PaRDeS
Zeitschrift der Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien e.V.

Cultures of Wissenschaft des Judentums at 200

(2018) Heft 24
Universitätsverlag Potsdam

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Herausgegeben von
Markus Krah, Mirjam Thulin und Bianca Pick (Rezensionen)
für die Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien
in Verbindung mit dem Institut für Jüdische Studien
und Religionswissenschaft der Universität Potsdam

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ISSN (print) 1614-6492
ISSN (online) 1862-7684
ISBN 978-3-86956-440-1

The publication of this issue of PaRDeS was supported by the School of Jewish Theology at University of Potsdam, Germany.

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek:
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über http://dnb.de abrufbar.

Universitätsverlag Potsdam 2018
Am Neuen Palais 10, 14469 Potsdam | http://verlag.ub.uni-potsdam.de/
Tel.: +49 (0)331 977 2533 | Fax: -2292 | verlag@uni-potsdam.de

Redaktionsadresse: Universität Potsdam, School of Jewish Theology
Am Neuen Palais 10, 14469 Potsdam

Redaktionsschluss: 25 (2019): 1. Juni 2018
Die Artikel in PaRDeS durchlaufen ein „double-blind peer review"-Verfahren. Die Redaktion behält sich das Recht vor, Beiträge abzulehnen, in geteilter Form zu drucken oder nach Rücksprache zu kürzen. Die veröffentlichten Texte spiegeln Meinungen und Kenntnisstand der Autoren und nicht die Meinung der Herausgeber wieder. Alle in PaRDeS veröffentlichten Artikel sind in „Rambi. Index of Articles on Jewish Studies" nachgewiesen.
Umschlagabbildung: Nummernschild (US-Bundesstaat Virginia) des „Zunz Mobile" von Rabbiner Steven M. Glazer (© Steven M. Glazer). Umschlagdesign: Tabea Mau (Universitätsverlag Potsdam)

Druck: docupoint GmbH Magdeburg
Layout und Satz: Frank Schlöffel

ISSN (print) 1614-6492
ISSN (online) 1862-7684
ISBN 978-3-86956-440-1

Zugleich online veröffentlicht auf dem Publikationsserver der Universität Potsdam
URN urn:nbn:de:kobv:517-opus4-414943
http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:kobv:517-opus4-414943

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Disciplining Jewish Knowledge: Cultures of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* at 200

by Mirjam Thulin/Markus Krah

In 2018, we celebrate the bicentennial of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the early Jewish Studies that began in the nineteenth century and introduced critical historical research into Jewish sources, using all academic methods available, including non-Jewish sources or the comparison with them. Today, the academic study of Judaism exists in various national and cultural contexts. Its three centers – Israel, the United States, and Germany – have different labels and forms for it such as "Jewish Studies," "Jewish Science" *(Madat ha-Yahadut)*, "Judaic Studies," or "Jewish Theology."[1] Their differences notwithstanding, they all refer to the year 1818 as the founding date of their disciplines. In that year, Leopold Zunz (1794–1886) published his essay *Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur* ("Something on Rabbinic Literature"), which unfolded the thematic field of modern Jewish Studies for the first time.[2] As Michael A. Meyer and Ismar Schorsch emphasize in the double interview opening this issue, Zunz's essay initiated a "Copernican revolution" by marking the turn to history in Jewish scholarship. The new historical consciousness among the Jews dethroned divine revelation as the source of authoritative and meaning-making knowledge, as it gave preference to

[1] The most recent accounts on the contents and theories of Jewish Studies are: Andrew Bush: Jewish Studies. A Theoretical Introduction, New Brunswick 2011; Christina von Braun, Micha Brumlik (eds.): Handbuch Jüdische Studien, Köln 2018. For a classical introduction, see: Günter Stemberger: Einführung in die Judaistik, München 2002.

[2] Leopold Zunz: Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur. Nebst Nachrichten über ein altes bis jetzt ungedrucktes hebräisches Werk (1818), in: idem, Gesammelte Schriften. Herausgegeben vom Curatorium der „Zunzstiftung". 3 Bände in einem Band, vol. 1, Berlin 1818 (reprint Hildesheim 1976), pp. 1–31.

human agency in history. Eventually, *Wissenschaft des Judentums* thereby helped to open the road to the modernization of Judaism.

1. "Re-Orientation of our Wissenschaft:" The Centennial of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*

One hundred years ago, the centennial of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* took place in a world shaken by war and holding uncertain prospects for the Jews around the globe. By then, Jewish Studies had still not found their way into the university. Instead, rabbinical seminaries in Europe and the US were prospering, as were other institutions of the academic study of Judaism, such as highly regarded professional journals, scholarly societies and associations, large-scale transnational research projects, and publishing houses that printed the findings and works of the Jewish scholars.

In those days, Ismar Elbogen (1874–1943), then professor at the *Hochschule (Lehranstalt) für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Higher Institute for Jewish Studies) in Berlin, reviewed the first century of Jewish Studies.[3] Naturally, he gave his talk, on a Monday evening at the scholarship fund of the *Hochschule,* in early 1918 under the impression of the ongoing war that should not end until November of the same year. After speculating about the expectable consequences for the Jews after the war, Elbogen turned to his subject: the state of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the plea for a vital re-orientation ("Neuorientierung") of Jewish Studies after its first one hundred years.

In his short chronological overview, Elbogen pointed to the legacy of the father of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Leopold Zunz, and emphasized that the founder had left him and his colleagues – and Elbogen thought and spoke then only of male scholars, of course – big footsteps to follow. He reminded his audience that modern Jewish scholarship in the shape of *Wissenschaft* was different from traditional Jewish scholarship, and emphasized that the mission of *Wissenschaft* was to utilize all academic tools and methods, namely systematics, classification, and critique as well as the recording and presentation of the (Jewish) reality.

[3] Ismar Elbogen: Neuorientierung unserer Wissenschaft, in: Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums, 62 (1918) 26, pp. 81–96. On the essay, see Kerstin von der Krone: Wissenschaft in Öffentlichkeit. Die Wissenschaft des Judentums und ihre Zeitschriften, Berlin 2011, pp. 398–402. On the first hundred years of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, see Ismar Schorsch, Jewish Studies from 1818 to 1919, in: idem, From Text to Context. The Turn to History in Modern Judaism, Hanover, NH 1994, pp. 345–359.

Following Zunz, Elbogen highlighted the necessary close relationship between Jewish and general studies in presenting their research, but also in demonstrating the relevance of the Jewish discipline. This was also why it was only with Zunz that a new epoch of Jewish scholarship as a "critical discipline" had begun, Elbogen stressed.[4] Nothing distinguished *Wissenschaft des Judentums* from other disciplines but its topic; and yet, according to Elbogen, *Wissenschaft des Judentums* lacked a clear-cut definition. For Elbogen, Zunz's early definition of *Wissenschaft* as a largely Jewish philological subject was too narrow. Historical scholarship had rather revealed new themes and insights, not least in connection to the non-Jewish environment.

Elbogen described the relationship between *Wissenschaft* and Judaism as interdependent and most obvious in the name *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. In regard to the practitioners of Judaism, probably with a view to Orthodox colleagues in the field, Elbogen was convinced that the Jewish religion or religious positioning could never be shaken by academically critical insights and conclusions. Moreover, the term "Judaism [as] containing both a religious and national category," as Elbogen explained, was purposefully chosen by Zunz and his circle, precisely because of its ambiguity. Elbogen for his part, however, advocated for the name "Jewish theology." Following the philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), Elbogen understood Jewish theology not as a narrow dogmatic system but as an academic discipline on the basis of a philological historical subject with a critical method.

As sources for *Wissenschaft des Judentums* or Jewish theology, Elbogen kept exclusively Jewish texts in sight. Apparently, he was not overly amenable to other source material than the textual accounts. On the basis of this text orientation, he argued for the necessity of a general systematics of Jewish Studies that defined topics and terms more precisely and would lead to clear interpretations. Moreover, he spoke for the professionalization of Jewish Studies that in its first one hundred years had remained the occupation of usually overworked rabbis, whose scholarship was *nolens volens* superficial. In this context, Elbogen supported the call of a then still a young fellow in the field by the name of Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929) who had proposed the establishment of an "Academy of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*."[5] In fact, such an academy was finally

4 Elbogen, Neuorientierung unserer Wissenschaft, p. 84.

5 Elbogen, Neuorientierung unserer Wissenschaft, p. 96, points to: Franz Rosenzweig: Zeit ists… Gedanken über das jüdische Bildungsproblem des Augenblicks; an Hermann Cohen, Berlin 1918.

founded in 1919 in Berlin, and the institution became a meeting point and productive think tank of Jewish scholars at that time.[6] Elbogen's reference to this call for a new institutional home of *Wissenschaft*, by which he concluded his review of the first century of Jewish Studies, indicates the relationship between Ismar Elbogen and Franz Rosenzweig. In his essay in this volume of PaRDeS, Benjamin Sax shows how Rosenzweig used Elbogen's research on liturgy in the *Star of Redemption,* an indication of the critical role *Wissenschaft* played in the formation of Rosenzweig's philosophical methodology.

After the centennial and the foundation of the Academy, nobody anticipated, of course, that Jewish Studies in Europe would come to a brutal end only fourteen years later. The destruction of European Jewry was accompanied by the destruction of Jewish Studies and its personnel. Ismar Elbogen took refuge in the US and taught at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. He died in New York in 1943.

Many scholars and institutions that collectively embodied *Wissenschaft des Judentums* attempted to emigrate to the US and Israel/Palestine;[7] however, many institutions and traditions were irretrievably torn off. Still, Israel and the US became the new centers of Jewish Studies. Since the 1960s, Germany also institutionalized the subject of "Judaic Studies" (Judaistik) through political will, and is nowadays the third center of Jewish Studies in the world.[8]

2. The Transnational and Diverse Cultures of Jewish Studies Today: The Bicentennial of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*

The development and the history of modern Jewish scholarship more generally have been the subject of great attention in recent years.[9] The networks

6 David N. Myers: The Fall and Rise of Jewish Historicism. The Evolution of the Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums (1919–1934), in: Hebrew Union College Annual, 63 (1992), pp. 107–144.

7 Christhardt Hoffmann / Daniel R. Schwartz: Early but Opposed – Supported but Late. Two Berlin Seminaries Which Attempted to Move Abroad, in: Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook, 36 (1991), pp. 267–304; Robert Jütte: Die Emigration der deutschsprachigen „Wissenschaft des Judentums". Die Auswanderung jüdischer Historiker nach Palästina 1933–1945, Stuttgart 1991.

8 Cf. Andreas Lehnardt (ed.): Judaistik im Wandel. Ein halbes Jahrhundert Forschung und Lehre über das Judentum in Deutschland, Berlin 2017.

9 *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was the core topic of the academic year 2014/15 fellow group at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies in Philadelphia. See: http://katz.sas.upenn.edu/fellowship-program/programs/2014. Among the most immediately helpful result of the fellows' research is the annotated bibliography of secondary literature on *Wissenschaft* by

and institutions of Jewish Studies have been further discussed in the scientific community, for instance in the context of the nature of Jewish encyclopedias.[10] With them, the protagonists and agents of early Jewish Studies and the scholarly thematic priorities and attitudes of specific figures, for example Ignac Goldziher's contribution to Islamic Studies, could be presented in detail.[11] Similarly, cohorts of graduates of the institutions of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* have been analyzed more deeply such as those which became field rabbis ("Feldrabbiner") in World War I,[12] and rabbis that were forced to emigrate due to the rise of National Socialism.[13] Furthermore, classical biographies and relationship histories between scholars were (and still are) the topic of recent projects and publications, for example of an edited volume on Ludwig August Frankl,[14] and a just finished research project on Italian and German Jewish networks of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.[15]

Nevertheless, there are still many aspects awaiting research. Biographies of scholars of *Wissenschaft*, especially lesser known ones, second-tier and late scholars in this tradition, are still a desideratum. Moreover, the impact of *Wissenschaft* in different national and cultural settings, especially in previously underexplored contexts such as in the Eastern European lands, their specific intellectual and institutional context of non-Jewish or secular academia

Amos Bitzan: http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199840731/obo-9780199840731-0157.xml Moreover, the fellows produced an online exhibition, entitled "Doing Wissenschaft: The Active Study of Judaism as Practice, 1818–2018," with special attention to the objects and material cultures of *Wissenschaft* (http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/cajs/fellows15/). Parallel to the online presentation, the Leo Baeck Institute in New York created an exhibition on "Wissenschaft des Judentums: Jewish Studies and the Shaping of Jewish Identity." The exhibition topics can be viewed at https://www.lbi.org/2015/02/wissenschaft-judentum-jewish-studies-jewish-identity-exhibition/.

10 Arndt Engelhardt: Arsenale jüdischen Wissens. Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Encyclopaedia Judaica, Göttingen 2014.

11 Ottfried Fraisse: Ignác Goldzihers monotheistische Wissenschaft. Zur Historisierung des Islam, Göttingen 2014.

12 Sabine Hank / Uwe Hank /Hermann Simon: Feldrabbiner in den deutschen Streitkräften des Ersten Weltkrieges, Berlin 2013.

13 Cf. the project of Cornelia Wilhelm on "German Refugee Rabbis in the United States, 1933–1989," see http://www.jgk.geschichte.uni-muenchen.de/jgk_neuzeit/personen/professoren/wilhelm_cornelia/research/index.html.

14 Louise Hecht (ed.): Ludwig August Frankl (1810–1894). Eine jüdische Biographie zwischen Okzident und Orient, Köln 2016.

15 See the finished dissertation project of Francesca Paolin, at the Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany, entitled: "Die deutsche und italienische Wissenschaft des Judentums im 19. Jahrhundert im Spiegel der deutsch-jüdischen und italienisch-jüdischen Publizistik." For a project summary, see http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/46071640/70_prom_paolin.

would still need much more attention. Moreover, criticism of *Wissenschaft* as well as the influence of *Wissenschaft* on contemporary religious Judaism are still underexplored. As a research essay on the history of *Wissenschaft* suggested in 2013, the study of individual protagonists, the consideration of the ideologies of *Wissenschaft* and its fields like philology, Bible studies, Jewish history, and philosophy, and the history of the institutions and networks of Jewish Studies may be themes along which the broad corpus of research literature could be systematized.[16]

3. Cultures of *Wissenschaft* at 200: New Perspectives in this Issue

On the occasion of the bicentennial of *Wissenschaft des Judentums,* this issue of PaRDeS aims to look at various cultures of *Wissenschaft* that developed in different places and in connection to diverse branches of Judaism. Most contributions are devoted to nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft.* Then, Jewish Studies had become a domain of rabbinical scholars, divided along the three main denominations of modern Judaism – Reform, positive-historical or Conservative Judaism, and Orthodoxy – which also defined the prevalent cultures of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* of the time. Eventually, by the end of the nineteenth century, also specific local and traditional academic cultures shaped the discipline in addition to the denominational diversification. Various scholars involved in these developments are subjects of the contributions in this issue. Almost every article shows, implicitly or explicitly, that, in the absence of academic institutions of *Wissenschaft,* its culture was the culture that individual scholars, all men in our case, created and spread by way of their networks.

A few of these scholars have recently been portrayed in biographies and studies.[17] Most prominently, 130 years after this death also the father of the

[16] Kerstin von der Krone / Mirjam Thulin: Wissenschaft in Context. A Research Essay on the Wissenschaft des Judentums, in: Leo Baeck Institute Year Book, 58 (2013), pp. 249–280. Another survey is: Andreas Kilcher / Thomas Meyer (eds.): Die "Wissenschaft des Judentums". Eine Bestandsaufnahme, Paderborn 2015.

[17] Some of these works were occasioned by anniversaries, such as the hundredth anniversary of the death of Solomon Schechter and the fiftieth anniversary of Martin Buber's death. Among the publications are Theodor Dunkelgrün: Solomon Schechter. A Jewish Scholar in Victorian England (1882–1902), in: Jewish Historical Studies, 48 (2016), pp. 1–8; Ismar Schorsch: Schechter's Indebtedness to Zunz, in: ibid., pp. 9–16; Mirjam Thulin: Wissenschaft and

Wissenschaft des Judentums himself, Leopold Zunz, became the subject of a comprehensive biographical study by Ismar Schorsch, reviewed in this issue.[18] Also in this issue, Mirjam Thulin turns to Zunz by analyzing his correspondence with David Kaufmann, professor at the rabbinical seminary in Budapest.

The ideology of *Wissenschaft* and the cultures of Orthodox Jewish Studies have received more attention in recent years. Religious scholars of Jewish Studies in particular have filled that void and devoted their works to specific aspects connected to Orthodox modern scholarship as well as to several, lesser known proponents in the field that until then were mostly remembered through hagiographic accounts. Often, this research is accompanied by a look at the reactions to and reception of *Wissenschaft* in Eastern European lands such as in Hungary[19] and Poland.[20] In this issue, Dimitri Bratkin takes a look at the development of Jewish and Oriental Studies, respectively, in Russia by presenting new archival material from St. Petersburg about Daniel Abramovich Chwolson.

In regard to Orthodox *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Asaf Yedidya's study of 2013 gave a first overview from 1873, when the Orthodox rabbinical seminary in Berlin was founded by Esriel Hildesheimer, to 1956 when Bar-Ilan University opened its doors.[21] In this issue, Yedidya presents the scholar and writer Zeev Jawitz and his national Orthodox concept of Jewish studies. Besides Yedidya, three younger scholars have contributed to this issue from the perspective of religious Jewish Studies scholars. They take a look at traditional scholars who were critical of or even refused to accept the academic tools and methods in modern Jewish scholarship. Eliezer Brodt introduces the scholar and book collector Mattityahu Strashun from Vilna and his perception

Correspondence. Solomon Schechter between Europe and America, in: ibid., 109–137. The proceedings were prepared at two conferences in Philadelphia and Oxford in 2015, see https://schechterconf.wordpress.com. The most recent biography of Buber by Dominique Bourel was first published in French: Dominique Bourel: Martin Buber. Sentinelle de l'humanité, Paris 2015. The German translation is Martin Buber. Was es heißt, ein Mensch zu sein. Biografie, Gütersloh 2017.

18 Ismar Schorsch: Leopold Zunz. Creativity in Adversity, Philadelphia 2016.

19 Tamás Turán / Carsten Wilke (eds.): Modern Jewish Scholarship in Hungary. The 'Science of Judaism' between East and West, Oldenburg 2016.

20 Natalia Aleksiun: Ammunition in the Struggle for National Rights. Jewish Historians in Poland between the Two World Wars, New York University 2010 (unpublished manuscript).

21 Asaf Yedidya: Criticized Criticism. Orthodox Alternatives to Wissenschaft des Judentums, 1873–1956, Jerusalem 2013 (Hebrew).

of and connections to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*; Eliezer Sariel explores the thought and historiography of Yitzchak Isaac Halevy Rabinovitz, founder of the Ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisrael ("Union of Israel"), and Esther Solomon presents the thought of the Talmud scholar and philosopher Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler and his view on secular studies and *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.

Another still recent aspect of the history of Jewish Studies is the genesis of Kabbalah research in connection to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Gershom Scholem often claimed that he invented this field ex nihilo. However, recent studies have shown that scholars of early Jewish Studies had tilled the field before him, among them Adolf Jellinek, about whose study of Spanish Kabbalism Samuel J. Kessler writes in this issue. It becomes clear that Jellinek's studies must have shaped and defined Scholem's research. In this issue, Rose Stair turns to Scholem's critical view of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and asks about the fiction of historical objectivity. Two recently published biographies on Gershom Scholem, both reviewed in this issue, analyze the most dazzling star of Kabbalah research.[22]

4. Acknowledgments

The editors wish to thank the Potsdam School of Jewish Theology for its support of this issue. It is also made possible by the funding of the German Association for Jewish Studies (Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien, vjs). The type setting office, the *Universitätsverlag Potsdam*, and our copy editor, Dr. Anne Popiel, made its production a smooth and pleasant process. Moreover, we wish to thank the peer reviewers from Israel, the U.S., and Germany who gave their time, scholarly expertise, and professional commitment. Steven M. Glazer, rabbi emeritus of Congregation Beth Emeth in Herndon/Virginia, kindly provided the cover image. The license plate of his "Zunz Mobile" testifies to his creative fascination with the father of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Last but not least, we would also like to thank the authors and reviewers of this issues for their inspiring and rich contributions and their cooperation.

[22] Amir Engel: Gershom Scholem. An Intellectual Biography, Chicago 2017; Noam Zadoff: Gershom Scholem. From Berlin to Jerusalem and Back, Waltham 2018.

Interview

"Zunz and Steinschneider Would Be Astonished – and Reassured:" Two Senior Scholars of *Wissenschaft* Reflect on Its 200th Anniversary

by Michael A. Meyer/Ismar Schorsch

PaRDeS: Both of you have devoted significant parts of your research to *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and may even place yourselves in that tradition. If you think of the 200th anniversary of *Wissenschaft*, what do you see as its legacy or ongoing relevance for the modernization of Judaism/Jewishness until today?

Meyer: In a number of respects, *Wissenschaft des Judentums* has played a significant role in the modernization of Judaism. Although in the nineteenth century its practitioners were unable to bring it into the university, it has since given Judaism a place among other subject areas in institutions of higher learning the world over. It transformed Jewish learning from an ahistorical textual recitation into historical inquiry that set its various elements into the context of their origins and development. For religious reformers it served as a central device for indicating that Judaism had evolved over the centuries and that ongoing reform possessed historical legitimation.

Does that mean that *Wissenschaft* has completed its task among Jews? Certainly not. Without it, Jewish consciousness would lack the depth necessary for a meaningful Jewish existence.

Schorsch: The enduring legacy of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* is the turn to history on the basis of critical scholarship. This was the Copernican revolution ignited by Leopold Zunz in 1818 with his astounding bibliographical essay on Jewish literature. Implicit in his bombshell was the urgent need for new knowledge. A proper understanding of Judaism for an age in which it would be admitted into the body politic required a far greater command of its literary remnants and historical fragments. The few ancient and medieval tracts by adversaries on the subject were rife with error, bias, and venom.

Moreover, Zunz contended no text could be understood outside its historical context, which meant that philology became the primary tool for dating.

Zunz's shift to history also dared to replace revelation as the primary source of knowledge about our past. In the modern world, as in that of the Rabbis, a sage would be preferred over a prophet as inspiration gave way to evidence. Human agency was now seen to be the engine of the historical continuum; to discover the role of an individual in an event or a literary creation supplanted the traditional value of anonymity. In time, specificity in historical research and *peshat* (literal meaning) in biblical studies became the lodestones of their respective disciplines.

PaRDeS: How did this shift away from a tradition-based epistemology change scholarship of traditional texts, concepts, and practices of Judaism?

Schorsch: No scholar of the nineteenth century matched Zunz's grand conception of the synagogue. The institution served as the crucible of Midrash and *Piyyut* (liturgical poetry) because it resonated with sacred meaning. From its earliest days and deep into its long history, the synagogue was the locus of religious dialogue between God and Israel. Its worship service centered on the reading of God's word in the form of Torah and Haftarah and the response of Israel in the creative expression of psalms, Midrash and *Piyyut*. If the former was a constant reaching back to Moses and the Prophets, the latter was an innovative corpus giving voice to the lived experience of a nation in exile. Rooted in the first Jewish commonwealth, the dialectic obviated the nefarious Christian distinction between Israelite religion and Judaism, or better between spirit and law, even as it filled the Moorish and Romanesque synagogues of Europe and America with a liturgical format susceptible to alteration. Above all, the remarkable history of *Piyyut* which Zunz recovered countenanced a culture of protest and individualism.

