical example, it is significant to single out the estate of Samson Wertheimer in whose household articles were valued at 6,000 florins at the same time that the value of his book collections, kept in his houses of study in Nikolsburg and Frankfurt, was estimated at 13,000 florins.⁷⁸

73 See esp. in Brillring's article, *loc. cit.*, note 61, p. 25 and see *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s. v. "Market Days and Fairs," vol. 11, cols. 1000-1005.

74 See Heilprin, *loc. cit.*, *Kiryat Sefer*, vol. 9, p. 377.

75 See Steinschneider and Cassel, *op. cit.*, cited above p. 59, note 3.

76 See *Stadt im Wandel. Kunst und Kultur des Bürgtums in Norddeutschland, 1150-1650*, hrsg. von Cord Meckseper. Ausstellungskatalog, Band 3 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1985), pp. 653-659, esp. p. 655: "...die privaten Büchersammlungen weder absolut noch relativ einen besonderen Anteil an den bürgerlichen Vermögen des 17. Jahrhunderts hatten."

77 Israel Taglicht, *Nachlässe der Wiener Juden im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Wien-Leipzig, 1917), p. 44.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 45, end of note 1.

preferred to publish their *aggadic* books first in order to obtain the funds needed for subsequent publication of more technical *halakhic* or rabbinic works. As one rabbi puts it succinctly: *aggadah* is more appealing and therefore more people buy it!⁶⁷

It is generally assumed that a certain type of book, especially the very popular *Zena Ur'ena*, was directed towards the female reading public. Women were avid readers and also patronesses of publishing ventures, workers in the printing trade and accomplished scholars. Behrend Lehmann's wife, Haenele, urged her husband to lend hundreds of talers to the Jessnitz printers in 1721 to cover the cost of the printing of Rabbi Moses Alsheik's commentary on various biblical books.⁶⁸ Alsheik's works were very rare in central Europe because they had not been published for over a hundred years, since their first edition in Venice at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Among women who were accomplished scholars mention should be made of the grandmother of Yair Haim Bacharach,⁶⁹ and the wife of Joseph Steinhardt (who was Isaiah Pick Berlin's sister).⁷⁰ Women printers are mentioned from time to time, among them a nine-year-old girl who worked as a typesetter in Dessau at the end of the seventeenth century.⁷¹

Another aspect of the role that books played in this era is the question of book prices. It would be interesting to compare the prices of books to that of other commodities. In the meantime, it suffices to record some prices that are known: e.g. the scholarly *Beith Shemuel*, consisting of 160 folios, was sold for 1 taler and 10 groschen, while four copies of the liturgical book, *Shaarei Zion*, which contained 48 quarto leaves, were priced at ten groschen.⁷² The main channels of book distribution were the fairs. Jewish merchants from East and West used to meet at the fairs of Königsberg, Leipzig, Breslau and Frankfurt an der Oder, and large

67 In Zevi Hirsch Bialeh's (*Hirsch Harif's*) approbation to Jehiel Michael Glogau's *Nezer ha-kodesh* (Jessnitz, 1719), f. 2a.

68 See *Rommemuth el* (Jessnitz, 1721), verso of title-page.

69 See the introduction to his *Havvoth Yair* (Frankfurt a. Main, 1699), f. [3a-b].

70 See *Zikhron Yoseph* (Fürth, 1773), f. [3a].

71 See Abraham Yaari, *Studies in Hebrew Booklore* (Jerusalem, 1955), pp. 256-302 (in Hebrew). On the nine-year-old girl see *ibid.*, p. 262 and also Freudenthal, *op. cit.* (above note 14), p. 271 and Alexander Marx, *Bibliographical Studies and Notes on Rare Books and Manuscripts in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America* (New York, 1977), p. 326.

72 See M. Marx, *loc. cit.*, (cited above in note 13), p. 221, Nos. 1 and 5.

printed, by the same publisher who issued the popular *Maasse-bukh*, in 1,600 copies.⁶²

As to the subjects on which Hebrew and Yiddish books were published, one immediately observes that the largest proportion of them were of a liturgical nature. Prayerbooks of all kinds, *siddurim*, *mahzorim*, *Haggadoth*, *selihoth*, *tehinnoth*, etc., amount to at least half of all books published.⁶³ The standard editions of the Pentateuch, with Rashi's commentary, Targum Onkelos, *Haftaroth* and the Five Scrolls were also issued frequently and often they included the Sabbath prayers as well. Very popular were books on *mussar*, such classics of ethics as *Hovoth ha-levavoth*, *Menorath ha-maor*, and later works such as *Simhath ha-nefesh*, *Kav ha-yashar* and *Lev tov* saw dozens of editions.⁶⁴ Rabbinic works, besides the Talmud itself, i.e. codes, responsa, novellae, etc. occupy a significant portion of this production. Popular entertainment, in the form of stories as well as transcriptions of German novels into Yiddish, also appeared in large numbers.⁶⁵ Philosophy, mysticism, medicine and astronomy were also represented, but in smaller numbers than the above mentioned categories. It would be rewarding to examine this area carefully and, at the same time, to pay attention to the relation between the number of original works by contemporary authors and that of the re-issues of older works. One can judge the taste of the public also by the frequency of the editions of particular works. Books that had a practical bearing on *halakhic* matters, especially commentaries on those parts of the *Shulhan Arukh* that deal with the dietary laws, were re-published over and over again. Still, works on *Midrash* and *aggadah* were also in demand as may be seen from the fact that the *Midrash rabba* and the aggadic *Yalkut Shimoni* and *Ein Yaakov* appeared frequently.⁶⁶ *Aggadic* works were considered potentially more profitable because of the wider readership and authors

62 See Bernhard Brilling, "Letters of a Jewish Publisher in Frankfurt on the Oder, 1708-1709," in *Studies in Jewish Bibliography and Booklore*, vol. 8 (1966-1968), p. 25.

63 See e.g. the index (compiled by Joseph Prys) of books printed in Sulzbach, in *Jahrbuch der Jüdische-literarischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 21 (1930), pp. 368-370 and see also, *ibid.*, pp. 366-367.

64 On *Hovoth ha-levavoth* see the bibliography by A. M. Habermann in *Sinai*, vol. 28 (1950-1951), pp. 320-329; the editions of *Menorath ha-maor* are listed in Naftali Ben-Menahem's introduction to the Jerusalem 1952 edition of the work and Jacob Shatzky listed the editions of *Simhath ha-nefesh* in his New York 1926 facsimile reprint of the work, pp. 23-29.

65 See the literature cited in note 56.

66 See their respective entries in H. D. Friedberg's *Bet Eked Sepharim* (Tel-Aviv, 1951-1956).

Christian expressions were neutralised (instead of cathedrals, fortresses, instead of Christian pilgrims, merchants were substituted, etc.), the lack of rabbinic approbations betray the displeasure of the rabbis with the dissemination of secular literature.⁵⁷

The proliferation of Hebrew and Yiddish books provides an opportunity for research in various related areas, such as the reading and study habits of the Jewish population, the practices of the booktrade, the status of books in Jewish society, the book as a commodity, the book as an artifact, etc. Since, to the best of this writer's knowledge, no systematic study has ever been conducted concerning these and related subjects,⁵⁸ the observations that follow must remain, at this time, of very tentative nature. First of all, on the basis of available lists of Hebrew printed books produced in various localities, one may venture to suggest that during the approximately one hundred years under discussion, at least 2,500 separate editions of Hebrew and Yiddish books appeared,⁵⁹ and if we assume that the average size of each edition was 1,000, we arrive at a total of two and a half million copies of books printed in Hebrew characters. Moritz Steinschneider and David Cassel estimated that about one third of all Hebrew books printed up to the beginning of modern times came from German-Jewish presses.⁶⁰ The average size of each edition, of course, is only an estimate, although we do have information on the size of some specific editions, e.g. Behrend Lehmann's 1697-1699 Talmud was published in 5,000 sets,⁶¹ the Yiddish *Maasse-bukh* was issued in 3,500 copies in 1708-1709, while, at the same time, the bulky *Yalkut Shimoni* was

57 Approbations are lacking in most of the books containing narratives that are listed in Zfatman's work.

58 See, however, Zafren's various articles on the typographical aspects of Hebrew printing and esp. his statement in his paper cited above in note 4, pp. 543-544. [See now also: Zeev Gries, *The Book as an Agent of Culture: 1700-1900* (Tel Aviv, 2002, in Hebrew).]

59 We arrived at this figure by using the number of books listed in some of the bibliographies, e.g. Sulzbach (*Jahrbuch der Jüdische-literarischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 21 [1930], p. 348) has 701 items, Fürth (*ibid.*, vol. 10 [1912], p. 167) lists 533 entries, for Dyhernfurth (see Marx as cited in note 13, p. 234) we have 132 books, for Wilhermsdorf (Freimann, *op. cit.*, see above note 30, p. 113) 150, for Dessau, Jessnitz, etc. (Freudenthal, *op. cit.*, above note 14, p. 270) 104 books are listed. Using these figures and extrapolating the rest, it seems that 2,500 for more than twenty presses is a rather conservative estimate. [See now: Vinograd's *Thesaurus*, above note 3.]

60 *Op. cit.*, (above note 3), p. 57.

61 Rabinowitz, *op. cit.* (above note 32), p. 98, end of note 1; but see Freudenthal, *MGWJ*, vol. 42 (1898), p. 84, note 3.

Hebrew books took place in Fürth in 1702,⁵⁰ and Shabbetai Bass was forced to face trials in Dyhernfurth in 1694 and again in 1712, having been accused by Jesuits for not excising from the Hebrew books published by him passages that allegedly contained anti-Christian statements.⁵¹ Internal Jewish control was exercised through the instrument of rabbinic approbations, the *haskamoth*.⁵² These served multiple purposes: they provided copyright protection, contained praise and recommendation for the author and attested to the reliability of the work from the point of view of religious beliefs and laws. The granting of *haskamoth* was one of the functions of the local rabbinate, but was also entrusted to the Council of Four Lands.⁵³ Accordingly, in many Hebrew works printed in Germany, the *haskamoth* were divided into two groups, one by German rabbis and the other by their Polish and Russian colleagues. *Haskamoth* occasionally were issued with reservations. Rabbi Ezekiel Katzenellenbogen of Altona granted an approbation to Rabbi Efraim Heckscher's *halakhic* work, but took exception to one of his particular rulings, depriving it of its validity.⁵⁴ There are Hebrew and Yiddish books that lack *haskamoth* completely. Usually, their absence is a clear indication of either a copyright violation or questionable contents.⁵⁵ The latter applies especially to the area of popular literature, mainly works of belletristics that were issued in Hebrew characters, many originally composed in High German.⁵⁶ Despite the fact that in such works, containing popular German novels, the explicitly

50 See Leopold Löwenstein, "Zur Geschichte der Juden in Fürth," in *Jahrbuch der jüdische-literarischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 10 (1912), p. 51.

51 See Brann's article cited above in note 6, pp. 560-562, 572-573.

52 See Rakover's book cited above in note 36 and, on an earlier period in Italy but containing much important general material as well, M. Benayahu's *Copyright, Authorization and Imprimatur for Hebrew Books Printed in Venice* (Jerusalem, 1971) (in Hebrew).

53 See Yisrael Heilprin, "The Council of Four Lands and the Hebrew Book," in *Kiryat Sefer*, vol. 9 (1932-1933), pp. 367-378; and his "Approbations of the Council of Four Lands in Poland," *ibid.*, vol. 11 (1934-1935), pp. 105-110, 252-264; and also *ibid.*, vol. 12 (1935-1936), pp. 250-253. It would be useful to investigate the differences between the Polish and German *haskamoth*, although it seems that they were basically similar and concerned with more or less the same issues.

54 *Adnei Paz* (Altona, 1743), verso of title-page.

55 See s.v. "Approbation," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, esp. p. 28.

56 See Arnold Paucker, "Yiddish Versions of Early German Prose Novels," in *The Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. 10 (1959), pp. 151-167, and his "The Yiddish Versions of the Schildbürgerbuch," in *Yivo Belter*, vol. 44 (1973), pp. 59-77; and his other articles cited there in notes 18-19. See also Zfatman's book cited above in note 44.

hospitality of the son-in-law and daughter of the influential Court Jew, Joseph van Geldern, during the time that he was engaged in the supervision of the printing in Berlin.⁴⁵

Rabbi Yair Haim Bacharach also dealt with the significance of the availability of efficient printing facilities for Hebrew works. He described the devastation of his city, Worms, in 1689, and his decision to settle in Frankfurt a. Main, among whose attractions he singled out the existence of a good, well-organized printing press. Once in Frankfurt, Bacharach began the publication of his book which was due to the favourable circumstances in the new domicile.⁴⁶ In a similar vein, Rabbi Ezekiel Katzenellenbogen, of Altona, Hamburg and Wandsbek, in the introduction to his collection of responsa, counted among his blessings the establishment of a printing press for Hebrew books in Altona which provided him with the opportunity to publish his work.⁴⁷

An important aspect of the history of Hebrew publishing was the issue of freedom of the press, or rather the lack of it, namely censorship.⁴⁸ Control over publishing rested not only with the civil authorities but also with the rabbinate and internal Jewish communal leadership. These authorities had the right to regulate the flow and contents of Hebrew and Yiddish books. The privileges extended to Jewish printers included, as a matter of course, the requirement that expressions that might be construed as offensive to Christianity be excluded from the text of the works to be produced. The enforcement of this provision, however, was not as strict as it had been when it was in the hands of centralised Church censorship which originated in sixteenth-century Italy. As an example of less stringent attitudes, reference should again be made to the Frankfurt 1697-1699 Talmud edition as well as to subsequent editions of the Talmud produced in various German cities.⁴⁹ Despite the more liberal times, accusations against Hebrew books continued to be levelled and confiscation of

45 Verso of title page of *Zinzeneth Menahem* (Berlin, 1719).

46 *Havvyoth Yair* (Frankfurt a. Main, 1699), f. [2a].

47 *Keneseth Yehezkeel* (Altona, 1732), f. [2a].

48 On censorship of Hebrew books in general see William Popper, *The Censorship of Hebrew Books* (New York, 1899), reprinted, with an introduction by Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger (New York, 1969). Also Carmilly-Weinberger, *Censorship and Freedom of Expression in Jewish History* (New York, 1977).

49 See above note 36.

and elsewhere deserve to be remembered, too.⁴³ Despite some recent, important scholarship on the subject,⁴⁴ much more remains to be done and it is to be hoped that the history of Hebrew printing in Germany in the period will soon attract the kind of scholarly attention that it deserves.

Beyond the study of the history of the various printing presses, there are other areas that could offer insights into the life of the Jewish community, especially in the cultural and religious realm. In the following, we shall briefly refer to some such aspects. The existence of well-run printing establishments served as a stimulus to many authors to publish their works and to migrate to places where such presses operated. On the title-page of a book on talmudic *aggadoth*, *Zinzeneth Menahem*, by Menahem Mendel ben Zevi Hirsch, we find the text of a letter issued by the Council of the Four Lands in Yaroslav in 1691. The signatories recommend the publication of the book and urge that the printer who will undertake the printing of the book, should proceed efficiently and quickly, in order to enable the author to return to his home without delay, otherwise the students in his *yeshiva* would be forced to be idle in their Talmud study. For some reason, the admonition of the Council was not heeded and the book remained unpublished until 1719 when printers in Berlin completed its 100 folios in four months. Rabbi Menahem Mendel enjoyed the

43 See the literature cited above in note 3. See also Aron Freimann, *A Gazetteer of Hebrew Printing* (New York, 1946) reprinted in *Hebrew Printing and Bibliography*, ed. by Charles Berlin (New York, 1976), pp. 255-340; see also Sh. Shunami, *Bibliography of Jewish Bibliographies*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem, 1965), pp. 510-514; and also H.B. Friedberg, *History of Hebrew Typography of the Following Cities in Central Europe: Altona, etc.* (Antwerp, 1935) (in Hebrew).

