Rediscovering the Study of Spanish Kabbalism in *Wissenschaft des Judentums*: Adolf Jellinek in Leipzig, 1842–1856

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Abstract

This article examines the works of Adolf Jellinek (1821–1893) on the history of mysticism and the Kabbalah, which were written during his fourteen-year residence in Leipzig. It argues that studying the Spanish Kabbalists allowed Jellinek to work through ideas concerning the development of Jewish theology and the interplay of Jewish and non-Jewish philosophical perspectives. The article briefly describes Jellinek's early education and attraction to Leipzig; his first writings on Kabbalah; and concludes with an analysis of his larger philological and genealogical projects on the authorship and literary background of the *Zohar*. Though Jellinek's later prominence as a rabbi and preacher in Vienna has had the tendency to obscure his years in Leipzig, it was Jellinek's work in Saxony that laid the groundwork for most of his subsequent scholarship on Jewish mysticism. This article is a brief introduction to this research and one more step toward revealing the still too often forgotten *Wissenschaft* interest in the history of Jewish mysticism.

1. Introduction

In 1842, at the age of twenty-one, Adolf Jellinek (1821–1893) arrived in Leipzig. Attracted to the city because of its well-regarded Faculty of Oriental Languages, and especially the possibility to study with the Arabist Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (1801–1888) and the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholar (and the university's Hebrew lecturer) Julius Fürst (1805–1873), Jellinek resided in the Saxon city until 1856, when he was recruited by the Viennese Jewish community to become its rabbi in Leopoldstadt. Though he was a prolific and well-regarded scholar in Leipzig, it was not until his years in Vienna

(in Leopoldstadt from 1856 to 1865, thenceforth as the city's chief rabbi) that Jellinek became truly famous, renowned as German Jewry's most gifted orator. Yet Jellinek's later prominence in Vienna has had the tendency to obscure his years in Leipzig, where he contributed groundbreaking work on the philology and intellectual history of Jewish mysticism, with a special focus on the authorship of the *Zohar*, the foundational text of Spanish Kabbalism.[1] It was in Saxony that Jellinek became one of the leading voices in the still-nascent *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (hereafter referred to as *Wissenschaft*), a group of German-Jewish scholars dedicated to the scientific study of Jewish history. Since the move to Vienna marked a sharp decline in Jellinek's contributions to *Wissenschaft* journals, his early publications were for too long overlooked by historians. This article is a brief introduction to some of this work, and a step toward illuminating a forgotten aspect of *Wissenschaft* scholarship: its interest in the history of Jewish mysticism.[2]

Jellinek was an immensely prolific scholar during his residence in Leipzig, contributing dozens of short- and medium-length articles and book reviews to the *Wissenschaft* journal *Der Orient* in the 1840s; publishing eight book-length works on the history and philology of Kabbalah in the first half of the 1850s; and beginning a project that would, in total, take him over two decades: the six-volume *Beit ha-Midrasch*, a collection of previously unpublished rabbinic and kabbalistic texts. One overriding question arises from even this brief recounting of Jellinek's publications: Why was Jellinek so deeply interested in the history of Kabbalah? We cannot, of course, comprehensively answer any question that contains more than a hint of personal idiosyncrasy. But two modes of inquiry go some lengths toward an explanation. First, the history of Kabbalah revealed certain historical phenomena in which Jellinek was particularly interested: those concerning Jewish philosophy and its non-Jewish

1 Jellinek's work on Kabbalism has not been entirely neglected in the modern scholarly literature. See: Moshe Idel: Al Aharon Jellinek ve haKabbalah (Hebr.), in: Pe'amim 100 (2004), pp. 16–21; Isaiah Tishby: Wisdom of the Zohar. An Anthology of Texts, vol. 1, New York 1989, pp. 47–49; and Ronald Kiener: From *Ba'al ha-Zohar* to Prophetic to Ecstatic. The Vicissitudes of Abulafia in Contemporary Scholarship, in: Peter Schäfer / Joseph Dan (eds.), Gershom Scholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism 50 Years after. Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism, Tübingen 1993, pp. 145–162.

2 For an introduction and overview of *Wissenschaft* engagement with the history of Jewish mysticism, see David Myers: Philosophy and Kabbalah in Wissenschaft des Judentums. Rethinking the Narrative of Neglect, in: Studia Judaica, 16 (2008), pp. 56–71.

influences; Jewish theology and its development and transformation across the ages; and Jewish accounts of value, meaning, and ethics outside of biblical exegesis and halakhic (religious legal) codes. All of Jellinek's publications in Leipzig point toward his deep fascination with the interplay of Jewish and non-Jewish intellectual and linguistic motifs. For Jellinek, medieval Kabbalah (especially in its Spanish variety) was an unexamined entrée into the vast cultural diversity of historic Judaism, one that was often obscured by more Bible- and Talmud-centered narratives.

The other answer as to why Jellinek was interested in the history of Kabbalah focuses less on the specifics of the mystical tradition itself. Instead, it understands Jellinek's fascination as related to his observations concerning contemporary developments in German Judaism. In other words, during his years in Leipzig (and then even more so during his first decade in Vienna), Jellinek was seeking new modes of language and rhetoric for connecting contemporary German-speaking Central European Jews to the narratives and moral principles embodied (he believed) in the Jewish tradition. Jellinek interpreted the Kabbalah as part of the more general project of theological expression and rabbinic Biblical exegesis known as Midrash, and it was in Midrash, Jellinek hoped, that one might find an authentic and uniquely Jewish rhetorical posture, one that could appeal to urban, acculturating (liberal) Jews. For Jellinek, Kabbalah was a deep and complex form of Midrash, just one of a myriad of its strands, each of which illuminated a particular Jewish apperception of the world and represented a distinctive Jewish adaptation or appropriation of non-Jewish ideas and insights. Indeed, as the years progressed and Jellinek participated less in scholarship and more in communal leadership, it was to this enormous body of midrashic texts that he returned time and again for rhetorical inspiration and moral guidance. During his career as a preacher and community rabbi he came to hold that Midrash was the key that could rejuvenate Jewish belief and practice in a world of urban modernity.[3]

This article is devoted primarily to Jellinek's writings on the history of mysticism and the Kabbalah before his turn to communal leadership. It investigates the first answer as to why Jellinek was interested in the Kabbalah: what it revealed to him concerning the development of Jewish ideas and

[3] See Samuel J. Kessler: Translating Judaism for Modernity. Adolf Jellinek in Leopoldstadt, 1857–1865, in: Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook, 14 (2015), pp. 393–419.

the interplay of Jewish and non-Jewish philosophical perspectives. His six-volume collection *Beit ha-Midrasch* and his larger philosophy concerning the place of Midrash in contemporary German-Jewish life are mentioned merely in passing, as they can only fully be discussed elsewhere. Instead, in the pages below, I will briefly describe Jellinek's early education and attraction to Leipzig, his first writings on Kabbalah, and conclude with an analysis of his larger philological and genealogical projects on the authorship and literary background of the *Zohar*.