But Zunz's more immediate impact was on the divine side of the liturgical ledger. His majestic and meticulous survey of *midrashic* literature in due time spawned an explosion of *midrashic* studies by younger scholars inspired by the breadth and thoroughness of his research. Some pursued the publication of cherished *midrashic* texts worthy of better editions, others of texts unknown and still others of translations in German. With midrash a porous literature, a few scholars explored its interaction with apocryphal works, mystical texts, the Church Fathers and the emerging field of folklore. And finally still others assembled biographical details that abounded in midrash and Talmud

in order to recast them into integrated individual portraits of sages from a rabbinic perspective. By the first decade of the twentieth century not only had Midrash become the dominant subfield of Wissenschaft des Judentums, but it gave rise to three massive, highly creative anthologies that pushed far beyond the normative boundaries of traditional Midrash. Long before the pioneering scholarship of Gershom Scholem in Kabbalah, *Wissenschaft des Judentums* had embraced the study of a body of rabbinic literature that excelled in the cultivation of non-rational modes of thought and powerful conceits of imagination.

PaRDeS: Why has there been a decrease in (scholarly) reflections on *Wissenschaft*? Has it been invisibly omnipresent (and a victim of its own success), or has its relevance peaked?

Meyer: Recently, considerable attention has been given to the history of Jewish Studies. There have been conferences and seminars on various aspects of the subject in Israel, in Europe, and in America. Recent books and articles have dealt with major figures in the movement. I don't think the subject is being neglected. Quite the contrary.

Schorsch: I would argue that the foundational guidelines of *Wissenschaft* are no less indispensable today than 200 years ago. The goal of authentic scholarship is to minimize the free play of subjectivity. In my vocabulary positivism is not a pejorative term that disparages flights of imagination, but rather a launching pad that takes us a bit closer to what actually happened.

PaRDeS: Did Scholem's stark condemnation of *Wissenschaft* shape its image in the sense that it has unjustly been seen as historically disproven in its goals and underlying values?

Meyer: Scholem did not criticize *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as such, but only the manner in which it was practiced in Germany before and during his time. He found it lacking in that he believed it had an axe to grind and because it did not, to his mind, do justice to the mystical tradition. However, he was also looking for a rejuvenation of *Wissenschaft* within the Zionist movement, a rebirth in which he saw himself a principal protagonist.

Schorsch: Scholem's assault on *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as a demonic cluster of fallen angels out to give Judaism a decent burial is no more than the recycling of an angry misreading born of Ahad Ha'Am in Odessa. In the pages of *Ha-Shiloah* beginning in 1897, he and his minions had caustically rejected the critical scholarship that emanated from Germany because it failed to write in Hebrew, spurned biblical scholarship, centered Judaism in the synagogue

and turned it into a wholly religious phenomenon. In so doing *Wissenschaft des Judentums* totally ignored the *kahal* as the embodiment of Jewish autonomy and wrote the Jewish people out of its own history. Perhaps its gravest failing was that it wrote to win the sympathy of Gentiles rather than to inspire Jews.

While certainly not true of Geiger, Frankel and Graetz, that last charge did fit Zunz. His awesome scholarship was predicated on a belief that the emancipation of Jews in a society bereft of any respect for Judaism would be tragically shortlived, a tree without roots. Zunz and Steinschneider labored to gain entry for the study of Jewish history and literature into the German university because with its vaunted stature, it might engender the cultural and religious respect for Judaism that political emancipation needed. Contra Scholem, they were not out to bury Judaism, but rather to secure stability and longevity for its nascent political rights.

PaRDeS: Which aspects or potential of *Wissenschaft* do you see that have been neglected either in its history or relevance today?

Meyer: Gershom Scholem brought the largely neglected history of the Kabbalah to prominence within *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Others expanded it to include new disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology. Today much attention is focused on the transfer of *Wissenschaft* from its place of origin in Germany to other countries, a subject that had heretofore received little attention. Perhaps an area that deserves more attention is biographies of its leading proponents. Ismar Schorsch's biography of Leopold Zunz should be followed by comprehensive treatments of other practitioners, perhaps in comparative perspective.

PaRDeS: A daring experiment: What do you think Leopold Zunz and other founders of *Wissenschaft* would think of the current state of scholarly reflection on Judaism today?

Meyer: Were the founders of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* able to imagine *Wissenschaft* as it is today they would no doubt be astonished. It has come a long way and reached a stage of development far beyond Leopold Zunz's dreams. It has spread to a variety of specific subject areas and is represented in universities and seminaries almost everywhere in the developed world. There is a World Union of Jewish Studies, a European Association of Jewish Studies, and in America both the American Academy for Jewish Research and the very large Association for Jewish Studies. To be sure, there are few scholars whose

knowledge is as encyclopedic as some of the founders, but collectively the productivity is extraordinary.

Schorsch: From the perspective of the founders of *Wissenschaft,* ensconcing it in rabbinical schools was an admission of failure that would leave the pervasive anti-Jewish sentiment in German society unaltered. From this perspective, nothing could be more reassuring to Zunz and Steinschneider than to see Jewish studies today firmly embedded in universities the world over.

Interview: Mirjam Thulin/Markus Krah[1]

[1] The interviews were conducted separately and per email. The editors thank both interviewees for their willingness to engage in this unusual genre of scholarly exchange.

Articles

Mattityahu Strashun (1817–1885) and His Relationship with the Early Founders of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*

by Eliezer Brodt

Abstract

This paper will explore a lesser known and underexplored member of the nineteenth-century Haskalah, Mattityahu Strashun (1817–1885) from Vilna, Lithuania, and his personal relationship to *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars such as Leopold Zunz (1794–1886) and Shlomo Yehudah Rapoport (Shir, 1790–1867) and its effect on his scholarship. I will outline Strashun's methods of study by locating him within the historical and cultural world in which he was born and lived. I argue that three distinct contemporaneous movements influenced his scholarly achievements: the Russian Haskalah, Strashun's local intellectual circle that embraced the teachings and methods of R. Eliyahu ben Solomon Zalman of Vilna (Vilna Gaon, 1720–1797), and *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. I will demonstrate that each of these three – with particular focus on the influence of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and its leading scholars – are apparent in Strashun's scholarship and worldview. Additionally, I will provide examples of correspondence between Strashun and leaders of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* that illuminate his personal relationships with these scholars.

1. Introduction

Mattityahu Strashun was born in Vilna on October 1, 1817, and died there on December 13, 1885.[1] His renowned reputation was due as much to his scholarship as to his philanthropic and communal activities.[2] He combined

[1] Many thanks to Dan Rabbinowitz and Rabbis Yosef Dubovick and Shimon Shimanowitz for their useful comments on earlier drafts of this article.

[2] For biographical information on Mattityahu Strashun, see: Hillel Noach Steinschneider: Ir Vilna (City of Vilna), Vilna 1900, pp. 283–287; Shalom Pludermacher: Zikkaron le-Chacham. Zeh Sefer Toledot ha-Rav ha-Gaon, he-Chacham ha-Kolel Rabbi Mattityahu Strashun, in:

both when he bequeathed his extensive library, replete with contemporary Haskalah literature, to the community of Vilna after his death, along with funding to maintain it as a communal library, thus creating one of the first public Jewish libraries.

In recent years, the history of his library and the Strashun public library has been the subject of various monographs and articles.[3] To date, however, Strashun's writings and correspondence have still not been explored. Nevertheless, Mattityahu Strashun was a prolific author, having written over three hundred articles published in newspapers, journals, supplements, and commentaries on various printed books at the authors' request.[4]

Shortly after Strashun's death, a volume of his glosses on *Midrash Rabba* (The Major Homilies) was published, entitled *Mattat-Yah* (God's Gift), wherein Strashun demonstrates an impressive usage of and familiarity with *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, i. e. with the methods of contemporary philology, grammar and textual criticism, bibliography, and history. In 1969, the Jerusalem-based publishing house *Mossad Rav Kook* (Rabbi Kook Institute) printed a selection of Strashun's articles entitled *Mivchar Ketavim* (Selected Writings).[5]

Since the writings show that *Wissenschaft des Judentums* clearly and sustainably influenced Strashun's scholarship, it is the goal of this paper to systematically examine and analyze the impact of *Wissenschaft* on his traditional, or rather, Orthodox methodologies and oeuvre. In order to properly assess Mattityahu Strashun's involvement with and usage of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* methods and ideals, it is first important to outline the historical

Mattityahu Strashun Mattat-Yah (The Memory of a Sage. This is a Biography of the Great Genius and Wise One Rabbi Mattityahu Strashun), in: Mattityahu Strashun: God's Gift, Vilna 1893, pp. 7–38; Zvi Harkavy: Rabbi Matityahu Strashun, in: Naftali Ben Menahem, Aresheth 3 (1961), pp. 426–29; Zvi Harkavy: Rabbi Matityahu Strashun (1816–1885), in: Shimon Federbusch (ed.), Chochmat Yisrael be-Europa (Jewish Studeis in Europe), 3 vols., Jerusalem 1965, pp. 345–355. See also Jacob Mark: Be-Mehi'tsatam shel Gedolei ha-Dor. Biographiot, Sofrim, Amerot ve-Sihot Chulin shel Gedolei Yisrael be-Dor ha-Kodem (In the Generation Leader's Inner Sanctum), Jerusalem 1958, pp. 237–247, originally printed in Yiddish in: Gedolim fun Unzer Tsayt (The Great Men of our Time), New York 1925, pp. 359–372. Interestingly, there are some noticeable differences and omissions in the Hebrew translation.

3 See Frida Shor: From "Likute Shoshanim" to "The Paper Brigade." The Story of the Strashun Library in Vilna, Tel Aviv 2012 (Hebrew); Dan Rabinowitz: The Lost Library. The Fate of the Strashun Library in the Aftermath of the Holocaust (forthcoming).

4 For the most current bibliography of his writings, see Shalom Pludermacher: Shirei Minhah, in: Strashun, Mattat-Yah, pp. 39–80.

5 Mattiyhau Strashun: Mivchar Ketavim, Jerusalem 1969, hereafter Ketavim. Most of the material by Mattityahu Strashun that I am referring to in this article can be found in this volume.

and cultural world in which Strashun was born and lived, namely the two intellectual movements that may have influenced him the most: *Wissenschaft* and the Haskalah. Secondly, the paper turns to Strashun's lifeworld and education, and the third intellectual movement that shaped his thought: the scholarly circle around the teachings and methods of R. Eliyahu ben Solomon Zalman of Vilna (1720–1797), also known as "Gaon of Vilna" or "Vilna Gaon." Based on this description of his intellectual and religious influences, I will trace specific aspects of Mattityahu Strashun's writings that directly or indirectly reference these three distinct movements.

2. The *Zeitgeist* of Strashun's World: *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and Haskalah

Wissenschaft des Judentums is the academic study of Judaism using modern methods of research, such as philology, textual criticism, and comparison of manuscripts, for an all-encompassing scope of inquiry. In 1818, Leopold Zunz (1794–1886) published the essay *Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur* (Something on Rabbinic Literature), in which he outlined the mission of *Wissenschaft*.[6] Given the impact of Zunz's article as well as his later works, it is not surprising that particularly Zunz's writings became significant for Strashun's thought. Zunz's most important work which had a lasting impact on academia until today is *Die Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden historisch entwickelt* (The History of the Jewish Sermon), first printed in 1832. Chanoch Albeck (1890–1972), in the introduction to the Hebrew translation of this work, stressed that its importance today is more in the methods that it outlined on

[6] For a Hebrew translation of this text, see Paul R. Mendes-Flohr: Modern Jewish Studies. Historical and Philosophical Perspectives, Jerusalem 1979, pp. 81–100. About this essay, see Ismar Schorsch: Leopold Zunz. Creativity in Adversity, Philadelphia 2016, pp. 18–20; Leon Wieseltier: Etwas Über Die Jüdische Historik. Leopold Zunz and the Inception of Modern Jewish Historiography, in: History and Theory, 20 (1981) 2, pp. 135–149; Amos Bitzan: Leopold Zunz and the Meanings of Wissenschaft, in: Journal of the History of Ideas, 78 (2017) 2, pp. 233–254. (Thanks to Menachem Butler for pointing me to these last two sources.) For an overview on Judaic Studies, see the introduction by Shimon Federbusch (ed.), Chochmat Yisrael be-Maariv Europa (Judaic Studies in Western Europe), vol. 1, Jerusalem, 1958, pp. 9–24; Shmuel Mirsky: Introduction, in Shimon Federbuch (ed.), Chochmat Yisrael be-Europa Hamizrachit (Judaic Studies in Eastern Europe), vol., 2, Jerusalem 1963, pp. 5–64. For biographical details, see: Hirsch Jakob Zimmels: Leopold Zunz. His Life and Times, London 1952; Schorsch, Creativity in Adversity.

how to analyze and define rabbinical literature critically and academically than in Zunz's conclusions.[7]

Besides Zunz, the chief rabbi of Prague, Shlomo Yehudah Rapoport (1790–1867, hereafter "Shir," following his acronym), became particularly important for Mattityahu Strashun's thought.[8] Shir was famous for his monographs on the history of the *Paytanyim* (liturgists) such as Eliezer Ha-Kalir (end of sixth Century), and *Geonim* (giants), especially Nathan of Rome (1035–1103), the author of the important dictionary Sefer Aruch (The Set Book).[9] These historical biographies of renowned Talmud interpreters were the first of their kind.[10] At the same time, Shir demonstrated his expertise in linguistics and knowledge of foreign languages. This is also visible in his uncompleted but equally impressive work, *Erech Milin* (The Importance of Words), published in Prague in 1852, an encyclopedic dictionary which focused on the origins of ancient names and words. In this later work, Shir proved his impressive command of both the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud, their parallels in early *midrashic* texts, and their historical context.[11] Shir's work had a demonstrable impact on Leopold Zunz's writings.[12]

A generation prior to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the Haskalah movement (Jewish enlightenment) shared some similar goals with *Wissenschaft* and had equally different foci and styles.[13] Disciplines encouraged by Maskilim were

7 Chanoch Albeck: Chadrashot Be-Yisrael (The Homiletic Genre in Israel and Their Historical Chain): Jerusalem 1947, pp. 19–20. On the significance of Zunz's study, see also Schorsch, Creativity in Adversity, pp. 80–82; Günter Stemberger: Leopold Zunz. Pioneer of Midrash Research, in: EAJS Newsletter 15 (2004), pp. 33–49. (Thanks to Menachem Butler for pointing me to this article.)

8 On Shir, see: Simon Bernfeld: Toledot Shir (Rabbi Shlomo Yehuda Rapoport). Tsiur Kulturi me-Chayyav, Zemano, u-Poaluto ha-Maadait (A Biography of Shir [Rabbi Solomon Judah Rapoport. A Cultural Sketch of his Life, Times and Scientific Work), Berlin, 1899; Isaac Barzilay: Shlomo Yehudah Rapoport (Shir) and His Contemporaries. Some Aspects of Jewish Scholarship of the Nineteenth Century, Tel Aviv 1969; Nathan Shifriss: Shelomo Yehudah Rapoport (Shir), 1790–1867. Torah, Haskalah, Wissenschaft des Judentums, and The Beginning of Modern Jewish Nationalism (unpublished Hebrew dissertation, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 2011).

9 All essays are to be found in Shlomo Yehudah Rapoport: Toldot Gedolei Yisrael (History of Great Jewish Leaders), 2 vols., Jerusalem 1969.

10 See Gerson D. Cohen: The Reconstruction of Geonic History. Studies in the Variety of Rabbinic Cultures, Philadelphia 1991, pp. 99–155.

11 Chanan Gafni: The Mishnah's Plain Sense. A Study of Modern Talmudic Scholarship, Tel Aviv 2011, pp. 175–188 (Hebrew).

12 See Schorsch, Creativity in Adversity, pp. 87–89.

13 On Russian Haskalah, see Michael Stanislawski: Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews. The Transformation of Jewish Society in Russia, 1825–1855, Philadelphia 1983; Mordechai Zalkin: A New

especially grammar (*dikduk*), the study of the Hebrew Bible, and knowledge of foreign languages and academic disciplines. For example, in 1828 Isaac Beer Levinsohn (1788–1860), the father of Russian Haskalah, published his classic work *Teudah Be-Yisrael* (Vocation in Israel) in Vilna.[14] In this highly influential work, the author demonstrated the importance of knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, grammar, languages, and the academic disciplines, based on numerous Jewish sources and partly drawing on Shir's writings.[15] Before the Haskalah, Rabbi Eliyahu ben Sholomo Zalman, known as the "Gaon" (Genius) resided in Vilna. Gradually, he began to have an impact on a small group of people through his teachings and writings that overlapped with those of the Haskalah and later, particularly as academic Jewish learning developed with *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. He encouraged study of the Hebrew language and Hebrew Bible, as well as the acquisition of scientific knowledge.[16] For example, the Gaon encouraged a critical method focusing on a careful reading, even emending the text, with references to and close examination of parallel source texts.[17] The Gaon of Vilna's impact on Eastern European Maskilim was significant.[18]

Dawn. The Jewish Enlightenment in the Russian Empire. Social Aspects, Jerusalem 2000 (Hebrew); Joshua Levisohn: The Early Vilna Haskalah and the Search for a Modern Jewish Identity (unpublished dissertation, Harvard University, 1999). For recent works highlighting some of the differences, see Gafni, Mishnah's Plain Sense.

14 Immanuel Etkes: For the Sake of Heaven. Hasidim, Mitnagdim, Maskilim and Their Interrelations, Jerusalem 2016, esp. pp. 272–289 (Hebrew).

15 See, for example, what Shmuel Finn writes about himself, reprinted in Shmuel Feiner: S.J. Fuenn. From Militant to Conservative Maskil, Jerusalem 1993, p. 71. See also Shmuel Barantchok (ed.): Vilna, Yerushalayim de-Lita. Dorot aharonim 1881–1939 (Vilna, Jerusalem of Lithuania. The first Generations 1881–1939), Tel Aviv 1983, esp. pp. 184–186; Zalkin, New Dawn, pp. 239–240. Levinsohn's work even received a letter of recommendation from Rabbi Avraham Abbaleh (1762–1836), the chief judge of the religious Jews in Vilna at the time, cf. Etkes, For the Sake of Heaven, p. 309.

16 Stefan Schreiner: The Vilna Gaon as a Biblical Scholar. A Reappraisal, in: Izraelis Lempertas (ed.), The Gaon of Vilna and the Annals of Jewish Literature, Vilna 1998, pp. 128–136. See also Jay Harris: How Do We Know This? Midrash and the Fragmentation of Modern Judaism, Albany 1995, pp. 234–239; David Fishman: Russia's First Modern Jews. The Jews of Shklov, New York 1995, pp. 104–108; Immanuel Etkes: The Gaon of Vilna. The Man and His Image, Jerusalem 1998, pp. 60–68 (Hebrew).

17 On the Gaon's methods and teachings, see Lawrence H. Schiffman: The Vilna Gaon's Methods for Textual Criticism of Rabbinical Literature, in Izraelis Lempertas (ed.), The Gaon of Vilna and the Annals of Jewish Literature, Vilna 1998, pp. 116–127; Yaron Zilberstein: The Vilna Gaon. Thought and Exegesis on the Jerusalem Talmud, in: Israel Rozenson / Yosef Rivlin (eds.), The Vilna Gaon's Disciples in Eretz Yisrael. History Thought Reality, Jerusalem 2010, pp. 131–163 (Hebrew); Yaakov Shmuel Spiegel: Chapters in the History of the Jewish Book, Scholars and their Annotations, Ramat Gan 2005, pp. 423–470 (Hebrew).

18 See Etkes, The Gaon of Vilna, pp. 44–83; Etkes, For the Sake of Heaven, pp. 253–271. See also Eliyahu Stern: The Genius. Elijah of Vilna and the Making of Modern Judaism, New Haven

Leopold Zunz and Shir were equally influenced by Azariah de Rossi's (1512–1577) *Meor Einayim* (The Light of the Eyes), in which the author had employed critical methods, including philology and comparative linguistics.[19] Many of these methods eventually became trademarks of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.[20] The work also influenced people affiliated with the school of the Gaon of Vilna, such as Mattityahu Strashun's father, Rabbi Shmuel (Samuel) ben Joseph Strashun (1793–1872).

3. Mattityahu Strashun's Life and Education

The above-mentioned setting is essential to understand the intellectual world in which Mattityahu Strashun grew up. Born into a wealthy family, Strashun received an excellent Jewish traditional education first by his father, Rabbi Shmuel Strashun. Besides the typical subjects like the Hebrew Bible and Talmud, Mattityahu Strashun was also taught other subjects that children of his age usually did not learn, such as Hebrew grammar and foreign languages. He married at the age of fourteen, remained in Vilna until his death, and was able to continue his studies uninterrupted in great wealth.

Mattityahu Strashun became a prolific writer. The range of his numerous writings is remarkable, covering literally all areas of Jewish studies. On various topics, he dealt with basically all texts of the Jewish tradition from the Bible to contemporary literature, philosophy, history and bibliography.[21] Much of his knowledge was of course garnered by studying the books in his vast library that he painstakingly built and maintained.[22] However, Strashun was

2013. For an excellent bibliography of everything related to the Gaon, see Yeshayahu Vinograd: Thesaurus of the Books of the Vilna Gaon. Detailed and Annotated Bibliography of Books by and about the Gaon and Hasid R. Eliahu b. R. Shlomo Zalman of Vilna, Jerusalem 2003 (Hebrew).

19 On this work there is extensive literature, see for example Bezalel Safran: Azariah de Rossi's Meor Eynaim (unpublished dissertation, Harvard University 1979). (Thanks to Menachem Butler for this source); Lester Segal: Historical Consciousness and Religious Tradition in Azariah De Rossi's Meor Einayim, New York 1989; Robert Bonfil: Azariah De Rossi: Selected Chapters from Sefer Meor Einayim, Jerusalem 1991 (Hebrew).

20 Leopold Zunz even examined De Rossi's biography, see Leopold Zunz: A Biography of Rabbi Azariah De Rossi, in: Kerem Hemed (Delightful Vineyard) 5 (1841) pp. 131–158; Leopold Zunz: Addenda to A Biography of Rabbi Azariah de Rossi, in: Kerem Hemed 7 (1843) pp. 119–24 (both Hebrew).

21 See footnote 3 about a partial bibliography of his works.

22 For a catalogue of the Hebrew section of his library, see Zvi Hirsch Itzakowski: Likutei Shoshanim (A Gathering of Roses), Berlin 1889.

not merely a collector of books but, more importantly, a curator of their content.[23] Strashun's works are impressive not only in regard to the great range of topics he dealt with but also because of their depth and originality. Various descriptions of him mention that he had a photographic memory.

There is scholarly consensus that Mattityahu Strashun learned about the works and methods of the Gaon of Vilna from his father, Rabbi Shmuel Strashun, known by his acronym "Ra-Shash." Shmuel Strashun is best known for his glosses on the Talmud and Midrash, published in 1858 as *Hagahot HaRashash* (Glosses of Rabbi Shmuel Strashun).[24] While it is unknown who Rabbi Shmuel Strashun's teachers were, it is certain that he was influenced by the Haskalah but even more by the Vilna Gaon's methods. His glosses clearly reveal that he utilized works from the school of the Gaon.[25] For example, Rabbi Shmuel Strashun was famous for carefully reading texts and emending them in quest of a proper reading, not based upon manuscripts, but upon a comparison with parallel texts along with his deductive acumen.[26]

Rabbi Shmuel Strashun penned glosses to texts that were commonly known to people influenced by the Gaon of Vilna. These include his extensive comments on the *Midrash Rabba*, a work neglected by many contemporaries.[27] Furthermore, he annotated Zvi Hirsch Katzenelnbogen's (1796–1868) commentary work *Netivot Olam* (Pathways of the World), published in Vilna in 1822.[28] In his glosses on the Talmud, Strashun placed an emphasis on the Hebrew language, an area neglected by many scholars but popular among

23 See, for example, Mattiyhau Strashun: Mivchar Ketavim, Jerusalem 1969, pp. 30, 218, 244, where he quotes some of his "rare" books.