44 See especially Bernhard Brillig's articles in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, Kirjath Sepher, and elsewhere. Mosche N. Rosenfeld of London has published a large number of articles on Hebrew printing in Fürth in the bulletin of the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Fürth*. I understand that he is also planning to publish a comprehensive work on the history of Hebrew printing in Fürth. His paper on centres of Hebrew printing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is scheduled to appear in a book to be published by the New York Public Library in 1988 [= Moshe N. Rosenfeld, "The Development of Hebrew Printing in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", in: *A Sign and a Witness: 2000 Years of Hebrew Books and Illuminated Manuscripts* (New York, 1988), pp. 92-100.] On Yiddish books printed in the period, much important material is found in the works of Chone Shmeruk and his school at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. See his *Yiddish Literature. Aspects of its History* (Tel-Aviv, 1978); and his *The Illustrations in Yiddish Books of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Jerusalem, 1986); and Sarah Zfatman, *Yiddish Narrative Prose* (Jerusalem, 1985); as well as Chava Turniansky, "The 'Bentsherel' and the Sabbath-Hymns," in *Alei Sefer*, vol. 10 (1982), pp. 51-92 (all in Hebrew).

regarded as some kind of precursor of nineteenth-century *Jüdische Wissenschaft*.⁴⁰

Let us now turn to another scholarly press, the one which was established by the famous Rabbi Jakob Emden in Altona.⁴¹ In 1743, Emden received a royal privilege from Christian VII of Denmark that allowed him to print Hebrew books. The privilege contained two restrictive conditions: Emden must refrain from printing books in German and in Latin and he must submit all books printed by him for approval to the local rabbinic and lay authorities. The first condition, apparently imposed on Emden at the insistence of a Christian publisher who feared that the new press would compete with his, was fulfilled. We have no knowledge of any non-Hebrew book ever printed by Emden. On the other hand, the second condition was flouted by the controversial rabbi. Emden published a stream of polemical pamphlets against his great foe, Rabbi Jonathan Eibeschütz, without proper approbation. Emden realized the power of the press as a political tool and used it with great enthusiasm. Many of his tracts were published without a prepared manuscript, improvising while setting the type and camouflaging the fact that they were produced in Altona.⁴² The fact that a scholar of Emden's stature invested his time and effort in learning the printing craft himself and the trouble he took to acquire the equipment and the type, as well as his skillful use of the press in his polemics against his adversary, indicate that Emden had recognised the potential of the printing press as an effective and quick instrument in furthering his cause. In this respect, Emden may be compared to other eighteenth-century public figures in Europe and in the American colonies who made similar use of the press. In addition to the Hebrew printing presses mentioned above there existed many others, some major and some minor. The very prolific Fürth press should be singled out, but others, in Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, Wandsbek, Homburg vor der Höhe, Karlsruhe,^{42a} Neuwied, Offenbach, Rödelheim

40 Compare Altmann's remarks on David Fränkel's commentary on the Palestinian Talmud in his work cited above (note 14), top of p. 14.

41 On Emden's activities as printer of Hebrew books see Bernhard Brilling, "Die Privilegien der hebräischen Buchdruckerien in Altona (1726-1836)," in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, vol. 9 (1969-1971), pp. 155-156 and vol. 11 (1976), pp. 41-56.

42 *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 156 and p. 165, note 16.

42a [See now: Moshe Nathan Rosenfeld, *Jewish Printing in Karlsruhe* (London, 1997).]

printing press in his native Hanau, beginning in 1708.³⁷ It is worthwhile to call attention to the fact that Bashuysen printed not only such standard commentaries to the Bible as that of Don Isaac Abarbanel, but also difficult and very technical books on Talmud. In 1712, Bashuysen published the pilpulistic novellae on various tractates of the Talmud written by Rabbi Yona Teomim (*Kikayon de-Yona*) and in 1714 issued a book called *Sugyoth ha-Talmud* by Moses of Rohatyn, in the original Hebrew, with a Latin translation, under the title *Clavis Talmudica*. This work was an important methodological introduction to the pilpulistic way of Talmud study as it was practiced in many Polish and German *yeshivoth*.³⁸ Apparently, Bashuysen believed that without an understanding of the rules governing the specific method of *pilpul*, one could not understand the mentality of the contemporary rabbis. Such deep familiarity with rabbinic writings must have developed through personal contacts, and the interaction between scholars of different faiths and scholarly backgrounds must have exerted an influence on both sides. The large number of Latin dissertations produced in German universities on Jewish topics by non-Jews shows one side of the coin.³⁹ It is less obvious to observe the other side, namely the influence of Christian scholars on the rabbis. One may speculate that the exposure of rabbinic scholars to Christian orientalists may have led some of the former to become more inclined toward a historical, methodological and more critical approach to their own heritage. A thorough re-examination of rabbinic literature produced during this period may detect such influences even in the traditional fields of learning and may point to the existence of a subtle, perhaps hardly discernible phenomenon which could be

37 Ernst J. Zimmermann's "Die Hanauer hebräischen Drucke (1610-1744)" in *Hanauisches Magazin* (Supplement to *Han. Anzeiger*), Jg. 3, Nr. 7 (1. Juni 1924) lists 52 entries according to Shlomo Shunami's bibliography (cited in note 43), number 2880. Unfortunately, Zimmermann's work was not available to me. On an earlier period in Hebrew printing in Hanau see Herbert C. Zafren, "A Probe into Hebrew Printing in Hanau in the 17th Century or How Quantifiable is Hebrew Typography," in *Studies in Judaica, Karaitica and Islamica presented to Leon Nemoy* (Ramat Gan, 1982), pp. 273-285.

38 On the nature of *pilpul* in Germany around this time see Hayyim Zalman Dimitrovsky, "Al derekh ha-pilpul," in *Salo W. Baron Jubilee Volume*, Hebrew section (Jerusalem, 1974), pp. 128-130; see also his "Leket Yosef and Sugyot ha-Talmud," in *Alei Sefer*, vol. 4 (1977), pp. 90-98.

39 See the extensive literature and list in Raphael Loewe's article in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 8, cols. 9-71 ("Hebraists, Christian").

and other Hebrew books in the wake of the Chmielnicki massacres, to the frequent fires that destroyed Jewish books and the resulting dire need for Talmud volumes so that the study of Talmud in the *yeshivoth* could be continued. According to Oppenheim, the entire Jewish educational system was endangered because of the lack of sufficient copies of the Talmud. Needless to say, Oppenheim heaped praise on Lehmann for his generosity and mentioned that Lehmann distributed half of the edition to needy scholars, free of charge. As a result of the involvement of Christian scholars and businessmen in this venture, the text of the Talmud itself was cleansed from some of the corruptions that had previously disfigured it as an outcome of the intervention of Church censorship. Although the title-pages of this edition bear a statement that the volumes were printed in accordance with the regulations of the Council of Trent and that they followed the censored Basel Talmud (1578-1581), in actual fact, many passages and the entire Tractate *Avodah Zarah* (on idolatry), which had been omitted in Basel, were restored in Frankfurt.³⁵ The publication of the Frankfurt Talmud was rightly considered an event of major importance for the Jewish community and, apparently, the edition was rather rapidly sold out. Soon, other complete editions of the Talmud were printed, in Frankfurt a. Main, in Berlin and Sulzbach, and the resulting fierce competition and occasional infringements of prior privileges and copyrights kept many secular and rabbinic courts busy.³⁶ In any case, the first complete edition of the Talmud ever printed in Germany demonstrates the cooperation of Jew and Gentile, scholarly and financial, as well as Eastern and Western European Jewish forces.

More limited in nature, serving narrower interests and smaller geographic areas, were the printing presses established by a Christian and a rabbinic scholar, respectively. Heinrich Jacob Bashuysen, a Calvinist theologian and accomplished Hebraist, in addition to his translations of rabbinic works into Latin, had also operated a Hebrew

35 See Rabinowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

36 On the various editions of the Talmud printed in German cities see Rabinowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 101, pp. 108-112, 115-117, 120-124, on legal controversies see *ibid.*, pp. 106-107, 111, 121 and 123-124; see also Nahum Rakover, *Ha-haskamoth li-sefarim ki-yesod li-zekhuth ha-yotzrim* (Jerusalem, 1970), pp. 25-39. [See now also: Marvin J. Heller, *Printing the Talmud; A History of the individual Treatises Printed from 1700 to 1750*, Leiden, 1999.]

century, with the exception of the fledgling Zolkiew press that was established in 1692.³¹ Accordingly, the needs of Russian and Polish Jews had to be supplied from abroad and the German Hebrew presses were eager to do so.

As an excellent illustration of this state of affairs, mention should be made of the 1697-1699 Frankfurt an der Oder edition of the Babylonian Talmud.³² This major publication effort was the result of a combination of forces that joined together to produce the first complete Talmud in Germany. Behrend Lehmann,³³ the famous and influential Court Jew, who was Polish Resident to the Court of Brandenburg, underwrote the expenses of this major undertaking. According to some sources, Lehmann spent 50,000 talers to produce the work. He was also instrumental, through his excellent connections, in obtaining the required permission for the Talmud. Indeed, such permissions were granted by Frederick III of Brandenburg and by King Leopold I. The application for the privilege was drafted by a Christian scholar, perhaps Johann Christoph Beckmann, professor at the University of Frankfurt an der Oder and business associate of the Gentile bookdealer, Michael Gottschalck. The latter operated a Hebrew printing press and had sufficient technical means and adequate staff to carry out such a major undertaking as the printing of the Talmud. Gottschalck also used the services of M. Berninger, a Christian engraver, who was the artist in charge of the figures that were incorporated into the edition. The background of this venture was described by Rabbi David Oppenheim in his approbation.³⁴ Oppenheim referred to the burnings of the Talmud

31 See Hayyim Dov (Bernhard) Friedberg, *History of Hebrew Typography in Poland* (Tel-Aviv, 1950) (in Hebrew), p. 41 and esp. note 2 there; pp. 59-60, 62-63 and esp. note 4 on p. 63. See also I. Heilprin, "The Council of Four Lands and the Hebrew Book," in *Kiryat Sefer*, vol. 9 (1932-1933), pp. 373-374 (in Hebrew).

32 See Max Freudenthal, "Zum Jubiläum des ersten Talmuddrucks in Deutschland," in *MGWJ*, vol. 42 (1898), pp. 80-89, 134-143, 180-185, 229-236 and 278-285 and Raphael Nathan Rabinowitz, *Maamar al hadpasath ha-Talmud*, ed. by Abraham Meir Habermann (Jerusalem, 1952), pp. 96-100. See also Manfred R. Lehmann, "A Jewish Financier's Lasting Investment," in *Tradition*, vol. 19 (1981), pp. 340-347; Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 225 and see also Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Philosemitismus in Barock*, (Tübingen, 1952), pp. 188-189 with quotations from an eyewitness report describing the scene in the printing house during the printing of the Talmud.

33 See Stern, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-85 and *passim*.

34 His approbation on the verso of the title-page of Tractate *Berakhoth*.

theosophical teachings of the Jews which contained many passages from the *Zohar* in Latin translation. The publication of *Kabbala Denudata* was completed in 1684 and in the same year Moses Bloch printed a magnificent, folio edition of the *Zohar* in the original, accompanied by a Latin dedication to Christian August composed by Baron Knorr von Rosenroth. There can be no doubt that Christian August's motives in granting Bloch the privilege to print Hebrew books were intellectual: namely, his desire to become familiar with Jewish mystical teachings.²⁸ Bloch took advantage of the grant and launched Sulzbach as one of the most prolific of Hebrew presses in Europe. From 1684 until 1851, Bloch, his successors, as well as other printers produced well over seven hundred Hebrew and Yiddish titles bearing the imprint Sulzbach, thereby making the name of this small Bavarian city well known in every Jewish community.²⁹

In contrast to Sulzbach, the Wilhermsdorf Hebrew press was founded as a result of economic interests. Wolfgang Julius, Count of Hohenlohe, granted the privilege to establish a Hebrew press to Isaac Cohen, for the purpose of supporting the production of the local paper mills. The first Hebrew book left the Wilhermsdorf press in 1670 and in subsequent years many important, elegant and large format books were produced by the Hebrew printers of the city.³⁰ The convergence of various factors, chief among them the involvement of wealthy Court Jews who were ready to supply the initial financing, and the interest of local rulers in the large and active Jewish book market, encouraged the flourishing of more than twenty independent Hebrew presses in Germany in the period under consideration. The consumers were members of the German-Jewish communities and, to a smaller extent, German Christian Hebraists, but to a large measure it was the Eastern European community that had the capacity of absorbing a considerable portion of the production. Russia and Poland had no printing presses in the second half of the seventeenth

28 On *Kabbala Denudata* and its influence see *Mishnath ha-Zohar*, by I. Tishby, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1971), p. 48 and pp. 113-114.

29 See Weinberg, *loc. cit.*, vol. 1 (1903), pp. 19-202, vol. 15 (1923), pp. 125-155 and vol. 21 (1930), pp. 319-370.

30 See Aron Freimann, "Annalen der hebräischen Druckerei in Wilhermsdorf," in *Festschrift zum siebenzigsten Geburtstage A. Berliner's* (Frankfurt a. Main, 1903), pp. 100-115. [See now: Moshe Nathan Rosenfeld, *Jewish Printing in Wilhermsdorf*, London, 1995.]

astronomical work, *Nehmad ve-naim*, by David Gans, remained in manuscript for one hundred and thirty years until the Jessnitz printers issued it for the first time in 1743.²² In the field of rabbinical studies, an outstanding achievement was the Maimonidean code, *Mishneh Torah*, which included the text of previously unpublished commentaries as well as geometrical figures specially etched for the new edition, all arranged in a pleasing typographical harmony.²³

Back in Dessau, the son of Moses Wulff, Elijah, re-opened the printing house for a short time in 1742.²⁴ Among the most important publications leaving the renewed Dessau press was a commentary on the Talmud of Jerusalem by David Fränkel,²⁵ the teacher of Moses Mendelssohn. The interest in the Jerusalem Talmud, usually neglected by traditional students of rabbinics, is another indication of the widening horizons characterising the period. The importance of the intellectual atmosphere that prevailed in Dessau for the shaping of Mendelssohn's personality and the role of Hebrew printing in that city and vicinity in creating that atmosphere were fully recognized by Max Freudenthal who devoted more than half of his book, *Aus der Heimat Mendelssohns*, to the printing history of the Dessau, Halle, Jessnitz and Köthen presses.²⁶

Hebrew printing presses in many other places were opened up one after the other. Some were established because of scholarly interests, others owed their existence to commercial ambitions. In Sulzbach, Northern Bavaria, Prince Christian August allowed the printer Moses Bloch to settle there and to open a Hebrew printing press.²⁷ The prince was strongly drawn to mysticism and deeply interested in *Kabbalah*. He invited the Christian theologian and poet, Baron Knorr von Rosenroth, to join his court and encouraged him to publish his *Kabbala Denudata*, a study of the

22 Freudenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-223 and p. 264, No. 87. See also André Néher, *Jewish Thought and the Scientific Revolution of the Sixteenth Century. David Gans (1541-1613) and his Times* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 67-71.

23 Freudenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-219 and pp. 261-263, No. 85.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 219.