2. Arrival and Early Studies in Leipzig

Adolf Jellinek was born June 26, 1821 in Drslawitz (Drslavice), a village northwest of Ungarisch-Brod (Uherský Brod) in the Habsburg Crown Land of Moravia.[4] The oldest of three boys in a family we might now consider of lower middle class means, he and his brothers were raised in a characteristically traditional Jewish home: the family celebrated the Sabbath and festivals, and the children attended the local *cheder*, or Jewish boys school, where they learned to read and write in Hebrew and memorized passages from Torah and Mishna. Until age thirteen Jellinek continued both his Jewish and German educations in Ungarisch-Brod, after which he went to live and study at the Proßnitz (Prostějov) yeshiva under the tutelage of Moses Katz Wanefried (d. 1850).[5] As Michael L. Miller notes, "the students who flocked to Wanefried's yeshiva found an environment that was particularly open to secular studies."[6] In 1838

[4] For overviews of Jellinek's life, see Klaus Kempter: Die Jellineks 1820–1955. Eine familienbiographische Studie zum deutsch-jüdischen Bildungsbürgertum, Düsseldorf 1998, and Moses Rosenmann: Dr. Adolf Jellinek. Sein Leben und Schaffen, Vienna 1931. For scholarship on Czech Jewry, see Martin Joachim Wein: History of the Jews in the Bohemian Lands, Leiden 2015; Hillel J. Kieval: Languages of Community. The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands, Berkeley 2000; Hillel J. Kieval: The Making of Czech Jewry. National Conflict and Jewish Society in Bohemia, 1870–1918, New York 1988; Michael L. Miller: Rabbis and Revolution. The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation, Stanford 2011.

[5] For a brief history of the Jewish community of Proßnitz through the early twentieth century, see Bohuslav Eliáš: Zur Geschichte der Israelitengemeinde von Prostějov (Proßnitz), in: Husserl Studies, 10 (1994), pp. 237–248.

[6] Miller, Rabbis and Revolution, p. 91. In Proßnitz, Jellinek studied secular subjects—French, Italian, the sciences—with the doctor and private tutor Gideon Brecher. And in an 1891 interview, Jellinek recalled his student days learning under Wanefried, and credited him with fostering his early interest in Kabbalah. See Moritz Eisler: Feuilleton: R. Moses Katz Wanefried. Eine Reminiscenz aus dem Leben des Herrn Dr. Adolf Jellinek von einem Jugendgenossen, in: Die Neuzeit, 1891 (22.05.1891), 21, p. 206.

Jellinek left Proßnitz for Prague, where he spent three years studying Talmud under Solomon Judah Rappaport (1790–1867), as well as learning secular subjects at the Charles University.[7]

Jellinek, therefore, arrived in Leipzig with a traditional yeshiva education complemented by knowledge of classical and contemporary European languages (Latin, English, French, Italian) and history. Jellinek's first years at Leipzig University were taken up by courses in Oriental languages, philosophy, and philology, with over half his classes taught by Fleischer, a specialist in Arabic literature and philosophy who was highly respected across Europe.[8] (Fleischer was also one of the few professors who actively cultivated personal relationships with his Jewish students, and one of the few non-Jewish scholars to regularly contribute to *Wissenschaft* journals.) It was in Leipzig that Jellinek learned to read Arabic, and from Fleischer that he gained his knowledge of the Islamic philosophy of the Middle Ages, two skills he would later heavily rely upon for his work decoding the authorship and literary background of the *Zohar*. It was also in these first years at the university that Jellinek befriended Julius Fürst, the institution's Hebrew lecturer and the editor of a new *Wissenschaft* journal. The journal, called *Der Orient* (hereafter simply "*Orient*"), printed scholarly articles, news from around the Jewish world, short critiques and analyses, and book reviews.[9] *Orient* ran for just over a decade (from January 1840 to May 1851), during which time it was the most important periodical for Oriental scholarship within *Wissenschaft* in the German language in Central Europe.

7 For Jellinek's certificate from the Prague University, see National Library of Israel, Ms. collection ARC. 4° 1588. Series 2- Studien-Zeigniß Prague 1839 and ARC. 4° 1588. Series 2- Classes in 1838. Rappaport expressed a deep interest in ensuring that his curriculum included both the newest developments of *Wissenschaft* alongside traditional Talmudic study. We know that Rappaport's intellectual model remained forefront in Jellinek's mind for many years to come, for on November 15, 1867, the Viennese Jewish newspaper *Die Neuzeit* featured a multi-page obituary for Rabbi Rappaport, with the lead essay penned by Jellinek. See Adolf Jellinek: Erinnerungen an den verewigten Oberrabb. S. J. Rappaport, in: Die Neuzeit 1867 (15.11.1867), 46, pp. 531–533. See also Adolf Kurländer: Biografi S. L. Rapoport's, Pest 1869.

8 See National Library of Israel, Ms. collection ARC. 4° 1588 – Adolphus Jellinek Almae Universitatis Lipsiensis. The list of Jellinek's courses in Leipzig has been preserved, see National Library of Israel, Ms. collection ARC. 4° 1588. Series 2- Collegian-Buch. On Fleischer, see Hans-Georg Ebert / Thoralf Hanstein (eds.): Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer—Leben und Wirkung. Ein Leipziger Orientalist des 19. Jahrhunderts mit Internationaler Ausstrahlung, Frankfurt/Main 2013.