24 See Steinschneider, Ir Vilna, pp. 250–252; Mordechai Zalkin: Samuel and Mattityahu Strashun. Between Tradition and Innovation, in: Yermiyahu Aharon Taub / Aviva E. Astrinsky (eds.), Mattityahu Strashun, 1817–1885. Scholar, Leader, and Book Collector, New York, 2000, p. 1–28. (Thanks to Dan Rabinowitz for this source.); Tzvi Harkavy: Toledot ha-RaShaSh u-Ketavav (Origins of the Rasash and his Writings), in: Tzvi Harkavy (ed.), Mekorei ha-Rambam. Samuel Strashun, Jerusalem 1957, pp. 53–58; Shua Engelman: Rabbi Samuel Strashun (Harashash) and his Haggahot on the Babylonian Talmud (unpublished dissertation, Bar Ilan University 2008 (All references in Hebrew).

25 Jay Harris: Rabbinic Literature after the Death of the Gaon, in: Izraelis Lempertas (ed.), The Gaon of Vilna and the Annals of Jewish Literature, Vilna 1998, pp. 88–95; Dovid Avraham: Pinkso Shel Shmuel (Notebook of Samuel), Jerusalem 2001, pp. 100–101.

26 See Engelman, Rabbi Shmuel Strashun, pp. 115–175.

27 See Gil S. Perl: The Pillar of Volozhin. Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin and the World of Nineteenth Century Lithuanian Torah Scholarship, Boston 2013, pp. 42–60.

28 On this work, see: Hermann L. Strack: Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash, Cambridge 1996, pp. 22–30. See also Perl, Pillar of Volozhin, pp. 85–86, 52–53.

those who were influenced by the Gaon of Vilna.[29] A similar linguistic and philological orientation became the method of the Haskalah and *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.[30]

There are other aspects of Rabbi Shmuel Strashun's work that are even more in line with *Wissenschaft des Judentums* methods and ideals. In 2011, the Jerusalem publishing house *Machon Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem Institute) printed a collection of indexes on thousands of topics found in Shmuel Strashun's writings, entitled *Pinkas Shel Shmuel* (Notebook of Samuel). A careful examination of the indexes reveals many topics touched upon in his glosses, showing that he devoted many comments to historical issues related to the Hebrew Bible, the sages of the Mishnah, and the Talmud.[31]

Other non-traditional areas of interest in Rabbi Shmuel Strashun's writings deal with mathematics and academic disciplines such as astronomy and geography.[32] This too, could possibly be traced to the Gaon of Vilna's influence, who valued the natural sciences. Moreover, Strashun can be found on a list of subscribers (Pränumeranten) in the first edition of Isaac Ber Levinsohn's aforementioned *Teudah BiYisroel*. This demonstrates not only his interest in owning the work but also indicates his interest in actually using it.[33] Two other works are quoted several times by Strashun in his glosses: de Rossi's *Meor Eynayim*,[34] and the *Biur* (Commentary [on the Hebrew Bible]) by Moses Mendelsohn (1729–1786), which both have a strong emphasis on language.[35] It can thus be said that Rabbi Shmuel Strashun's writings display a strong influence from the school of the Gaon of Vilna as well as many similarities and overlaps with methods of the Haskalah and *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.

29 Engelman: Rabbi Shmuel Strashun, pp. 227–234; Avraham, Pinkso Shel Shmuel, pp. 7–39.

30 Engelman, Rabbi Shmuel Strashun, pp. 221–240.

31 Engelman, Rabbi Shmuel Strashun, pp. 209–213; Avraham, Pinkso Shel Shmuel, pp. 7–39.

32 Engelman, Rabbi Shmuel Strashun, pp. 322–722; Avraham, Pinkso Shel Shmuel, pp. 161–174.

33 On the subscribers, see Shynayer Z. Leiman: A Note on R. Bezalel Alexandrov's (Mishkan Betzalel) and its Prenumeranten, The Seforim Blog, November 28, 2016, http://seforim.blogspot.com/2016/11/a-note-on-r-bezalel-alexandrovs-and-its.html (last accessed October 6, 2016).

34 Engelman, Rabbi Shmuel Strashun, p. 237.

35 Engelman, Rabbi Shmuel Strashun, pp. 234–235. These works are absent from the otherwise complete listings in Avhrhom, Pinkso Shel Shmuel. See also Meir Hildesheimer: Moses Mendelssohn in Nineteenth-Century Rabbinical Literature, in: Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research 55 (1988), pp. 79–133.

4. Going Beyond the Father: Mattityahu Strashun's Writings

It may not surprise that all the methods just mentioned are blatantly visible in Mattityahu Strashun's writings as well. Like his father, he authored glosses to the Talmud.[36] Mattityahu Strashun clearly employed methods affiliated with the school of the Gaon of Vilna, such as emending texts, using parallel texts from the Talmudim, and including a special focus on language and grammar. Furthermore, his glosses display knowledge of many of the Gaon's comments. Also similarly to his father, Mattityahu Strashun authored glosses to the *Midrash Rabbah*, printed in his work *Mattat-Yah*, and notes on Zvi Hirsch Katzenelenbogen's commentary *Netivot Olam.*

However, Mattityahu Strashun took his intellectual ventures to yet another level. Whereas the school of the Gaon of Vilna in general and his father in particular emended texts, Mattityahu Strashun went further and used the classic work of Rabbi Nosson Rabinowitz (1835–1888), *Dikdueki Sofrim* (Scribal Emendations) for his emendations.[37] Also in other areas, he went beyond his father. Whereas Shmuel Strashun quoted Moses Mendelsohn's Bible commentary, Mattityahu Strashun made much more extensive use of this work.[38] Furthermore, he used and quoted other works by Mendelsohn, such as *Jerusalem: On Religious Power and Judaism.*[39] The same is true for de Rossi's *Meor Eynayim*, which Strashun quoted extensively throughout his writings.[40] While Shmuel Strashun quoted numerous academic works, Mattityahu Strashun used such works even more frequently and quoted them. In fact, he wrote in passing that he had read scientific works already at a young age, particularly *Reshit*

[36] Unfortunately, there is only a very small part of his glosses on the tractates Eruvin and Bava Basra. These glosses, however, were first printed in the Vilna edition of the Babylonian Talmud, printed in Vilna between 1880 and 1886. They can be found in the back of the volumes. The glosses on Eruvin see pp. 44a–44b; the glosses on Bava Basra see pp. 80–84.

[37] See, for example, his glosses on tractates Eruvin, in Babylonian Talmud (Vilna edition), p. 44b, and notes on Talmud 11b, 13b, and 19b.

[38] For example, Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 17, 93; Mattat-Yah, pp. 4b, 7b, 12b, 26a, 39a.

[39] See the latest edition of the work: Moses Mendelssohn: Jerusalem oder über die religiöse Macht und Judentum, ed. by David Martyn, Bielefeld 2001. Strashun, Ketavim, p. 93; Mattat-Yah, pp. 15a, 38a.

[40] Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 169–172, 134–135, 223, 230, 238. See the comments of Perl, The Pillar of Volozhin, pp. 110–111.

Limudim (First Teachings) of Baruch Linda (1758–1849), a *maskilic* scientific textbook.[41]

When in 1860 the moderate Vilna Maskil Shmuel (Samuel) Joseph Fuenn (1818–1890) published his classic encyclopedia on prominent scholars of his city, entitled *Keriyah Nemunah* (Faithful City), Fuenn wrote in the introduction that he had asked his close friend Mattityahu Strashun to add his comments to the work and described him as well-versed in the literature of the *Chochmat Yisrael* (Jewish Studies).[42] Strashun justified his extensive notes and comments by way of the Talmud. Although he had no proper university training, it becomes clear from these additional comments and his further writings that he can be seen as an excellent historian, critical scholar, and bibliographer. Many other essays, some of which are collected in the volume *Mivchar Ketavim* (Selected Writings), also demonstrate this additional facet.[43]

Another intensification beyond the teachings and writings of his father is Mattityahu Strashun's usage of Isaac Baer Levinsohn's *Teudah BiYisrael*. Taking this relationship to the next level, Mattityahu Strashun corresponded with the author about the work. In one of the letters to Levinsohn, he confessed that the work had a tremendous impact on him.[44] In contrast, in one of his earliest published articles, he respectfully criticized one of Levinsohn's essays.[45] Besides his correspondence with Levinsohn, Strashun was in contact with many other Maskilim, particularly those from his hometown of Vilna. He participated in the first *maskilic* journal of Vilna scholars, *Prihei Tzafon* (Flowers of the North), contributing articles to the journal.[46]

41 Strashun, Ketavim, p. 251. Yet, Strashun writes negatively about Baruch Linda earlier in Strashun, Ketavim, p. 240. On Linda, see Tal Kogman: The "Maskilim" in the Sciences. Jewish Scientific Education in the German-Speaking Sphere in Modern Times, Jerusalem 2013, pp. 49–86.

42 Reprinted in Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 169–172. On Fuenn, see See Feiner, S. J. Fuenn, pp. 1–47.

43 See, for example, Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 234–242, which is a masterful essay against a historical essay of the scholar Yakov Reifman (1818–1994) about David Gans (1514–1641).

44 On the correspondence, see Isaac Baer Levinsohn: Sefer HaZihronot, Warsaw 1899, pp. 49–50. See also Isaac Baer Levinsohn: Sefer ha-Kolel Igerot Ratso've-Shov bein Yitzḥak Be'er Levinzon u-Vein Ḥakhmei Doro (Isaac's Well, a Thesaurus of Correspondence Between Isaac Ber Levinson and Scholars of His Generation), Warsaw 1899, pp. 42–46.

45 Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 227–228.

46 The articles are reprinted in Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 213–228. On the journal, see Mordechai Zalkin: The Periodical 'Pirhei Tsafon' and Its Role in the Social System of the Haskalah Movement in the Russian Empire, in: Kesher 35 (2007), pp. 63–69; Etkes, For the Sake of Heaven, p. 305; Shalom Pludermacher, Zikkaron le-Chakham, p. 15; Feiner, S. J. Fuenn, p. 181. (Thanks to Dan Rabinowitz for this source.)

5. Mattityahu Strashun's Reception of Zunz and Shir

Mattityahu Strashun developed unique skills and interests through his education by his father Rabbi Shmuel Strashun. Despite his study methods and personal relationships, Mattityahu Strashun is hard to place as a modern Jewish scholar, and even as a Maskil. As Gil Perl describes him, "he walked the virtually invisible line between traditionalist and maskilic scholarship."[47] Many accounts of his life describe Mattityahu Strashun as just a learned and gifted man. In contrast to that simple assumption, I would like to suggest an additional explanation for his outstanding knowledge and talents: It was his familiarity with the methods of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and his exchange with scholars of the Jewish academic movement that helped him outshine many of his contemporaries. While it is known that he was in correspondence with many *Wissenschaft* scholars, his relationships with Leopold Zunz and Shlomo Yehudah Rapoport (Shir) stand out.

In his writings, Mattityahu Strashun showed a great familiarity with Zunz's work.[48] Zunz's works had a great influence on Strashun in developing critical methods, and possibly added to his great interest in the Midrash literature. For example, in his writings, Mattityahu Strashun described at length the manuscript of an early Midrash.[49] Similar to Zunz, he was interested in the prayers and liturgy and authored various articles on these topics.[50] He demonstrated his knowledge in this field when, at the author's request, he added a number of comments to Levi Kletsky's *Erech Tefilah* (An Estimation of Prayer).[51]

Strashun often gave a detailed background on historical persons and events, as in the case of the great Jewish poet and philosopher Rabbi Yehudah Halevi (1070–1141), for which he used current historical knowledge to critically

47 Perl, The Pillar of Volozhin, p. 110. I am not labeling Mattityahu Strashun a "Maskil" as others have, for reasons beyond the scope of this paper. But just to list one support for this claim: In 1900, Hillel Steinschneider published a lexicon of the Vilna scholars, entitled Ir Vilna (City of Vilna). Only in 2003, the second part of the work was printed from a manuscript for the first time. This part was devoted to the Maskilim of Vilna, many of whom Steinschneider knew personally. Yet, Steinschneider, who knew Strashun well, lined him up with the scholars of Vilna but not the Maskilim in the first volume.

48 Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 31, 104, 144, 161, 169, 236, 251; Mattat-Yah, p. 130.

49 Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 166–168.

50 See, for example, Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 92–98.

51 Levi Kletsky: Erech Tefillah (Order of the Prayer), Vilna 1868, pp. 134–142.

analyze the traditional legends of the poet's life.[52] Similar to Zunz, bibliography was a field of great importance for him, not least in his capacity as a book collector.[53] Moreover, in his work on the *Midrash Rabbah*, he often used his knowledge of ancient languages and philological methods to decipher and understand textual variants.[54]

Similarly, Shir had a great impact on Mattityahu Strashun, as particularly the philological references in his writings show.[55] Since Strashun was especially interested in the history of the *Geonim* of the Middle Ages, he built on Shir's famous monographs about individual Geonim, such as when he discussed the usage of *geonic* material in order to better understand Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040–1105), called Rashi, or Moses Maimonides (1135/38–1204).[56] In his work on Rabbi Nathan ben Jehiel (1030–1106) and his lexicon, the *Aruch* (Prepared), Shir raised the question whether Rashi had used the *Aruch* for his commentaries. Following Shir's research, Strashun added numerous sources and notes to this issue.[57]

In some parts of his writings, one can trace Mattityahu Strashun's tremendous respect for Zunz and Shir. At the end of a lengthy discussion about the famous work *Besamim Rosh* (Incense of Spices) by Saul Hirschel Berlin (1740–1794), Strashun wrote that he had heard that "[…] the *great critical* one, Dr. Zunz, wrote a special article on the Besamim Rosh [Incense of Spices] and who is like him in such things, but the work did not reach me yet."[58] Elsewhere, he wrote: "*my friend* the wise and great critical, Zunz, did not see. […]"[59] Shir's name also appeared often in Mattityahu Strashun's writings, usually with

52 Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 215–217. See Eliezer Brodt: The Death and Burial of Rabbi Yehudah Halevi in Eretz Yisroel and the Cairo Geniza, in: Yeshurun 25 (2011) pp. 754–775.

53 See, for example, Strashun: Ketavim, pp. 213–228, 233.

54 See, for example, Strashun: Ketavim, on Greek see pp. 36, 59, 143, 250; on others, see 80, 83, 157, 162, 209; Mattat-Yah, pp. 7b, 10b, 15a, 15b, 17b, and many more.

55 Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 35, 48, 82, 97, 98, 100, 105,107, 128, 145, 184, 194, 248, 239; Mattat-Yah, pp. 167, 174, 192, 202, 219.

56 On Rabbi Hananel, see Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 107–109. On Rashi and the Geonim, see Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 105–106. On Rambam and Geonim, see Strashun, Ketavim, p. 114.

57 Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 100–104. See also Shamma Friedman: Rashi's Talmudic Commentaries and the Nature of Their Revisions and Recensions, in: Zvi Steinfeld (ed.), Rashi Studies, Ramat Gan 1993, p. 173. See also Strashun, Neirot ha-Emunah (Lights of Truth), in: Ha-Karmel 1 (1861) 40, p. 324.

58 Strashun, Ketavim, p. 161, my emphasis, E. B. On Hirschel's *Besamim Rosh*, see Moshe Samet: Chapters in the History of Orthodoxy, Jerusalem 2005, pp. 45–66 (Hebrew); Eliezer Brodt: Notes and Additions to Nitei Sofrim, in: Yeshurun 24 (2010), pp. 425–427 (Hebrew).

59 Mattityahu Strashun: Mincha BiLulah, in: Ha-Karmel 1 (1861) 40, p. 323, my emphasis, E. B.

great respect, even when he disagreed with him. For example, Strashun wrote about Shir: "*My friend* Shir […] that most of history is revealed before him and there is almost nothing in *Chochmat Yisrael* [Jewish Studies] and its history that is not known to him."[60]

6. Mattityahu Strashun's Personal Relationship to Zunz and Shir

In addition to Zunz's and Shir's influence on Mattityahu Strashun through their writings, Strashun had a personal connection with both scholars. However, there is little proof about the nature of Strashun's personal relationship to Shir and Zunz. It is known that, in 1855/56, Strashun traveled across Europe and visited various scholars.[61] One of the places he visited was Prague and the city's old Jewish cemetery.[62] Among the scholars he visited in Prague was Shir. Strashun wrote in passing that "the great Gaon and teacher Rav Shir of blessed memory *told me*…"[63] This demonstrates his personal connection to Shir. However, the correspondence that may have followed the personal encounter or even existed before that is lost.

Sadly, the same is true for the connection between Strashun and Zunz. Although in the various archives no original correspondence can be found between the two men, the references in their writings as well as the transmission of letters in Strashun's printed *Mivchar Ketavim* (Selected Writings) show that the connection existed. For example, in 1841 and 1843, Zunz published a lengthy history of the scholar Rabbi Azariah de Rossi in the Hebrew journal *Kerem Chemed* (Sweet Vineyard). In the second edition, Zunz added new material which he had collected since the first publication. Among these additions were sources provided by Mattityahu Strashun, to whom Zunz referred in his notes as the "wise one."[64]

Additional evidence of the personal relationship between Strashun and Zunz can be found in an article written in the journal *Ha-Karmel* (Mount

60 Strashun, Ketavim, p. 145, my emphasis, E. B.
61 About this trip, see Pludermacher, Zikkaron le-Chacham, p. 17; Mattat-Yah, p. 50b.
62 Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 131, 235.
63 See Strashun, Ketavim, p. 98, my emphasis, E. B.
64 Leopold Zunz: Tosefot le-Toledot R' Azariah min ha-Adumim, in: Kerem Hemed 7 (1843), pp. 119–24. Zunz quotes him four times in this essay.

Carmel) in 1863, in which Strashun discussed Zunz's work on Rashi.[65] In 1840, Simon Bloch (1810–1879) had translated Zunz's article into Hebrew. Strashun criticized Bloch's translation, not least for adding material without Zunz's authorization. Strashun also noted that Bloch did not attempt to receive from Zunz any new material or corrections. Finally, Strashun mentioned a letter from Zunz to himself, written on August 22, 1842, which enclosed the original German edition of Zunz's essay. In his letter, Zunz also expressed his disappointment with Bloch's translation.[66]

Moreover, other letters from the 1840s indicate the personal correspondence between Strashun and Zunz, for example when Strashun wrote about a rare *Siddur* (prayer book) he owned, that "in 1844, the wise and outstanding critic, Zunz, requested to borrow it by letter," upon which Strashun sent it to him.[67] His willingness to lend a valuable rare book attests to Strashun's high regard for Zunz.

In light of this, the following observation remains unclear. Based on a letter he wrote, printed in three parts in the two volumes of the Vilna journal *Prihei Tzafon*, Mattityahu Strashun penned a historical, biographical and bibliographical essay about the philosopher Rabbi Shem Tov Falaquera (1225–c. 1295), using a wide range of sources, including several manuscripts in his possession.[68] In the entry on the work *Sefer Ha-Maalot* (Book of Attributes), he omitted the note that this was the subject of Zunz's doctorate, completed in December 1820, entitled *De Schemtob Falkira* (On Shem Tov Falaquera).[69] The answer to the omission could be that this essay was written by Strashun at the young age of nineteen. While he quoted various manuscripts and even used the works of the Protestant theologian Johannes Buxtdorf (1564–1629), this was still in the early years of his career. He probably did not know all of Zunz's writings at that time. Moreover, as far as we know, his correspondence with Zunz began only a year or two later.

However, Mattityahu Strashun's first published essay was a copy of a letter that he wrote to someone about Rabbi Shem Tov Falaquera. Taking this

65 Leopold Zunz: Dreifaches Verzeichnis, Abschriften und Ausgaben des (Rashi) Commentars betreffend, in: Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums 1 (1822), pp. 349–366.

66 Reprinted in Strashun, Ketavim, p. 104. In Mattityahu Strashun: Omissions and Corrections, in: Ha-Karmel 3 (1877) 11, p. 640, he noted another mistake in Bloch's translation and said, "however my friend the author Dr. Zunz wrote it correctly."

67 Strashun, Ketavim, p. 144.

68 Reprinted in Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 213–228.

69 Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 214. See also Schorsch, Creativity in Adversity, p. 25.

observation further, I would suggest that perhaps this letter to an unknown addressee was actually written to Zunz himself. Evidence to support this assumption can be found in a footnote in the letter, written before 1841:

> "You already know from me from my letter to you about the precious work *Meor Eynayim* […] and the thefts from it. […] I gave you a list of over thirty sources like this; now here is another source which I did not write in that list."[70]

This note deals with plagiarism from de Rossi's *Meor Eynayim.* As mentioned above, this book was the subject of another correspondence between Strashun and Zunz. If my conclusion are correct, one could note another observation. At the end of this letter, Mattityahu Strashun included a postscript to a previous letter, writing that he had made many more discoveries about Rabbi Shem Tov Falaquera but would only include some of them, as he had just received a new book from his friend Isaac Ber Levinsohn who had also dealt with Falaquera but had made a few mistakes about this subject. One may argue that Strashun was shifting from "being similar" to a *maskilic* scholar and moving forward towards Leopold Zunz and the methods of *Wissenschaft des Judentums.*[71]

7. Mattityahu Strashun's Attitude to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*

From Strashun's writings, it becomes clear that he bought, received, and used the works of Zunz and Shir. Moreover, it can be assumed that Strashun knew Zunz and Shir in person and corresponded with them. The question remains, however, what his attitude to *Wissenschaft des Judentums* really was.[72]

In an essay from 2004, Michael A. Meyer described "two persistent tensions within *Wissenschaft des Judentums*."[73] According to Meyer, the first source of tension refers to its specific conception and the question of whether it was a secular "*Wissenschaft*" based upon the methods of classical studies and

[70] Strashun, Ketavim, p. 217.

[71] Many thanks to Dan Rabinowitz for this suggestion.

[72] I wish to thank the anonymous peer-reviewer of my essay whose suggestions led me to this analysis.

[73] Michael A. Meyer: Two Persistent Tensions within Wissenschaft des Judentums, in: Andreas Gotzmann / Christian Wiese (eds.), Modern Judaism and Historical Consciousness, Boston 2007, pp. 73–89. On the state of research, see Kerstin von der Krone / Mirjam Thulin: Wissenschaft in Context. A Research Essay on the Wissenschaft des Judentums, in: Leo Baeck Institute Year Book 58 (2013), pp. 249–280.

philology or, on the other hand, more a Jewish theology that relied on historical research but first and foremost aimed to re-define modern Judaism. The second source of tension refers to the conflicting intentions of the protagonists to either influence the perception of Judaism in Christian society, or transform Judaism and contemporary Jewish life. Meyer assumes that Leopold Zunz and numerous *Wissenschaft* scholars of the first generation were mainly concerned with being accepted in regular secular universities, influencing the perception of Judaism among non-Jews, and helping it gain recognition in the world of general scholarship. Later adherents sought to use it as a religious enterprise to re-define Judaism, a non-Orthodox religious revival to inspire Jews to attach themselves more closely to their Jewish past. This aspect was found much more in the second generation of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars such as Abraham Geiger (1810–1874), Zacharias Frankel (1801–1875), and Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891), and was especially visible in their efforts to create rabbinical seminaries. For example, Frankel wrote that there could be no Judaism if there were a lack for the love of Jewish *Wissenschaft.*[74]

These important observations documented by Michael A. Meyer may give us insight into Strashun and his attitude towards *Wissenschaft des Judentums.* It seems fairly safe to conclude that Strashun was attached to the methods of *Wissenschaft* – but nothing more. He remained an Orthodox Jew. While he felt that these tools were immensely beneficial for his learning, he did not use them to invoke changes. More ideological aspects of *Wissenschaft* that Zacharias Frankel and other scholars of the second generation were proposing were completely foreign to Strashun. Thus, Zunz, who was more concerned with the methodology of *Wissenschaft* than with pursuing a religious renewal or re-definition of Judaism, was closer to Strashun. Strashun used Zunz's works and was even in contact with him.