25 Printed in 1743, see Freudenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-230 and pp. 240-241, No. 19; see also Altmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

26 Freudenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-276 and 291-304.

27 See Magnus Weinberg, "Die hebräischen Druckereien in Sulzbach," in *Jahrbuch der jüdisch-literarischen Gesellschaft*, vol. I (1903), pp. 19-202, vol. 15 (1923), pp. 125-155 and vol. 21 (1930), pp. 319-370.

service of King Leopold I. The King was one of the pioneers of modernisation and Wulff was perhaps the most capable, dynamic, influential and wealthy Jew of his time. Wulff was deeply interested in Jewish matters. He established a *Klaus*, but also a Hebrew printing press in Dessau, in 1694. The privilege granted to him by the Duchess Henrietta Katherina included most liberal conditions: the new firm was to enjoy complete tax and duty freedom and these freedoms were to be extended to the staff, too.¹⁵ More than 30 books were published between 1696 and 1704.¹⁶ Wulff himself, because of his entanglements in stormy financial and legal affairs, relinquished his role as the principal of the firm and transferred his press, equipment and stock to one of his relatives.¹⁷ The press continued to operate in the neighbouring cities of Halle, Jessnitz and Köthen.¹⁸ The highlight of this press was its Jessnitz period. Not only standard biblical, rabbinic and liturgical works were published in large numbers, but also important books in other areas of learning. Mention should be made of a few: a new, etymological dictionary of the Hebrew language by an Ashkenazi author, Yehudah Aryeh Loeb, who settled in Provence, included an introduction that dealt with the history of languages in general and in which the author had also announced his plan to compose a book on French glosses found in Rashi's commentary on the Pentateuch.¹⁹ Another interesting book printed in Jessnitz was the second edition of the medical and scientific encyclopaedia, *Maaseh Tuviah*, by Tobias Cohen. The work of this famous physician contained the latest information on medicine and the natural sciences.²⁰ *The Guide for the Perplexed* by Maimonides was published in Jessnitz in 1742, for the first time after two hundred years, the previous editions having been published in the middle of the sixteenth century in Italy.²¹ The

Freudenthal's book deals with Wulff and his family. See also Selma Stern, *The Court Jew. A Contribution to the History of Absolutism in Central Europe* (Philadelphia, 1950), index; and Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn, A Biographical Study* (Philadelphia, 1973), pp. 5-8.

15 Freudenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-160.

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 163-173 and pp. 235-246.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 174 and p. 181.

18 For a list of books printed in Halle, see Freudenthal *op. cit.*, pp. 246-249, for Jessnitz, *ibid.*, pp. 251-270 and for Köthen, *ibid.*, pp. 249-251.

19 *Oholei Yehudah* (Jessnitz, 1719), f. [4b].

20 Printed in 1721.

21 Freudenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-221 and p. 259, No. 82. See also Altmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

Dyhernfurth, he thanked God for making the heart of the local prince favourably inclined towards him by granting him the privilege to settle there and to establish a Hebrew printing press.⁷ Bass eagerly availed himself of the new opportunity. His first publication, *Beith Shemuel*, a commentary on *Even Haezer*, a section of Joseph Caro's *Shulhan Arukh*, composed by Samuel ben Uri Shraga, was ready even before the agreed deadline.⁸ Samuel himself was of Polish origin, he studied in Cracow and served as rabbi in Szydlowiecz. He came to Dyhernfurth in 1689 in order to supervise the printing of his book. Soon afterwards, he was invited to become rabbi and head of the famous *yeshiva* in one of the most important Jewish communities in Germany, in Fürth. It was there that Samuel published a second edition of his work,⁹ incorporating into it comments and suggestions that emerged as a result of his learning together with his pupils in the Fürth *yeshiva*. Subsequently, Samuel returned to Poland permanently.¹⁰ These brief sketches of the lives of Bass and Samuel may serve as typical illustrations of the steady flow of two-way traffic between East and West¹¹ and of the mutual enrichment derived from this mobility. The basic commodity of the Jews was easy to transport: it consisted of knowledge, or as Bass formulated it: "wherever Samuel went, his house [the House of Torah] went with him."¹² Bass' first effort was followed by many more and during the existence of the press, operated by him and by his descendants until 1762, hundreds of Hebrew and Yiddish books were published. The output included Bibles, Talmuds, codes, responsa, prayerbooks, sermons, ethical and kabbalistic works, but also books of popular entertainment in Yiddish, and even a book on arithmetic.¹³

Let us now turn to another Hebrew publishing and printing venture. In Anhalt-Dessau, we find the Court Jew, Moses Benjamin Wulff,¹⁴ in the

7 *Beith Shemuel* (Dyhernfurth, 1689), afterword by Bass, f. 106b.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Fürth 1694.

10 See *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 14, cols. 814-815.

11 See Moses A. Shulvass, *From East to West, The Westward Migration of Jews from Eastern Europe during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Detroit, 1971).

12 See note 6.

13 See the list in Moses Marx's "A Bibliography of Hebrew Printing in Dyhernfurth, 1689-1718," in *Studies in Jewish Bibliography*, etc. (cited above in note 4), pp. 221-234, esp. numbers 45, 82, 94 and 108.

14 See Max Freudenthal, *Aus der Heimat Mendelssohns* (Berlin, 1900). A large part of

Our first example is Shabbetai Bass,⁴ printer, bibliographer and rabbinic scholar. Bass was a native of Kalisz, Poland, where his parents were killed in a pogrom in 1655. He and his brother survived and fled to Prague. There he became an assistant to the cantor of the *Altneuschul*. After a while, he moved to Amsterdam. The Amsterdam Sefardi community made a tremendous impression on Bass to which he gave expression in the introduction to his book, *Siftei Yeshenim*.⁵ In a glowing portrayal of the advanced, progressive ways of the Sefardim, Bass described the organized, graduated, communally financed educational system of the Sefardi Jews of Amsterdam and contrasted them with what he considered to be the backwardness of the Eastern European Jews. *Siftei Yeshenim* is the first Hebrew bibliography compiled by a Jewish author and in it Bass provided not only lists and classifications of books, but also a programme for the establishment of a Jewish educational system which could properly serve the cultural and religious needs of all elements of Jewish society: the learned, the simple, the child, those who were familiar with Hebrew as well as those who only knew Yiddish. In this book, Bass demonstrated openness towards secular subjects, such as mathematics and medicine, and he even included a list of rabbinic works which were available in Latin translations.

The various interests of Bass and his concern for the raising of the educational level of the Jews, prompted him to acquire the technical knowledge required for the establishment of a Hebrew printing press. In 1689, Bass took up residence in a small Silesian town, Dyhernfurth. The town was founded just shortly before this time and the authorities, in order to promote the development of the new locality, granted Bass and a number of Jewish assistants the right to settle in the town and to start operating a Hebrew printing house.⁶

He and his assistants, mainly Jewish craftsmen from Prague and Cracow, constituted the foundation of the Jewish community in the new town. In the foreword to the first book that Bass published in

4 On the life and personality of Bass see the bibliography in Herbert C. Zafren, "Dyhernfurth and Shabtai Bass: a Typographic Profile", in *Studies in Jewish Bibliography, History and Literature in Honour of I. Edward Kiev* (New York, 1971), pp. 546-547.

5 Amsterdam, 1680, f. 8a-b.

6 See Markus Brann, "Geschichte und Annalen der Dyhernfurter Druckerei," in *Montasschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums (MGWJ)*, vol. 40 (1896), pp. 474-477.

however, the period still remains to be looked upon as inward-directed, self-contained, stagnating and rigid. It seems that a systematic and extensive study of the intellectual life of the German-Jewish community in the century preceding the entry of Jews into modern society could lead to substantive change in this perception. By choosing to explore, albeit tentatively, some aspects of Hebrew printing and publishing in Germany during this period, we hope to gain new insight into the cultural, intellectual and religious conditions of the Jews. This activity, although it may look peripheral now, occupied central stage then, and therefore may serve as a good instrument to be used for drawing a cultural profile of pre-emancipation German Jewry. After the Thirty Years' War, in the middle of the seventeenth century, the rulers of the numerous small sovereignties on German territory were eager to reconstruct the land and to develop strong, independent principalities. Large numbers of Jews from Polish and Russian localities devastated by Chmielnicki, others who were expelled from Vienna in 1670, as well as co-religionists who fled the turmoil in Buda that resulted from recapture of the city from the Turks in 1686, gravitated towards the German lands, where prosperity and relative protection awaited them. In the wake of this movement Hebrew printing in Germany rapidly expanded and, by the end of the seventeenth century, a steady and ever increasing flow of Hebrew and Yiddish books left the recently established printing presses.³ In order to demonstrate the multifaceted nature of this activity, a few personalities and trends have been selected for describing the phenomenal expansion of Hebrew printing in a relatively short period of time. Through these selections we hope to illustrate the interplay of many factors which were responsible for this development.

the eighteenth century, mainly from the point of view of the social background. See Jacob Katz's discussion of Shohet's book in *Out of the Ghetto* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), pp. 34ff.

- 3 See Moritz Steinschneider and David Cassel, *Jüdische Typographie und Jüdischer Buchhandel*, originally published in Ersch und Gruber, *Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*, Teil 28 (Leipzig, 1851, reprinted in Jerusalem 1938), pp. 57-70. This is still the most comprehensive survey on the subject. See also *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (German), vol. 6, cols. 66-70: *Druckwesen* and *The Hebrew Book: An Historical Survey*, ed. by Raphael Posner and Israel Ta-Shema (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 106-111. [See now: The brief chapter on Hebrew printing in Germany by Mordechai Breuer, in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, Ed. by Michael A. Meyer, Vol. I (New York, 1996), pp. 222-226; For comprehensive lists of Hebrew books printed in various German localities see now: Y. Vinograd, *Thesaurus of the Hebrew Book*, Part II, *Places of Print*, Jerusalem, 1993.]

Hebrew Printing and Publishing in Germany, 1650-1750. On Jewish Book Culture and the Emergence of Modern Jewry

There was a century in early modern Jewish cultural and religious history in Europe that perhaps could best be characterized as an orphan. The approximately one hundred years that fall between the Chmielnicki massacres and the events surrounding the appearance of the pseudo-messiah Sabbatai Zvi at one end, and the emergence of *Hasidism* and Enlightenment at the other end, i.e. the second half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century, are usually accorded scant treatment and are denied the kind of scholarly attention given to other, more spectacular periods in European Jewish cultural and religious history.¹ In contrast to the times that begin with Mendelssohn, the century preceding him is relegated into a kind of twilight zone that is regarded as the end of the vanishing Jewish Middle Ages. On the other hand, the years between 1650 and 1713 were recently characterized as a time when Jews, in the realm of economic and political activity, exerted “the most profound and pervasive impact on the West which they were ever to exert, whilst still retaining a large measure of social and cultural cohesion.”² Culturally and religiously,

- 1 This paper is based on lectures delivered in 1986 at the Leo Baeck Institute, New York and at Yeshiva University, in conjunction with the latter's exhibition, *Ashkenaz: The German Jewish Heritage*. I wish to express my deep gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Ludwig Jesselson for encouraging me to explore this subject during a sabbatical year that I spent at Yeshiva University in 1985-1986. I would also like to thank Yehudah Mirsky for his helpful comments on a draft of this paper.
- 2 Jonathan I. Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550-1750* (Oxford, 1985), p. [1]. Israel explicitly states that he has “not attempted to say anything new, or import any substantially new emphases, on the religious history of the period.” Surprisingly, Israel does not even mention in his bibliography any of Jacob Katz's books that are relevant to the period. Attention should be called here to Azriel Shohet's *Im hillufei tekufoth (Beginnings of the Haskalah among German Jewry)* (Jerusalem, 1960) (in Hebrew) that deals with the first half of

small local community acquired a printed *Mahzor* or *Siddur*. The more generalized customs were adopted, and the local usage went out of practice. In addition, the role of the *hazan* as the person who had the authority of excluding or including certain non-obligatory *piyyutim* or private prayers was assumed by the printer, and once his prayerbooks were distributed, they became accepted as standard by worshippers.

The form and direction of Talmud studies, ever since the end of the 15th century, were shaped in a most decisive way by the first printed editions of the Talmud. H.Z. Dimitrovsky gathered and studied all the surviving fragments of the Spanish and Portuguese Talmud incunabula. He then pointed out the substantial variants that exist between the Iberian and Italian traditions.²⁶ The Iberian tractates preserve the textual traditions of the Spanish academies, whereas the Italian Soncino tractates reflect those of Ashkenaz. Since the Soncino volumes became the foundation of all later editions, and since the Iberian prints disappeared or were destroyed as a result of the expulsion, it was the Ashkenazi tradition of transmitting the text of the Talmud that became the dominant one for all Jewry. Similarly, the decision of the Soncino printers to print Rashi on one side of the Talmud text and certain kinds of *Tosafot* on the other side changed the learning habits of all students of Talmud for all times.²⁷

The publication by Yeshiva University of Gershon Cohen's fine and beautiful catalog is surely an event worth celebrating. It carries incunabula research substantially forward, and we hope that it will help to provide inspiration and serve as the stimulus for further study of this multifaceted topic.²⁸

The people who made this great achievement possible deserve the gratitude of all lovers of the Hebrew book.

26 *ibid.*

27 See E.E. Urbach, *The Tosaphists*. 4th edition. vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1980), pp. 29-31.

28 [There is a rich literature on Hebrew incunabula that appeared after the publication of this article. I would like to single out here A.K. Offenberger's *Hebrew incunabula in Public Collections* (Nieuwkoop, 1990), with its rich bibliography as well as the various publications of S.M. Jakerson. See e.g. his "Hebrew incunabula in the Asiatic Museum of St. Petersburg", in: *Judaic in the Slavic Realm*, ed. by Z.M. Baker (Binghamton, N.Y., 2003), pp. 37-37, and his *Catalogue of Hebrew Inconabula from the Collection of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, New York and Jerusalem, 1-2, 2004-2005.]

Kimchi's *Sefer ha-shorashim* that saw 3 editions in fewer than 20 years). On the other hand, we have only two books on philosophy — the *Guide to the Perplexed* by Maimonides and the *Ikarim* by Albo — and none on Kabbalah.²¹

In this connection, one must also raise the problem of book distribution and book trade. Strangely, many of the rarest Hebrew incunabula, especially the Iberian ones, survived in remote places such as Persia and Yemen, and among the fragments of the Cairo *Genizah*. We know very little about how they got there.

Let us now turn to what is, in my view, the most fascinating area of research in connection with early Hebrew printing. What was the impact of Hebrew printed books on Jewish life in the generation in which it was introduced and in the period following it? The only comprehensive article on the subject was published by Abraham Berliner about a century ago.²² There are, however, in the works of Isaiah Sonne,²³ and, in our generation, those of Sh.Z. Havlin,²⁴ H.Z. Dimitrovsky,²⁵ and others, discussions that offer many valuable insights about the decisive influences of printing on the mind of the Jews.

A number of practices were significantly changed as a result of Hebrew printing. In manuscripts, the order of Biblical books was not uniform. In most manuscripts, the Prophets were copied according to the order mentioned in the Talmud: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah. The sequence in early printed Bibles is Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. In manuscripts, the book of Ruth usually precedes Psalms; in early printed books, it is Psalms that stand at the head of Hagiographa. In both cases, all subsequent editions followed the arrangements found in early printed Bibles.

Perhaps the greatest influence of printing is on the standardization of liturgical texts. Many of the minor local variations disappeared once a

21 See A. Marx, "The Choice of books by the printers of incunabula," in: *To Dr. R. [A.S.W. Rosenbach]* (Philadelphia, 1946), pp. 154-173.

22 Abraham Berliner, *Ueber den Einfluss des ersten hebraeischen Buchdrucks auf den Cultus und die Cultur der Juden*, published originally in 1893-1894 and translated and published in his *Ketavim nivharim*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1949), pp. 113-143.

23 See his "Tiyulim be-historiyah u-ve-bibliyografiyah," in: *The Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*, Hebrew Section (New York, 1950), pp. 209-235.

24 See introduction to *Responsa of R. Solomon ben Abraham Adret; first edition, Rome ca. 1470* (Jerusalem, 1976).

25 See his *S'ridei Bayli; an historical and bibliographical introduction* (New York, 1979).

would continue to be in demand. But as typography developed and spread rapidly as an independent instrument of producing books, Farissol realized that the new technique would inevitably render his craft obsolete. His reaction was to disassociate himself from printing, and his name never occurs in any early printed book. Farissol continued to write beautiful manuscripts by hand well into the 16th century. His scribal activity, at a time when printing was already highly developed, may have been an act of protest, as if to demonstrate the excellence and superiority of the scribe's art above the mechanical skills of the printer.

The happy convergence of Provencal, as well as German scholars and artisans to prosperous Italy — in Rome, Mantua and Ferrara — in the third quarter of the 15th century, gave the impetus to the quick emergence and rapid growth of Hebrew printing.