9 Its complete title was *Der Orient. Berichte, Studien und Kritiken für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur.*

Jellinek's first (credited) writing appeared in *Orient* in November 1842.[10] Printed under one of *Orient*'s recurring subject headings, "Literarische Nachrichten und Miscellen," it was a brief philological exercise on the possible Arabic origins of the Hebrew word *lakhan* ("melody"). More important than the substance of the piece itself is what it already revealed about Jellinek's course of scholarship. Given Jellinek's future interest in the Arabic (and Islamic) influences on post-Talmudic Hebrew and Judaic culture, it is interesting to note that even his very first article in *Orient* focused on a Hebrew-Arabic connection. Though Jellinek was not the only writer to quote in Arabic in *Orient* (which the publisher printed in its original script and not in transliteration), he was one of the most consistent to do so, as if in a personal attempt to keep the nascent *Wissenschaft* movement from conducting research exclusively within Judaism's own enormous Hebrew literary oeuvre. Further, Jellinek mentioned Fleischer by name in this article, calling him "der gelehrte und menschenfreundliche Hr. Prof." (the learned and affable Mr. Professor), expressing in public a fondness for a man whose mentorship and guidance would result in a lasting friendship.

Over the course of its decade-long run, Jellinek published at least seventy-five articles in *Orient*, ranging in length from a single page to many dozens, on topics related to Hebrew-Arabic linguistic connections,[11] the cultural milieu of the Jewish Middle Ages,[12] Kabbalah and its theological perspectives,[13] and reviews of new religious and scholarly books.[14] During these years, Jellinek was also scouring libraries in Leipzig, and corresponding with friends in Munich and elsewhere, in search of unknown Jewish manuscripts from the Spanish

[10] Orient 49 (1842): 780–781. *The Orient* was divided into two sections. The first gathered news from around the Jewish world. The second, under the additional title *Literaturblatt des Orients*, was where all of Jellinek's writings appeared. It is to this literary supplement that all references in this article relate.

[11] See Orient 4 (1863), pp. 63–4; Orient 6 (1843), pp. 88–91; Orient 9 (1843), pp. 141–142; Orient 23 (1843), pp. 360–361; Orient 30 (1843), pp. 471–472; Orient 2 (1844), pp. 26–27; Orient 45 (1844), pp. 719–720.

[12] See Orient 17 (1843), pp. 270–272; Orient 19 (1843), pp. 296–297; Orient 39 (1843), pp. 615–617; Orient 46 (1843), p. 728; Orient 52 (1843), pp. 817–21; Orient 11 (1844), pp. 167–69; Orient 12 (1844), pp. 187–190; Orient 50 (1844), pp. 793–794; Orient 5 (1847), pp. 78–79; Orient 9 (1847), pp. 141–142; Orient 17 (1847), pp. 263–264; Orient 18 (1847), pp. 275–277; Orient 19 (1847), pp. 296–298.

[13] See Orient 11 (1844), pp. 167–169; Orient 30 (1844), p. 470.

[14] See Orient 1 (1843), pp. 9–13; Orient 12 (1843), pp. 201–202 and Orient 17 (1843), pp. 265–268 and Orient 18 (1843), pp. 279–281; Orient 22 (1844), pp. 350–352; Orient 26 (1844), pp. 413–414; Orient 27 (1844), pp. 428–429; Orient 29 (1844), pp. 458–459; Orient 36 (1844), pp. 573–576; Orient 38 (1844), pp. 603–608.

Middle Ages, parts of which he published, with commentary, in *Orient*.[15] Finally, through the middle and end of the 1840s, Jellinek wrote a series of biographical sketches for the journal, focused mainly on medieval and early modern rabbinical proponents of Kabbalah and mysticism.[16] These mini-biographies were brief forays into the theological and philological particularity of individuals, and they foreshadowed the intensive work Jellinek would later undertake in his search for (what he came to believe was) the medieval Spanish originator of the *Zohar*.

Jellinek's frequent contributions to *Orient*, and his early and continued relationship with Fürst, provided the up-and-coming scholar with a platform and testing ground for his ideas, especially when it came to mapping the linguistic and intellectual connections between Jewish and non-Jewish texts. Jellinek's voluminous body of short writings in *Orient* demonstrated an early affinity for two key scholarly methodologies, both of which would direct his later researches: close philological analysis on the one hand, and the noting and historicizing of overlapping social contexts on the other. These two approaches were complemented by a third, which might even be called Jellinek's theoretical lens: Jellinek began every investigation with the assumption that Jewish history constituted a series of historical developments, of changes over time, that arose in response to shifting social factors taking place outside of the Jewish community. This idea was already a core element of *Wissenschaft* ideology, but Jellinek took it a step further. Major historical developments, he believed, like the creation of the Talmud or the advent of Spanish Kabbalism, were prompted almost entirely by external factors, social and intellectual trends that originated in the worlds of Christian and Islamic learning.[17]

Taken together, these two methods of reading and this sense of historical development in conversation with external traditions appear to have guided

15 See Orient 20 (1843), pp. 305–309; Orient 24 (1843), pp. 376–377; Orient 35 (1843), pp. 557–560.

16 Jellinek's biographies included: Samuel Balerio (16th century) (Orient 36 (1845), p. 566 and Orient 38 (1845), p. 606); Moshe Botarel (14th-15th centuries) (Orient 12 (1846), pp. 187–189); David ben Solomon Vital (called ha-Rofe) (d. 1589) (Orient 13 (1846), pp. 198–199); Jacob Luzzato (d. 1587) (Orient 14 (1846), pp. 221–222); Emanuel Recchi (Orient 15 (1846), pp. 232–233); Aaron ben David ha-Kohen (14th century) (Orient 16 (1846), pp. 252–253); Yisachar Bähr (Orient 16 (1846), p. 254); Isaac of Neustadt (17th–18th centuries) (Orient 16 (1846), pp. 254–256); Naftali Hirsch Goßlar of Halberstadt (18th century) (Orient 17 (1846), pp. 260–261); Josef Jabez (15th–16th century) (Orient 16 (1846), pp. 261–263).