Although Strashun owned the works of scholars of the second generation like Frankel and was aware of their ideas, they remain almost absent in his works.[75] Strashun's attitude towards Shir supports this assumption. In 1862, Max Meir Halevi Letteris (1800–1871) published an attack on Shir in the

[74] For the quote from Frankel, see Meyer, Two Persistent Tensions, p. 81.

[75] See, for example, the catalogue of Strashun's library: Hirsch Itzakowski: Likutei Shoshanim, 52, #1029 and 131, #2517. However, although he owned them, he did not quote these works, see, for example, Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 57, 90.

Hebrew newspaper *Ha-Maggid* (The Messenger).[76] This attack was in response to an article Shir had written in an earlier issue about Letteris.[77] Letteris had announced that he intended to publish a journal in which he would print letters from scholars of the time. Shir was worried that some of the letters would not be from worthy and God-fearing scholars.[78] Soon after Letteris' attack on Shir, a three-part anonymous defense of Shir was published, actually penned by Mattityahu Strashun.[79] Strashun attacked Letteris sharply, criticizing his various publications over several pages.[80] Further, he outlined some of Shir's merits and explained his point of view on the subject.

The attack seems to be out of character for Strashun, who avoided personal disputes. Therefore, his public defense of his friend Shir should be understood as an exception. In his article series, Strashun accused Letteris for not being well-versed in Talmud and having devoted most of his life to poetry and the Hebrew language. While Strashun stressed their importance and emphasized that Letteris' contributions were valuable, he berated Letteris for criticizing Shir, as he was far from being a Talmud scholar. Instead, Strashun pointed to the fact that Shir had studied Jewish poetry from a young age but his main focus was Talmud and that he was a recognized expert in it already in his youth:

> "It's clear from his works and letters that he put all his strength in holiness, investigating Bible, Talmud, Midrash, Poskim [deciders], responsa and in investigating all aspects of its early origins […] already in his youth […] he showed his greatness in Talmud and his amazing glosses to the Avnei MeLuim [Setting Stones] […] by his father in law the Gaon. […] And the great Gaon R[abbi] Yaakov Lorberbaum [1772–1832] […] gave him the Smicha [rabbinical ordination]."

Shir had expressed a deep concern in his response to Letteris, one which Strashun wholeheartedly endorsed, namely that one had to be careful not to allow this publication because it would attack Judaism from the inside. By

[76] Meir Letteris: Heneni Key Kuratei Lee, in: Ha-Maggid 6 (1862) 27, p. 213.

[77] Shlomo Y. Rapoport: Bechinat Darchei Hadat. in: Ha-Maggid 6 (1862) 24, p. 194.

[78] This saga has been systematically dealt with in Nathan Shifriss' excellent dissertation, cf. Shifriss: Shelomo Yehudah Rapoport (Shir), pp. 311–318. However, Shifriss does not refer to Strashun's role in the confrontation between Shir and Letteris.

[79] The three articles are reprinted in Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 194–201. See also Shifriss, Shelomo Yehudah Rapoport (Shir), p. 317n582. Strashun wrote under various pseudonyms, many of them noted in Saul Chajes: Pseudonymen-Lexikon der hebräischen und jiddischen Literatur, Vienna 1933. See also Pludermacher, Zikkaron le-Chacham, p. 18.

[80] Strashun, Ketavim, pp. 196–198.

all accounts, Shir was much more concerned with the modern methods of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* than with implementing them on a practical basis. Shir's biographer Isaac Barzilay refers to the attack, explaining that:

> "They excepted the founder of critical Jewish historiography to draw, as they did, the religious and philosophical conclusions of his own method and apply them to the problems of the present-day Jewry. This, however, Shir never did nor intended to do."[81]

In this respect, Shir shared an approach with Strashun in having no intention to re-define Judaism.

During Strashun's lifetime, an Orthodox *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was founded which was much more in line with his own attitude. The movement formed around the Berlin rabbinical Seminary for Orthodox Judaism, founded by Rabbi Esriel Hildsheimer (1820–1899).[82] This seminary was founded to combat Zacharias Frankel's Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau and its attempts to create a moderate reformed Judaism.[83] While the methods of *Wissenschaft* were also employed at the Berlin Orthodox seminary, their ideology was more similar and in line with Strashun's.[84]

8. Conclusion

In light of recent academic interest in Leopold Zunz and Shlomo Yehudah Rapoport (Shir), and especially in regard to the two-hundredth anniversary of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, I attempted to demonstrate a relatively unknown personal connection between these scholars of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the Vilna-based scholar Mattityahu Strashun. It is apparent that Strashun was influenced by and utilized the methods of modern scientific inquiry of Judaism, which he learned about from the writings of and personal contacts

[81] Barzilay, Shlomo Yehudah Rapoport, p. 61.

[82] David Ellenson: Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer and the Creation of a Modern Jewish Orthodoxy, Tuscaloosa 1990; Jacob Sinason: The Rebbe. The Story of Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer, New York 1996.

[83] Andreas Brämer: Rabbiner Zacharias Frankel. Wissenschaft des Judentums und konservative Reform im 19. Jahrhundert, Hildesheim 2000; Uri (Adolf) Kober, Beit ha-Midrash be-Breslau (The Rabbinical Seminary in Breslau), in: Shmuel Mirsky (ed), Mosdot Torah be-Europah be-Vinyanam uve-Hurbanam (Jewish Institutions of Higher Learning in Europe. Their Development and Destruction), New York 1956, 605–633 (Hebrew).

[84] On this movement, see Asaf Yedidya: Criticized Criticism. Orthodox Alternatives to Wissenschaft des Judentums, 1873–1956, Jerusalem 2013.

with three schools of thought of his time, the school of the Gaon of Vilna, the Haskalah movement, and eventually from the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. When he employed the critical methods in his writings, especially in his works on the Talmud, he surpassed not only Shir but also the father of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Leopold Zunz, who did not conduct much research on the Talmud. In fact, it seems that Strashun did years and decades before what, in the end, the Orthodox Jewish academics at the Berlin Seminary for Orthodox Judaism and its followers today would do when studying Jewish texts and traditions. Mattityahu Strashun's attitude towards *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as a religious enterprise to re-define Judaism was also similar to the branch of Orthodox *Wissenschaft* that would eventually be institutionalized in the Hildesheimer seminary.

A Historian from the World of Torah: The Historiographical Approach of Rabbi Yitzhak Isaac Halevy Rabinowitz (1847–1914)

by Eliezer Sariel

Abstract

The article examines the work of Rabbi Yitzhak Isaac Halevy, arguably the most significant Orthodox response to the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* school of historiography. Halevy himself exemplified the Orthodox struggle against *Wissenschaft,* yet his work expressed a commitment to modern historiographical discipline that suggested an internalization of some of the very same premises adopted by *Wissenschaft*. While criticizing the representatives of *Wissenschaft*, Halevy was, at the same time, fighting for the internalization of its innovative characteristics into Orthodox society. He saw himself as a leader of a movement working towards the development of Orthodox Jewish studies and his application of modern historiographic principles from an Orthodox worldview as creating critical Orthodox historiography. Halevy's approach promotes an understanding of Orthodoxy as a complex phenomenon, of which the struggle against modern secularization is just one of many characteristics.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to present the complexity of Yitzhak Isaac Halevy Rabinowitz's historiographical approach.[1] On the one hand, Halevy exemplified the Orthodox struggle against the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* School of historiography. On the other hand, his work expressed a newfound commitment to modern historiographical discipline, which meant that he internalized some of the same premises adopted by *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. While striving

[1] His family name was Rabinowitz, but he is known as Halevy and will be referred to as such throughout the article.

against the representatives of *Wissenschaft*, Halevy was, at the same time, fighting for the internalization of its innovative characteristics into Orthodox society and against the segregation of that society. He saw himself as a leader of a movement towards the development of Orthodox Jewish studies. His work constituted a comprehensive effort to apply modern historiographic principles from an Orthodox worldview, thereby creating critical Orthodox historiography.

In the context of the growing interest of academic scholarship in Orthodox Jewish society since the 1980s, historians have begun to examine the literary genre of Orthodox historiography, which began to develop in the nineteenth century. Until the end of the twentieth century, scholars focused on the ideological and polemical nature of this genre, based on the overall perception of Orthodox society as a society on the defensive. The epithet "hagiography with footnotes," coined by Ada Rappaport-Albert at the end of the 1980s in relation to the writing of history among Chabad Hasidim, can be taken to express a more general assessment among historians of the quality of Orthodox historiography of this period.[2] Since the twenty-first century, a change in this perception can be discerned, together with a growing tendency to examine Orthodox historical writings more broadly, and not just as an ideological reaction.[3] This article follows the second approach and analyses the methodology

[2] Ada Rappaport-Albert: Hagiography with Footnotes. Edifying Tales and the Writing of History in Hasidism, in: History and Theory, 27 (1988), pp. 119–159. For similar approaches, see Haim Gertner's bibliography in the YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe (Gershon Hundert, ed., New Haven 2008): http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Historiography/Orthodox_Historiography, as well as Jacob Barnai: Shabtaʿut. hebetim ḥevratiyim [Sabbateanism. Social Perspectives], Jerusalem 2001, pp. 41–120, and Nahum Karlinski: The Dawn of Hasidic-Haredi Historiography, in: Modern Judaism 27 (2007), pp. 20–46. Gertner, who examined traditional chronicles, argued that Orthodox historiographical writing dates as early as the first half of the 19th century: Haim Gertner: Reshitah shel ketivah historit ortodoqsit be-mizraḥ eropah: haʿarakhah meḥudeshet [The Beginning of "Orthodox Historiography" in Eastern Europe; a Reassessment], in: Zion 67 (2002), pp. 293–336.

[3] David Ellenson: Jewish Meaning in a World of Choice, Philadelphia 2014, pp. 249–267; Richard S. Sarason: Rabbinic Literature, Rabbinic History, and Scholarly Thinking. Wissenschaft and Beyond, in: Andreas Gotzmann / Christian Wiese (eds.), Modern Judaism and Historical Consciousness. Identities, Encounters, Perspectives, Leiden 2007, pp. 93–109; Asaf Yedidya: Orthodox Reactions to "Wissenschaft des Judentums," in: Modern Judaism 30 (2010), pp. 69–94; Asaf Yedidya: Orthodox Strategies in the Research of the "Wissenschaft des Judentums," in: European Journal of Jewish Studies 5 (2011), pp. 67–79; Asaf Yedidya: Biqqoret mevuqqeret. Alternativot ortodoqsiyot le-ʿmadaʿe ha-yahadut 1873–1956 [Criticised Criticism: Orthodox Alternatives to Wissenschaft des Judentums, 1873–1956], Jerusalem 2013; Hanan Gafni: Peshutah shel Mishna. Iyyunim be-heqer hazal ba-et ha-hahadashah [The Mishnah's 'Plain Sense': A Study of Modern Talmudic Scholarship], Bnei Brak 2011.

of Halevy, who presented the most comprehensive, profound, and significant Orthodox response to the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* school of historiography concerning the history of the Oral Torah. To a certain extent, Halevy worked in an intellectual no-man's-land and did not enjoy the honor this might have been expected to earn him. The Orthodox world did not appreciate the religious value of his work, while the scholarly world was alienated by his arcane Hebrew style.[4]

[4] Exceptions are those who discuss Halevy as part of the fabric of 19th-century Orthodox Jewry and historians of the rabbinic period who regarded him as an early pioneer in the field, see Eliezer Sariel: Historion bi-reshut ha-torah. Qavvim le-darko ha-historyografit shel ha-rav Yitzḥak Isaac Halevy (1847–1914) [A Historian from the World of Torah. The Historiographic Approach of Rabbi Yitzhak Isaac Halevy (1847–1914)], in: Moreshet Yisra'el 4 (2007), pp. 33–75. Mordechai Breuer effectively presented the professional element of Halevy's writing, although he did not go into particulars. See Mordechai Breuer: Modernity Within Tradition. The Social History of Orthodox Jewry in Imperial Germany, New York 1992, pp. 193–201; Mordechai Breuer: Ḥokhmat Yisra'el. shalosh gishot ortodoqsiyot [Three Orthodox Approaches to Wissenschaft], in: Shaul Yisraeli / Norman Lamm / Yitzhak Raphael (eds.), Sefer yovel li-khevod morenu ha-ga'on Rabbi Yosef Dov Halevy Soloveitchik [In Honor of Moreinu, Hagaon Rabbi Yosef Dov Halevy Soloveitchik], Jerusalem 1984, pp. 856–865. Asaf Yedidya placed him on the spectrum of Orthodoxy with stress on Orthodox scholars who dealt with Judaic Studies (Yedidya, Biqqoret mevuqqeret, pp. 94–147). Yedidya's survey of Halevy's works is encyclopaedic. This article will attempt to provide an in-depth analysis of Halevy's historiographic methodology. For a narrower, more focused analysis of Halevy's methodology in the context of his approach to the works of Josephus see: Eliezer Sariel: Can't Live with Him, Can't Live without Him. Josephus in the Orthodox Historiography of Isaac Halevy and Ze'ev Ya'avetz, in: Andrea Schatz (ed.): The Reception of Josephus in Modern Jewish Culture, Leiden 2018 (in print). Asher Reichel dedicated his doctoral dissertation, originally published in English, to Halevy. Asher Reichel: Isaac Halevy, 1847–1914. Spokesman and Historian of Jewish Tradition, New York 1969. See also Asher Reichel: Iggerot Rabbi Yitzḥak Isaac Halevy, Jerusalem 1972. Reichel does not attempt a comprehensive study and analysis of the contents of Dorot ha-rishonim. Family members and Orthodox admirers published a memorial volume in 1964, written in an elegiac spirit and devoid of any critical dimension. See: Moshe Auerbach (ed.): Sefer zikaron le-rabbi Yitzḥaq Ayzik Halevy [Anthology in Honor of Rabbi Yitzhak Issac Halevy], Bnei Brak 1964. See also: Mordechai Eliash: Rabbi Yitzhak Isaac Halevy, in: Shmuel Kalman Mirsky (ed), Who's Who in Eastern European Judaic Studies, Tel Aviv 1959, pp. 65–115. The later historians for whom Halevy is a relevant reference include David M. Goldblatt and David Weiss Halivni, see: David M. Goodblatt: Y. I. Halevy, in: Jacob Neusner (ed.), The Formation of Babylonian Talmud, Leiden 1970, pp. 26–47. Halivni refers to Halevy throughout his work, notably, in a series of references in his introduction to Tractate Bava Batra, see David Halivni: Meqorot u-masorot massekhet Bava Batra [Sources and Traditions: A Source Critical Commentary on the Talmud Tractate Bava Batra], Jerusalem, 2008, pp. 6n3, 7n4, 10n18, 25n74, 26n 77, 27n79, 41n107, 67n 45, 70n49, 75n64, 78n77, 105n30, 128n21, 146n21.

2. Personal Background

Born in Lithuania in 1847 into an Orthodox, non-Hasidic milieu, Isaac Halevy received a yeshiva education which included, inter alia, studies in Volozhin, the leading yeshiva of the Orthodox world in the nineteenth century. Halevy never received formal academic training. His historical knowledge and analysis were based on an autodidactic study of Hebrew and German sources, languages he was able to read. However, his lack of academic training contributed to his arcane writing style.[5] In 1880, while a businessman serving as one of the fundraisers of the Volozhin Yeshiva, he published anonymously a series of articles in the Orthodox journal *Halevanon* in which he attacked the initiative to establish a Russian rabbinic seminar in the spirit of the moderately reformist Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau (Wrocław). At the same time, he encouraged Orthodox rabbis to expand their knowledge beyond Halakhah.[6] This duality symbolized his life-long approach. He left Lithuania for Pressburg (Bratislava) in 1895, when his business went bankrupt. In 1897, Halevy, who came from a wealthy family, published in Pressburg the first in his series of historical volumes, *Dorot ha-rishonim* [First Generations]. In his books Halevy presented original analysis which he based on a wide range of primary halakhic sources, integrated with secondary sources written in Hebrew or in German. His writing style closely resembled that of the responsa, a genre in Jewish tradition, compiled from the written decisions of rabbinic authorities, in which the adjudicator not only presented his conclusions but also explained them in details and in relation or in opposition to other opinions. Two further volumes followed during his lifetime, and the other volumes were published posthumously from his manuscripts.[7]

5 At least in one case he integrated analysis of a Greek source in his historical discussion (Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 631).

6 Yitzhak Isaac Halevy (anonymously: Divray Shalom Ve-emet [Words of Peace and Truth], in: Halevanon, 1880, (20.02.1880), pp. 227–229, (09.04.1880), pp. 273–274, (28.05.1880), pp. 329–331. Yedidya, Biqqoret mevuqqeret, p. 149. "Divray Shalom Ve-emet" takes its eponymous title from the early Maskil Naphtali Herz Wessely's text of the same name written a century before.

7 Listed below are the various volumes of Halevy's oeuvre and the somewhat complex order in which they were published: Yitzhak Isaac Halevy: Dorot ha-rishonim III: Mi-ḥatimat ha-talmud ʿad sof yeme ha-ge'onim [Vom Abschluss des Talmuds bis zum Ende der Geonim], Pressburg, 1897. Despite being the third volume, it was published first. Yitzhak Isaac Halevy: Dorot ha-rishonim Iia-IIb: Min sof yeme ha-Mishna ʿad aḥar ḥatimat ha-talmud [Von der Beendigung der Mischna bis zum Abschluss des Talmuds], Frankfurt a. M., 1901. Yitzhak Isaac Halevy: Dorot ha-rishonim Ic: Mi-sof yeme ha-ḥashmona'im ʿad yeme netzive Roma [Umfasst den Zeitraum vom Ende der Hasmonäerzeit bis zur Einsetzung der römischen Landpfleger (Encompasses the period from the destruction of the Temple to the completion of the Mishnah)], Frankfurt a. M.,

After several years of wandering in Europe, he settled in Germany in 1902, where he was appointed a supervisor of adult study in the Hamburg *Beis Medrash* (*Kloiz*), a position he held until his death in 1914.[8] During this period he was exposed directly to the acculturated Jewish community in Germany and continued his historical writings, primarily on the rabbinic period. Halevy was one of the most important figures in the *Jüdisch-Literarische Gesellschaft* (Jewish Literary Society), established in Frankfurt am Main in 1902, whose members included Rabbi Dr. Jonas Bondi (1862–1929), Rabbi Dr. Heymann Kottek (1860–1913), Rabbi Salomon Menachem Bamberger (1869–1920), and Gerson Lange (1868–1923). The *Jüdisch-Literarische Gesellschaft* became a separate school within the Orthodox community in Germany.[9] On the one hand, they agreed with the approach of Rabbi Dr. Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888), the founder of modern Orthodoxy, and supported Orthodox segregation and opposed collaboration with the non-Orthodox. On the other hand, they encouraged scientific inquiry into the Jewish tradition as did the Neo-Orthodox school in Berlin led by Rabbi Dr. Azriel Hildesheimer (1820–1899). Using his East-European background and his familiarity with Central-European Orthodox Jewry, Halevy played an important role in the negotiations and cooperation between the Eastern and Central European Orthodox communities in order to create a united Orthodox non-Zionist political movement.[10] It was he who coined the moniker "Agudas Yisroel."[11] This wide and varied range of experiences helped shape Halevy's oeuvre which will be discussed in the following section, beginning with its conservative-Orthodox elements and moving on to its modernist elements.

1901. Yitzhak Isaac Halevy: Dorot ha-rishonim Ie. Me-aḥar ha-ḥurban ʿad ḥatimat ha-Mishna [Umfasst den Zeitraum von der Zerstörung des Tempels bis zum Abschluss der Mischnah (Encompasses the period from the destruction of the Temple to the completion of the Mishnah)], Frankfurt a. M., 1906. This volume was published posthumously by Salomon Bamberger. Yitzhak Issac Halevy: Dorot ha-rishonim. Tequfat ha-miqra, Jerusalem 1939. This volume, which included Halevy's notes on Isaac Hirsch Weiss' Dor ve-dorshav, was published posthumously by Baruch M. Levin. Yitzhak Issac Halevy: Notes on Isaac Hirsch Weiss' Dor ve-dorshav, in: Baruch M. Levin (ed.): Tequfat ha-miqra, Jerusalem 1939, pp. 261–292. Yitzhak Isaac Halevy: Dorot ha-rishonim Id, in: Moshe Auerbach (ed.): Sefer zikaron le-rabbi Yitzḥaq Ayzik Halevy, Bnei Brak, 1964. pp. 5–184. Volumes Ia –Ib were never published. Volumes Ic, Ie, II and III of Dorot ha-rishonim offer two systems of pagination: (Hebrew) folio numbers on the left, and page numbers on the right. In this article, citations referring to Dorot ha-rishonim refer to the page numbers.

8 Sources on his activities before coming to Hamburg are sparse.

9 Yedidya, Biqqoret mevuqqeret, pp. 182–94. Nils H. Roemer: Jewish Scholarship and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Germany. Between History and Faith, Madison 2005, pp. 127–128.

10 Reichel, Iggerot, pp. 55–67.

11 Reichel, Iggerot, p. 177.

3. Orthodox Tendencies in *Dorot ha-rishonim*

Halevy saw himself as an integral part of Orthodox Judaism and was accepted as such by supporters and detractors alike.[12] The article will seek to demonstrate how his Orthodox viewpoint is reflected in the various aspects of his historical studies: historiographic conservatism, apologetics, negative attitude towards non-Orthodox historians, and his notion of divine intervention in the direction of the history of Israel.

3.1 No New Torah and No New Judaism: Halevy's Conservative View of the History of the Oral Law

Throughout the nineteenth century, the field of Jewish history was considered the uncontested terrain of the Maskilim and the *Wissenschaft* school historians. Not infrequently, historical inquiry was used as leverage to advance reforms in Jewish lifestyle.[13] The proponents of change argued that the examination of the course of Jewish history revealed far-reaching, man-made transformations which could be seen as lending legitimacy to contemporary changes. [14] Orthodox society was also called upon to contend with the advocates of change in the field of history. Halevy devoted himself to this challenge and cast his historiographic net from the First Temple period to the end of the period of the *Rishonim,* the rabbinic authorities of the high and late middle ages. For him, in diametrical opposition to reformist views, the study of history led to the conclusion that there were no man-made changes.

"The Jews, however, have no new Torah and no new Judaism. What was from the earliest times is what we see in the latest times, and what is found in Scripture is what is found in later homiletics, and the behavior of Elkana, Samuel and David was no different from the behavior of all Israel, until the end of the Second Temple period and is identical with what we have inherited in the tradition and what was recorded in the Mishnah." [15]

[12] Breuer, Modernity Within Tradition, pp. 193–201; Yedidya, Biqqoret mevuqqeret, pp. 182–192.

[13] Michael A. Meyer (ed.): German-Jewish History in Modern Times, [vol; 12], New York 1997, pp. 129–138. Ismar Schorsch: From Text to Context. The Turn to History in Modern Judaism, Hanover NH 1994, pp. 149–367.

[14] Michael A. Meyer: Abraham Geiger's Historical Judaism, in: Jakob Josef Petuchowski (ed.), New Perspectives on Abraham Geiger. An HUC-JIR Symposium, New York 1975, pp. 1–3.