When we turn our attention to questions concerning the kinds of books that were selected to be printed by the first printers and the manuscripts that were used for establishing the texts, we are dealing with a topic that has a bearing on the general cultural, intellectual, and religious profile of the period. The scope of this type of inquiry must encompass not only Italy, but also Spain and Portugal, where Hebrew printing was practiced during a shorter period, beginning a little later than in Italy, and coming to an end with the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1497. In a recent publication, Robert Bonfil deals with the nature and contents of the libraries of Renaissance Jews.²⁰ Bonfil emphasizes the importance of comparing the degree of popularity of certain works with others, in order to determine the cultural interests of the community. A work that was rarely copied or printed, even if very learned and important in itself, could not have left its imprint on society. Bonfil, as did other scholars before him, examined some extant library inventories from that period and found that there were very few books on philosophy and Kabbalah in Jewish libraries in the second part of the 15th century. Indeed, among the incunabula, the most commonly found categories are: Bible; Bible commentaries by Rashi, Nahmanides, Kimchi, Gersonides and ibn Ezra; codes by Maimonides, Jacob ben Asher and Moses of Coucy; several tractates of the Babylonian Talmud; liturgical works; certain popular ethical works; and works on grammar (e.g.,

20 R. Bonfil, *The Rabbinate in Renaissance Italy* (Jerusalem, 1979), pp. 174-179.

Another datum may be added: a Renaissance Jew by the name of Abraham Farissol worked as a scribe of Hebrew manuscripts, among his many activities and talents. From a highly plausible reconstruction by Ruderman, we know that Farissol left Avignon for Italy in the year 1468 or 1469.¹⁶ As noted above, 1469 was the year in which, in all probability, the first printed Hebrew book appeared in Rome. Farissol lived for a while in Ferrara, where Abraham ben Hayyim the Dyer was engaged in operating a printing press using the type of Abraham Conat from Mantua. Furthermore, Farissol's handwriting — which we know from numerous examples — was similar to the printed type employed in 1476-1477 by the Mantua and Ferrara printers. Ruderman therefore suggests that Farissol may have been one of the scribes whose manuscripts served as a model for the Conat type.¹⁷ On the basis of Ruderman's study, one may further consider Farissol's career as having a bearing on the history of the infancy of Hebrew printing.

It is common knowledge that the early printers encountered opposition by practitioners of the ancient art of the scribes. The scribes had a vested interest in protecting their craft from the new invention that many considered to be the devil's work. We do not have any explicit sources in Jewish literature, as far as I know, about such tension between new printers and old scribes. Farissol's case may, however, suggest the existence of such tensions. At first, as just mentioned, Farissol may have been involved in the pioneering stage of printing by Conat. Conat still refers to the new art of typography as *ketivah*, writing. Also, he considers it *avodat kodesh*, holy work, probably indicating that printed works in Hebrew deserve the same amount of respect and possess the same sanctity as their manuscript counterparts. Interestingly, the question of the sanctity of printed books was the subject of numerous responsa.¹⁸ Conat also states that what he does as a printer is like "writing with many pens," but "*be-lo ma'aseh nisim*" (not through miracles).¹⁹ In these words, one hears an echo of the rejection of the notion that printing is the devil's work. We may thus speculate that Farissol at first saw printing as just another form of writing, and thought that his skills and talents as a scribe

16 See Ruderman, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*

17 *ibid.*, p. 22.

18 See Isaac Zeev Kahana, *Ha-defus be-halakhah*, in: *Sinai*, vol. 16, 1944-45, pp. 49-61.

19 Quoted by Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

The questions that exercise the curiosity of scholars in these areas are the following: who were the first printers of Hebrew books; from whom did they learn their trade; on what basis did they select the books to be printed; what manuscripts did they use; what method did they employ for establishing the text; what was the religious status of books produced by the new craft; and — perhaps the most interesting one — in what ways did the introduction of printing change and affect Jewish life?

It is now generally accepted that the very first Hebrew books produced by movable type were printed in Rome between 1469-1475. These books resemble in all physical aspects the non-Hebrew incunabula produced in Rome at the same time by the Christian printers Sweynheym, Pannartz, and Han.¹² As their names betray, these early typographers were of German origin, as were many later printers of Hebrew books in Italy — the most prominent among them being members of the Soncino family. One may assume, therefore, that the printers of the Hebrew Roman incunabula were also Ashkenazi Jews and that their Christian counterparts may have originally belonged to a circle of apprentices and assistants who had worked with Gutenberg, and parted with him in order to become independent. But there is another line of speculation, not necessarily contradicting or excluding the one mentioned just now. Isaiah Sonne was the first to suggest that with the return of the Pope to Rome from his exile in Avignon, a number of wealthy and learned Jews from Provence also settled in the Papal State.¹³ As pointed out by David B. Ruderman, there was a large number of Italians in the Provencal city of Avignon and some Jews, influenced by personal contact with them, may have chosen to try their luck in Italy.¹⁴ There is an isolated piece of information about the Jew, Davino de Caderousse, who, in 1444, in the city of Avignon, was involved in some kind of activity that may have been a precursor of printing.¹⁵ Incidentally, Davino was also an expert in dyeing, an occupation that he shared with one of the first printers of Hebrew books, Abraham ben Hayyim the Dyer of Ferrara, who printed the *Yoreh Deah* in that city in 1477. The craft of dyeing was apparently related to printing.

12 See Tishby, *op. cit.*, p. 815.

13 See *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, vol. 2, 1955, p. 12 and esp. p. 19, note 22.

14 David B. Ruderman, *The world of a Renaissance Jew: the life and thought of Abraham ben Mordecai Farissol* (Cincinnati, 1981), pp. 10-11.

15 See Sonne in his article quoted in note 13, p. 19, note 23.

composition of sheets. Equally important is the study of all statements found in the book itself regarding its printing. The language of these statements, located mostly in the colophons, is often obscure or ambiguous and must be closely analyzed. Let me cite one example. In what is, perhaps, the most beautiful incunabulum that Yeshiva University possesses, the Mantua 1476 *Orah Hayyim*, the printer, Abraham Conat, states:

And mastered this craft so as to print properly, juxtaposing one forme to another, one thousand columns each day [printing each sheet by processing it twice with] devotion and commitment; [printing] in one process four columns which are on one side of the large folio sheet...

Michael Pollak interprets the colophon as meaning that Conat printed 2,000 columns on 250 sheets each day. Abraham Rosenthal, in a rejoinder, reduces this to mean 1,000 columns, namely, 125 sheets daily, while Gershon Cohen agrees with Rosenthal as to the number of sheets printed each day, but disagrees with him concerning other details of the interpretation.¹⁰

Information about Hebrew incunabula may also be found in later sources. Again, just one example: an Italian rabbi in a responsum dated 1566, quotes a passage from the Responsa of Rabbi Solomon ibn Adret that he identifies as having been printed in Rome. The discovery of this quotation, and the identification of the book to which it refers, was the first step that led to the conclusion that 9 books — otherwise lacking any indication of place and date — were the products of the very first Hebrew presses in the world that were active in Rome, presumably between the years 1469-1475.¹¹

The correct and painstaking description of incunabula in catalogs of public or private collections provides the foundation for a further stage of incunabula research which deals with the cultural, historical, literary, and religious significance of early Hebrew printing.

10 *ibid.*, p. 11; see Michael Pollak, "The daily performance of a printing press in 1476, evidence from a Hebrew incunable," in: *Gutenberg Jahrbuch*, 1974, pp. 66-76 and Avraham Rosenthal's remarks in *Gutenberg Jahrbuch*, 1979, pp. 39-50 (the translation of the colophon is on p. 42).

11 Moses Marx in *The Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*, English section (New York, 1950), pp. 481-501 and see now Tishby's article quoted in note 4.

1595, among 20,000 Hebrew printed books, there were only about 100 copies of various incunabula.⁵ There is no easy explanation for this. Perhaps one reason for the scarcity of 15th century Hebrew printed books is that they were produced in small editions, normally not exceeding 300 to 400 copies. Also, since many Hebrew incunabula contained basic and much studied texts, they were worn out quickly and, when new editions became available, the older, worn copies were put away as “shemot” [lit. *names* — referring to names of God in Hebrew sacred texts. Worn copies of such texts may not be discarded, and must be buried. — *Eds.*]

No wonder, therefore, that the number of Hebrew incunabula preserved today, even in the most prestigious institutions, is relatively small. The Vatican Library contains 42, the Rosenthaliana in Amsterdam 27, and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris 39.⁶ Accordingly, the 29 titles represented in a total of 40 copies at Yeshiva University’s library place it among the ranking institutions holding 15th century Hebrew printed books, and the publication of Gershon Cohen’s catalog⁷ of this collection calls the attention of the scholarly world to it for the first time. This publication thus corrects the anomaly found in Goff’s census of incunabula in American libraries,⁸ in which the Hebrew incunabula of Yeshiva University were completely ignored. Cohen’s catalog does more than just put this library on the map of incunabula research; it also proposes to enlarge the number of known Hebrew incunabula. He describes a certain Italian *Mahzor* as having been printed shortly after 1486 and not in 1504 as previously assumed — thus making it an incunabulum.⁹

The first task of the study of Hebrew incunabula remains the establishment of a solid, reliable corpus of the books that belong to this category. This can be achieved by careful and thorough scrutiny of all physical aspects of each book, such as paper, parchment, watermarks, type size, type shape, decorative graphic materials, text arrangement, and

5 See Sh. Simonsohn in *Kiryat Sefer* (added t.p.: *Kirjath Sepher*), vol. 37, 1961, pp. 106-107.

6 On the Vatican, see Tishby’s article quoted in note 4, pp. 853-857; on the Rosenthaliana, see A.K. Offenberger in *Studia Rosenthaliana*, vol. 5, 1971, p. 125; and on the Bibliothèque Nationale, see Israel Adler, *Les incunables hébraïques de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1962).

7 Gershon Cohen, *Hebrew Incunabula; Mendel Gottesman Library of Hebraica-Judaica, Yeshiva University* (New York, 1984).

8 F.R. Goff, *Incunabula in American libraries; a third census* (New York, 1964), pp. 316-325.

9 Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-43.

Hebrew Incunabula: An Agenda for Research

The first questions in Hebrew incunabula research are most basic: how many incunabula are there, what are they, and where are they? The answers to these simple questions are by no means easy. Since incunabula were printed without title pages, and some without colophons, and since there are many early Hebrew printed books that survive only in a most fragmentary state, the identification of certain early Hebrew books as incunabula is doubtful and, at times, hotly debated.

There was a colorful and rather cantankerous scholar in the last generation by the name of Lazarus Goldschmidt who is perhaps best known as the translator of the Babylonian Talmud into German and who, incidentally, admitted in his old age that in his youth he had fabricated a work in the style of an ancient Aramaic Midrash in order to perpetrate a prank on his scholarly colleagues.¹ Goldschmidt was the author of a small book on Hebrew incunabula² in which he poked fun at collectors and dealers who purposely inflate the number of Hebrew incunabula to make their wares more attractive. He maintained that there are no more than 100 Hebrew books which can beyond doubt be claimed as dating back to the 15th century. This figure is the most conservative estimate; the most generous one is made by Herrmann Meyer in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, listing 175 books.³ Current scholarship by Perez Tishby puts their number at 140.⁴ Be that as it may, the total number of Hebrew incunabula known to us today does not amount to even one-half percent of the approximately 40,000 non-Hebrew incunabula. Even in the 16th century, their number was very low. The extensive booklists prepared in Italy for the use of Church censors of Hebrew books demonstrate that, e.g., in

1 See *Areshet* (added t.p.: *Aresheth*), vol. 1, 1958, pp. 484-485.

2 Lazarus Goldschmidt, *Hebrew Incunables; a bibliographical essay* (Oxford, 1948).

3 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 8, 1971, col. 1335-1344.

4 In the first part of his definitive study on Hebrew incunabula, see *Kiryat Sefer*, vol. 58, 1983, p. 808.

nately large number were produced on parchment, a clear sign of interest in bibliophilic, aesthetically pleasing editions.⁵¹ In this connection, mention should also be made of Rabbi David ibn Zimra, the Radbaz, who possessed a large library in Cairo and who encouraged scholars to copy works that he owned.⁵²

This survey has attempted to demonstrate the centrality and diversity of the Hebrew book in the life of Sephardic Jews in a time of great historical upheaval. The Hebrew book, in its physical form and as an idea, became, as at so many other times in Jewish history, a symbol of memory, survival, continuity, and vitality.

51 See A. Freimann, "Die hebräischen Pergamentdrucke," *Zeitschrift für hebräische Bibliographie* 15 (1911), pp. 46-57, nos. 31, 32, 34, 35, 37, 40, 41, 42, 45, etc.

52 Hacker, "Patterns of Intellectual Activity," p. 578, n. 20; Yaari, *Hebrew Printing*, pp. 122-23.

Alongside the traditional literature — Bible and commentaries, rabbinic classics and their commentaries, codes, philosophy and ethics — other subject matter, such as belles lettres, responsa, poetry, grammar, medicine, mathematics, history, and travel, were also represented among the books published. The wide-ranging intellectual interest of the exile communities is attested to also by the report that many copies of al-Ghazzali's writings were circulating in Salonika in the sixteenth century.⁴⁶ Al-Ghazzali's works on logic may have been much in demand because of the dominance of the philosophical-logical method of Talmud study that was practiced by many talmudists in the period.⁴⁷ This prolific printing activity was aided and stimulated by the existence of great private collections of Hebrew manuscripts and printed books. Jacob ibn Habib, in the introduction to his *'Ein Ya'akov*, writes that although he had planned to publish this collection of talmudic *aggadot* for a long time, he had to delay his work on it because he lacked the books needed for it. But in Salonika, with the help of the extensive libraries owned by members of the Benveniste family, he could finally carry his project to completion.⁴⁸ Samuel di Modena and Joseph ben Leb also mention books that they had found in the private libraries of the same family.⁴⁹ An elegy included in the Ninth of Av liturgy of an Ashkenazic *mahzor* printed in Salonika mourns the losses from a great fire that devastated Salonika in 1545. Among these, the destruction of Samuel Benveniste's collection of books occupies a prominent place. We learn from this elegy that Don Samuel used to hire scribes to copy for him "innumerable" copies of the books of the Talmud, codes, and commentaries. The author, Benjamin ben Meir ha-Levi Ashkenazi, refers to "hibburim... penimiyyim ve-hizoniyyim," perhaps meaning writings not only by Jewish but also by non-Jewish authors, such as al-Ghazzali, just mentioned. He also speaks about the physical beauty of the books, some of which were copied on fine parchment.⁵⁰ Indeed, it is noteworthy that among the earliest books printed in Constantinople and Salonika, a disproportio-

46 *Ibid.*, p. 578, n. 20.

47 On this method, see Daniel Boyarin, *Ha-'Iyyun ha-Sefaradi: Le-Farshanut ba-Talmud Shel Megorashe Sefarad* (Jerusalem, 1989).

48 Hacker, "Patterns of Intellectual Activity," pp. 577-79.

49 *Ibid.*

50 *Mahzor*, Ashkenazi rite. Salonika c. 1555-1556 (no pagination), in the *kinah*, "Le-Mi 'Oy le-Mi Hoy" (Israel Davidson, *Thesaurus of Medieval Hebrew Poetry* [New York, 1970], *lamed*, 1085).

God to be great experts in the art of printing... They decided to spread the knowledge of Torah among Israel, to make up, even though only to a small extent, for the innumerable books that were destroyed on land and on sea.⁴²

In the 1509 edition of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, the printers bemoan the destruction of the Jewish communities of Sepharad, the forced exile imposed upon them, and the consequences of these dislocations, including the loss of books and the diminution of learning and scholarship. In view of these vicissitudes, they regard their own activities in spreading knowledge through printing as the "restoration of the fallen tabernacle of the Torah."⁴³

In the subsequent decades, the printing presses of the cities of the Ottoman Empire, operated mainly by Iberian exiles, were churning out Hebrew books in large number and in many subject areas. Again, a comparison with Italy may be helpful. It is noteworthy that it was in Constantinople and Salonika that the first editions of midrashim and midrashic anthologies appeared in print.⁴⁴ The *Midrash Rabbah*, the halakhic midrashim, the *Tanhuma*, the Midrash on Psalms and Proverbs, *Pirke de-Rabbi 'Eliezer*, the *'Ein Ya'akov*, the *Haggadot ha-Talmud*, and so on, all were printed for the first time by Spanish exiles in Constantinople and Salonika, followed only decades later by Italian editions. The reason for including these titles among the early editions produced by Sephardic printers may have been related to the importance of sermons in the newly established exile communities. Sermons provided solace and guidance following the recent traumas. Indeed, a large number of collections of sermons, some printed but many more in manuscripts, have come down to us from this period.⁴⁵ Since the sermons were, of course, based on midrashic sources, it is plausible to assume that the practical needs of the rabbis for appropriate source material for their homiletic activity was what prompted the printing of midrashim and midrashic anthologies in the first two decades of the establishment of Hebrew presses in the Ottoman Empire.