17 This core scholarly conviction was what ultimately allowed Jellinek to see that Judaism in the middle nineteenth century was being buffeted by a new set of external forces, and that these called for their own set of theological and ritual responses.

Jellinek's research throughout the 1840s. In fact, as he studied at the university and focused on philology and manuscript collection, his original intention to write a large, synthetic treatment of the entire history of the Kabbalah devolved into a dedication to trace the Kabbalah's historical development through small, focused works. We can see this evolution in his thinking quite clearly in two statements made seven years apart. In May 1844, Jellinek wrote:

> "Bound up with the question of the origin and the age of the Kabbalah is another, that of the time and place of the composition of the *Zohar*. This question appears to us as not having been sufficiently answered. The *Zohar*, in its entirety, contains no less than a uniform system. One finds in it repetitions; there are passages which have been borrowed from the Talmud and Midrash; the language is variously colored. One finds progressions within it, since the system developed gradually. [Ultimately,] it now must be shown what doctrines make up its original elements: how it developed under the hands of various teachers and what elements of other writings are found in it. In short, we need to give a critique of the entire *Zohar* according to its individual passages. This [I] shall attempt in a future work, [to be called] 'The Composition of the Zohar.'"[18]

Jellinek published these words at the age of twenty-three, after having been a student in Leipzig for less than two years. His ambitions were grand and his insights clear. Yet he never did write such a great synthetic work. Instead, as his many small articles from *Orient* illustrate, his youthful exuberance slowly transformed into a methodology of micro-histories. By 1851, at the start of four highly productive years, he wrote another statement of purpose, this time with a very different tone.

"I stayed mindful of my promise [from 1844, to write a book on the composition of the *Zohar*], and it was not Horace's *nonum prematur in anum* [let it be kept back until the ninth year] that detained me from fulfilling it so far, but [rather] the consciousness that my subject could not be sufficiently solved until, over time, something affirmative placed the origins and authorship of the *Zohar*."[19]

These are the opening lines to Jellinek's *Moses ben Schem-Tob de Leon und sein Verhältnis zum Sohar* (discussed in detail below), his attempt at a definitive

[18] A. Franck: Die Kabbala oder die Religions-Philosophie der Hebräer, trans. Ad. Gelinek [sic], Leipzig 1844), p. x. (From Jellinek's "Vorrede des Uebersetzers.")

[19] Adolf Jellinek: Moses ben Schem-Tob de Leon und sein Verhältnis zum Sohar. Eine historisch-kritische Untersuchung über die Entstehung des Sohar, Leipzig 1851, p. 5.

statement that the authorship of the *Zohar* dated not from the *mishnaic* era (2nd century CE) but from the milieu of medieval Spain. *Moses ben Schem-Tob* was a short book, fifty-three pages in length, closer really to an extended article, but it exemplified the methodologies and preferences Jellinek had honed throughout the 1840s. Jellinek was never to become known as a grand theorist. Instead, his preferred style was argument through quotidian analysis, the piecemeal assemblage of trace data that, in the end, created enduring proofs and bedrocks of text on which to build a grounded account of the Jewish past.

There is one final text that requires mention before we can turn to Jellinek's core discoveries in the history of Spanish Kabbalism. The May 1844 passage, quoted above, originated in one of Jellinek's first major contributions to German-language scholarship on the history of the Kabbalah: a translation. In 1843, the French Jewish philosopher (and member of the *Institut de France*) Adolphe Franck (1810–1893) published *La Kabbale ou La Philosophie Religieuse des Hébreux*, an attempted synthesis of the various philosophical concepts that comprise the canonical texts of the Kabbalah, especially those originating in *Sefer Yetsirah* and the *Zohar*.[20] Immediately, Jellinek set to work translating the text. But Jellinek's was to be more than just a German-language version of the French original. Though still a student, Jellinek took many liberties with Franck's text, including adding introductory remarks, correctional footnotes concerning manuscript variations and alternate translations, and his own set of appendices.[21] These were audacious acts by a man not yet out of his early twenties. But they likewise demonstrated Jellinek's already deep knowledge of both the original sources and the extant scholarship on Kabbalism.[22]

[20] For an overview of Franck and the importance of his works, see Wouter J. Hanegraaff: The Beginnings of Occultist Kabbalah. Adolphe Franck and Eliphas Lévy, in: Boaz Huss / Marco Pasi / Kocku von Stuckrad (eds.), Kabbalah and Modernity. Interpretations, Transformations, Adaptations, Leiden 2010, pp. 107–128, esp. 111–118.

[21] Jellinek's translation was subtitled "übersetzt, verbessert und vermehrt" (translated, improved, and expanded). It was Jellinek's first publication with the Leipzig house of Heinrich Hunger (they originally spelled his name 'Gelinek', later modified to the more familiar 'Jellinek'), a firm that would eventually publish the vast majority of his own personal writings, as well as those of his many *Wissenschaft* colleagues. Hunger has left very little historical record beyond its extensive back catalogue. But it would appear that the editor and printers left him a great deal of personal freedom in both subject and style – judging by Jellinek's long relationship with the house and the many and varied works he produced with it.

[22] Jellinek's translation appeared in May 1844 and was reviewed widely, including in *Orient* by Isaak Markus Jost, a leader of the *Wissenschaft* movement and an early advocate of Jellinek's researches. See I. M. Jost: Adolf Jellinek und die Kabbala, Leipzig 1852.