[15] Halevy, Tequfat ha-miqra, p. 168.

In *Dorot ha-rishonim,* Halevy devoted considerable effort and detailed discussion to justify this position. In his view, it can be inferred from Scripture that throughout the First Temple period the Israelites strictly observed the laws of the Torah, the study of Torah and prayer.[16] In several places he emphasized that this devotion to the laws of the Torah was in accord with the statements of the sages and the rabbinic authorities both during the time of the Mishnah (the *Tanaim*) and during the time of the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud (*Amoraim*), while in other places he compared the observance of the commandments in the First Temple period with that of his own times.[17] Moreover, he strove to demonstrate that the words of the prophets, depicting manifold deviations from the laws of the Torah, were directed towards a small minority whose guilt lay in the inappropriate worship of God rather than outright abandonment of that worship. [18]

Halevy directed the majority of his efforts to prove the conservatism and constancy of the Oral Law in the Second Temple subsequent *tanaitic* periods. In his view, the contents of the Oral Law were already in place at the time of the Sanhedrin (Great Assembly, a group of leaders representing all the sages). In his opinion, the Mishnah in general presented earlier materials, or alternatively, the argumentation of the *Tanaim* which was based on the Mishnah which had been set down long before. [19]

In his view, the disputes among the *Tanaim* touch on the fundamental material of the Mishnah.[20] He characterized the Oral Law as unified and constant from the third to the eleventh centuries of rabbinic scholarship, the *amoraitic*,

16 Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 332, 333n98; Ie, pp. 155–157, 168–171; Tequfat ha-miqra: pp. 3, 34, 37, 38, 39, 75, 80, 84–85n1, 104, 108, 116, 127, 130–131. Notes on Weiss' Dor dor ve-dorshav p. 274.

17 Tanaim and Amoraim: Tequfat ha-miqra, pp. 120, 124. Comparison of the observance of the mitzvot in the First Temple period with Halevy's own times: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 168; Tequfat ha-miqra, pp. 58, 60, 101.

18 See Halevy, Tequfat ha-miqra, 6, 11, 18 Notes on Weiss' Dor dor ve-dorshav p. 274 and Halevy, Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 316, and Halevy: Tequfat ha-miqra, pp. 21, 24–25, 30–32, 38–39, 48, respectively. The same approach to the sin of the Golden Calf is to be found in the Kuzari. See Rabbi Yehuda Halevy: The Kuzari, Northvale 1998, pp. 38–42.

19 For the earlier mishnaic materials see Halevy, Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 80n43, 205, 213, 294, 296; Ie, pp. 147, 151–152, 232, 250, 309n33, 442, 443n9, 469, 482, 867, 870, 872–873, 877; Notes on Weiss's Dor dor ve-dorshav: 291, 292; Auerbach (ed.), Sefer zikaron, pp. 141–142, 151,162. For more on the argumentation of the Tanaim see Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 202, 204, 303–304, 350, 357, 435, 584.

20 With the notable exception of a dispute between the School of Hillel and the School of Shamai over the case of the rival of a forbidden relative. See Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 213n30, 605n2).

sevoratic, and *geonite* eras.[21] In addition to addressing specific periods, he presented a general picture of continuity without change from the third century to the late Middle Age (from the *Amoraim* through the times of the *Geonim* and the *Rishonim*): "From everything we have explained with regard to the yeshivot, it is clear that from their beginnings in Babylon to the end of the days of the Geonim everything was characterized by constancy and consistency." [22]

Considering Halevy's conservative approach, it is not surprising that he adopted the position which asserts that no new rabbinic rules were innovated and no discrepancies settled as the result of the rabbinic Midrash (exegesis), rather these rules were transmitted from teacher to disciple over the generations and halakhic Midrash served merely to ground the extant teachings, not to innovate teachings. [23]

At this point, it should be noted that there exists an internal contradiction in Halevy's approach, which negates the possibility of halakhically innovative or determinative Midrash. Halevy emphasized the conservative aspect of the importance of the tradition, whereas the Talmud is, in fact, full of passages in which the Halakhah is clearly presented as emerging from the Midrash rather than as a tradition merely supported by the Midrash. In other words, Halevy's claim, that the sages of the Talmud did not innovate Halakhot or settle disputes on the basis of scriptural Midrash is inconsistent with the plain sense of the talmudic text and the position of some of the *Rishonim* who understood it in that sense.[24] Halevy himself admited that this position was somewhat

21 For the amoraic era see Halevy, Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 20–21, 48, 117; II, p. 404. Ie, pp. 874–875. For the sevoratic era see, Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 145–146; II, p. 482. For the geonite era see Halevy, era: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 32, 164, 215, 232.

22 Halevy, Dorot ha-rishonim, III 225. Similarly, in Dorot ha-rishonim III: 217, 294.

23 Halevy, Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 155; Ic, p. 307; IIe, pp. 251n18, 487, 489, 492, 492n34, 500, 507–508, 545, 558; Notes on Weiss' Dor ve-dorshav, p. 279. Harris noted that rejecting the possibility of generative Midrash by the sages is characteristic of German Orthodoxy, as opposed to Eastern European Orthodoxy, and attributes this difference to the differing character of Orthodox life in those differing regions. Whereas in Lithuania the ideal of the brilliant scholar capable of creating novellas flourished, in Germany the ideal of working people committed to the tradition held sway. (See Jay M. Harris: How Do We Know This? Midrash and the Fragmentation of Modern Judaism, Albany 1995, pp. 249–250).

24 Harris, How do We Know? pp. 256–257. Harris notes the double-edged sword of the rejection of generative Midrash, but in my view, it is appropriate to more strongly emphasize the problematic position of Orthodoxy finding itself between the hammer of a conservative ideal and the anvil of the plain meaning of the Talmud and the interpretation of the Rishonim.

innovative.[25] In summary, it may be said that on the one hand, Halevy represented an extremely conservative position, but on the other hand, his position, in itself, was very innovative and diverged from the traditional pre-modern mainstream view of Ashkenazic rabbinical scholarship. [26]

3.2 The History of Israel Going Out with a High Hand: Apologetics and Uncritical Approach to the Sages and to Israel

In his study of modern Orthodoxy in imperial Germany, Mordechai Breuer argues that apologetics held pride of place in the approach of Orthodox scholars in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century.[27] Similar to other apologists, Halevy did not reject, in principle, the use of the historical discipline for political purpose but he averred that his purpose was not advocacy, but rather an unvarnished inquiry into the truth on the basis of sources and facts rather than suppositions.[28] However, he also lent historiographic legitimacy to the laudatory depiction of the sages, serving as a counterweight to the scholars of the *Wissenschaft* school, whom he viewed as seeking to denigrate the Torah Sages.[29] In fact, the topics of *Dorot ha-rishonim* were not limited to responses to the statements of particular historians from the *Wissenschaft* school and were replete with complimentary depictions of the Sages and the Jewish people, often extending to attempts

25 Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 492n34.

26 From the tenth to the 13th centuries, there was a view among Rishonim in Moslem countries that rejected the possibility of generative exegesis. (Harris, How do We Know, pp. 74–86, 253).

27 Breuer, Modernity Within Tradition, pp. 203–214. In the list of studies appearing in note 2 above is an expanded comment on the central role of apologetics in Orthodox historiography.

28 This acceptance of the use of the historical discipline for political purposes is implied by his criticism of Josephus: "At a time when the nation was in dire straits, trampled upon by the Romans, it was incumbent upon the author of a history of Israel for the Romans and for the eyes of the Emperor to make an effort to mitigate the extent of their iniquity and depict Israel so as to win sympathy in the eyes of their conquerors, but Agrippas and Josephus conspired to depict all matters in a way that flattered Agrippas…" (Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 373). Halevy declared his purpose was not advocacy: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 37, 276; II, pp. 280–281; Ie, p. 373. Halevy declared his purpose was inquiry into the truth, see: Halevy, Dorot ha-rishonim III, pp. 4, 107, 145, 231, 269. Dorot ha-rishonim, II, Introduction, p. 170. Ic, pp. 84, 429, 669. Halevy declared his purpose to be inquiry based on sources and facts, see: Halevy, Dorot ha-rishonim III: Introduction, pp. 13, 64, 135, 210, 251; II, pp. 52, 215n17; Ic, pp. 70n35, 375, 511. This matter will be discussed broadly in the section on Halevy as a modern historian.

29 Halevy believed such a depiction was consistent with historical veracity, see Dorot ha-rishonim II, p. 276. Ie, p. 373.

to blur criticism implied by the plain meaning of the statements of the sages themselves.[30]

From Halevy's point of view, this was not a departure from the criteria he set for himself, but part of his worldview in which his historiographic oeuvre is a response to the *Wissenschaft* school. His intention in *Dorot ha-rishonim* was to uncover the truth that had been obscured by the *Wissenschaft* historians.[31] It was therefore legitimate, in his view, to occasionally emphasize what he viewed as the obvious truth regarding the excellence of the sages and the Jewish people, without viewing himself as an apologist.

Halevy's tendency to minimize the existence of disputes regarding the history of the Oral Law is evidence of his apologetic approach, an example of which can be seen in his exposition of the disputes between the rabbinic scholars of the *geonite* period:

> "We have not found *any instance* of dispute among the *Geonim* [...] if over the entire course of four hundred and fifty years a few instances can be found where the authorities' choice [for the post of Head of the Yeshiva] did not completely hit the target and there were those who murmured to themselves that they had been passed over unjustly, this is natural and inevitable as humans are not divine and do not know each other's thoughts, *but where can such a one be found who transgressed against* the generally approved and chosen determination, disputed it and created a faction to follow his path and create discord in Israel? Where can be found a dispute in the academy itself [...] as we are well aware from the writings of Rav Sherira Gaon himself that even though he took upon himself extra stringencies in his own home, God forbid, they did not create disputes."[32]

30 For laudatory depictions of the sages see: Dorot ha-rishonim III, pp. 169, 220, 229; II, pp. 19, 190, 260, 280, 288–289, 333, 335–336, 362, 429, 447; Ic, pp. 73, 91–93, 120, 430, 526–527, 534–536, 542–543, 547, 640–641, 644, 648, 672; Ie, pp. 3, 43, 47, 61, 119, 144, 291n28, 302, 317–318, 328, 330–331, 375, 385, 575, 625, 767; Auerbach (ed.), Sefer zikaron, pp. 21, 25, 52, 127, 132, 161; Notes on Weiss' Dor dor ve-dorshav, p. 288. For laudatory depictions of the Jewish people see: Dorot ha-rishonim II: 208, 252, 289, 603; Ic, pp. 25, 39n22, 328n92, 356, 480, 483–484, 486; Ie, pp. 638, 666; Tequfat ha-miqra, p. 77; Auerbach (ed.), Sefer zikaron, pp. 25, 126, 129, 157. For blurring criticism of sages see: Dorot ha-rishonim III, pp. 232, 263; II, p. 334; Ie, pp. 315, 768.

31 Dorot ha-rishonim II, pp. 514–515; Reichel, Iggerot, pp. 81, 84.

32 Dorot ha-rishonim III, p. 269, emphasis in the original. Halevy devoted an entire chapter to supporting his argument that there were no disputes among the sages in the geonite period (III, pp. 269–279). He claimed that if there were disagreements during the last centuries of the early Middle Ages they emerged in the context of the institution of the Exilarch.

Armed with the talmudic rule that "anything that enables us to reduce disputation is preferable," Halevy devoted much effort to minimize the extent and significance of disputes and contradictions among Torah sages, of discrepancies among diverse rabbinic sources, and of divergent versions of the same story.[33] Similarly, he sought to depict an idyllic picture of harmony among all the Jewish groups in the acceptance of the authority of the Oral Law.[34] In his view, after the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE), except for unusual periods, a single universal academy was maintained, which partly continued the institution of the Great Bet Din which was maintained throughout the Second Temple period.[35]

An implicit apologetic strain can also be detected in his position that the methods characterizing the Oral Law as used by generations of Torah sages, can contribute to modern historical methodology. He argued that from the second century BCE to the late Middle Age, the sages took great care in formulating their words out of a meticulous devotion to the search for truth.[36] In his view, evidence of this devotion could be found in previously unexamined

33 The rule "anything that enables us to reduce disputation is preferable" is quoted by Halevy in Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 550. On minimizing the extent of disputes see: Dorot ha-rishonim III, p. 201. II, pp. 111–112, 422, 429. Ie, pp. 109, 229, 254, 281–282, 374, 504–508. On minimizing discrepancies among diverse rabbinic sources see: Dorot ha-rishonim Ie, p. 135. For Halevy's attempt to unify the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 7–8, 61n27, 75n39, 98, 111, 140–141n68, 201, 263; Ic, pp. 476, 587, 595, 598–599, 602. Ie, pp. 101–102, 742, 746n36, 756n42, 761, 767n47. He also claimed there was compatibility between the yeshivot in Israel and Babylonia. See: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 472, 482, 484, 488. On minimizing discrepancies between divergent versions of the same story see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, pp. 2n2, 26, 43, 77n5.

34 Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 162, 197, 210, 496, 602; Ic, p. 127n60; Ie, p. 3.

35 In Halevy's opinion, the redundant existence of parallel, central Torah academies, under Rav and Shmuel respectively, during the amoraic period, was an exception (Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 416), and that while, for over 130 years of the geonite period, there were two central Torah academies, Sura and Pumbedita, during the remainder of the geonite period there was only a one universal Torah academy, Pumbedita (Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 159). On the single universal academy that was maintained see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 46, 155–159, 192–193, 21635, 165–167, 298, 409, 411–417, 480–482, 490–491, 494–496; Ie, pp. 119, 311, 425, 433, 738–740, 744, 805–806. On the institution of the Great Bet Din, see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 664–667. At the time of the Great Bet Din, an exceptional situation existed where two academies operated simultaneously during the joint tenure of Hillel and Shamai (Ic, p. 602).

36 For Halevy's arguments on this point as they relate to the various periods see: Hasmoneans: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 623n36. Tanaim: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 90, 500; Ic, p. 634; Ie, p. 514. Amoraim: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 201, 325, 500; Ic p. 634; Ie, p. 101. Geonim: Dorot ha-rishonim,III, pp. 2, 155, 163, 170. Rishonim: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 206.

redactions of the talmudic text.[37] It is not surprising, therefore, that in his view the literary sources of the Oral Law are of primary importance for any historian wishing to write about Jewish history and that the legitimacy of other sources is contingent on their not contradicting the Oral Law literature.[38]

At the same time, Halevy attacked the subjects of his inquiries who didn't follow the values of Orthodoxy. He had harsh words for those who opposed the Halakhah of the Pharisees, including specific factions and individuals. This includes the Hellenizers, aristocratic Jews in the late Second Temple period, apostates and Sadducees.[39] In his view, the opposition of the Sadducees to the Pharisees stemmed from the fact that they

> "denied all of the foundations of religion, saying Israel is like any other nation, their desire being to completely abandon all the ways of the Torah and pursue the ways of the nations, but when this desire did not go well, they looked to the path of Judaism in the most minimal possible way, i. e. only to that which is explicitly stated in the Torah."[40]

Halevy also directs his barbs towards historical figures, including Herod, Agrippas II, and Salman ben Yeruham.[41]

37 Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 144, 208.

38 On the importance of Jewish Oral Law for any historian see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 178, 372. On the legitimacy of the various sources of the Oral Law see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 341n47. According to Halevy, within the Oral Law there exists an internal hierarchy in terms of the quality of the sources. For example, in Halevy's view, the most important sources in the amoraic period are the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmudim and the use of other sources is conditioned upon their not contradicting these (Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 250n43). On the question of the internal relationship between them see: Isaiah Gafni: Skirah al ha-mechkar ha-history shel bavel ha-talmudit Ba-dorot ha-achronim [A Review of the Historical Research on Bavel in the Talmud and 'Later Generations' Periods], in: Yedion ha-irgun ha-olami le-mada-ey ha-yahadut 5 (1983).

39 For Halevy's criticism of Hellenizers see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 379. For his criticism of aristocratic Jews see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, pp. 4, 9, 21, 25, 29, 39, 50–51; Auerbach (ed.), Sefer zikaron: 35–36, 79, 157. For Halevy's criticism of the apostates see: Auerbach (ed.), Sefer zikaron, p. 37. For Halevy's criticism of the Sadducees see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 358, 362, 412–413, 416, 418, 540; Ie, pp. 13; Auerbach (ed.), Sefer zikaron, pp. 35–36, 49, 55, 157, 161.

40 Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 370.

41 For Halevy's criticism of Herod see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 9–13; Reichel, Iggerot, p. 123; Auerbach (ed.), Sefer zikaron, pp. 17–18. For Halevy's criticism of Agrippas II see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, pp. 25, 31, 39; Auerbach (ed.), Sefer zikaron, pp. 34, 8, 44, 56–57, 60–61, 72–74, 77, 83, 85–86, 88. For Halevy's criticism of Salman ben Yeruham see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 107, 111.

Finally, Halevy completed his veritable wall of apologetics with his claim that the history of the people of Israel proved that the people, as well as the sages, were opposed to revolt against the nations and that when such revolts occurred they stemmed from circumstances which led the people to revolt against their will.[42] His attitude was in line with the traditional Jewish approach of both the Middle Ages and the early modern period: an unwillingness to challenge the mandate of the non-Jewish authorities.[43] An example of this is his depiction of the second-century Bar Kokhba revolt in which he presented the planned rebellion as being coincidental and unintentional: "This revolt, from its inception, had neither instigator nor bringer to birth, rather it emerged of itself and moved forward of its own accord as happened previously in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes."[44] This is consistent with his opposition to Zionism in preference to the approach of "acting with submission and humility in the lands of our exile."[45]

3.3 In Graetz's Books Thou Shalt not Peek:[46] Rejection of Anyone Not Identified with Orthodoxy

One of the main characteristics of the Orthodox camp was the shared consciousness of contention with other Jewish factions and a negative attitude to any outsider.[47] The volumes of *Dorot ha-rishonim* place great emphasis on the author's scathing critique of historians whose worldviews are inconsistent with Orthodox principles. Halevy wrote critically of a long line of Jewish scholars associated with the Enlightenment and *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. In his view, their hostility to, and misunderstanding of, Jewish tradition impaired their judgment and compromised the conclusions of their research. As

42 Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 43, 60–61. Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 76, 336–337, 337n45; Ie, pp. 4, 10, 16–20, 28, 39, 397, 410, 413, 574, 622–623, 626–628. For notes on Isaac Hirsch see: Auerbach (ed.), Sefer zikaron, pp. 67, 77, 91, 115–116. Notes on Weiss' Dor dor ve-dorshav p. 284.

43 Aviezer Ravitzky: Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism, Chicago 1996, pp. 21–23.

44 Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 620.

45 See: Moshe H. E. Bloch: Mi natan le-meshisa ya-akov ve-israel le-bozezim [Who Handed Jacob Over to Become Loot, and Israel to the Plunderers], New York 1957, pp. 163–172. See also: Sariel, Can't Live with Him.

46 This is not a quote from Halevy but the author's paraphrase of the objections of the Hatam Sofer (Moses Sofer / Schreiber, 1762–1839) to the works of Moses Mendelssohn.

47 Jacob Katz: Divine Law in Human Hands. Case Studies in Halakhic Flexibility, Jerusalem 1998, pp. 191–402.

Halevy's criticisms extend to several hundred references and are too numerous to examine in detail, the focus in this research will be on his critique of the two historians most heavily criticized in *Dorot ha-rishonim*: Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891), the author of the eleven-volume *The History of the Jews: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day* which became the standard for future works in the field of Jewish history, and Isaac Hirsch Weiss (1815–1905), scholar of rabbinic literature and the author of the five-volume *Dor ve-Dorshav*. For the sake of comparison, the article will also examine his critique of the non-Jewish German historian Emil Schürer (1844–1910).

The common thread in Halevy's critiques of Graetz and Weiss was his view that both used historiographic writing to advance their ideological agenda.[48] According to his opinion, in both cases the antipathy towards the people of Israel and the sages and the sympathy for groups not associated with loyalty to the Pharisaic Halakhah – the origin of the rabbinic Halakhah – distorted their work and impaired the credibility of their historical research: [49]

> "In fact, the scholar Graetz wrote a history of the people of Israel in accordance with his own wishes rather than on the basis of the sources even though he mentioned them […] and the scholar Weiss who followed in his footsteps…"[50]

In addition, Halevy accused these two scholars of impaired professionalism as historians. In his opinion, they both lacked the knowledge necessary to accomplish what they had set out to do.[51] They were frequently content with su-

48 For Halevy on Graetz see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 201; Ic, p. 657. Ie, pp. 279, 315. For Halevy on Weiss see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 59,231; Dorot ha-rishonim II, pp. 30, 34, 118, 118, 170, 527; Ic p. 322. Notes on Weiss' Dor dor ve-dorshav, p. 279.

49 On the connection between Pharisaic Halakhah and Rabbinic Halakah see: Alexei M. Sivertsev: Households, sects, and the origins of rabbinic Judaism, Leiden 2005, pp. 272–274. For Halevy on Graetz's antipathy towards the people of Israel see, see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 88, 368, 454, 457, 484–486, 496, 512–513, 517, 674n48, 680, 682, 685; Ie, pp. 106, 393, 694–695, 714, 796. For Halevy on Weiss' antipathy, see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 163, 172, 280, 451; Ic, pp. 100–101,130, 141; Ie, pp. 158–160, 319, 374–375, 377–378, 382, 386, 392, 740; Notes on Weiss' Dor dor ve-dorshav p. 283. For Halevy on Graetz's antipathy to the sages, see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 151, 232; II p. 369; Ic, pp. 85, 484, 486, 486n46, 495, 515–516, 674n48; Ie: 693 695, 796, 817. For Halevy on Weiss' antipathy to the sages, see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III pp. 269–270; II, pp. 103, 118, 280–281, 359, 511–512; Ic, p. 84; Ie, pp. 380, 392. For Halevy's claim that Weiss displayed animosity towards the Torah itself see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 428–429. For the argument that their sympathy and admiration for the Sadducees influenced Graetz's and Weiss' work, see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic: 454, 484. Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 373. He further accused Graetz of admiring Herod, see Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 674n48. and Agrippas II and his faction, see Ie. pp. 15, 51.

50 Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 30.

51 For Halevy on the impaired professionalism of Graetz, see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 394, 445, 468; Ic, pp. 80n43, 156, 408–409, 458–460; Ie, pp. 333,372, 674. For Halevy on the impaired

perficial research and relied on secondary references, in particular references from *Seder ha-dorot*, a chronological work by the East European Rabbi Jehiel Heilprin (1660–1746), or on uncritical adoption of the conclusions of previous scholars without examining them in their contexts.[52] He accused both of them of misinterpreting the sources and of inventing historical axioms.[53] In his opinion, the various shortcomings in their methodologies directly impaired the validity of their historical arguments. According to Halevy's opinion, in many cases, Graetz and Weiss relied on speculation rather than facts and failed to reference sources to back up their claims.[54] Moreover, they confused one matter with the other, contradicted themselves, and failed to notice that their conclusions were not in accord with the natural order of the world, as in the following direct criticism of Graetz and Weiss:[55]

professionalism of Weiss, see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 103; Ic, pp. 314, 415, 733–734; Ie, pp. 148, 160, 182, 293, 307, 317, 377, 383, 389, 391, 741; Notes on Weiss' Dor dor ve-dorshav, p. 272.