42 *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 60; Allan, "A Typographical Odyssey," p. 350.

43 Yaari, *Hebrew Printing*, no. 6, p. 63.

44 Hacker, "Patterns of Intellectual Activity," p. 585, n. 39.

45 *Ibid.*, pp. 583-93.

the book was indeed printed in 1493, and this is the year when Hebrew printing in Constantinople started.³⁸

After the printing of the *'Arba'ah Turim*, the nascent Hebrew press of Constantinople issued a series of major works: the Bible with commentaries by Rashi, David Kimhi, and Abraham ibn Ezra, in 1505-1506,³⁹ the *Halakhot* by Isaac Alfasi in 1509,⁴⁰ and the *Mishneh Torah* by Maimonides in the same year.⁴¹ These were monumental undertakings, large, multivolume, copious folio productions, efforts that required a great deal of technical skill, scholarship, and financial investment. The printers and the people associated with them were fully aware of the importance of their historical mission: transplanting Jewish learning from the Iberian Peninsula to the new Jewish centers established by the exiles. This sense of mission is clearly expressed in the lengthy colophon of the 1505-1506 Bible. The colophon was written by Abraham ben Joseph ibn Yaish, the editor and corrector of the work, an exile from Spain and a well-known rabbi:

From the day that God had confounded the speech of the whole earth through the bitter and impetuous exile, the exile from Sepharad, all good things have abandoned us... The few survivors were compelled to wander from country to country... In the wake of the terror of the persecutions the books, too, were gone... People neglect to teach their children because of the vicissitudes of the times and the unavailability of books... When one finds a copy of the Torah, the Targum will be lacking, and if there is available a copy of the Targum, the Commentary [that is, Rashi's] will be missing... Suddenly, God provided a remedy. A few survivors, coming from many directions... found their way to Constantinople, among them two brothers, David and Samuel Nechamias, who were blessed by

38 On the influence of Hebrew printing in the Ottoman Empire and the literature about it, see Hacker, "Patterns of Intellectual Activity," pp. 576-77, and n. 13. On the Constantinople *'Arba'ah Turim*, see A.K. Offenberg, "The First Printed Book Produced at Constantinople," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 3 (1969), pp. 96-112, where the literature on the subject is reviewed. [See now: A.K. Offenberg, *A Choice of Corals* (Nieuwkoop, 1992), pp. 102-132.]

39 Yaari, *Hebrew Printing*, no. 2; Nigel Allan, "A Typographical Odyssey: The 1505 Constantinople Pentateuch," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, ser. 3, 1,3 (1991), pp. 343-51.

40 Yaari, *Hebrew Printing*, no. 5.

41 *Ibid.*, no. 6.

The manuscript of Joseph ibn Shoshan's commentary on the *Sayings of the Fathers* was written in Tunis, in 1496. The scribe, an exile from Spain, states in the colophon: "I, the unfortunate, a man of suffering, copied these commentaries, while on the shores of Tunis, in the house of eminent and righteous people in a room in the attic that they put at my disposal. And as we were expelled from our homeland..."³⁶ There are other testimonies in which scribes mention the fact that they were exiles from Spain and Portugal, and in a few instances they indicate the year the manuscript was copied by counting from the expulsion, for example, "year two of the Spanish exile."³⁷

Hebrew manuscripts continued to be written in the new communities, but the introduction of printing by Iberian exiles in Constantinople, Salonika, and Fez made the printing press the dominant instrument of publishing, with far-reaching effects on Jewish religious and cultural life. Perhaps the most telling example of the introduction of printing in the newly established communities is the story of the printing, by Spanish exiles, of Jacob ben Asher's *'Arba'ah Turim* in Constantinople. Despite the fact that there is an explicit date, 1493, in the colophon, scholars have long debated when this edition was actually published. Alexander Marx and his brother, Moses Marx, took the date at face value and emphasized its meaning for demonstrating how speedily the Spanish exiles began the reconstruction of their cultural and religious life. After all, to print a bulky volume such as the *'Arba'ah Turim* just one year after the expulsion, in a faraway location, is a sign of great vitality and a proof of strong determination to start the rebuilding of the community. Others, however — De Rossi, Steinschneider, Goldschmidt, and Yaari — doubted that it was possible to print such a major work just one year after the expulsion. They argued that the printers needed time to arrive in the Balkans from the Iberian Peninsula, and considerable time was also required for setting up an operation capable of carrying out a project of such magnitude. Accordingly, these scholars maintained that the explicit date was a typographical error, and they suggested a later date: 1503. A.K. Offenbergs, on the basis of the evidence of the paper and its watermarks and the typographical material, proved that

36 Sirat and Beit-Arié, *Manuscrits médiévaux*, 3:51.

37 *Ibid.*, 3:49, also 55. Cf. Joseph Hacker, "New Chronicle on the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain: Its Causes and Results," *Zion* 44 (1979), p. 202, n. 6.

There are two manuscripts in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary that include on their pages the account of having been taken from Spain and from Portugal at the time of the expulsion. A manuscript Bible records the following colophon:

This volume, which contains the twenty-four sacred books, was written by the learned Rabbi Abraham Calif in the City of Toledo, in Spain. It was finished in the month of Nissan 5252 [1492]. And on the seventh day of the month of Av in the selfsame year, the exiles of Jerusalem who were in Spain, went forth dismayed and banished by the royal edict. And I, Hayyim ibn Hayyim, have copied therein part of the Masorah and the variants in the year 5257 [1497] in the city of Constantinople.³⁴

Hence, it is clear from this colophon that the unfinished manuscript was taken from Spain in 1492 and was completed five years later in Constantinople. The other manuscript is Shem Tob ben Shem Tob's *Sefer ha-'Eminot*, an anti-Maimonidean polemic against philosophy. Because of its controversial nature, this work had been copied only rarely. In 1497 the Portuguese ruler, King Manuel, issued a decree forbidding Jews to possess Hebrew books. He ordered that they be surrendered and deposited in synagogues. The JTS manuscript of *Sefer ha-'Eminot* was among books that ended up in a synagogue in Lisbon, where it was locked up and made inaccessible to its former Jewish owners. Somehow, exiles managed to remove the manuscript and take it with them on the journey to Constantinople or Salonika. Thus was the manuscript of *Sefer ha-'Eminot* saved. The story of its vicissitudes is told on the margin of the manuscript, concluding with the words: "It was brought here to the Ottoman Empire by the exiles from Spain and Portugal."³⁵

The exiles not only tried to save their books and bring them to their new homes, but also, very soon after their arrival — indeed, even at a time when they had not yet had a permanent home — they resumed their activities as scribes and printers, as preservers and transmitters of knowledge.

34 JTS Manuscript, Bible collection, L 6. See *Illuminated Hebrew Manuscripts from the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary* (New York, 1965), no. 6.

35 JTS Manuscript no. 1969. See Benayahu, "A New Source," p. 236 ff., esp. 262, where the marginal inscription is quoted. On King Manuel's decree, see note 30 above.

wanderings. Abraham ibn Yaish²⁶ and Abraham Saba²⁷ both speak about innumerable books that were lost during the flight from the Iberian Peninsula. David ibn Yahya, another exile, relates that he had lost three-quarters of his collection of four hundred books.²⁸ Isaac Abravanel tells us that he had sent "whatever the hail has left" (Exodus 10:12) from his books to Salonika.²⁹

The combined number of Hebrew manuscripts from the Iberian Peninsula and of Hebrew codices written in Sephardic script by scribes from Spain and Portugal in Italy and in Byzantium is, surprisingly, greater than the number of Hebrew books copied by native scribes in Italy, long considered to be the "homeland" of Hebrew manuscripts.³⁰ The popularity of Spanish Hebrew manuscripts in Italy can be seen from the humorous description by Immanuel of Rome of the Italian adventures of a bookseller from Toledo in the fourteenth century.³¹ The basic point of the story, that Hebrew manuscripts from Spain were highly desirable in Italy and that Italian Jews were ready even to commit mischief in order to obtain them, is probably valid for the fifteenth century as well.

The expulsion put an end to a rich and productive tradition in the area of scribal and printing activity. Hebrew books became the target of banning, burning, and confiscation or were victims of loss and abandonment.³² Despite these adversities, as mentioned above,³³ many exiles managed to take their books with them.

26 In the colophon to the 1505-1506 Constantinople edition of the Bible, see Abraham Yaari, *Hebrew Printing at Constantinople* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem 1967), p. 60. He says that the books were lost on "dryland and on the sea." Similarly, in a report by Joseph ibn Shraga, it is mentioned that books were lost at sea. Hacker, "Patterns of Intellectual Activity," p. 579.

27 Dan Manor, "Abraham Sabba: His Life and Work" (in Hebrew), *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 2 (1982-83), p. 227. He refers to his books as his writing instruments.

28 Hacker, "Patterns of Intellectual Activity," p. 579.

29 Isaac Abravanel, *She'elot le-Rabbi Sha'ul ha-Kohen* (Venice, 1574), p. 18a.

30 See the interesting statistics in Beit-Arié, *The Makings of the Medieval Hebrew Book*, p. 49. About Italy as the "homeland" of Hebrew manuscripts, see Abraham Berliner, *Ketavim Nivharim* 2 (Jerusalem, 1949), p. 83.

31 *The Cantos of Immanuel of Rome*, ed. Dov Jarden (Jerusalem, 1957), 1:161-66.

32 On King Manuel's decree to seize Hebrew books, see report of Abraham Saba, William Popper, *The Censorship of Hebrew Books*, introduction by Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger (New York, 1969), p. 20; Manor, "Abraham Sabba," pp. 212-13; Meir Benayahu, "A New Source Concerning the Spanish Refugees in Portugal and Their Move to Salonika" (in Hebrew), *Sefunot* 11 (1971-77), pp. 244-45.

33 See note 23.

criteria were established for classifying the material with greater accuracy. This made it possible to know what tractates of the pre-expulsion Sephardic editions of the Babylonian Talmud are extant and to identify printed editions of various other works, among them printed fragments of pre-exilic editions of the *Mishneh Torah*.²² The latter were printed in square letters resembling the monumental square Hebrew script so familiar from medieval Spanish synagogue inscriptions and from formal biblical codices. The anonymity of these leaves, the lack of any identifying features such as place, date, and name of printer, led to the suggestion that the books represented by these fragments were produced clandestinely by Marranos. In archival sources mention is made of a Marrano, Juan de Lucena, and his daughters who, according to the accusations of the Inquisition, were producing Hebrew books set in Hebrew type. Although no actual book from this alleged press can be identified with certainty, the assumption that the anonymous *Mishneh Torah* fragments were the work of Juan de Lucena is quite alluring.²³

Other fragments, most significant among them leaves of the first illustrated printed Haggadah, may have been produced in Spain before the expulsion and not, as was previously assumed, in Constantinople in the second decade of the sixteenth century.²⁴

Despite some of the uncertainty regarding the attributions of these unidentified fragments as the products of the Hebrew printing presses of Spain and Portugal, there is no doubt that right up to the expulsion there existed on the Iberian Peninsula a rich and varied printing activity, alongside the continued making of Hebrew manuscripts. Indeed, as Joseph Hacker has amply documented,²⁵ the exiles mention an abundance of Hebrew books possessed by Jews of Spain and Portugal, but they also refer to the fact that they were able to take their books with them on their

22 Dimitrovsky, *S'ridei Bavli*; Hurvitz, *Mishneh Torah of Maimonides*.

23 Bloch, "Early Hebrew Printing," pp. 9-16; Hurvitz, *Mishneh Torah of Maimonides*, pp. 39-44.

24 Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Leaves from the Oldest Illustrated Printed Haggadah* (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 7-18, supplement to Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Haggadah and History* (Philadelphia, 1974).

25 Joseph Hacker, "Patterns of Intellectual Activity of Ottoman Jewry in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" (in Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 53 (1984), pp. 569-606, esp. 579 and n. 25.

to the names of the printers, frequently members of well-known families, and the dates and places of printing,¹⁹ the colophons also reveal attitudes toward the new art. The Iberian printers, like their Italian colleagues, expressed their amazement about the seemingly miraculous quality of the new art to which they refer as a divine gift, heavenly work, and deriving from God.²⁰

Allusions to historical events are also found in the colophons. In a Leiria incunabulum, the 1494 Bible, there is explicit mention of the expulsion and its effects on Hebrew printing. The printer speaks about the great anguish that befell the Jewish community as a result of the decree of expulsion. Among its devastating results he counts the decline of Hebrew printing: this glorious, heavenly work suffered its downfall when the Jews were compelled to leave Spain.²¹

Because of this dislocation, alongside easily identifiable incunabula from Spain and Portugal, there exists a puzzling load of unidentified printed fragments of Sephardic origin. Among these are leaves from tractates of the Babylonian Talmud, of Isaac Alfasi's *Halakhhot*, and of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*. The first discovery of these Sephardic fragments was made at the end of the nineteenth century, and since then they have continued to pose a scholarly quandary. Because of the fragmentary nature of these remnants and because of the similarity between paper and type used on the Iberian Peninsula and that used by exiles in Fez, Constantinople, and Salonika, scholars could not determine which of the fragments were pre-expulsion and which were post-expulsion. Recently, however, as a result of painstaking research, new

19 A list of places, dates, and printers is found in Offenberg's *Hebrew Incunabula*, pp. 186-94.

20 Jacob ben Asher, *Tur Yoreh De'ah* (Hijar, 1486-1487), colophon: *le-nes hi' be-khol peh* (see A. Freimann, *Thesaurus typographie hebraicae saeculi XV* [Berlin, 1924-31; repr. Jerusalem, c. 1967], B. 9,2; Offenberg, *Hebrew Incunabula*, no. 72); Pentateuch (Hijar, 1490), colophon: *re'u sefer ve-'ein kofet le-mofetav, mattan 'elokim* (Freimann, B 11,4; Offenberg, *Hebrew Incunabula*, no. 16); Rashi on Pentateuch (Zamora, 1492 [?]), colophon: *'ale deyo neyyar she-lo ke-derekh* (Freimann, B 13,3; Offenberg, *Hebrew Incunabula*, no. 114 bis); Former Prophets (Leiria, 1494), colophon: *mel'ekhet shamayim* (Freimann, B 27,5; Offenberg, *Hebrew Incunabula*, no. 28); Pentateuch, colophon, from the Genizah, quoted by Hurvitz, *Mishneh Torah of Maimonides*, 30, end of n. 101: *me-'et h[a-shem] hayeta zot*.

21 In the colophon of Former Prophets (Leiria, 1494) (Freimann, *Thesaurus*, B 27,5; Offenberg, *Hebrew Incunabula*, no. 28). The relevant passages from the colophon are quoted and discussed by Isaiah Tishby, *Messianism in the Time of the Expulsion from Spain and Portugal* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1985), p. 25, n. 41.

fragments of editions of the Talmud published in Fez closely resembled their earlier Iberian counterparts.¹⁵

In one of the few elegies on the expulsion that has come down to us, the author, Abraham ibn Bukrat, mourns the destruction of book-filled academies. He referred probably to the existence of extensive libraries in the yeshivot of Sepharad. Still, he may have wanted to imply that the yeshiva had also served as a place for the organized production of Hebrew books.¹⁶

There seem to have been two kinds of scriptoria in Sepharad, the Lisbon type, on the one hand, and various academic types, on the other hand. Further, the Lisbon atelier served the needs of well-to-do laypeople, producing mainly lavish illuminated Bibles and prayerbooks, while the academies provided manuscripts for scholars in the areas of halakhah, philosophy, and other disciplines.