Jellinek's extensive notes in the Franck translation set into writing his earliest thoughts on the overall history and development of the Kabbalah. First, Jellinek sided with Johann Karl Ludwig Gieseler (1792–1854), a Protestant German church historian then working in Göttingen, who had argued in a series of essays in the 1820s and 1830s that Jewish Kabbalah did not originate in Zoroastrianism, nor was it the source of Christian Gnosticism.[23] Such debates – about the relationship of the mystical strands of Judaism to the more esoteric traditions of the ancient Near East and Mediterranean – were the cause of much speculation in the first half of the nineteenth century. Though never rejecting the interaction of Gnostic thought with Judaism, Jellinek (as Gershom Scholem would later do) argued vehemently that the Kabbalah was much closer to the mainstream of Judaism than it was to other esoteric traditions that persisted mainly within small circles of acolytes.[24] Second, Jellinek supported Franck's assertions that any examination of the Kabbalah must involve "an investigation on the relationship of the Kabbalistic system to other systems of philosophy and religion."[25] Still, Jellinek differed with Franck, especially over the age of the *Zohar* and its relationship to other theological literatures. (Franck continued to place the *Zohar*'s origins in the Mishnaic period.) Following the publication of the translation, Jellinek spent over half a decade searching widely through medieval Arabic, and later Christian, texts in search of proofs about the close ties of Kabbalah to the non-Jewish framework of the medieval world. And finally, Jellinek used this translation (and especially his added appendixes) to begin to correct what he understood (rightly) to be a deeply corrupted manuscript tradition and a weak philological understanding among scholars of key kabbalistic terms.[26]

23 Franck, Die Kabbala, p. vii.

24 This belief explains many of Jellinek's mini-biographies in *Orient*. Those who participated in kabbalistic thought, whether fully or merely as one project alongside other Talmudic and philosophical devotions, were not, for Jellinek, adherents of a secret sect, encamped outside the mainstream of Judaism. Rather, Kabbalah represented a fully accepted strain of Jewish theological investigation in continual concert with other forms of religious experience. Jellinek did write a long essay on Gnosticism for *Orient*, see Orient 27–30 (1849).

25 Franck, Die Kabbala, p. xi.

26 Franck, Die Kabbala, p. xii.

3. The *Zohar:* Authorship and Lineage

Jellinek's translation of Franck and the years he spent subsequently carefully learning the cultural context of Spanish Kabbalism marked the first chapter in his scholarly contributions to the history of Jewish mysticism. Then, beginning in the first half of the 1850s, Jellinek sought to bring definitive answers to some of the field's most outstanding questions: the authorship of the *Zohar* and the intellectual networks in which it was created.[27] Jellinek's central works on the authorship and lineage of the *Zohar* were published between 1851 and 1854. Writing almost nothing in 1850, he spent the year preparing a string of short books that would fundamentally reshape the debate on the origins and ideas of Spanish Kabbalism. With each of these texts Jellinek sought to expand the scholarly conception of the intellectual world of Spanish Kabbalism and to create a foundation of critical editions on which future research could be based.

Jellinek began his spate of publications with a short monograph entitled *Moses ben Schem-Tob de Leon und sein Verhältniß zum Sohar* (Moses ben Shem-Tov de León and his relationship to the *Zohar*, 1851), an attempt to definitively identify the authorship of the *Zohar*. From there, he began a systematic investigation of texts within the *Zohar*'s cultural milieu, which he parsed at length in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala* (contributions to the history of the Kabbalah, 1852). In this same period, he also published critical editions of texts he felt to be important to the kabbalistic imagination: in 1852, the "Dialogue on the Soul" by the Greek philosopher Galen (2nd century CE), which was influential in Arabic philosophy and had been translated into Hebrew by Judah ben Solomon Alharizi (d. 1225); in 1853, *Auswahl kabbalistischer Mystic* (selections of kabbalistic mysticism), which included the texts of *Masechet Asilut* (tractate on emanations), *Sefer ha'Iyun* (book of intuitions) by Rabbi Hamai Gaon (school of Isaac the Blind, 13th century), the *Epistles* of Abraham Abulafia, and *On the Tetragrammaton* by Abraham of Cologne (13th century); also in 1853, the text of *Ma'arich*, an explanatory dictionary of talmudic, midrashic, and kabbalistic terms by Menahem ben Judah de Lonzano (d. early 17th century); in 1854, the *Sefer Olam HaKatan* (microcosmos) by Josef ibn Tzaddik (d. 1149) on religious philosophy and ethics; and also in

[27] For a recent synthesis and expansion of scholarship on this topic, see Boaz Huss: The Zohar. Reception and Impact, trans. Yudith Nave, Oxford 2016.

1854, Abraham Abulafia's *Epistles on Philosophy and Kabbalah*. Finally, Jellinek sought to illuminate kabbalistic connections with the Christian world, publishing, in 1853 and 1854, two essays by Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274): Hebrew translations of *Quaestiones disputate, quaestio de anima* (disputed questions, the question of the soul) and *De animae facultatibus* (the faculties of the soul).[28] Jellinek's critical editions have had a much longer scholarly life than has his proofs of de León's authorship of the *Zohar*.[29] Yet *Moses ben Schem-Tob de Leon und sein Verhältniß zum Sohar* is the key to understanding Jellinek's larger intellectual project, and essential for explaining why he chose certain works to publish in new editions. Therefore, it is to this book that we now turn.

Moses ben Schem-Tob de Leon und sein Verhältniß zum Sohar was published in 1851. Subtitled "Eine historisch-kritische Untersuchung" (an historical-critical investigation), the book exemplified the methodological paradigms that Jellinek had been perfecting throughout the 1840s. Structured around a series of close readings and text-parallels, and relying heavily on philological comparisons to other twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscripts, Jellinek claimed that the *Zohar* was not written by its purported author, the rabbinic sage Simeon bar Yochai (2nd century CE), but rather authored by the Spanish rabbi Moses ben Shem-Tov de León (d. 1305).[30] Citing mainly Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic sources, Jellinek sought in careful detail to trace the development of kabbalistic mystical philosophy through centuries of preceding texts.[31]

[28] For an overview of Jewish engagements with Thomas Aquinas, see Norman Roth: Thomas Aquinas, in: Norman Roth (ed.), Medieval Jewish Civilization. An Encyclopedia, New York 2016, pp. 27–31.

[29] Much of the reason for this is Gershom Scholem's attribution of the insight about de León mainly to himself but somewhat also to Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891) – although Graetz cited Jellinek.