52 On Graetz's superficial research see: Dorot ha-rishonim: II, pp. 5, 16–17, 31, 436–446, 445, 445n104; Ic, pp. 6, 80, 180, 455, 495, 691n56, 694n57, 659n59, 711; IIe, pp. 16–17, 128, 280, 323, 333, 707, 711, 714, 817n62. On Weiss' superficial research see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 47, 212, 296, 298. Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp; I33, 197, 262, 282, 339, 345, 364, 379n67, 412, 422, 538n152; Ic, pp. 175, 230n35,404, 554, 710; IIe, pp. 63, 263n21, 293, 378, 740; Notes on Weiss' Dor dor ve-dorshav: 271, 275–276, 290. On Graetz's reliance on secondary sources see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 314; Ic, p. 694n57. On Weiss' reliance on secondary sources see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 118, 280; Ic, pp. 422, 595; Ie, pp. 377–379. On Graetz's reliance on *Seder ha-dorot* see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 51–52; Ie, p. 695. On Weiss reliance on *Seder ha-dorot* see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 71, 86, 156; II, p. 20. On uncritical adoption by Graetz, see Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 369; Ie, p. 588. Graetz and Weiss were also accused of incorrect interpretation of other historians (Graetz, see: II, pp. 3–4, 12; Weiss, see Ic, p. 644). On Gratz's failure to examine his sources see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 14, 51, 223, 248, 594n182; Ic, pp. 156, 452; Ie, p. 625. On Weiss' failure see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 118–119.

53 On Graetz's misinterpretation of sources see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 215, 220, 251, 254, 262, 273, 287, 301; Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 50–51, 300, 435, 445, 448–449, 479n124; Ic, pp. 54, 56, 177–178, 409, 520, 659n42; Ie, pp. 416, 422. On Weiss' misinterpretation see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II: 30, 197, 254, 260, 282, 325, 452–453, 513; Ic, pp. 359, 374. Notes on Weiss's Dor dor ve-dorshav: 272, 277, 279, 280, 291.On Graetz inventing historical axioms see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 264, 272; II, pp. 10, 12, 37, 49, 402, 434, 442; Ic, pp. 56, 71, 440, 458, 460, 658, 659, 684–685, 687n52, 688, 707, 711; Ie, pp. 2, 362, 396, 402, 424, 427, 694. On Weiss inventing historical axioms see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 270, 296; II, pp. 196–197, 262, 279–280, 412, 413n86, 428, 576; Ic, pp. 203, 230, 314, 553; Ie, p. 822.

54 On Graetz's reliance on speculation see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 28, 164–165, 168; II, p. 12n6. Ie, p 394. On Weiss' reliance see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 115–116, 141, 186; Ic, p. 79; Ie, p. 148. For Graetz's amd Weiss' failure to reference sources, see Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 153, 265; II, p. 11 (Graetz), Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 269; Ie, p. 375 (Weiss).

55 For Halevy's comments on the confusion evident in Graetz's work, see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 84, 369, 448; Ic, pp. 497n47, 683. In Weiss' work see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 87; Ic, pp. 98, 169n6, 340. For self-contradiction in Graetz's work, see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 18, 107, 115,

> "All of this could be written and set out only when recounting the history of Israel, where, apart from their lack of critical, diligent research they failed to pay attention to the true nature and ways of the world, thus resulting in anachronistic historical accounts which were incongruous with the actual order of events."[56]

Alongside the similarity of Halevy's criticisms of Graetz and Weiss, he also saw some differences between them. Graetz was accused of sloppy proofreading of texts, of faulty citations of sources, and of sacrificing historical accuracy for popularity.[57] Weiss, on the other hand, whom he called "the rear guard of all the divisions" (cf. Numbers 10:25) was accused of Reform sympathies, anti-nationalism, and errors any schoolboy should be expected to avoid.[58] Halevy also accused Weiss of deliberately misleading the public.[59] In general, it may be said Halevy had harsher words for Weiss than for Graetz.[60]

Numerous elements of Halevy's criticism of Graetz and Weiss are also to be found, albeit to a more moderate degree, in his critique of the German historian Emil Schürer. Halevy applied the sobriquet "the rear guard of all the divisions" to Schürer as well and accused him of a negative attitude towards Israel and the sages.[61] He also accused Schürer of faulty professionalism in his

273, 280, 285, 287, 299–300. Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 4, 341, 436; Ic, pp. 361, 711; Ie, p. 16. In Weiss' work, see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 213.

56 Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 359. Similar, but separate criticisms of each of them can be found as follows: Graetz: II: 7, 15. Weiss: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 319, Notes on Weiss' Dor dor ve-dorshav, p. 276.

57 On sloppy proofreading of texts see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 168; II, p. 52; Ic, p. 594n27. On faulty citations of sources: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 43, 255; II, p. 435; Ic, pp. 661–662n43. Ie, pp. 74, 280. On sacrificing historical accuracy for popularity, see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 255; Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 197, 201n14, 337n45.

58 On the pejorative "the rear guard of all the divisions" see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 359, 368; Ie, p. 147; Tequfat ha-miqra, p. 262. On Reform sympathies see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 387; Auerbach (ed.), Sefer zikaron, p. 140. For Halevy on Weiss' anti-nationalism see: Notes on Weiss' Dor dor ve-dorshav, p. 284. On Weiss' errors see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 279, 326, 425, 514; Ic, pp. 405, 594; Notes on Weiss' Dor dor ve-dorshav, p. 276.

59 Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 276–277, 279, 281, 324, 360, 425, 511–512; Ic, pp. 100, 320, 368–369, 371–372, 422–423, 736; Ie, pp. 158, 378–380, 388, 390, 392, 471n30, 622; Notes on Weiss' Dor dor ve-dorshav: 275, 280, 283, 284, 290. While a similar claim is implied in his criticism of Graetz, accusing him of knowing that his interpretation was incorrect (Ic, pp. 513, 516), it cannot be compared with the scope and intensity of his criticism of Weiss, whom he accuses of willful distortion.

60 Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 392.

61 For the pejorative "the rear guard of all the divisions", see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 609. On Schürer's negative attitude towards Israel see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 620; Ie, p. 429. On Schürer's negative attitude towards sages see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 424n67.

historiographic work. In his opinion, Schürer lacked the knowledge necessary to realize his aims, as a historian, to aspire to historical truth.[62] His scholarship was frequently superficial; he relied on other historians uncritically, did not access the source materials in their original contexts, and occasionally fabricated historical facts.[63] The quality of Schürer's historical claims, like those of Graetz and Weiss, was compromised by his faulty scholarship. He relied on speculation rather than facts and contradicted himself at times attempting to distract from his faulty scholarship by being deliberately misleading.[64]

In short, Halevy argued that both non-Jewish historians and Jewish historians of the *Wissenschaft* school were not free of ideological agendas; moreover, their contempt for the sources of the Oral Law stems from lack of knowledge and understanding and that their conclusions were therefore faulty. While the content and intensity of Halevy's criticisms are not consistent, there are significant common themes. He had clear reservations about a long list of historians which were consistent with the tendency of Orthodox society to strive against all whom it perceived as challenging its values.

3.4 The Exclusivity of the History of the Jewish Nation

Another brick in the wall of Orthodoxy in *Dorot ha-rishonim* had to do with the uniqueness of the history of Israel. Halevy based his work in the belief that the divine imprint may be seen in the history of Israel and that the connection between the Jewish people, God and the influence of the Torah on them lent a unique nature to the history of Israel.[65] In Halevy's view, the *Wissenschaft* historians viewed the history of Israel through the lens of the history of the other nations.[66] He, in contrast, viewed his life's work as revealing the elements which reflect the history of "our wondrous chronicles."[67]

62 Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 57, 642; Ie, pp. 339, 344.

63 On superficial scholarship see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 9n5, 32, 87–88, 620, 635–637; Ie 130, 430, 609; Auerbach (ed.), Sefer zikaron, p. 11. On uncritical reliance see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 642. On the lack of original context see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 498. On the fabrication of historical facts see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 58; Ie, p. 611.

64 On reliance on speculation see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 618–619. On self-contradiction see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 641; Ie, p. 639. On being deliberately misleading see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 619.

65 Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 336–337; III, pp. 27, 126, 214; II, pp. 298, 399, 481, 600. For two examples, among many, see: Tequfat ha-miqra, pp. 105, 110–112.

66 Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 197.

67 Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 112.

In summary, it can be said that Halevy, who was raised and lived in an Orthodox society, integrated his Orthodox values into his historiography which unequivocally reflected several fundamental elements of the Orthodox worldview, including historical conservatism, apologetics, an uncritical attitude towards earlier Jewish Law authorities, discomfort with persons and viewpoints contradicting Orthodox values, and the effort to advance religious values.

4. Discarding the Old to Make Room for the New: Trends in *Dorot ha-rishonim* Inconsistent with Orthodox Values

Up to now, we have seen how Halevy's historiography reflects fundamental values of an Orthodox worldview. The following section will show how Halevy adopts, whether openly or covertly, historical insights inconsistent with Orthodox values.

4.1 And Yet It Moves: Halevy Recognizes Development and Change in Torah Matters

The previous section noted the ambiguity inherent in Halevy's approach which rejects the possibility of Midrash generating and determining Halakhah. His efforts to fortify the status of the halakhic tradition became a double-edged sword leading to conclusions directly contradicting the claims of the tradition itself which did recognize generative Midrash. His conservative view of the history of the Halakhah was also undermined by his readiness to recognize the existence of historical layers within the Book of Esther and the insertion of later additions into the text of the Mishnah.[68] Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook (Rav Kook, 1865–1935), one of the most influential rabbis of the twentieth century, noted the internal contradiction in Halevy's approach; Halevy raised the banner of conservatism while he himself blazed new trails. In a response Kook wrote to Halevy:

> "Your Illustrious Honor cautions against new directions, but I am certain your Honor would admit that you have achieved more for the situation of Judaism in your historical works than all those other historians, who presented inductions and

[68] For Halevy on the Book of Esther see: Tequfat ha-miqra, pp. 263–265. For Halevy on the Mishnah see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 207n22, 210n28, 235n40, 239n46, 240n47, 300n80.

deductions in the traditional manner, even though you have pioneered directions which no other historians devoted wholeheartedly to the Torah have done."[69]

4.2 "Things so Utterly Without Foundation that the Ear Cannot Abide:"[70] Halevy's Criticism of Torah Scholars

Halevy's innovative spirit was most apparent in his occasional willingness to abandon Orthodox apologetics. The image of Halevy the apologist was the mirror image of Halevy the academic scholar who was sometimes alert to the problematic nature of the rabbinic sources as historical sources and did not hesitate to criticize earlier rabbinic authorities and dispute their derivation of historical information.[71] The authority of earlier generations of adjudicators of Halakhah became a foundational element in the ideology which Orthodoxy developed in its defining conflict with other Jewish religious movements in the nineteenth century. Orthodox rabbis emphasized the obligation to the decision-making tradition. Halevy, whose historical inquiries sometimes led him to the conclusion that the sages of the Oral Law were not strictly accurate in relating historical details, found himself torn between his commitment to those rabbinic authorities who had passed the divine word from generation to generation and his commitment to historical accuracy. He justified his preference for the commitment to historical accuracy by the argument that the scholars devoted their primary efforts to seeking halakhic truth and therefore it was possible that they made errors regarding historical accuracy.[72] Armed with this justification, he took the liberty of disputing with a long list of sages, collectively and individually.[73]

69 Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook (ed.): Igrot HaReayah Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook [The Letters of Avraham Issac HaCohen Kook], vol. 1, Jerusalem 1992, p. 185.

70 Citation from Halevy's critique of the author of Tosephot Yom Tov, Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 252.

71 Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 225; Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 201, 285, 317; Ic, pp. 21n13, 311, 643. Ie, pp. 133, 431n5, 459n20, 460n22, 738n33; Notes on Weiss' Dor dor ve-dorshav, p. 273.

72 Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 56; Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 117, 216, 228, 241, 264n5, 318, 448n105, 476, 476n120; Ic, pp. 74, 223, 446, 595; Ie, pp. 52, 101, 132, 184, 187, 221, 467–468, 522, 524n44, 629.

73 Halevy relates to several groups: Rishonim (Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 54. Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 81, 116–117; E5: 242, 555, 587, 851), the disciples of Rabbenu Yonah (Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 145), the commentators on Maimonides (Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 525), and Aharonim (Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 532).

Halevy generally used more moderate language in disputing with medieval and early modern Torah scholars, using expressions such as, "his meaning is obscure" or "with all due respect." At times, however, he used language almost as harsh as that directed against *Wissenschaft* historians. For example, he accused medieval rabbinic scholars of fabrication; arguing that they "explained nothing" and "made up new homilies which have no basis."[74] Finally, in at least one instance Halevy disputed the medieval rabbinic authorities on a historical matter which had clear halakhic implications.[75]

These numerous examples show the kind of snare awaiting the Orthodox historian; a snare inherent in the innovation which lies at the heart of Orthodoxy as a modern phenomenon.[76] Halevy aspired to advance Orthodox values by defending the honor of Talmud sages, which, in his opinion, medieval rabbinic scholars had sometimes offended. This in itself, undermined the very values he was trying to advance as in doing so he placed himself in opposition to great rabbinic scholars such as Moses Maimonides (1135/38–1204) and the medieval commentators on the Talmud (*Tosaphot*) who viewed criticism of talmudic sages as legitimate. In other words, the Orthodox values Halevy sought to advance were not necessarily consistent with the traditional worldview of Maimonides, the *Tosaphot*, and others.[77]

Halevy's use of severe language in criticising medieval rabbinic scholars can be seen as demonstrating that Halevy's determinations did not emerge

74 Halevy criticized the innovative homilies used by the medieval rabbinic authorities to explain why the authority of the Sanhedrin to exercise capital punishment was contingent upon its being established on the temple mount while he himself presented a more conservative rationale. See: Dorot ha-rishonim Ie, p. 112, 112n53. For additional criticism on the Tosaphot see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 318; Ie, p. 851, 873. For additional criticism of specific sages by Halevy see: Maimonides (1138–1204), Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 95–97; Rashi (1040–1105), Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 95; Asher ben Yehiel (the Rosh, 1250–1328), Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 284; Ie, p. 572. Gershon Shaul Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller (1579–1654) wrote a commentary on the Mishnah called "Tosphot Yom-Tov," Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 95, 252; the Vilna Gaon (1720–1797), Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 95; Rabbi Akiva Eiger (1761–1837), Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 245.

75 Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 532.

76 Michael K. Silber: The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy. The Invention of a Tradition, in Jack Wertheimer (ed.), The Uses of Tradition. Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era, New York 1992, pp. 23–84.

77 Additional examples of Halevy disputing earlier sages, on the one hand, and proposing explanations more consistent with Orthodox values on the other, may be found in: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 294; Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic: 217, 530n58, 600–601; Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, pp. 123–124, 186, 242.

from the preference for one Orthodox value over another, but from the aspiration to seek the truth. While Halevy frequently found himself at a dead end, obliged to choose between two contradictory Orthodox values, his use of harsh language against earlier rabbinic authorities was avoidable. He could, for example, have criticised the famous rabbinic figures without accusing them of saying "such horrible things about one of the leading lights of Israel."[78]

The depth of the contradiction between Halevy's approach and certain Orthodox values can be seen from the fact that Rabbi Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz (1878–1953), known by the title of his book "Hazon Ish" and, the most influential leader of Israeli ultra-Orthodox society, objected to the reprinting of *Dorot ha-rishonim*, which was out of print. Among his reasons was that Halevy "contradicts *Rishonim* in several instances." [79]

4.3 From the New Testament to Azariah De Rossi: The Array of Historical Sources Upon Which Halevy Relied

The previous section described how Halevy's historiographic oeuvre acted as a brick in the Orthodox wall against alien values by strongly opposing historians and historical figures whose words or deeds contradicted Orthodox values. The article will now try to show how far Halevy was prepared to go to adopt historical information from non-Orthodox sources.

Firstly, throughout his writings, Halevy complimented, either directly or indirectly, persons whom he attacked harshly in other places.[80] For example,

78 There are several instances where Halevy indirectly disputed the views of Rishonim by claiming that the text was written by an erring disciple or by copyists: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 212; II, p. 615; Ic, pp. 330n93, 557–558n2; In another instance Halevy claimed that he was, indeed, disputing the views of Rashi and Maimonides in favor of those held by their teachers: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 525.

79 Quoted in Avraham Horowitz: Orot Rabbenu, vol. 3, Bnei Brak 1996, p. 119. Rabbi Hayyim Kanievsky (b. 1928), who participated in a meeting between Halevy's son, Shmuel, and the Hazon Ish, reported that Shmuel asked the Hazon Ish whether to reprint Dorot ha-rishonim, to which the Hazon Ish responded in the negative. Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky has been cited as having similar reservations. See: N. Kamenetsky: Making of a Godol. A Study of Episodes in the Lives of Great Torah Personalities, Jerusalem 2002, p. 14. These reservations, together with Kanievsky reasoning "because Dorot ha-rishonim cites others' incorrect views," testify to the emergence of another intensely defensive central branch of Orthodoxy, in whose eyes even Halevy himself became a threat. Breuer noted a similar thread of criticism emanating from the followers of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch: Breuer, Modernity within Tradition, p. 201.

80 I. Gafni noted the fact that Halevy's knowledge of general history was taken "primarily from Graetz, Schürer, Weiss and others, i. e. specifically those historians he criticizes throughout his work." (Isaiah Gafni: Skirah al ha-mechkar, p. 8.)

the following praise for Rabbi Zacharias Frankel (1801–1875), the founder of positive-historical Judaism, which was the progenitor of Conservative Judaism, and Solomon Judah Löb HaKohen Rapoport (1786–1867), an East European rabbi and Maskil.[81] Included among those on whose work he relied, despite their adherence to values alien to Orthodoxy, were Graetz, Weiss, Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903), one of the greatest classicists of the nineteenth century, Schürer, and Friedrich Münter (1761–1830), church historian, archaeologist, professor at the University of Copenhagen, and Danish bishop.[82] These examples show that Halevy did not categorically reject persons who did not fit in with his Orthodox worldview, and even cited them by name when he thought their words were historically accurate. Moreover, it should be also noted that a close examination of Halevy's criticisms of historians such as Graetz and Weiss indicates that his sometimes harsh language, which was not uncommon at that time, expressed primarily professional criticism of their methodologies and conclusions.

Halevy relied on a variety of sources whose content was inconsistent with Orthodox values. In two instances he sought to support his arguments by using New Testament sources, in one of which he showed a considerable familiarity with the New Testament by using citations from a variety of New Testament books to contest the claims of the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuenen (1828–1891) that Jesus was sentenced by the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jews.[83] Moreover, in several instances, he relied on the testimonies

81 Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 185. For other cases where Halevy relies upon Frankel see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 280; Ie, p. 591. Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 76n34. For other cases where Halevy relies upon Rapoport see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 101, 124; Ic, p. 425.

82 For Halevy's reliance on Graetz see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 62–63; Ic: 180n8, 424, 443n27. Reliance on Weiss. See: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 236–237n23; Ic 19n12. Reliance on Mommsen. See: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie: 359, 419, 427, 585, 633, 810. For examples of Halevy's confirming Schürer findings see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie: 406, 424. For Halevy's reliance on Schürer's analysis see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic: 7n4, 180n8, 228, 367, 384, 443n27, 453; Ie: 400, 633. For Halevy's use of the term Bishop Münter see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 396. Elsewhere he refers to him as "first and foremost of the historians of the nations." See Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 708. A similar description may be found in: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 584. Halevy regards him as a historian of high quality. See: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 730. For Halevy's justification of Münter see; Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, pp. 396, 412. For Halevy's reliance on Münter see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, pp. 584, 608, 636–637, 637n90, 708; Tequfat ha-miqra, p. 112. For examples of Halevy's reliance on non-Jewish scholars in general see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 366–367.

83 Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 630–631. For Halevy's reliance on the New Testament, see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 48n26, in which Halevy displayed his pretensions to deep familiarity with it.

of the Church Father Eusebius (260/265–340).[84] Halevy was also willing to rely on the work *Meor Eynayim*, written by the Jewish Italian physician Azariah de Rossi (1511–1578), who had published a critical analysis of the history of the Jewish nation based on various Roman and Christian sources. Important rabbis in the traditional community, among them Joseph Caro (1488–1575), Moshe ben Avraham Provençal (1503–1576), Judah Loew ben Bezalel (d. 1609), Samuel Judah Katzenellenbogen (1521–1597), had denounced and even banned this work, considering its content inconsistent with the values of traditional Jewish society.[85]

Finally, Halevy did not hesitate to grant preference to non-Jewish historians over rabbinic authorities when called for, as in his interpretation of a remark of Rabbi Sherira Gaon (10th century), one of the most prominent *Geonim* and the head of the yeshivah at Pumbedita, who wrote that the city of Pumbedita had been conquered by the Caliph Ali. Influenced by the Jewish-German orientalist and historian Gustav Weil (1808–1889), Halevy concluded that the city had been conquered by the earlier Caliph Umar. To harmonize Rabbi Sherira Gaon's remark with Weil's, Halevy offered a farfetched interpretation of the word "conquered", claiming, "This is not to say that he conquered her by warlike means for there was no war involved there at all [...] but he [Sherira Gaon] means that they submitted to him and showed him tokens of affection and accepted him as their king."[86]

In summary, it can be argued that Halevy's adherence to the three central pillars of his Orthodox position – a conservative view of the development of the Oral Law, an apologetic rejection of criticism of the great figures of Jewish wisdom, and the rejection of those who threaten Orthodox values – was often ambiguous or inconsistent. In several cases, Halevy directly or indirectly legitimized the view that there were, in fact, developments in the Oral Law.

[84] Based on Eusebius: Dorot ha-rishonim, I, pp. 75, 77, 130, 332, 344, 354, 395, 405, 420–421, 595–599, 611, 634, 638–639 (including criticism on Eusebius), 664–665, 709.

[85] Azariah De' Rossi: The Light of the Eyes, Joanna Weinberg (ed.), New Haven 2001, pp. xiii-xlv. Reichel, Iggerot, p. 179. Additional references to Maor Eynayim [The Light of the Eyes] may be found in Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, pp. 586, 594.

[86] Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 178. Further down on the same page Halevy proposes a textual variant of Abraham ibn Daud (1110–1180) in Sefer HaKabbalah in which the calculation of the years coordinates with Weil, but he allows that this is not an absolute necessity because, as Weil himself notes, the Arab historical sources are not necessarily accurate. Nevertheless, the implication is that Weil is to be relied upon. See: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 637n90.

Throughout the volumes of *Dorot ha-rishonim* are instances where Halevy disputed earlier rabbinic authorities, at times in harsh terms, and adopted historical information from historians who were far from Jewish Orthodox values.

5. Wie Es Eigentlich Gewesen:[87] Halevy as a Modern Historian

In the previous section, the article discussed the extent to which the volumes of *Dorot ha-rishonim* reflected insights inconsistent with Orthodox values. The common thread running through all those insights is an approach central to modern critical historiography: the assumption that historical sources should not be taken at face value but must be examined critically in accordance with scholarly criteria. The following section will examine the extent to which Halevy's approach is consistent with modern historiographic methodology, as developed in Germany in the nineteenth century.[88]

In Ismar Schorsch's view, the *Wissenschaft* school of Jewish historiography was based upon two major foundations. The first was the demand for objectivity, intended to present reality as it was (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*) by employing the full range of conventional academic tools: referencing a variety of sources, including non-Jewish sources; a focus on data and facts; using critical analysis extending to the previously sacred sources of tradition; and employing philology as an important critical tool.[89] The second foundation was the use of history as a means for the advancement of ideological interests.[90] *Wissenschaft* provided an alternative to the study of Judaism by non-Jews whose scholarship had supported, at least partially, anti-Jewish tendencies and trends that sought to isolate Jews.[91] Adherents of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, however, sought to utilize scholarship to justify emancipation and

87 Statement of the prominent German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), quoted in Fritz Stern: The Varieties of History. From Voltaire to the Present, New York 1956, p. 57.