The introduction of one of mankind's greatest inventions, printing by movable type, occurred in Spain and Portugal in the waning years of Jewish life there. As a result of the abrupt end of the Jewish community on the Iberian Peninsula, Hebrew printed books from there are far less known and far more scarce than Hebrew books printed in the same period in Italy. Generally, Italy is regarded as the cradle of the Hebrew printed book and the name of the Soncinos, the pre-eminent Hebrew printers, is familiar even to the lay public. Hebrew incunabula from Italy have been thoroughly researched for a long period of time, whereas the history of Iberian Hebrew incunabula is much more obscure. If not for the expulsion, Hebrew printing in Sepharad would have become as significant as that of Italy. The first Hebrew book in Spain was probably printed in 1476, just one year after the printing of the first dated Hebrew book in Italy.¹⁷ In the following years, Hebrew presses were established in Zamora, Híjar, Leiria, Faro, and Lisbon, and perhaps also in Montalbán and Toledo.¹⁸ The products of these presses yield considerable knowledge on various aspects of Jewish life and learning. In addition

15 *Ibid.*, p. 25 ff., p. 58 ff.

16 Published by Hayyim Hillel Ben-Sasson, in *Tarbiz* 31 (1961), p. 68 (line 53).

17 Both books contain Rashi's commentary to the Pentateuch, testimony to the popularity of this work among Jews. The Italian edition was printed in Reggio di Calabria (Offenberg, *Hebrew Incunabula*, no. 112), the Spanish one in Guadalajara (Offenberg, *Hebrew Incunabula*, no. 113).

18 See the literature listed in note 2.

the Lisbon workshop. There are some references in colophons to manuscripts copied in the rabbinic academies of Spain.⁷ In Seville, the scribe Jacob ben Joshua Frontino copied manuscripts in 1471 and 1474 in the synagogue called Ibn Yaish. One manuscript contained a halakhic work, *Hazeh ha-tenufah*, and the other the Book of Proverbs, with commentaries by Ibn Ezra, Kimḥi, and Gersonides. Joseph ben Joshua Frontino, most likely a brother of Jacob, was active as a scribe of Hebrew manuscripts in the Jewish quarter of Fez, probably after the expulsion.⁸ Fez, as we shall soon see, was the site of organized scribal and printing activity in the second decade of the sixteenth century. The involvement of the Frontino brothers in scribal work in the Ibn Yaish synagogue in Seville and later in the *mellah* of Fez, seems to indicate not only the continuation of a family tradition but also that of an established and perhaps institutionalized endeavor of Hebrew book production. In Saragossa, in 1471, Moses Narboni's commentary on al-Ghazzali's *The Intentions of Philosophers* was copied in the academy of Rabbi Abraham Bibago.⁹ A manuscript of Judah Halevi's *Kuzari* was written in 1490 by a Spanish scribe in the academy of Rabbi Moses ibn Habib of Lisbon, in the Southern Italian city of Bitonto.¹⁰ The Responsa of Asher ben Jehiel were copied in the academy of Rabbi Isaac Aboab in Guadalajara in 1491.¹¹ Guadalajara was the site of a Hebrew press, too.¹² This tradition was apparently transported by the exiles from the Iberian Peninsula to their new home in Fez. Members of a society of scholars (*havurah*) that was established in Fez by a Castilian exile, Rabbi Judah Uzziel, were engaged as scribes of Hebrew manuscripts.¹³ Other Iberian traditions of book-making were carried out in this city. It is well known that Abudraham's commentary on the prayerbook, originally printed in Lisbon in 1489, was reprinted in Fez in 1516 and followed the layout and typographical arrangement of that of the Lisbon edition to the letter.¹⁴ Similarly,

7 On manuscripts copied in study houses and yeshivot, see Riegler, "Colophons," pp. 162-72.

8 Sirat and Beit-Arié, *Manuscripts médiévaux*, 3:3 and nn. 2,4.

9 *Ibid.*, 3:5.

10 British Library, Harley 5779 (Catalogue Margoliouth, no. 901).

11 Manuscript R 1351 in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

12 See Tishby, "Hebrew Incunabula"; A.K. Offenbergh, *Hebrew Incunabula in Public Collections* (Nieuwkoop, 1990), p. 187.

13 Sirat and Beit-Arié, *Manuscripts médiévaux*, 3:62 and n. 1; Riegler, "Colophons," p. 169.

14 Dimitrovsky, *S'ridei Bavli*, pp. 61-70.

One of these features was the assumed existence of a workshop for creating Hebrew manuscripts in Lisbon. Unlike Christian manuscripts, the production of which took place mostly in scriptoria, Hebrew manuscripts in the Middle Ages were written by individual scribes and not in workshops.⁴ A possible exception is a Lisbon workshop that flourished between the 1460s and the 1490s. This atelier produced attractive illuminated Hebrew manuscripts, mainly Bibles and prayer-books, but also a *Mishneh Torah* of Maimonides and calligraphically beautiful, although nonilluminated, manuscripts of Kimḥi's grammar, Nahmanides' commentary on the Pentateuch, and Joseph ibn Shem Tob's commentary on Aristotle's *Ethics*.⁵ Unfortunately, there are no external sources about the history of this atelier, its inner workings, and its personnel. The evidence is in the manuscripts themselves, in their style and in the occasional laconic statements in the colophons relating to the place and date of their writing and to the identity of the copyists. It is noteworthy that it was on the Iberian Peninsula that the appreciation for aesthetically pleasing, fine manuscripts led to what was apparently the only institutionalized undertaking among medieval Jews for the production of Hebrew codices. Manuscript making in Lisbon also influenced the newly introduced art of printing by movable type, which began there in the 1480s. The Hebrew manuscripts of the Lisbon school and the printed books of the Lisbon Hebrew press bear some similarity in the character of letters and in the layout and decoration of the pages.⁶

Another phenomenon found among Sephardic Jewry was perhaps similar to the organized effort for the writing of Hebrew manuscripts in

4 Beit-Arié, *The Makings of the Medieval Hebrew Book*, p. 78.

5 See Gabrielle Sed-Rajna, *Manuscrits hébreux de Lisbonne: Un atelier de copistes et d'enlumineurs au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1970); and Thérèse Metzger, *Les Manuscrits hébreux copiés e décorés à Lisbonne dans les dernières décennies du Xve siècle* (Paris, 1977). The fact that some famous scribes worked with apprentices (Richler, *Hebrew Manuscripts*, p. 41) and that many manuscripts were written by more than one scribe in stereotype scripts (Beit-Arié, *The Making of the Medieval Hebrew Book*, pp. 78-79), does not necessarily mean that these were institutional efforts. As Beit-Arié points out: "Hebrew manuscripts in the Lisbon workshop and in the various Rabbinic academies (see below), may have been the exception and may have been initiated by the workshop or the academy." See also Riegler, "Colophons," p. 107.

6 See Sed-Rajna, *Manuscrits hébreux*, pp. 51, 107; but see Metzger, *Les manuscrits hébreux*, pp. 14-17, according to whom the influence was not as pronounced as it was proposed by Sed-Rajna. On the affinity between Hebrew manuscripts and the first products of the Hebrew press in general, see Beit-Arié, *The Making of the Medieval Hebrew Book*, pp. 251-77.

Hebrew Manuscripts and Printed Books Among the Sephardim Before and After the Expulsion

The production of Hebrew manuscripts¹ and printed books² flourished in the second half of the fifteenth century in Spain and Portugal. Indeed, several features of Hebrew bookmaking were unique to Sephardic Jewry at the time and not found in other Jewish centers. These features made the decades prior to the expulsion extraordinary in the history of the Hebrew book.³

- 1 There are no monographs, to the best of my knowledge, that deal with Hebrew manuscript making in Sepharad in the second half of the fifteenth century. There are, however, a number of relatively recent publications that offer valuable information on Hebrew paleography and codicology in general, including many aspects of the subject under discussion here. See Malachi Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1981); and *idem*, *The Makings of the Medieval Hebrew Book* (Jerusalem, 1993); Binyamin Richler, *Hebrew Manuscripts: A Treasured Legacy* (Cleveland, 1990); Colette Sirat, *Min ha-Ketav 'el ha-Sefer* (Jerusalem, 1992) [See now: Colette Sirat, *Hebrew Manuscripts of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2002); and Michael Riegler, "Colophons of Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts as Historical Sources" (in Hebrew), Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1995. Of course, the most important source for the study of medieval Hebrew manuscripts is the multivolume, still unfinished work by Colette Sirat and Malachi Beit-Arié, eds., *Manuscrits médiévaux en caractères hébraïques* (Jerusalem-Paris, 1972). For illuminated manuscripts, see Bezalel Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts in the British Isles*, vol. I: *The Spanish and Portuguese Manuscripts*, 2 parts (Jerusalem and London, 1982).
- 2 On Hebrew printing in Spain and Portugal in general, see the old survey by Joshua Bloch, "Early Hebrew Printing in Spain and Portugal," in Charles Berlin, ed., *Hebrew Printing and Bibliography* (1938; repr. New York, 1976), pp. 7-56. On Hebrew printing in Portugal, see Arthur Anselmo, *Les origines de l'imprimerie au Portugal* (Paris, 1983). For thorough and detailed treatments of some aspects of Hebrew printing on the Iberian Peninsula, see H.Z. Dimitrovsky, *S'ridei Bavli: Fragments from Spanish and Portuguese Incunabula and Bibliographical Century Printing of the Babylonian Talmud and Alfasi: An Historical and Bibliographical Introduction* (in Hebrew) (New York, 1979); Eleazar Hurvitz, *Mishneh Torah of Maimonides* (in Hebrew) (New York, 1985), introduction, esp. pp. 39-44; and Peretz Tishby, "Hebrew Incunabula: Spain and Portugal (Guadalajara)" (in Hebrew), *Kiryat Sefer* 61 (1986-87), pp. 521-46.
- 3 Eleazar Gutwirth's forthcoming article, "Jewish Readers and Their Libraries in Late-Medieval Spain" is expected to shed light on the subject [I was unable to determine whether this article was published or wasn't]. See Eleazar Gutwirth and Miguel Ángel Motis Dolader, "Twenty-Six Jewish Libraries from Fifteenth-Century Spain," *Library* 18 (1996), pp. 27-53, esp. note 4.

parodies, etc., in Hebrew, or in the vernacular but in Hebrew characters, constitute a large segment of Hebrew manuscript collections, especially those assembled more recently. Many of these works were intended for private or local use, and the works of even famous poets were rarely collected in complete manuscripts and survive in fragmentary sources, often only among the leaves of the Cairo *Genizah*.

There are, of course, other groups of manuscripts of great importance. Karaite manuscripts, some older ones in a mixture of Hebrew and Arabic characters, Hebrew dictionaries and grammars, polemical works that were composed for the frequent disputations between Jews and Christians or Muslims, all provide material for the interested scholar. Manuscripts of the record books of the various Jewish communities and societies, containing minutes, by-laws, and personal and financial records, were by nature intended for local use and were preserved in community, society, or family archives. With the destruction of old Jewish communities, the surviving, scattered examples of this type of document assumed a highly important place in libraries of Hebrew manuscripts. These handwritten records became the primary source for the study of the political, economic, and social history of the Jews throughout the ages. Furthermore, they serve as a mine of genealogical and biographical information. Since some of these sources require expertise in many disciplines as well as familiarity with languages and many types of script, relatively few have been published in full scholarly editions. Thus, a great deal of painstaking, systematic work still awaits the attention of the competent historian.

Since the Holocaust, the appreciation of Hebrew manuscripts as testimony to the spiritual and historical greatness of destroyed Jewish life has assumed new dimensions. The overwhelming loss of Jewish treasures during the Third Reich has made the survivor generation much more conscious of the need for the preservation and exploration of what remains. The dramatic upsurge in Jewish studies, in Israel and in the United States, has led many scholars to the study and publication of Hebrew manuscripts. Through the ready availability of modern technology, microfilming, computerization, and the growth of the reprint industry, scholars have built upon the advances that had already been achieved. Progress will undoubtedly continue, and still-hidden treasures preserved among the leaves of Hebrew manuscripts will come to light: to enrich, to instruct, and to add to our understanding of the Jewish heritage.

Toward the fourteenth century, manuscripts containing mystical works began to appear. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced more and more manuscripts in this field. The majority of these texts of the Kabbalah remained in manuscript form until recent centuries. There was reluctance among the leaders of the Jewish community to allow wide circulation for esoteric, mystical writings and, accordingly, many kabbalistic works were copied only privately. The popular *Ets Hayyim* by the famous sixteenth century kabbalist Hayyim Vital was not printed until the end of the eighteenth century, when many handwritten copies of it were produced in Europe and in North Africa.

It should be pointed out that there were other reasons as well for the continued use of handwritten books at a time when printing was widespread. In distant places, for example, Yemen, the art of printing was never practiced and the rich and ancient literature of Yemenite Jews was transmitted in manuscript form from generation to generation. This explains why, among Yemenite manuscripts, there are many of late vintage, some even from the twentieth century. When such manuscripts contain standard texts, their significance for scholarship or even as collectors' items is minimal. On the other hand, they often preserve older traditions. Only individual examination will determine a given manuscript's importance, if any.

Alongside well-known works of Jewish philosophy and ethics, one finds many manuscript collections of homiletical materials. These must be judged individually and considered frequently as no more than private notebooks. Works on medicine and the sciences, especially astronomy, a subject which was important beyond its intrinsic merit for calendar calculation, are common among the older libraries of Hebrew manuscripts. These include the works of Greek, Latin, and Arabic physicians, mathematicians, and scientists in Hebrew translation. As in philosophy, Jews played a prominent role in the Middle Ages as translators of the classical and Arabic scientific heritage; thanks to their activity, works by Galen, Hippocrates, Euclid, Ptolemy, Avicenna, and others are preserved in Hebrew versions. Toward the beginning of modern times, these works became all but obsolete and were rarely copied or reprinted; historians of the sciences must therefore rely mainly on medieval manuscripts.

Manuscripts also contain diverse materials of a belletristic nature. Poems, both secular and religious, stories, folktales, dramatic works,

[while] new compositions, called *piyyut*, or poetry, constitute... an ever changing and restless element in the Jewish liturgy" (*The Jews, Their History, Culture, and Religion*, ed. L. Finkelstein, 3rd ed., 1960, p. 866). The extant manuscripts faithfully reflect this description. From all the countries of the Jewish Diaspora and from all ages, manuscript prayerbooks for local usage provide us with a wealth of information about the history of the standard prayers but even more about the immense literature of religious poetry. Among the multitudes of *piyyutim* one finds many by the great Hebrew poets of the Middle Ages such as Judah ha-Levi, but also large numbers of liturgical compositions by local talent. Although the literary quality of the poems in the latter category may not be exquisite, they still are important for the study of local tastes and traditions.

Liturgical instructions, frequently in the vernacular—Judeo-French, Judeo-Greek, Judeo-Persian, and, of course, Judeo-Arabic, Yiddish, and Ladino—offer rich research opportunities for linguists and for historians of liturgy. In this group we are also blessed with many beautifully illuminated and decorated codices, as lavish Haggadah and prayerbook manuscripts demonstrate. Prayerbooks of smaller communities often remained in manuscript and, accordingly, are our only source for their particular liturgy. This was the case with the rite of the small communities of Asti, Fossano, and Moncalvo of Northern Italy (usually referred to by the acronym APAM), of which there are many fine manuscripts but no printed editions.