[30] Jellinek's theory of the *Zohar*'s primary authorial origins was accepted by Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891) in his magisterial *Geschichte der Juden* (1853–1875). Jellinek's proof of Moses de León's authorship of the *Zohar* was not fully embraced by scholars until Gershom Scholem (1897–1982) gave it his imprimatur a century later. The fifth lecture of *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, entitled "The Zohar I: The Book and Its Author," is in part devoted to explaining how Scholem forwent his initial belief in the Zohar's multi-authorship for Jellinek's theory – which Scholem credits to Graetz – of Moses de Leon's sole authorship. See Gershom Scholem: Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, New York 2011, pp. 156–204; Daniel C. Matt: Zohar. the Book of Enlightenment, Minneapolis 1983, pp. 4–10. See also Moses de Leon: The Book of the Pomegranate. Moses De Leon's Sefer Ha-Rimmon, ed. and trans. Elliot R. Wolfson, Atlanta 1988.

[31] For a longer account of Jellinek's work on Abraham Abulafia and Jellinek's importance to the field of Jewish mystical studies generally, see Ronald Kiener: From *Ba'al ha-Zohar* to Prophetic

Jellinek's contention in *Moses ben Schem-Tob* concerning the *Zohar*'s more recent authorship built on already-extant theories, some dating from the 1840s, others much older. As both Jellinek and Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891) openly acknowledged, the idea of the *Zohar*'s medieval origin was not an invention of the nineteenth century. Jellinek listed a number of Jewish authorities who had long before come to the conclusion that Moses de León was, at the very least, involved with the *Zohar* within the first generation of scholars engaged with it at the time of its historical appearance, perhaps even as its primary redactor (*Verfasser*). These figures included the medieval Spanish Talmudist Solomon ben Aderet (1235–1310, called Rashba), the Portuguese court astronomer Abraham Zakuto (1452–1515), and the German rabbi and publisher Jacob Emden (1697–1776). Jellinek credited the writings of these men as being essential to his own early research.[32] But, Jellinek also noted that, in order to make a final proof, he sought to return to the primary sources themselves.[33] Graetz, in his *Geschichte der Juden*, likewise recorded Emden's widely-discussed idea that the *Zohar* was of medieval origin.[34]

As noted above, Adolphe Franck, in his 1843 book, still believed the *Zohar* to be of ancient origin, an idea that Jellinek was beginning to doubt but could not yet disprove at the time of his 1844 translation. Throughout the 1830s and early 1840s, while skepticism grew regarding this early dating (both from within and without Jewish scholarly circles), little solid historical evidence was gathered to prove a different conclusion. In the middle 1840s, however, as Jellinek was contributing his short pieces to *Orient*, Julius Fürst received the unpublished writings of a young scholar, whose theories (though ultimately proven wrong) would fully inaugurate the modern idea of the *Zohar*'s medieval origins. In the middle and late 1830s, Meyer Heinrich Hirsch Landauer (1808–1841) had been working through the uncatalogued Hebrew materials

to Ecstatic. The Vicissitudes of Abulafia in Contemporary Scholarship, in: Peter Schäfer / Joseph Dan (eds.), Gershom Scholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism 50 Years after. Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism, Tübingen 1993, pp. 145–162.

32 Jellinek, Moses ben Schem-Tob, pp. 6.

33 "Meine Hauptquellen waren der Sohar und eine gedruckte Schrift Moses de Leon's." Jellinek, Moses ben Schem-Tob, pp. 6.

34 Graetz contextualized Emden's insight as part of Emden's ongoing attempt to combat crypto-Sabbatianism and Frankism in the middle eighteenth century. For an extended discussion of these debates, see Graetz, Geschichte der Juden, vol. 10, pp. 349–406.

housed in the Bavarian State Library in Munich. After Landauer's untimely death in 1841, Fürst spent four years organizing Landauer's papers, which were serialized in *Orient* in 1845 and 1846. The writings in Landauer's estate were highly varied and of mixed quality, ranging from the scholarly to the theological, from the lucid to the abstruse. Yet after years of reading, Landauer had come to the conclusion that the *Zohar* was indeed of medieval origin. But as to whose authorship, Landauer settled on Abraham Abulafia (b. 1240), the Spanish mystic, influential teacher, and disseminator of a school of prophetic Kabbalah.[35]

Jellinek, we know, read these articles in *Orient* carefully (working as closely as he did with Fürst, he possibly saw them even before publication), and *Moses ben Schem-Tob* was in many ways structured as a fair-minded but categorical rebuttal to Landauer's conclusions. Jellinek's disagreements with Landauer centered on a series of interlocking contradictions within Landauer's findings, which Jellinek laid out in his book's preface:

1) One cannot find mention in any Jewish writer of Abulafia's having written the *Zohar*, while there are such notes for Moses de León.
2) It is psychologically unlikely that a man who is so prominent in his personality, who thinks he is inspired, should write his works under a borrowed name.
3) One finds teachings that form a bridge [i. e., contemporaneity rather than authorship] between the *Zohar* and Abulafia, as well as with other Kabbalists.
4) Landauer has misunderstood the evidence of the *Zohar* [itself], as was partly proved by me (*Orient* 1851) and partly by [Manuel] Joël (*die Religionsphilosophie des Sohar*, pp. 68 ff.).
5) A single person did not write the entire *Zohar*, the *Zohar Chadash* [New Zohar] and the *Tikunei ha-Zohar* [Rectifications of the Zohar]; and Abulafia was not a man to associate with others. And where could he have found helpers in Italy? It is, however, possible that in Ávila [Spain] certain writings of Abulafia were employed in the editing of the *Zohar*.[36]

[35] For a brief discussion of Landauer and Jellinek on Abulafia, see Giulio Busi: Beyond the Burden of Idealism. For a New Appreciation of the Visual Lore in the Kabbalah, in: Boaz Huss / Marco Pasi / Kocku von Stuckrad (eds.): Kabbalah and Modernity. Interpretations, Transformations, Adaptations, Leiden 2010, pp. 29–46, esp. 36–38.

[36] Jellinek, Moses ben Schem-Tob, pp. 7–8.