88 Breuer noted in a general way that Halevy largely identified with modern scientific historical scholarship. (Breuer, Modernity within Tradition, p. 200).

89 Ismar Schorsch: From Text to Context. The Turn to History in Modern Judaism, Hanover NH 1994, pp. 168–170.

90 Schorsch, From Text to Context, pp. 162–166, 180–187, 303–333.

91 Schorsch, From Text to Context, pp. 163. According to Schorsch these included the German classicist Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824), the French scholar and author of the Histoire des Juifs, Jacques Basnage, (1653–1723), and the German Orientalist and author of the rabidly anti-Jewish work Entdecktes Judenthum (Judaism Unmasked) Johann Andreas Eisenmenger (1654–1704).

the acculturation of the Jews into the wider society and in so doing implied criticism of the stand of the supporters of Orthodoxy.

Halevy's approach was clearly and substantially consistent with both of the founding principles of *Wissenschaft:* the demand for objectivity and the use of history as a means for the advancement of ideological interests. He programmatically stated that "we must investigate thoroughly to be sure we have established what really happened."[92] In the introduction to volume II of *Dorot ha-rishonim,* Halevy set forth his vision for achieving quality historical inquiry:

> "The time has come to freely investigate the wisdom and history of Israel without straying from the actual events and their order. The time has come to work together to set the wisdom of Israel on the same foundation all the sciences rest upon, that the desires and wishes of the writer are of no consequence and that only the evidence and the investigation of the actual events are of consequence."[93]

It is worth noting that Halevy emphasized here the common denominator between history and other sciences. In another case he emphasized his commitment to science devoid of any religious agenda:

> "And I am not stating this on the basis of faith in God's Torah and the laws He set forth for Israel, rather, this is based entirely upon the spirit of inquiry which is inherent to Jewish wisdom, an open inquiry which takes into account nothing but the inquiry itself." [94]

Moreover, like any modern historian, Halevy emphasized the importance of thorough investigation of the primary sources: "And because it is our way to view the sources face to face without leaning to any pole but to try to see and to understand what was really there." [95]

The previous section showed how deeply he assimilated the requirement to investigate the widest possible variety of sources and research, even if the content or the tendencies of the author were inconsistent with Orthodox values. The similarities with modern historiography did not end there but

[92] Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 34. This principle reappears in several other places: Dorot ha-rishonim, pp. 107, 145, 231; II p. 170, Ic, pp. 84, 558.

[93] Dorot ha-rishonim, II, introduction.

[94] Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 429. Halevy wrote in a similar vein in private letter (Reichel, Iggerot, p. 175).

[95] Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 269.

also included the critical use of sources.[96] Halevy tried to access the most primary sources available and therefore argued that where *Geonim* and *Rishonim* expressed an opinion about history based on discussions in the Talmud these opinions were not to be taken at face value, but the talmudic texts themselves must be examined based on additional different sources.[97] Halevy also demonstrated considerable philological skills in the analysis of primary sources, rabbinic and non-rabbinic: These skills included making distinctions between the original text and insertions by copyists, identifying transmission of a text from one talmudic discussion into another, analyzing superfluous emendations, addressing redacting issues, and presenting the text in the original language with an awareness of the necessity of accurate translation.[98] Similarly, he did not hesitate to question the reliability of several sources from the Oral Law literature.[99]

It must be emphasized that one central point of Halevy's philological analysis is fundamentally different from that of modern historiography. Whereas Halevy asserted that he objects to textual emendations based solely on reasoning, there are in fact numerous instances where he emended texts without having sufficient textual basis, a basis that he might have achieved by comparing manuscripts.[100]

Finally, Halevy presented his readers with a system of historiographic rules setting out what is required of a historian seeking to extract reliable historical information from sources. According to Halevy, in the most straightforward case, the examination of the sources may lead us to the conclusion that in this

96 In addition to the sources and historians mentioned in the previous chapter, Halevy relied on other works and authors who, in his view, did not offend against Orthodox values. These included: the Roman historian Dio Cassius (155–235), see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, pp. 73, 129, 275, 280, 283, 349, 402–403, 411, 415, 418–419, 421–423, 578, 585, 593, 594, 599–600, 603, 610, 612, 617, 618, 620, 621, 627, 631, 632n85, 635, 638, 777, 810, 814; and the Spanish historian De Castro (died 1898), see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 303. Halevy also displayed a familiarity with contemporary historical inquiry. See: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 41; Ie, pp. 398–399.

97 Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 181, 267, 594n2; Ie, p. 503.

98 On insertions by copyists see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 41, 198, 200, 227; II, p. 114n59. On transmission of a text: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 114n59, 582n73. For Halevy's skills in analyzing emendations see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 475; Ic, p. 274; Ie, pp. 164n80. For Halevy's skills in redacting issues see: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, pp. 183–184, 445. On Halevy's awareness of the importance of original language and the importance of accurate translation see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 594n2; Ic, p. 519; Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 86, 383n10, 400–401n18.

99 Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 250; Ic, pp. 180n8, 195n17.

100 Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 78, 245. Rabbi Raphael Nathan Rabinowitz (1835–1888) was an Orthodox scholar whose 15-volume magnum opus Dikdukei Soferim presented different versions of the Talmud, based on manuscripts, yet is not referenced in any of the volumes of Dorot ha-rishonim. Breuer, Modernity within Tradition, p. 196.

particular case "the source from which all this [information] is derived is completely reliable."[101]

Halevy claimed that more complex cases, where the source before us is discovered to be problematic, required a more complex research process. Not everything found in such a source is to be automatically rejected, even if the source is found to be faulty. Halevy wrote that the historian is charged with the obligation:

> "to diligently separate the wheat from the chaff, not based on whatever suits us best but to seek out the external as well as the internal evidence in order to reconstruct the events as they were, as clearly as though the sun itself shone on them."[102]

This may be done by noticing whatever the source reveals unintentionally, as Halevy explained:

> "For, in any event, much may be learned, from the style of the narration, from the way the writer refers to times past. Even from that which is mentioned only in passing, from that which is described in great length and even from that which is mentioned only briefly."[103]

When the historical information appearing in the source is in contradiction to the author's proclivities, the concern that the information was influenced by ideological biases is negated, thus reinforcing its historical reliability.[104]

In Halevy's depiction, when faced with a scarcity of explicit sources the historian must follow a long and arduous process of constructing a historical mosaic: "find now this and now that, items which, when strung together, can fill in the blanks and clarify the matter."[105] In any event, one must try to avoid evidence from absence, as it is very difficult to know what considerations led the writer to omit a particular detail.[106] The historian's ear must be attuned to the reality of the world, because "the nature and practice of the world is substantial evidence."[107] At times Halevy provided his readers with specific rules to assist in the formulation of the historical information. One example was his

101 Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, p. 507.
102 Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 251. Halevy further reinforces this methodological approach. See: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 237n23, 256, 276; Ie, p. 393.
103 Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 166. For further reinforcement by Halevy of this methodological approach see: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 253, 256.
104 See: Dorot ha-rishonim, Ic, pp. 507, 537.
105 Dorot ha-rishonim, Ie, p. 570.
106 Dorot ha-rishonim, II, pp. 225n27, 330.
107 Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 480.

claim, that the later the version of the source, the greater its chances of being widely accepted. Another was his statement, not necessarily conforming to a critical historical approach, that agreement among the *Rishonim* could be seen as evidence of acceptance by the community of Israel.[108]

6. Summary: "The Way of Truth is Not in the Center, But at the Ends: Both Ends at Once."[109]

Rabbi Isaac Yitzhak Halevy was a man of internal contradictions, who seemed to join disparate poles. At one pole, his historical works represented unequivocal Orthodox values: historical conservatism, apologetics, an uncritical approach to earlier rabbinic authorities, antipathy towards persons and views opposed to Orthodox values, and the effort to advance religious values. At the other pole, his works revealed tendencies inconsistent with the values of Orthodoxy: in several instances, he directly or indirectly legitimized the recognition of development in the Oral Law tradition. Throughout *Dorot ha-rishonim* there are instances of Halevy disputing the earlier rabbinic authorities, occasionally in harsh terms. Ultimately, Halevy assimilated historical information from historians who were far from Jewish Orthodox values. While the above tendencies could be widely interpreted as being anti-Orthodox, on closer examination they can be seen more accurately as an expression of Halevy's devotion to modern historiographic methodology.[110]

Convention in the Orthodox society in which Halevy lived posited a substantial contradiction: The Orthodox aspiration to preserve the tradition contradicted with the tradition itself which had undergone significant change over the course of history. Thus Orthodoxy considered itself threatened by historical positivism which sought to uncover the imprints of history on the halakhic tradition. Those Orthodox who became aware of the historiographic threat during the second half of the nineteenth century and remained steadfast in their Orthodox faith generally adopted one of two historiographic responses. Yaakov Lifschitz (1838–1921), who wrote a three-volume memoir

[108] The later the source: Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 204, 241. On agreement among the Rishonim see: Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 589.

[109] Hillel Zeitlin: Al gvul shnei olamot [On the Border of Two Worlds], Tel Aviv, 1965, p. 161.

[110] Halevy's double loyalty to the world of Orthodoxy and the historical discipline is evident, for example, his historiographic approach to Flavius Josephus (37–100), see: Sariel, Can't Live with Him.

and history of nineteenth-century non-Hasidic Haredi society called *Zikhron Ya'akov*, was an example of a writer who chose to write history in opposition to the conclusions of both historical research and modern historiographic methodology.[111] Halevy, in contrast, sought to integrate Orthodox faith and modern historical research by dint of their common interest in seeking the truth. In his opinion, Orthodoxy liberated the historian from false prejudices, whereas the science of modern historiography afforded the Orthodox instruments for anchoring their religious faith in the past: "because the basis of Orthodoxy lies at the foundation of true Wissenschaft des Judentums."[112] Halevy's critical Orthodox historiography reflected a trend in Orthodox society whose focus was not only on the fear of the ramifications of the modernization process, but also on the internalization of its values.

One could fault Halevy for not noticing the contradiction between Orthodox conservatism and the shifts within the development of Halakhah and for trying "to hobble between two opinions."[113] The historian could criticize him for ignoring talmudic manuscripts or for apologetic naiveté, while the Orthodox could criticize him for daring to dispute rabbinic authorities and legitimizing enemies of rabbinic tradition and Orthodox position by using them as historical sources.

To understand Halevy's historiographic oeuvre, however, it must be considered from his integrative point of view. While Orthodoxy developed as a modern movement reacting to other movements within Jewry, Halevy's modernity also expressed itself in his partial internalization of scientific historical methodology. In other words, his Orthodoxy was a modern phenomenon as evidenced by both those elements of modernity with which he struggled *and those* which he internalized and assimilated. The difficulties and inconsistencies in his work and conclusions can be seen as evidence of the dual loyalty and self-contradiction inherent. His loyalty to the Orthodox world lead him to believe that in the period of the *Geonim* there were no disputes among the *Geonim*, while his loyalty to historical inquiry led him, on occasion, to dispute the *Rishonim*. Halevy's willingness to live with this dissonance can be seen to indicate the authenticity and deliberate nature of his position. However, his readiness to

111 Israel Bartal: Ha-yediah ve-hachochma ha-amitit. Guideline for the Understanding of Orthodox Historiography, in: Zmanim 64 (1998), pp. 6–8, 11.

112 Reichel, Iggerot, p. 188.

113 Kings I, 18:21.

stray from normative historiographic practice must be differentiated from his readiness to stray from normative Orthodoxy. Whereas the divergence from normative modern historiography, which led him to "Orthodox" conclusions, sprang from his deep belief in the correlation between mehtodological principle and Orthodox conclusions, his divergence from normative Orthodoxy sprang from a conscious decision. In other words, while Halevy was fully aware of the price he paid in terms of Orthodoxy, for his insistence on modern historical methodology, he was unaware of the price his insistence on devotion to Orthodox values extracted from his historical research. This may also explain why his "Orthodox" image is more prominent than his *Wissenschaft* image.

This indicates that, aside from the elements of contending against the historiography of *Wissenschaft* and the internalization of modern methodology, Halevy's historiographical methodology reflected complexity within Orthodoxy. Like the Berlin branch of neo-Orthodoxy, Halevy supported an academic approach that would engage with *Wissenschaft*.[114] Halevy's conclusion that Orthodoxy must brace itself to assimilate modern values more significantly would seem to explain several actions he took which were anomalous in the normative Orthodoxy of his day. Firstly, he devoted the majority of his effort to writing history rather than to pure Torah study, as was expected of a religious leader in his position in the Lithuanian tradition. Secondly, he discussed with Rav Kook the claim that rabbinical training must be changed to include "external knowledge."[115] Halevy expressed satisfaction at Rabbi Yitzhak Yaacov Reines' (1839–1915) request to include *Dorot ha-rishonim* in the curriculum of the Lidda Yeshivah and his emphasis on the importance of the work for high-level Torah scholars. As a work dealing with history it would traditionally have been considered outside the rabbinic point of view (*hitzoni*): "I am full of satisfaction, for if my work will begin to be taught in the yeshivot this will fulfill my primary

[114] Breuer, Modernity within Tradition, pp. 181–193. In fact, Halevy broke with the Berliner School over the harsh language Halevy employed and the importance he placed on non-Jewish sources and historiography. See: Breuer, Modernity within Tradition, pp. 196–200; Yedidya, Biqqoret mevuqqeret, pp. 180–181, 192–193. For additional references see: David Ellenson: Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer and the Creation of a Modern Jewish Orthodoxy, London 1990.

[115] Reichel, Iggerot, pp. 150–152. Halevy disagreed with Rabbi Kook on the need to rejuvenate the approach to Torah study by devoting time to the spiritual study of Aggadah, Midrashim, and Kabbalah. In Halevy's view "the spirituality of the Torah is to be found only in the Torah itself." (Reichel, Iggerot, p. 151). This was in keeping with the Lithuanian heritage in which he was raised.

desideratum and God will grant me the privilege of having contributed to the repair of the ways of Torah in Israel.[116]

It is in this context that I propose understanding Halevy's high self-esteem, which enabled him to see himself as a leader of a movement towards the development of Orthodox Jewish studies.[117] In addition, and as a mirror image of the "ultra-Orthodox" faction which sought to intensify the tendency of Orthodox isolationism, he reflects an attempt to advance the internalization of modern values into Orthodoxy.[118]

The relationship between Orthodoxy and modernity expressed itself in Halevy's historiographic approach in at least three ways: the struggle against the conclusions of modern historical inquiry, the internalization of the methods of modern historical inquiry, and the internal struggle within Orthodoxy against the academic segregation. Thus, Halevy's approach offers a new lens by which to understand Orthodoxy as a complex phenomenon, of which the struggle against modern secularization is only one characteristic.

116 Reichel, Iggerot, p. 179.

117 Halevy was convinced of the high quality of his own methodology. (Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 422; Ie, p. 486; Tequfat ha-miqra, p. 142; Reichel, Iggerot, p. 111) He saw this as leading to accurate conclusions. (Dorot ha-rishonim, III, p. 13; II, p. 241) These conclusions were, in his opinion, irrefutable. (Dorot ha-rishonim, II, p. 125; Ic, p. 97) He also considered them as unnoticed by previous historians. (Dorot ha-rishonim, III, pp. 7, 17, 80, 138, 160, 168, 202; II, pp. 3,24, 58, 127, 145, 212, 261, 265; Ic, pp. 49, 62, 65, 74, 387, 399; Ie, pp. 70, 77; Reichel, Iggerot, p. 203) On Halevy as the leader of a movement see: Reichel, Iggerot, pp. 108–109.

118 On the ultra-Orthodox faction see: Jacob Katz: A House Divided. Orthodoxy and Schism in Nineteenth-Century Central European Jewry, Hanover NH 1998, pp. 56–85. Halevy's dream of establishing an Orthodox pro-science movement in the spirit of Dorot ha-rishonim was not realized. See: Breuer, Modernity within Tradition, p. 198; Yedidya, Biqqoret mevuqqeret, p. 194.

Enlisted History: Zeev Jawitz (1847–1924) and the Making of a National Orthodox *Wissenschaft des Judentums*

by Asaf Yedidya

Abstract

Zeev Jawitz (1847–1924) was active in all spheres of culture: history, language, literature and pedagogy, all the while striving for harmonization with the Orthodox outlook. He understood that a people returning to its homeland needed a national culture, one that was both broad and deep, and that the narrow world of the Halakhah would no longer suffice. His main work was the multi-volume *Toldot Israel* (History of Israel, published 1895–1924) which encompasses Jewish history from its beginning – Patriarchs – until the end of the 19th century. His historical writing, with its emphasis on internal religious Jewish sources, the unity and continuity of Jewish history, and respect of Orthodox principles, comes as an alternative to the historiography of the celebrated historian Heinrich Graetz. The alternative that Jawitz tried to substitute for *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, was influenced not only by Orthodox ideology, which he supported, but also by his nationalist ideology. He saw himself and his disciples as the "priests of memory," presenting the true and immanent history and character of the Jewish nation as a platform to the Jewish future in the land of Israel.

1. Introduction

In 1886, at the beginning of his research career, Zeev Jawitz (1847–1924) published a long historical essay in the annual *Knesset Israel* edited by S.P. Rabinowitz. This annual was national and traditional. The article "Migdal HaMeah" (The Century Tower) attempted to celebrate two people: Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786), whose death centenary was being celebrated at that time, and Moses Montefiore (1784–1885), who was celebrating his hundredth birthday. The article was essentially an overview of the previous hundred years on the following topics: the Enlightenment movement, Reform,

Wissenschaft des Judentums, the Vilna Gaon and his disciples, and Montefiore and Jewish national revival. The article highlighted Jawitz's unique national Orthodox attitude, different both from enlightened writing and from Orthodox historiography.[1]

Unlike many Orthodox writers and the national Maskil Peretz Smolenskin (1842–1885), who considered Mendelssohn to be the father of Western European Jewish assimilation,[2] Jawitz viewed him as the luminary of his generation. He stressed the fact that Mendelssohn maintained an Orthodox lifestyle and, despite his closeness to German intellectuals, never considered foregoing his faith in order to placate them.[3] Jawitz effectively appropriated Mendelssohn into the Orthodox camp and considers his disciples to be errant students. In so doing, Jawitz strayed from the writings of other Orthodox thinkers like Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888), who, while viewing Mendelssohn positively, still expressed misgivings.[4] It was an attempt by Jawitz to portray Mendelssohn as a legitimate conveyor of age-old Jewish tradition, rather than as the precursor to modern Jewish streams of thought whose leaders also tried to appropriate Mendelssohn.[5] By bringing Mendelssohn over to his side, Jawitz implied that the Enlightenment movement does not contradict Orthodoxy. On the contrary, any deviation from Orthodoxy deviated from *true* enlightenment.

In his article, Jawitz addressed the discipline of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* which first developed in the 1820s. He claimed that the real father of this discipline is the Vilna Gaon (Elijah ben Solomon Zalman, 1720–1797), who introduced critical reading to rabbinic literature.[6] Jawitz distinguished radical and devastating scientific criticism, born in Germany, from genuine and constructive criticism born in Eastern Europe. He also placed his history

1 On Orthodox Wissenschaft des Judentums, see: Asaf Yedidya: Criticized Criticism. Orthodox Alternatives to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, 1873–1956, Jerusalem 2013, (in Hebrew).

2 Meir Hildesheimer: Moses Mendelssohn in Nineteenth-Century Rabbinical Literature, in: Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research, 55 (1988), pp. 80–133; Shmuel Feiner: Haskalah and History. The Emergence of a Modern Jewish Historical Consciousness, Oxford 2002, pp. 317–340.

3 Zeev Jawitz, Migdal HaMeah, in: Knesset Israel, 1 (1886), p. 98.

4 Mordechai Breuer: Modernity within Tradition. The Social History of Orthodox Jewry in Imperial Germany, New York 1992, pp. 70–71, 79–80.

5 Michael A. Meyer: Response to Modernity. A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism, New York 1988, pp. 248, 269.

6 Jawitz, Migdal HaMeah, p. 131.

as a critique of Heinrich Graetz, who disparaged traditional Polish Jews in his writings.[7] For Jawitz, who was personally offended by Graetz's portrayal, the alternative was not only Orthodox but also manifestly Eastern European. At the end of the article, he viewed the national movement *Hibbat Zion* (Love of Zion) as the triumph of Judaism over European culture and of nationalism and tradition over imitation and assimilation.[8] Actually, this early article specifically displayed Jawitz's unique attitude toward *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, an attitude which was national Orthodox and anti-German-centric in nature.

Wissenschaft des Judentums, the scholarly study of the Jewish religion and people which originated in the 1820s, challenged many traditional principles, and in fact threatened conceptions of the traditionally accepted Jewish past.[9] According to some scholars, *Wissenschaft des Judentums* appeared as an irrevocable fissure in Jewish life that wrought havoc on all elements of Jewish culture, due to the assimilatory motives of its founders. One of those scholars, Gershom Scholem (1897–1982), claimed that German Jewish historians had, at best, an antiquarian's interest in Jewish history.[10] Conversely, other scholars believed that *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was the supreme form of German-Jewish self-expression.[11] Everybody agreed that *Wissenschaft* was regarded by many traditional Jews as a real threat to traditional Jewish values. At the heart of this threat lay several premises and *Weltanschauungen* in terms of both methodology and content.

The Orthodox movement that was fighting against Reform and for "rabbinism"[12] could not ignore this discipline and was forced to respond ideologically as well as concretely. The anti-rabbinism of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*

7 Ibid, p. 134.

8 Ibid, p. 151.

9 Julius Carlebach (ed.): Wissenschaft des Judentums. Anfänge der Judaistik in Europa, Darmstadt, 1992; Ismar Schorsch: From Text to Context. The Turn to History in Modern Judaism, Waltham 1994; Michael A. Meyer: The Emergence of Jewish Historiography. Motives and Motifs, in: History and Theory, 27 (1988): pp. 160–175; Kerstin von der Krone / Mirjam Thulin: *Wissenschaft* in Context. A Research Essay on the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, in: Leo Baeck Institute Year Book, 58 (2013), pp. 249–280.

10 Gershom Scholem: Reflections on Modern Jewish Studies, in: idem: On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism in Our Time, and Other Essays, Avraham Shapira (ed.), Philadelphia 1997, pp. 51–71.

11 Schorsch, From Text to Context, pp. 1–6; Meyer, Emergence of Jewish Historiography, p. 175; David Sorkin: The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840, New York 1987, pp. 134–139.

12 Mordechai Breuer: Modernity within Tradition; Adam Ferziger: Exclusion and Hierarchy. Orthodoxy, Non-Observance, and the Emergence of Modern Jewish Identity, Philadelphia 2005.

researchers employed a critical method of research that was irreconcilable with the old Jewish methods of learning. The first reaction was to categorically negate it. The second reaction was fundamentally similar to the first, but more nuanced in that it criticized only those studies carried out in *Wissenschaft des Judentums* that specifically impinged upon Orthodox values. These criticisms included polemics aimed at the "problematic" deductions, in an attempt to negate the legitimacy of the way in which the authors reached their conclusions, sometimes by blatantly demeaning them. The third reaction was to create an Orthodox alternative to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Orthodox scholars competed with the basic values and methods of research which challenged traditional concepts of the past, such as objectivity and historicism, and developed research strategies that allowed them to hold on to both their objectives at the same time, i. e. scientific research methods *and* traditional values.[13]

Such an Orthodox alternative began forming in the 1870s. The first group of Orthodox researchers emerged in Berlin's rabbinical seminary headed by Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer (1820–1899). This seminary produced a significant body of literature on *Wissenschaft*, including critical editions of ancient manuscripts, studies on Jews in Germany and elsewhere, bibliographic studies, and contributions to Bible studies, Talmudic studies, and Near Eastern languages.[14] However, since the language of their writing was German, the seminary's researchers found it difficult to break out of the world of German Orthodoxy. The Jews of Eastern Europe were therefore influenced by non-Orthodox researchers who wrote in Hebrew.