While liturgical manuscripts display great variety, mainly dictated by the geographical dispersal of the Jews, manuscripts in Jewish thought, philosophy, ethics, mysticism, and homiletics reflect the vast differences of interest conditioned by the changing intellectual preoccupation among the Jews during their long history. In the Middle Ages, up to approximately the fifteenth century, the works of Aristotle, accompanied by the commentaries of Averroës, in Hebrew translation, dominated the field. Large collections of these works are preserved on the shelves of the great libraries of the world, and they are studied for what they contribute to the general, not only Jewish, history of medieval philosophy. The classic works of Jewish philosophers and ethicists, Bahya, Maimonides, Albo, and others, are available in many manuscripts. Interestingly, some codices containing Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* are richly illuminated, for example, the *Copenhagen Codex*.

and symbol of what it considered to be the perfidy of the Jews. As a result, the Talmud became a constant target and victim of persecution, defamation, censorship, confiscation, and book burning. The relationship between the number of surviving copies of the Talmud and that of the Bible can best be illustrated by pointing out that in the catalog of the outstanding collection of Hebrew manuscripts at the British library are listed 161 manuscripts of the Bible and its translations, while the collection includes only five fragmentary Talmud manuscripts. At the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris the ratio is 132:0.

The situation is not as bleak in the field of commentaries to the Talmud, Midrashim, halakhic codes, and responsa. These works, although related to and dependent on the Talmud, survived in large numbers of manuscripts, and their study yields valuable insights in many areas of Jewish studies. Some highly important texts have been discovered and published only relatively recently, for example, the now popular commentary to the Talmud by Menahem Meiri (Provence, thirteenth century) which was edited for the first time on the basis of manuscripts at the Palatine Library in Parma. The large number of extant manuscripts of the halakhic codes *Sefer Mitsvot Gadol* (*SeMaG*) by Moses of Coucy (France, thirteenth century) and of the *Sefer Mitsvot Katan* (*SeMaK*) by Isaac of Corbeil (late thirteenth century) indicate that these works were much more popular in the Middle Ages than in later times, when the *Shulhan 'Arukh*, the authoritative code by Joseph Caro (sixteenth century), began to be published in an almost unending stream of printed editions. Because the first edition of the *Shulhan 'Arukh* was printed in 1564-65, in the lifetime of its author, any eventual manuscript of the work, except for a most unlikely autograph, would be almost redundant and of little significance. Responsa manuscripts are frequently of great usefulness for not only the halakhic but also the historical materials they contain.

The intensive institutional and individual efforts that are being diligently devoted to the publication of rabbinic texts from manuscripts contribute significantly to our understanding of personalities and trends in the history of rabbinic literature.

Liturgical manuscripts are perhaps the most colorful representatives of Hebrew manuscripts. In the words of Shalom Spiegel, "the standard prayers, the oldest nucleus of the liturgy, always and everywhere became the center of Jewish worship, a bond of union despite geographic dispersal...

Works of Bible commentators of all ages are richly represented in this group. They may be divided into two categories: copies of classic commentaries that are also found in many printed editions, such as the works of Rashi, Abraham ibn Ezra, and Nahmanides, and texts that are preserved only in manuscripts. In both categories one may discover important elements for the critical understanding of the long history of Jewish Bible interpretation.

Let us look at two works as examples: the Pentateuch commentary of Rashi and that of his grandson, Samuel ben Meir (the *Rashbam*). Rashi's commentary has been the staple of elementary education for Jewish children throughout the centuries and it has also been an extremely popular text for lay adults. As a result, throughout the Jewish Diaspora, in the east and in the west, in Spain and in Germany, in Yemen and in Italy, numerous manuscripts of this beloved work were written, containing local variants. Although attempts have been made to collate large numbers of manuscripts and printed editions in order to present the scholar with the various traditions of the Rashi text, the classification of all available manuscripts according to families of tradition is still a *desideratum*. Accordingly, here it is not so much individual manuscripts, but rather the totality of all the sources, that are valuable for their contribution to an understanding of the history of the transmission of this standard text. On the other hand, if someone were to discover in our day a hitherto unknown manuscript of the Pentateuch commentary by Samuel ben Meir, high expectations would arise, for the commentary by Rashi's grandson is available in only a very few manuscripts, some poorly preserved. Thus, any new material would be eagerly explored for a better understanding of and insights into the mind of the commentator who, in contrast to most medieval Jewish Bible exegetes, radically adhered to the so-called simple meaning of the Bible. It is interesting to note that the first edition of this work was not published until 1705, when the greatest Jewish bibliophile of all time, Rabbi David Oppenheim, printed it on the basis of a defective manuscript that he had discovered in the *genizah* of the synagogue of Worms. The fates of these two works could serve as models for the evaluation of the intellectual and, perhaps even, religious preferences and tastes of generations of Jewish students and readers.

When we turn to manuscripts of the Talmud, we find that they are of utmost scarcity. The medieval Church regarded the Talmud as the source

Some change in this respect may be expected once the approximately two hundred thousand fragments of the Cairo *Genizah* are thoroughly researched. The Cairo *Genizah*, a treasure trove of manuscript leaves written in Hebrew characters, was discovered in an old synagogue in Fostat, near Cairo, toward the end of the nineteenth century. The *Genizah* owes its existence to the traditionally respectful attitude of Jews toward the written Hebrew word, even after the book or document that carries the Hebrew script has become worn out or otherwise outlived its usefulness. The contents of the *Genizah* represent the literary as well as economic and social creativity and activity of the Jewish community in the Mediterranean era, covering a period of many centuries. The *Genizah* fragments are now scattered in the libraries of the world, the largest collection of them being held by the Cambridge University Library in England. Despite the great advances in *Genizah* research, there is still hope that further systematic study will shed light on Hebrew manuscript scholarship, especially in the earlier medieval period.

If we now turn our attention to the broad subject areas within collections of Hebrew manuscripts, we arrive at widely varying situations.

First, let us look at manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible. There are extant hundreds, if not thousands, of medieval and later Hebrew Bible manuscripts. Given the care taken with the transmission of a sacred text, one expects and finds few significant textual variants among them. On the other hand, these manuscripts have great scholarly importance for the study of Hebrew orthography, pronunciation, systems of vocalization of Hebrew, cantillation, and the entire range of the so-called masoretic literature that deals with scribal instructions and the rules for the transmission of the text. Some Bible codices, especially the older ones, were considered, in their times, as models by scribes who used them for copying other Bibles with as much care and exactitude as possible. That some of the manuscripts are richly illuminated adds to their significance. The recent reproduction in facsimile editions of some of the finest codices, for example, the *Aleppo*, *Damascus*, and *Kennicott Bibles*, allows even the non-specialist to enjoy the beauty and antiquity of these monuments of the Jewish heritage.

Arabic and Aramaic as well as other versions of the Hebrew Bible are found in large numbers among Hebrew manuscripts. These reflect local traditions and serve as research materials for linguists and historians of Bible exegesis.

The pioneering project of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem was initiated in 1950 by David Ben-Gurion and has as its goal "to systematically collect microfilms of Hebrew manuscripts scattered in libraries and collections throughout the world, catalogue the manuscripts and make them available to readers who come to the Institute." This goal has been substantially achieved and, at present, records relating to well over forty thousand Hebrew manuscripts and countless fragments are at the service of Jewish scholarship.

Despite this progress, there is still no textbook that provides solid, comprehensive, up-to-date information on Hebrew manuscripts and the various aspects of their study. The last guide to the subject is Moritz Steinschneider's *Vorlesungen über die Kunde hebräischer Handschriften* (1897; with supplementary notes by A.M. Habermann and in a Hebrew translation, 1965). [See now: B. Richler, *Hebrew Manuscripts A Treasured Legacy*, 1990.]

For one, albeit extremely significant area of Hebrew manuscript study, we have now at our disposal the fundamental work by Malachi Beit-Arie, *Hebrew Codicology* (1976). Thanks to Beit-Arie's book, we are able to supply some statistical information on the early centuries of medieval Hebrew manuscripts. The oldest known dated Hebrew manuscript was written in Tiberias, in 895 C.E., and it contains a portion of the Bible. Although there are undated fragments that may be older, their existence does not alter the basic situation, which is that there is a huge gap of centuries separating the Dead Sea Scrolls from the appearance of the earliest medieval Hebrew manuscripts. The rabbinic inclination against writing down rabbinic and liturgical texts may partially explain this phenomenon, but it does not explain the lack of surviving copies of the Bible from that period. Even after the ninth century, Hebrew manuscripts remain very scarce. In Beit-Arie's words: "Of some 2,700 extant dated Hebrew manuscripts until 1540, 6 dated codices from the tenth century, 8 from the eleventh century and 22 from the twelfth century are known to us" (*Hebrew Codicology*, p. II). These figures are in sharp contrast with the large number of Latin and Greek manuscripts that are extant from the fifth century onward.

* These manuscripts, with palaeographical and codicological descriptions and representative reproductions, are now in the process of being published by the Comité de Paléographie Hébraïque, a joint Israeli-French project. Several volumes have already appeared.

The Hebrew Manuscript as Source for the Study of History and Literature

The mention of a Hebrew manuscript often conjures up the image of an object relevant only to select *cognoscenti* or highly trained specialists. In reality, most Hebrew manuscripts, books written by hand (*libri manuscripti*) in Hebrew characters, are ready and eager to yield the manifold information contained among their leaves. After all, Hebrew manuscripts were read and studied by ordinary people, not only by scholars, during the time before printed books (*libri impressi*) were made and sometimes even after the invention of printing.

Hebrew manuscripts can teach us a great deal about the reading and study habits of each generation in the various Jewish communities and about the authority and popularity of certain works. Of course, they are equally important because they often preserve significant unpublished religious, literary, historical, philosophical, and scientific texts. Furthermore, manuscripts may serve as objects of study in themselves, as artifacts and physical remnants of the culture in which they were created. As such, manuscripts teach us about Hebrew scribal traditions, book manufacturing, and aesthetic tastes, as well as offering genealogical and biographical facts concerning the scribes and owners by whom and for whom they were written.

Our principal and primary access to the study of Hebrew manuscripts is provided by the numerous catalogs of public and private collections of Hebrew manuscripts to be found in Europe, Israel, and America. Rather complete lists of these catalogs may be found in Shlomo Shunami's *Bibliography of Jewish Bibliographies* (1965 and supplement in 1975) and in Aron Freimann's *Union Catalog of Hebrew Manuscripts and Their Location* (volume I, 1973). [See now: B. Richler, *Guide to Hebrew Manuscript Collections*, 1994.] Needless to say, the quality of the various catalogs is uneven; some are extremely careful, detailed, and scholarly, while others display opposite characteristics.

them members of the Teitelbaum rabbinical dynasty, from whom the Rebbe of Satmar descends.

In the Golden Age of Hungarian Jewry there were many shades of communities and individuals, representing all colors of the rainbow between these two extremes—Szeged and Sighet. Jews in Budapest and Jews in the smallest of rural settlements, German-speaking Jews in the west, Yiddish-speaking in the east, with the great majority in the middle speaking Hungarian and looking down upon and loathing those whose language was Yiddish; rigidly Orthodox and liberally Neolog, totally assimilated and Zionistic—following the movement founded by the Budapest Jew Theodor Herzl—all were part of a multicolored tapestry.

The Hungarians and the Germans did not differentiate between them. Immanuel Loew at the age of ninety was placed in a cattle car to be deported. Through highest-level intervention he was removed from the train to be taken to a hospital in Budapest where he mercifully died shortly thereafter. The 1932 Olympic gold medal winner in fencing, Attila Petschauer (notice the *very Hungarian* first name!) was beaten to death by Hungarian murderers. And our neighbors from across the street, a veterinarian who converted to Christianity and his family, died in Auschwitz.

Out of 825,000 Hungarian Jews of all persuasions, 565,000 were murdered. The rich tapestry of what was once a great community was completely destroyed.

How should we remember the Jews of Hungary and what happened to them? Mourning, crying out, reminding, warning, or perhaps most eloquently, silence, are all ways of remembering. But so is searching and studying their brilliant lives and dark deaths. Not to forget means we must first know. We must know about their lives *before* the Holocaust as we must know about the Holocaust itself—so that we should be able to incorporate into our own lives the rich traditions of those who were martyred. We shall never be able to make sense of what happened. But perhaps we can make the lessons of their lives part of ours, and of our children's and of our children's children's, so that their tragically extinguished lives will be bound up with the life of the people of Israel for all generations to come.

product of, or a contributor to, its environment than was Hungarian Jewry. A great non-Jewish Hungarian writer once said: "No nationality was more loyal to us than the Jews." Another writer observed: "No one could out-duel, out-ride, out-drink, or out-serenade an assimilated Hungarian Jew!" Indeed, Hungarian Jews were great patriots. Rabbi Simon Hevesi, the rabbi of the famous Dohany Temple in Budapest, the grandfather of New York City Comptroller Alan Hevesi, would say in a prayer in the early 1940s: "I believe that Thou hast worked wonders with Hungary, our beloved nation, and shalt work wonders with her forever." Immanuel Loew, the learned rabbi of Szeged, looked upon Hungary as the land of Canaan. Abraham von Freudiger, head of the national Orthodox organization of Hungarian Jews, was photographed in Hungarian folk costume with the family coat of arms, received when his family was ennobled in Hungary. The coat of arms is engraved on the tombstones of family members in a Jerusalem cemetery.

I have referred previously to the city of Szeged. Many people confuse it with Sighet. There can be no greater difference than that between these two cities. Szeged is in southern Hungary, on the Hungarian Great Plain. In and around it lived Jews who became very successful and wealthy by introducing modern methods into agriculture and the marketing of agricultural products. Indeed, the rich soil of the "Land of Canaan" provided its inhabitants, including the Jews, with milk and honey. In behavior, manners, and language, the Jews of Szeged were greatly assimilated. In religion they followed the liberal Neolog branch of Hungarian Judaism. Immanuel Loew, Szeged's great rabbi, led his congregation in designing and building a synagogue, dedicated in 1903, that in his day was perhaps the most beautiful synagogue in the world. It is like a cathedral and it is the sight that perhaps most characterizes the city of Szeged. The community and Loew intended it to be a monument to the prosperity and permanence of Szeged Jewry. What a sense of security and self-confidence those people must have possessed to build such an edifice!

In contrast to the rich, assimilated, magyarized Jews of Szeged, the Jews of Sighet, in northeastern Hungary, had many poor among them. Their language was mainly Yiddish; they were Orthodox, with a large Hasidic element. The life of the Jews of Sighet was not much different from their brethren in Galician shtetls: full of *cheders* (religious schools), *talmidei chakhomim* (learned teachers and students), rebbes and rabbis, among

three months, was so cruel that Hungarian Jews felt that no other Jewry could match the enormity of their tragedy. One is reminded of the elegy, recited on the eve of the Ninth of Av, in which Ohola and Oholiva, symbolic representatives of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and of Judea, debate whose suffering was greater.

If one wants to understand the state of mind of Hungarian Jewry on the eve of its destruction, one should take a brief glance at its history. When compared to other Jewries, Hungarian Jewry is young, at least in regard to the beginnings of its creativity and assumption of distinct characteristics. German Jewry was at a creative peak in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; Polish Jewry in the sixteenth century; but Hungarian Jewry only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The expanding importance of Hungarian Jewry coincided with Hungary's first steps toward extricating itself from Austria and feudalism. Jews became leaders in the Hungarian modernization and capitalization process. They were the middle class — in the middle between the decadent Hungarian nobility and the downtrodden serfdom. An unprecedented dynamic burst of economic, social, political, cultural, and religious activity made this period the Golden Age of Hungarian Jewry — lasting until 1944.

Jewish participation was immense in commerce, industry, agriculture, music, arts, literature, and the sciences. In the 1920s Hungarian Jews constituted 5 percent of the total population, but 50 percent of all lawyers, 46 percent of physicians, 41 percent of veterinarians, 39 percent of engineers and chemists, 34 percent of journalists and editors, and 40 percent of all industrial-firm owners were Jews, and, most surprising: almost 20 percent of all large-landed estates were in Jewish hands, while 26 percent of those who either owned or rented small estates were Jews.