These arguments against Landauer point in a number of directions, yet all rely on Jellinek's two main forms of scholarly methodology – philological analysis (point 4) and historical-intellectual context (points 1, 3, and 5) – with what appears to be the addition of a new angle, that of personal psychology (points 2 and 5). Abulafia, Jellinek argued, was simply not the kind of person who writes a work like the *Zohar*. Yet how might one discover just who that sort of person could be? By focusing even more closely on the literary style and external influences of the *Zohar* text, Jellinek concluded. In *Moses ben Schem-Tob*, Jellinek sought to show that only by comparing across literary genres and styles could a definitive argument be made for the authorship of such a large and complex pseudepigraphic text. Jellinek based his conclusions on a close philological investigation of the entire corpus of known writings by de León, as well as by comparing the manuscript remains of de León's students to the *Zohar*'s vocabulary, structure, and thematic choices.

To further his claims, Jellinek sought to give historical context to de León's education and influences, as well as to argue that such texts could only have been written after a couple of generations of kabbalistic investigation.[37] "[Moses de León] studied poetry, the masterpieces of Salomon ibn Gabirol [11th century], knew the Aristotelian philosophy, and was an enthusiastic supporter and promoter of the Kabbalah …"[38] To definitively prove that de León was the primary author of the *Zohar*, Jellinek believed, he must also demonstrate that de León's other extant writings were as philologically and intellectually rooted in the thirteenth century as was the *Zohar* text. It wasn't enough that the *Zohar* was medieval. If de Léon was seen to lack the requisite knowledge or linguistic skill, the proof of dating would hold but that of authorship would not.

To provide this final link between de Léon, the thirteenth century, and the *Zohar*, Jellinek turned to the medieval debate between philosophy and mysticism: "the original tendency of the *Zohar* collection was to offer a counterbalance to rationalism and its consequences," he wrote.[39] Such a context fit well with Jellinek's larger understanding of the place of the Kabbalah in Jewish cultural and intellectual history. Mysticism was not an aberration or

[37] See Jellinek, Moses ben Schem-Tob, pp. 37–38.
[38] Jellinek, Moses ben Schem-Tob, pp. 17–18.
[39] Jellinek, Moses ben Schem-Tob, p. 21.

embarrassment; it was, instead, a legitimate form of theological inquiry, one tied to the deepest longings of the human soul. "Mysticism is such an essential moment in the spiritual development of humanity that it is found in all nations and all religions," he would write two years later.[40]

For Jellinek, mysticism's opposing (yet complementary) partner was philosophy, the rational investigation of the world. As many of his contemporary *Wissenschaft* scholars had begun to discern in the middle of the nineteenth century, the works of Moses Maimonides (1135/38–1204), and especially his *Moreh Nevukhim* (guide to the perplexed), had given rise, in the century after Maimonides's death, to a series of debates over the centrality of rationalist philosophy in Jewish theology.[41] Some rabbis sided with Maimonides, but others deprecated the more dogmatic claims. Spanish Kabbalism, Jellinek argued, was one of the more "romantic" responses to this new outpouring of philosophical rationalism, as well as a tradition of Jewish thought with its own independent genealogy. The urge to mysticism was coterminous with the human condition, but the particular varieties promoted in medieval Spain gained their emotional fervor from the disputes over philosophy.

> "For the fire, which was fueled twice against the *Moreh* [*Nevukhim*], found its sustenance not only in the materialistic groping after gross anthropomorphisms, but essentially in the unsatisfied longing for mystical intuition [...] Thus, Kabbalah also developed, both as a speculation and a mystical law [...] And our Moses ben Shem Tov de León now found the tracks of Kabbalah in [an already] rich literature."[42]

Both philosophy and mysticism had roots in the Torah and classical rabbinical literature, Jellinek noted. But the challenge of philosophy to the emotional core of human yearning provoked an outpouring of mystical investigation, drawing not only on much earlier Jewish texts but also, crucially, newer Islamic ones.

In the three years following the publication of *Moses ben Schem-Tob*, Jellinek published in critical editions – often for the first time – the core treatises in this debate between rationalism and mysticism. Both schools of thought, he

40 Adolf Jellinek: Auswahl kabbalistischer Mystik, Leipzig 1853, p. iii.

41 For an account of the reception of Maimonides in the nineteenth century, see George Yaakov Kohler: Reading Maimonides' Philosophy in 19th Century Germany. The Guide to Religious Reform, Dordrecht 2012.

42 Jellinek, Moses ben Schem-Tob, pp. 14–15.

argued, had made enormous medieval innovations, which was possible only because of the close interaction of Jews with Arabic and Christian learning. In *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala*, Jellinek expanded upon some of the intellectual context he had only briefly mentioned in *Moses ben Schem-Tob*.[43] The book, published in two volumes, examined the extant scholarship and historical genealogy of the *Sefer Yetsirah* (book of formation), and gave additional influences on the *Zohar*'s philosophy and epistemology.[44] It likewise traced the kabbalistic imagery and theology of pre-*Zohar* thinkers, especially that of Sa'adia ben Yosef Gaon (d. 942 CE), who lived in what is today Iraq. In the book, Jellinek strove to establish an account of the development and transmission of kabbalistic imagery and archetypes between the Jewish and Arabic worlds. Citing "families," or interconnected webs of pre-*Zohar* literature, Jellinek posited a genealogy of mystical theology, linking the Mesopotamian context of men like Sa'adia with the Spanish one of de León. In this way, Jellinek buttressed his theory of de León's authorship—only someone who had learned from these earlier treatises could have written the *Zohar*—while simultaneously opening to scholarship a whole theological relationship between Jews and Muslims then only partially understood.

In 1853 and 1854, Jellinek edited two more volumes of kabbalistic texts, *Auswahl kabbalistischer Mystik* and *Philosophie und Kabbala*, and republished Menahem de Lonzano's dictionary. For the works that appeared in the first two collections, Jellinek composed critical introductions, which included discussions of the identity and personality of each text's purported author, particular characteristics of the texts themselves, and comparisons of extant manuscripts. The second half of each volume was devoted to the works themselves—printings of Jellinek's corrected Hebrew editions. With *Ma'arich*, de Lonzano's lexicon, Jellinek's aim (and its close relationship to his work a decade prior in the translation of Franck) was clear. As Jellinek remarked in his brief introduction:

[43] Adolph Jellinek: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala, Leipzig 1852. For recent scholarship on the genealogy of Jewish mysticism, see Roni Weinstein: Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity, Oxford 2015; Rachel Elior: The Three Temples. On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism in Late Antiquity, Oxford 2005.