It is quite well known that in the late 1930s and early 1940s a group of Hungarian Jewish scientists, including Edward Teller, Leo Szilard, and Janos von Neumann, played a pioneering role in the development of the American nuclear bomb. All of them were refugee Jews from Budapest who studied at the same high school, attended mainly by extraordinarily talented Jewish students. Probably much less well known is the fact that seventy-six Jews won Olympic medals for Hungary before 1968, compared to the forty-seven who did the same for the United States. Large numbers of Hungarian Jews were ennobled and carried the title "baron." One can say that there was no Jewry, including German Jewry, that was more a

organizations on trading “trucks for blood”—a proposal to let Jews go in exchange for a supply of trucks and other goods badly needed by the Germans. As a goodwill gesture, the Nazis stopped the deportation of twenty thousand Jews headed to Auschwitz, who were to be kept alive in concentration camp conditions until the completion of the negotiations.

The selection of the twenty thousand was arbitrary. In this connection falls my painful and traumatic postwar experience. One of my uncles and his family lived in the western Hungarian city of Gyor. His wife and two children were murdered in Auschwitz. After the war, we, the surviving Schmelzer children, tried to avoid the uncle because we sensed that whenever he saw us he was reminded of his own children. He told us that when he returned to Gyor after the war he could not pull himself together to go to the main street because all along the street he could see photos of his daughter, taken before the Holocaust, used as an advertisement for a photography store. Many years after the war, I read in Randolph Braham’s book, *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary*, that it was the deportation train from Gyor that was supposed to be taken to nearby Austria. As a result of a switching error, the train was directed to Auschwitz. To substitute for the missing Jews, our train was stopped on its way to Auschwitz, with the appropriate number of cattle cars detached and routed to Austria—and it was we who survived and not our cousins from Gyor.

By the end of June 1944, three months after the invasion, the Germans, with the help of Hungarian gendarmes, deported hundreds of thousands of Jews to Auschwitz from every locality in Greater Hungary, with the exception of Budapest. The Hungarian countryside became *judenrein*.

There used to be a kind of morbid competition between Hungarian and Polish Jews—the latter’s fate more protracted, more brutal, more tragic. Polish Jews had suffered for years before 1944, while their Hungarian brothers and sisters were still enjoying relative tranquility. When, in May and June of 1944, the large transports of Hungarian Jews were arriving in Auschwitz, well-dressed and well-fed, with neat bundles and suitcases, the Polish Jews were totally emaciated. Resentment was harbored toward Hungarian Jews, who seemed to have fared much better than other Jewries under German occupation. The Hungarian Jews, on the other hand, were crushed by the suddenness, swiftness, and completeness of their liquidation. The collapse of their world in such a short time, in less than

for the future of Hungarian Jewry, as encouraging and reassuring. This interpretation was supported by a previous announcement by an earlier Belzer Rebbe. He was quoted as saying that when the Messiah arrived, he would choose members of the Sanhedrin [rabbinical parliament] mainly from among Hungarian Jews. This was a great compliment to Hungarian Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish leaders. With Jewries to the north, south, east and west of Hungary virtually destroyed by early 1944, the two statements were taken to mean that Hungarian Jewry would not only avoid the horrors that had befallen their brethren, but that it would also become a remnant—and a source of renewal—for Jewry in general.

This fatal self-delusion was shattered on March 19, 1944. By April 5, all Jews were required to wear yellow stars. I remember how my mother had sewn the stars on my jacket and coat and how scared I was to go into the street for the first time branded with the yellow badge. I remember the hushed whispering of adults—I was then ten years old—as they prepared to bury our silver candlesticks in the courtyard of our house. I remember the day in May when Hungarian gendarmes, in their distinct feathered caps, rounded us up, put us and our meager belongings on horse-drawn wagons, and drove us to a ghetto in the neighboring town of Bacsalmás. In this ghetto, 2,793 Jews from the towns, villages, and hamlets of the countryside (specifically the Szeged District) were concentrated—to await deportation. From the ghetto days, I remember vividly the cries of people who were beaten by the gendarmes, and the screams and bizarre behavior of Jewish former inmates of a mental asylum who were ghettoized together with us.

On June 25, 1944, we were taken to the railroad station and placed into cattle cars, which began their journey to the north—destination Auschwitz. At a certain station in northern Hungary a few cars were directed to the west, to a concentration camp called Strasshof, near Vienna. My mother, my brother, and other members of my family happened to be in those cars, and we survived the next ten months, until the end of the war in Austria. All my classmates were in the section of the train that continued to Auschwitz—none returned.

Long after the Holocaust I found out the reason for our survival. About twenty thousand Hungarian Jews, out of the more than four hundred thousand deported, were “put on ice,” to await the outcome of the famous bargaining between Adolf Eichmann and various Jewish leaders and

I lived on this earth in an age
when the poet too just kept his silence
and waited, maybe to find his voice again,
for surely, no one else could utter a worthy curse
but Isaiah, learned master of terrible words.

[Miklo's Radnóti, *The Complete Poetry*; ed. and tr.
by Emery George. Ann Arbor, Ardis, 1980, p. 267]

Still, with all these sufferings, there was hope in the air during the spring of 1944. Hungarian Jews believed that as they had survived until then amidst all the destruction, it was unlikely that anything would happen to them now, so late in the war. The Nazis would not want to expend energy to liquidate hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews at a time when the Germans were so busy fighting for their own survival. The Jews of Hungary lulled themselves into a false sense of security. This is not an accusation; it merely describes their mood—a mood that was not completely irrational.

Two examples demonstrate this point, one trivial, the other more significant. In a newspaper that appeared around the date of the Nazi invasion of Hungary, March 19, 1944, an uncle of mine placed an advertisement, looking for a nanny for his daughter. The same issue carried advertisements for Passover products. Clearly, this was an expression of a certain measure of normalcy. A more significant example of the atmosphere prevailing in the preinvasion days in Budapest, and in Hungary in general, can be found in the reaction to a speech delivered on January 16, 1944, by the brother of the famous Hasidic Rebbe, the Belzer. The Belzer Rebbe and his brother were passing through Hungary on their way to Palestine. Their followers were able to arrange for the Rebbe's escape from a Polish ghetto, as well as for their own safe passage. In the presence of thousands of Orthodox Jews in Budapest, the Rebbe was quoted as saying that only goodness and mercy would pursue and reach the Jews of Hungary. The address was published in February of 1944 in a special brochure; it was republished a few weeks later, practically days before the invasion. Clearly, the Rebbe most likely meant a blessing, a wish, and not a prophecy or assurance. However, it is clear from the number and fast distribution of the published brochures that Orthodox Jews in Hungary considered the Rebbe's words, in terms of their relevance

Yet the biggest danger came not from the fighting but from the officers and soldiers of the regular Hungarian army. Their cruelty and sadism raised the eyebrows of even the German Nazis. Poorly clad, exposed to the elements, many Jews froze to death, including those whom Hungarian soldiers doused with water until they turned to ice sculptures. Jews were ordered to climb trees, sit on the branches, and shout "I am a dirty Jew," as Hungarians shot at them. On April 30, 1943, the last day of Passover, Hungarian soldiers herded eight hundred Jews into a shed, ignited the structure, and shot anyone who tried to flee the flames. The suffering and fate of these Jewish victims served as entertainment and amusement for a number of the Hungarians. Out of some fifty thousand Jews in the forced labor companies, only between six and seven thousand returned. Most of the deaths occurred on the Russian front, but many other Jews in these units met their deaths elsewhere. In late 1944 and early 1945, just weeks before the end of the war in Hungary, Jewish men were forced to dig antitank ditches on the western border of Hungary, not far from Vienna, in a totally senseless effort to prevent the Red Army's rapid advance. Jews died there of beatings, shootings, typhoid fever, and exhaustion, but principally of starvation. My father was there, but miraculously survived. One of his brothers was not so fortunate.

Miklos Radnoti, a great Hungarian poet of Jewish origin, though completely assimilated, was among the victims of the forced labor. Poems that he had composed during these brutal days were found on his body. In a fragment written on May 19, 1944, he said:

I lived on this earth in an age
when man became so debased
that he killed on his own, with lust,
not just on orders.

I lived on this earth in an age
when in informing lay merit, and murderers,
backstabbers, and muggers were your heroes.

I lived on this earth in an age
when a mother was a curse to her child
and the woman was happy to miscarry,
the living envied the worm-eaten dead their prison.

Personal Recollections

It was Sunday, March 19, 1944, when German soldiers entered Hungary—the last country to be invaded by the Nazis. Until this date, Hungarian Jews were quite optimistic. The Nazis were losing the war. At Stalingrad, the Germans had lost 330,000 troops by February 1943, when the few remaining German soldiers surrendered. In North Africa, it became clear that by May 1943 Germany's drive had failed. And in July of that year, the Allies invaded Sicily; Mussolini was overthrown. Even Hungary, one of Nazi Germany's most faithful allies, was flirting with the idea of extricating itself from the war in March of 1944. No one, of course, knew yet of D-Day—to happen two and a half months later on June 6—but everyone was hoping for an imminent landing of the Allies in Western Europe.

While most Jews in German-occupied lands already had been massacred, Hungarian Jewry, in the midst of this terrible annihilation, was still relatively intact during the early months of 1944. Families were living in their homes, Jewish institutions and organizations were functioning, and Jewish schools were operating normally.

Yet business and professional activities were severely curtailed and restricted by the Hungarian government's anti-Jewish legislation that began in 1938. Soon after the promulgation of these anti-Jewish laws, tens of thousands of Jewish men were drafted into forced labor companies attached to the Hungarian Army, which, after June of 1941, were fighting on the Russian front alongside the Germans. The Jews in these forced labor formations were assigned to the most dangerous and menial tasks. They were forced to wear yellow armbands (Jews converted to Christianity wore white ones). They served as a kind of buffer between the Russians and the Hungarians. Their tasks included clearing minefields. Jews were also required to dig ditches to prevent the Russian advance. Many were killed or maimed during these operations.

Preface

It is my pleasant duty to express my thanks to those who made my work possible over the years and to those who were instrumental in the publication of this volume.

I thank Professor Shmuel Glick and Mr. Israel Hazani of the Schocken Institute in Jerusalem for their highly skilled professional efforts and expertise in the preparation of the articles for a uniform and pleasing collective re-issue. Without their work, this book could not have been published; Many thanks also for Mr. David Kerschen for preparing the indices, Hebrew and English. Professor Jack Wertheimer, Provost of the Jewish Theological Seminary and Professor Alan Cooper, chair of its Publication Committee, supported this project from its inception until its completion.

For 45 years the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and its Library have been my professional and academic home. I had the privilege of serving under three chancellors, Professor Louis Finkelstein and Professor Gerson D. Cohen, of blessed memory, and *yibbadel lehayyim*, Professor Ismar Schorsch. I am most grateful to them for the trust they placed in me, for their support and for the many kindnesses they have shown me.

But, of course, my most profound thanks are due to my family. To my wife, Ruth, for her patience, understanding and love. To our children, Naomi and Ely Stillman, Shai Schmelzer and Lisa Rotmil and Becky and Mark Benisz who made us proud with their achievements, and to our grandchildren, Avinoam, Lydia and Alexander who are a source of joy for us. I pray for their well-being and happiness.

Menahem H. Schmelzer
New York 2006 - 5766

PREFACE

The articles published in the present volume are the fruit of some four decades of my interest in two areas of learning: medieval Hebrew poetry and Jewish bibliography and booklore. They appear here, with the exception of minor editorial changes and of a few essential bibliographical additions, in their original version.

As a graduate student in the early 1960's, I wrote a dissertation on the poetic work of the great Spanish rabbi, Isaac ibn Giat, who lived in Lucena, Spain in the eleventh century. His liturgical poetry exercised a great influence on future generations of Spanish Hebrew poets, chief among them Moses ibn Ezra. My original plan was to prepare a critical edition of all of his poems, but unfortunately, for various reasons, I was unable to realize my plan. Still, I published a few articles about ibn Giat, which also included some unpublished poems by him.

From the mid-1960's until the mid-1980's, my main energies were directed to my position as librarian of the Seminary. During those years I was also active in the professional organization of Judaica librarians in the United States: I delivered some lectures and wrote some articles relating to the history of the Seminary Library and on various themes in Jewish bibliography. A few studies on specific Hebrew manuscripts and rare books were also the result of my good fortune of having had access to the treasures of the Seminary Library, and, of course, also to the holdings of other institutions.

Later, beginning with the 1990's, my interest turned to medieval Hebrew poetry in Ashkenaz. I was fascinated to realize that medieval Ashkenazi rabbis were also prolific in composing occasional poems, many of them on weddings. This somehow stood in contrast with the stereotypical impression of them being the authors of exclusively lachrymose poems on tragic events. A few of my later articles deal with Ashkenazi Piyyutim.

Finally, I published a few biographical appreciations. These are devoted to the much admired great scholars and leaders at the Seminary, Alexander Marx and Louis Finkelstein, and to my teacher Alexander Scheiber of Budapest, who inspired me to embark on a career in Jewish Studies.

The articles gathered in this volume reflect on these interests and topics.

Forword

terms of physical beauty and the absence of errors. Its pervasive high quality and good taste are an enduring monument to the greatness of its author and the humanity of its editor.

One year after the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Breslau Seminary in 1854, Professor Schmelzer represents a living link to that seminal font of *Jüdische Wissenschaft*. Born in Hungary, he still had the chance before his departure in 1956 to study at its institutional offspring, the Jewish Theological Seminary of Budapest among whose founders in 1877 were several graduates of Breslau. The most formative influence on his young life came from the last laudable embodiment of that spirit in Hungary, Professor Alexander Scheiber, who single-handedly sustained a greatly diminished seminary through the nightmare of the Holocaust and its oppressive Communist aftermath. In that lonely and lugubrious setting, Professor Schmelzer learned to value the building blocks of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* – a thorough command of Bible and Talmud, knowledge of foreign languages, mastery of philology and paleography, recourse to the archives in search of unknown legacies and the application of a historical perspective. Above all, he relished the thrill of discovery that marked the pioneers of *Wissenschaft* who first glimpsed the vast landscape of a Jewish past still largely unimagined.

Like the scholarship of those same pioneers, Professor Schmelzer's own research ranges over the enormous expanse of literary Jewish creativity from rabbinics to the history of Hebrew publishing in the eighteenth century, often through the lens of piyyut. To collect this rich harvest in a single silo is an act of recompense that will perpetuate in our midst a source of unending nourishment and comfort.

Ismar Schorsch

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FORWORD

This handsome volume of Professor Menahem Schmelzer's widely scattered published essays carries with it a profound expression of gratitude for his unstinting services to the Seminary and to Jewish scholarship. According to the Hasidic master, Reb Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, piety comes in two forms. The first is personified by those pious individuals who spend their lives devoutly worshiping God. They divert no energy to bringing those estranged from God and besotted with sin closer to their Maker. The second is personified by those individuals who seek to share their love of God with others. If Noah exemplifies the first type, Abraham does the second, of whom it can be said, in the words of the Talmud that he was of benefit to humanity as well as to heaven.

Great scholars, like true pietists, are life-long practitioners of self-deprivation. But few among them, in their devotion to advancing the frontiers of their field, find the time to facilitate the work of others. About Professor Schmelzer, though, it can be said that he has truly been of inestimable benefit to his field precisely because he has given so much of himself to aiding the work of his colleagues. His generosity of spirit consistently matches his erudition. As Seminary librarian from 1964 to 1987 and as the editor of Aron Freimann's *Union Catalogue of Hebrew Manuscripts and Their Location* and of Alexander Marx's *Bibliographical Studies and Notes on Rare Books and Manuscripts in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, he set aside his own research to bring to fruition the labor of scholars both living and deceased.

His superb editing of Shalom Spiegel's *Avot ha-Piyyut* recalls the role that Leopold Zunz once played in bringing Nachman Krochmal's literary torso, *Moreh Nevukhei ha-Zeman*, to print in 1851. Both were feats of vast learning and stark self-effacement to salvage from oblivion the unfinished work of a lifetime. Indeed, I suspect that the disordered and unhewn state of Spiegel's papers required of Professor Schmelzer a degree of imagination, ingenuity and sheer hard work that exceeded what Krochmal's more complete and cohesive manuscript demanded of Zunz. And there can be no doubt as to the superiority of the final product in

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Menahem H. Schmelzer

STUDIES IN JEWISH BIBLIOGRAPHY
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Collected Essays



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