[44] For a recent overview of the scholarship and history of *Sefer Yetsirah*, see Tzahi Weiss: The Reception of Sefer Yetsira and Jewish Mysticism in the Early Middle Ages, in: The Jewish Quarterly Review, 103 (2013) 1, pp. 26–46.

> "Menachem's dictionary is not without significance for the history of the *Zohar*: partly because he shows the Greek, Latin, Spanish, and Arabic origin of many words in the *Zohar*, and partly because he, as a connoisseur of the Kabbalah, correctly explains many things."[45]

Always mindful of philological accuracy, and aware that the vast majority of *Wissenschaft* scholars of Kabbalah had no direct experience of mystical communities or their linguistic interpretations, *Ma'arich* offered a way to mediate between divergent historical uses of Hebrew. It was a logical addition to Jellinek's close philological critiques from *Orient* in the 1840s: a single reference work that would aid future scholars not only with translations but with more accurately understanding the immense intellectual and semantic creativity contained within Kabbalism.

In 1854 Jellinek made an interesting, and, on the surface, unexpected turn. Such a fecundity of mystical spirit as he had identified in the centuries surrounding the composition of the *Zohar* could not last, he came to think. Jellinek saw the later students of Spanish Kabbalism, from the fifteenth century onward, as mere imitators of what had been a great, but relatively brief, flowering of true mystical insight.

> "In fact, Jewish spiritual development in Spain, with a wavering between philosophy, supernaturalism, and mysticism, also ends, analogous to all development proceeding from opposites and ending in syncretism (compare this to the process of Greek, Scholastic, and German philosophy) in the writings of the Spanish epigones: Isaac Arama [1420–1492], Isaac Caro [1458–1535], Isaac Abarbanel [1437–1508], Joseph Jabez [d. 16th century], Joel ibn Shu'eib [15th century], Judah Chayat [15th century], and Abraham Saba [1440–1508], to prove it clearly."[46]

Contemporary scholars should rightly differ with Jellinek's interpretation of the accomplishments of these men.[47] But their grouping is important, more for what it tells us about Jellinek than for anything else. These men all share a single characteristic: they lived at the end of Islamic rule in Spain, and most were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492. When the Jews of Spain

45 Menachem de Lonsano: Ma'arich, ed. Adolf Jellinek, Leipzig 1853, pp. vi–vii.

46 Joseph Ibn Zadik: Der Mikrokosmos. Ein Beitrag zur Religionsphilosophie und Ethik, ed. Adolf Jelinek, Leipzig 1854, pp. v–vi.

47 For one recent investigation of the accomplishments of this group, see Brian Ogren: Sefirotic Depictions, Divine Noesis, and Aristotelian Kabbalah. Abraham ben Meir de Balmes and Italian Renaissance Thought, in: The Jewish Quarterly Review, 104 (2014) 4, pp. 573–599.

scattered across Europe and the Mediterranean they lost access to the unique cultural mélange that had allowed thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Kabbalists to access the intellectual and cultural insights of Christianity and Islam.

In praising the earlier generations of Spanish Kabbalists, Jellinek was, so to speak, showing his cards. At a moment in Jewis history that had called out for an alternative to Maimonidean rationalism, the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Kabbalists had recognized the possibilities of inter-religious theological exchange – and pursued it. In contradistinction, then, it was not that the men of the era of the expulsion were intrinsically of weaker mind. They were simply more insular by force rather than capacity, and excluded from the linguistic encounters that had made books like the *Zohar* even imaginable, let alone possible. Jellinek's dismissal of the accomplishments of the "Spanish epigones" was as much (perhaps even more so) an indictment of the destruction of Islamic Spain and the parochialization of Spanish Catholicism as it was an indictment of the later Jewish sages themselves. And if we are to follow this explanation to its logical conclusion, Jellinek's words imply a hope and warning to his own generation of liberal, non-Jewish, leaders in Central Europe. Do not turn back the possibilities offered by the revolutionary changes of 1848, he seemed to be saying. Great flowerings of insight come only with the intellectual intermingling of very different sorts of people.

4. Conclusion: Turn to Communal Leadership

By the second half of the 1850s, Jellinek had begun to devote less of his time to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. In 1848, he accepted a position as rabbi of Leipzig, a new post created specifically for him, but one that also symbolized a broader urban transformation as Jews moved to cities in increasing numbers. In the late 1840s Jellinek was assuming greater roles within the Leipzig Jewish community. With his slow turn to the full-time rabbinate he was joining very different sorts of Jewish pioneers. In Jellinek's view, the nineteenth century was changing too rapidly for traditional assumptions and expectations to entirely define Judaism's future. Instead, he believed that a new role for the rabbi was needed, one still rooted in the classical texts but with an eye toward a future of Jewish integration within European cultural life.[48]

[48] For an early discussion of this theme, see Ismar Schorsch: Emancipation and the Crisis of Religious Authority. The Emergence of the Modern Rabbinate, in: Werner E. Mosse / Arnold

Yet as Jellinek moved away from full-time scholarly endeavors, he left behind an unflinching dedication to truth in the text, to discovering every bit of history's subtlety and inter-cultural complexity. These were the values, embodied in his 1840s articles and his 1850s monographs and critical editions, that Jellinek valued so highly in *Wissenschaft*, an intellectual movement he would continue to support for the rest of his life. The scholarship of the nineteenth century, he believed, need be no more destabilizing to traditional Judaism or Judaism's contributions to ethics, morality, philosophy, and theology than were the rabbis' own long history of un-blinkered textual readings. The Spanish Kabbalists, with their unique insights into the mystical inclinations of humanity and their remarkable desire to assimilate the ideas and languages of Christianity and, especially, of Islam, were not an embarrassment or aberration in Jewish history. Instead, as Jellinek wrote in his books, they had given the world one of Judaism's most remarkable accomplishments.

Paucker/Reinhard Rürup (eds.), Revolution and Evolution. 1848 in German-Jewish History, Tübingen, 1981, pp. 205–248.