Two methodological historic works from the end of the nineteenth century are considered to be the most influential products of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*: the books of Heinrich (Zvi) Graetz (1817–1891) and Isaac Hirsch Weiss (1815–1905). The five volumes of Weiss' book *Dor Dor Ve'Dorshav*, published between 1871 and 1891, were extremely popular. By 1907 four editions were printed, and six by 1911. Graetz's *Geschichte der Juden*, which already existed in the libraries of enlightened Jews in the original German, was translated into Hebrew by Saul Pinhas Rabinowitz between 1888 and 1899. These books

[13] Asaf Yedidya: Orthodox Reactions to Wissenschaft des Judentums, in: Modern Judaism, 30 (2010), pp. 69–94.

[14] Breuer, Modernity within Tradition, pp. 181–193.

were not confined to the homes of students and laymen, but even entered Lithuanian yeshivot.[15]

In addition, the Hildesheimer school's reaction to *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was also influenced by the pro-emancipation German context. It generally neglected Jewish national aspects, specifically the history of East-European Jews. Most of them did not support *Hibbat Zion* or the Zionist movement. Therefore, national Maskilim in Russia preferred adopting the positive-historical Breslau school's attitude toward *Wissenschft des Judentums*, which seemed to them more national in scope.[16] In this context, Jawitz began his historiographical project.

2. History Serves the Future

Ze'ev Jawitz was born on September 26, 1847 in the town of Kolno in north-eastern Poland. His father was a well-to-do merchant, religiously observant and well-known for his strong opposition to Hasidism. In 1860, the family moved to Łomża and five years later to Warsaw. Jawitz's father ensured that his son studied the Bible and Hebrew, and even engaged tutors to teach him European languages: French, Polish, and German. Outside the scope of his scheduled studies, Jawitz read voraciously about geography and history and was particularly influenced by the books of Josephus Flavius. He married at the age of eighteen and, after his wife died at an early age, he married Golda, the sister of Yehiel Michael Pines (1843–1913), an Orthodox author and the representative of *Hibbat Zion* in Eretz Israel in the 1880s. In 1882, he began to publish short essays on Jewish history in the Hebrew periodicals *Ha-Shachar* (The Dawn), *Knesset Yisrael* (Israel's Assembly), *Ha-Magid* (The Informant), *Ha-Melitz* (The Advocate), and *Ha-Boker Or* (The Morning Light). In 1887, he emigrated to Palestine, living in Yehud, near Petach Tikvah. Two years later, he was appointed rabbi and teacher in Zichron Ya'akov, but after a year and a half of conflict with Baron Edmond James de Rothschild's agents he was dismissed from his teaching position and moved to Jerusalem, where he lived

[15] Immanuel Etkes / Shlomo Tikochinski (eds.): Memoirs of the Lithuanian Yeshiva, Jerusalem 2004 (in Hebrew): 31–44. On the Lithuanian yeshivot, see also Shaul Stampfer: Lithuanian Yeshivas of the Nineteenth Century. Creating a Tradition of Learning, Oxford 2012.

[16] Asaf Yedidya: "Out of Breslau Shall Come Forth Torah, and the Word of the Lord from Frankfurt am Main." Religious Impact of German Judaism on Russian Judaism during the Last Three Decades of the 19th Century, in: Modern Judaism, 36 (2016), pp. 1–11.

for seven years. Finding it difficult to make a living, he left Jerusalem and Palestine in 1897 and moved to Vilna, where he stayed for eight years. While in Vilna, he joined the Zionist Organization, was one of the founders of the Mizrachi movement, and became editor of its journal *Ha-Mizrach* (The East). He left Lithuania for Germany in 1905, living first in Berlin and then in Bad Homburg near Frankfurt am Main. On the death of his wife in 1912, he went to live with his children in Antwerp in Belgium, but with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 he escaped with his family to England, settling first in Leeds and later in London.[17]

Jawitz's literary and communal activities were highly varied. They encompassed virtually all areas of culture and he left his stamp on them all. He realized that he was living in an age of transition from one way of life in the diaspora to a different one in the national homeland, one that presented complex problems together with occasional opportunities. He strove to harmonize Orthodoxy with life as it was developing in the land of Israel, in part by blending it with nascent Jewish nationalism. He was active in all spheres of culture: history, language, literature, and pedagogy, all the while striving for harmonization with the Orthodox outlook. He understood that a people returning to their homeland needed a national culture, one that was both broad and deep, and that the narrow world of Halakhah would no longer suffice. Writing in a positive spirit rather than a subversive one, he therefore strove to construct a traditional picture of the past, with a view to creating a new program for religious education that would meet the needs of the time without causing a rift with the past.[18]

In 1895, Jawitz began working on his magnum opus, *Toldot Israel* (History of Israel) series, encompassing Jewish history from the forefathers to the pogroms of 1881. The book is divided into two central eras of Jewish history: "the age of Israel in its land" and "the age of Israel among the nations." He mentioned a third era, which he also called "the age of Israel in its land," but did not write about it; since he was writing in the 1920s he claimed to not yet have the needed historical perspective.[19]

17 Asaf Yedidya: "To Cultivate a Hebrew Culture." The Life and Thought of Zeev Jawitz, Jerusalem 2016 (in Hebrew).

18 Ibid, pp. 187–190.

19 Yafah Berlovitz: Historiosophical Concepts in the Writings of Ze'ev Yavetz, in: Cathedra, 20 (1981), pp. 165–166.

He ended the work in 1922, two years prior to his death, but saw the publication of just nine volumes. The first two volumes were published in Jerusalem in 1895 and 1897; the third, fourth, and fifth were published in Vilna in 1898, 1900, and 1902; the following three volumes appeared in Germany in 1907, 1909, and 1912, and the ninth volume was published in London in 1922. The remaining five volumes were published in Tel Aviv in 1930. At the end of every volume, Jawitz published an appendix containing various historical clarifications and disagreements with other scholars.[20] At the start of his work, Jawitz turned to Ze'ev Wissotzky (1824–1904), a rich merchant and Zionist from Moscow, asking for financial support. Wissotzky agreed and allocated 500 rubles for the book, praising Jawitz's previous achievements.[21]

The first two volumes, published in Jerusalem, dealt with the biblical era from the forefathers to the kingdom of Hezekiah, and were primarily based on the biblical narrative, and less so on sources from the Aggadah. The first volume began by describing the Land of Israel before delving into the ancient genealogy of the Israelites. The message was contemporary: just as the land awaited the first "age of Israel in its land" with the arrival of Abraham, so too does the land now await the return of the Jews. In the middle of the volume, Jawitz paused the historical overview and dedicated an entire chapter to the "Torah of Moses." The chapter was essentially a summary of the Pentateuch, the five books of the Torah, with an emphasis on the commandments and the values stemming from them: the value of human life and dignity, the sanctity of family, the rights of the widow and orphan, and the right of an individual to private property and a share in common assets.[22] Jawitz popularized the Torah's philosophy and his understanding of the commandments using modern concepts. He depicted the Torah as humane, moral and rationalistic, surpassing all other ancient laws, and preceding modern European states by thousands of years in its progressive attitudes towards women and slaves, the poor and foreigners, orphans and widows, laws of wartime and animal rights.

A significant portion of the second volume dealt with the kingdom of David. Jawitz described it as idyllic in all aspects: militarily, politically, socially, and

[20] Reuven Michael: Jewish Historiography from the Renaissance to the Modern Time, Jerusalem 1993 (in Hebrew), pp. 424–465.

[21] Letter from Zeev Wissotzky to Zeev Jawitz, November 13, 1894, New York Public Library Archives, Jawitz Collection, item 49.

[22] Zeev Jawitz: Toldot Israel, Tel Aviv 1955–1963 (in Hebrew), vol. 1, p. 54.

religiously. He described King David as an enlightened monarch who established a modern bureaucratic system, opposed giving too much power to the military, and oversaw the separation of power and independence of the courts while remaining attuned to the needs of the people.[23]

Despite this idyllic portrayal, Jawitz remained loyal to the biblical text which describes David's sin with Bathsheba, preferring it to the more forgiving commentaries of the sages.[24] He viewed David's repentance – as well as his ability to hear harsh (prophetic) criticism – as a testimony to his greatness.[25] Jawitz also described the daily life of the Israelites at the time, their agriculture and craftsmanship, their clothes, home utensils and food, their aesthetics and hygiene, their love of freedom and hospitality, their heroism, their love of the nation and tribal loyalty, their holidays and mourning days, and their respect for the Torah, the prophets and the priests.[26] Clearly, he saw this as an ideal model for the future Jewish state.

3. The Uniqueness of his Project

For most of his life, Jawitz studied Jewish history, which he did not view as an apologetic imperative, but rather as a value akin to the study of Torah. He effectively tried to create a comprehensive Orthodox alternative to the historical writing of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* experts. The structure and chronology of Jawitz's book is similar to that of Heinrich Graetz, and was written as something of an alternative to it. Jawitz complains that *Wissenschaft des Judentums* researchers were influenced by their non-Jewish teachers, and therefore absorbed some of their biases and misconceptions.

In Jawitz's opinion, Jewish history is distinct from world history. While other nations are shaped by the external influences of surrounding cultures, Jewish culture is internal, inspired by divine revelation to the Jews.[27] Therefore, Jawitz argued, the historicist method which searches for external influences is inapplicable to Jewish history.[28] Even moderate *Wissenschaft* scholars, he

23 Ibid, vol. 2, pp. 20–23.
24 Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat, 56a.
25 Jawitz, Toldot Israel, vol. 2, p. 23.
26 Ibid, pp. 34–58.
27 Ibid., vol. 14, p. 220.
28 Ibid, vol. 1, p. III.

complained, use methods from the non-Jewish historical discipline.[29] Moreover, only researchers deeply connected to the Jewish people and their culture can properly comprehend Jewish history, Jawitz claimed.[30] This attitude stemmed from Jawitz's belief that Jewish culture was a self-contained, closed system, different from open cultures which require external help to develop. Therefore, the study of Jewish culture required a different methodology.

In addition to Jawitz's attempt to write Jewish history from a distinctly Jewish perspective, he had another motive, which he explained to his friend Benjamin Menasheh Levin in 1910: He believed that the study of history was the best way to explain Jewish philosophy and thought.[31]

Like other Orthodox scholars of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Jawitz preferred traditional sources to other ones.[32] In a private letter to another historian, he wrote:

> "I have distinguished myself from other authors in this thing, that my eyes and heart are focused only inward, to use only our literature as the source of our history; and the writings of foreign authors, ancient and contemporary, did not serve me – except for addenda."[33]

He also believed them to be more credible.

However, in certain cases he preferred external sources over rabbinical sources. In these cases, he justified his decision by quoting other rabbinical sources that supported his conclusions. For example, he adopted conclusions from modern research according to which the period of the Persian Kingdom extended for more than two hundred years, as opposed to the Midrash Tannaim "Seder Olam," which states that "the Persian Kingdom (existed) during the time of the Temple thirty-four years," for a total fifty-four years. However, by rejecting the words of the Midrash "Seder Olam Rabbah" (The Great Order of the World) as cited in the Babylonian Talmud (Tractate Avodah Zarah [Idolatry]), he was not only supported by the external sources "Josephus and Philo and colleagues who were authorities on this subject," but mainly by the rabbinic sages themselves, most of whom, by his understanding,

29 Ibid, p. IV.
30 Ibid, p. VI.
31 Zeev Jawitz: Nefesh Hayah, in: Tachkemoni, 1 (1910), p. 42.
32 Jawitz, Toldot Israel, vol. 6, p. IX.
33 Ibid, vol. 14, pp. 191–192.

disagreed with the *Tana* (*mishnaic* sage*)* Rabbi Yossi, who held the minority's opinion. According to him, Rabbi Yossi's calculation "counting to Persia only thirty-four years [...] because the Talmud brings many simplifications in Israel," was in truth only one opinion. In Jawitz's view, the majority disagreed with Rabbi Yossi, as mentioned elsewhere in the Midrash "Seder Olam," as a general *baraita* (teaching not incorporated in the Mishnah) without the *Tana's* name, "the totality of the Mede and Persian Kingdom two hundred and fifty years." Furthermore, he claimed "in order to support the Sages' words" that there may have occurred a switching of the letters Beth (second letter of the alphabet) and Lamed (twelfth letter of the alphabet) in the words of Rabbi Yossi, and the correct phrase was: "the Persian Kingdom (existed) before the Temple thirty-four years."[34]

Jawitz saw his uniqueness in choosing sources, especially biblical ones. He viewed the Bible as an especially credible source, praising the Book of Chronicles as a unique repository of ancient material.[35] He also scoffed at researchers who doubted the historicity of the Book of Esther, using it himself as a historical source.[36] However, Jawitz rejected the studies of Christian Bible scholars, even those supporting his positions. When Jawitz was criticized for ignoring archaeological findings from the Near East, some of which supported the biblical narrative, he added an appendix to his third volume called "the results of digs and studies." Jawitz's method was an alternative to the discipline of biblical criticism, whose adherents doubted the credibility of biblical sources.[37] In an article published in 1910, Jawitz insisted on the veracity of the biblical sources in opposition to all other external sources.[38]

Jawitz did not present his position on the superiority of biblical sources as an axiom, like the Hildesheimer school did. According to Jawitz, every nation recognized the veracity of its own sources, and Jews should be no different. However, he may have exaggerated the mistreatment of Jewish sources, since

34 Ibid., vol. 3, p. 31.
35 Ibid, vol. 3, p. 20.
36 Ibid, vol. 3, pp. 9–13.
37 On the discipline of biblical criticism and its criticism in the 19th century, see: Yaacov Shavit / Mordechai Eran: The War of the Tablets. The Defence of the Bible in the 19th Century and the Babel-Bible Controversy, Tel Aviv 2003 (in Hebrew); Ran HaCohen: Reclaiming the Hebrew Bible. German-Jewish Reception of Biblical Criticism, New York 2010.
38 Zeev Jawitz, HaBikoret She'Hee Mevukeret, in: Tachkemoni, 1 (1910), pp. 14–15.

non-Jewish researchers did not spare other sources their criticism either, including canonical Christian sources.

In his study of the Second Temple period and the periods that followed, Jawitz relied heavily on rabbinic Aggadah sources and Midrash, unlike many non-religious researchers who doubted their historic veracity. He did not, however, accept the legends at face value, but rather established research methods to examine them. According to him, Aggadah sources should be classified according to their content and style.[39] By doing this, he diverged from many Orthodox writers who relied on historical Aggadah material as-is, following rabbis from the Middle Ages who used such sources to explain the history of the oral Torah.

In his rejection of historicist approaches to Judaism, Jawitz praised historian Salomon Steinheim, who moved from supporting the Reform movement to identifying with Orthodoxy.[40] True to his approach of historical continuity, Jawitz consistently referred to the Jewish people as "Israel" rather than "Jews." He claimed that non-Jewish writers used the term "Jew" to argue that the Jewish people were not an authentic continuation of the ancient people, but rather "a diluted, mistreated tribe."[41] He also criticized Heinrich Graetz for using both terms, first "Israelites" and then "Jews." In the appendix to his third volume, Jawitz argued with the father of biblical criticism, Julius Wellhausen, relying on the findings from archaeological digs in the Near East. In an article titled "Their criticism," Jawitz argued that Bible critics come with an ulterior motive: German chauvinism and envy of the Jews had caused German researchers to attribute their significant values to neighboring cultures.[42]

The continual Jewish reliance on their own internal resources lasted, according to Jawitz, into the Second Temple period and beyond.[43] His aim in the volumes covering the period subsequent to the Babylonian exile, for example, was "to demonstrate that all the deeds of our Rabbis from the days of the men of the Great Assembly up until the time of Rav Hai Gaon were in fact

39 Esther Segal: The Historical Thought of Ze'ev Jawitz (unpublished MA thesis, Bar-Ilan University), Ramat Gan 1992 (in Hebrew), pp. 123–135.
40 Jawitz, HaBikoret, p. 14.
41 Jawitz, Toldot Israel, vol. 14, pp. 216–220.
42 Jawitz, HaBikoret, pp. 12.
43 Jawitz, Toldot Israel, vol. 6, p. IX.

a fulfillment of the spirit of the Torah."[44] In this connection, he referred his reader to Eisik Halevy's book *Dorot ha-rishonim* (First Generations), observing that

> "R. Eisik Halevy proved conclusively that none of the *Tannaim* nor the sages of the House of Shammai or the House of Hillel, including Hillel and Shammai themselves, innovated anything at all in the Mishnah […] due to constraints of space we cannot bring here all his cast-iron proofs that the Mishnah in essence originates with the men of the Great Assembly, and we therefore counsel all who wish to delve into this matter to read R. Eisik Halevy's book […]."[45]

Thus, he said regarding Rabbi Akiva, for example, that "he preserved the Law of Moses, expanding its boundaries from within and expounding it in all its detail."[46] He emphasized that the 'expansion' that Rabbi Akiva propounded was solely 'from within,' meaning that he did not invent new laws, in contrast with Graetz's approach which emphasized the innovative nature of Rabbi Akiva's method.[47]

In accordance with a method that negated real cultural absorption from other cultures, Jawitz saw fit to criticize Moses Maimonides (1135/38–1204) for adopting the principals of Aristotelian philosophy as the basis of his intellectual method. When it came to evaluating Maimonides, he had divided opinions about his two main works: *Mishneh Torah* (Repetition of the Torah) and *Moreh Nevuchim* (The Guide for the Perplexed). The first followed the traditional Jewish method, while the second was "an external method borrowed from their neighbors the gentile." Nevertheless, he also defended him, claiming that the intention of his writing was pure – to save from heresy Jews who had been attracted by philosophy.[48] On the other hand, he extolled Rabbi Sa'adia Gaon (882–942), who, in his *Ha'Emunot VeHade'ot* (The Book of Beliefs and Opinions) contended with the prevailing philosophy without adopting its principles as the basis of his thought, apart from its logic. The content itself was taken from Jewish sources.[49] His attitude towards Kabbal-

44 Ibid, p. VIII.
45 Ibid, pp. 212–213n3.
46 Ibid., p. 131.
47 Heinrich Graetz: Geschichte der Juden. Vom Untergang des jüdischen Staates bis zum Abschluss des Talmud, vol. 4, Leipzig 1908, p. 51.
48 Jawitz, Toldot Israel, vol. 12, p. 42.
49 Ibid, vol. 10, pp. 70–71.

ah was more complex. On the one hand, he acknowledged its inner Jewish sources and the fact that it constituted an alternative to Greek philosophy. But, on the other hand, he was aware of the danger that it could be abused by unscrupulous people like the "false messiahs" Shabtai Zvi (1626–1676) and Jacob Franck (1726–1791).[50]

Nevertheless, he respected the Hasidism of Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer (Baal Shem Tov, 1698–1760) despite its kabbalistic aspects. He esteemed the founder of *Hasidut* as one who adhered to Halakhah and emphasized its central innovation – serving God with joy and love – as a return to the Jewish roots of biblical times, long marginalized under the influence of Indian philosophy that infused religious worship with sadness and fear.[51] This perception guided Jawitz in his religious Zionist philosophy. He understood that, apart from political, practical, and spiritual initiatives, the national rebirth would also need a mental transformation. He was much preoccupied with the idea that natural rejoicing in life was an essential ingredient in the return of the Jewish people to their land. In a letter written in 1892 to his son, Yehudah Leib, he had already highlighted the idea of the "joy of life" (Heb. *messos ha-hayim*), arguing that it in no way conflicted with tradition.[52]

In his positive attitude toward Hasidism, he was like the Maskil Eliezer Zweifel (1815–1888), who changed the appreciation of Hasidism among those of the Russian Haskalah movement,[53] although Jawitz never delved into it as deeply. Jawitz, like Zweifel, adopted the theory of the "three shepherds," referring to the three religious-ideological Jewish movements of the 18th century – Hasidism (Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov), *Hitnagdut* (the opposition, i. e. the Vilna Gaon), and Haskalah (Moses Mendelssohn) – which, despite seeming to be at odds, actually harmoniously complement each other.[54] And, like Zweifel, he also pointed to manifestations of moral corruption in the movement in later years, though in a more moderate way.[55]

50 Michael, Jewish Historiography, pp. 456–458.
51 Jawitz, Toldot Israel, vol. 13, pp. 141–144.
52 Letter from Zeev Jawitz to his son Yehudah Leib, November 4, 1892, New York Public Library Archives, Jawitz Collection, item 95.
53 Feiner, Haskalah and History, pp. 306–317.
54 Jawitz, Toldot Israel, vol. 13, pp. 150–151.
55 Ibid, pp. 156–161.

Jawitz's tone was pro-rabbinic. His writings about certain rabbis were full of praise for their piousness and righteousness,[56] like the *tanaitic* group *Bnei Beteira (Bathyra)*, who he calls "pure" and "modest."[57] He viewed the rabbis as disciples of the prophets, highlighting their unshakable integrity. This pro-rabbinic stance continued into his survey of the Middle Ages and even the modern era.

Beyond defending rabbis from attack, Jawitz set out to defend Halakhah itself. He harshly criticized Jewish sects that opposed the rabbinic law throughout the ages. Thus, he accused the Sadducees of Hellenism and of acting out of egotistical and hedonistic motives.[58] He was no less critical of the Karaites. He portrayed the founder of the sect, Anan Ben David, as a fraud and a manipulator, and compared his disciples to Christians.[59] In the appendix to his tenth volume, he tried to prove the inconsistencies in Karaite doctrine. He used irony and harsh expressions to refute the Karaite grievances with rabbinic law. It seems, however, that his criticism was directed at the enlightened Jews who were sympathetic of the Karaite struggle against the rabbis.

The final group targeted by Jawitz was the enlightened of Berlin who followed Mendelssohn and the first religious reformers, excluding Mendelssohn himself. Jawitz ascribed problematic immoral behavior to them, in addition to wrong motives.[60]

Like other Orthodox historians, Jawitz also brought divine providence into his historical depictions. Thus, he described God's proactive role in rescuing Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zakkai from the Romans during the destruction of the Second Temple, which enabled the continuity of Judaism.[61]

4. In the Grip of Criticism and Acceptance

The first to critique Jawitz's "History of Israel" books, which appeared in Hebrew, were naturally *Wissenschaft des Judentums* experts writing in Hebrew in Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries. One year after the appearance of Jawitz's first volume, the Maskil Moshe

56 Ibid, vol. 3, pp. 30–40, 161–170.
57 Ibid, vol. 5, p. 35.
58 Ibid, vol. 4, pp. 157, 160.
59 Ibid, vol. 9, pp. 191–192.
60 Ibid, vol. 13, p. 201.
61 Ibid, vol. 6, p. 3.

Leib Lilienblum (1843–1910) penned a critique in the newly issued *HaShiloah* (The Messenger) periodical. While praising the book for its "charm and love for Israel and its Torah," the article attacked its lack of criticism toward traditional sources. He believed that Jawitz was not critical enough of rabbinic sources.[62] Asher Ginzberg (Ahad HaAm, 1856–1927) also bemoaned the existence of history books written "in a Jewish spirit."[63] A harsher critique came a few years later from the historian Joseph Klausner (1874–1958), who argued that Jawitz's Orthodoxy prevented him from being a critical historian.[64]

From the Orthodox side, Rabbi Joshuah Joseph Preil (1857–1896), the rabbi of Kroki in Lithuania, praised Jawitz for standing up to secularized historians, and for writing in Hebrew rather than German. However, he criticized some of Jawitz's writings for not being Orthodox enough, such as the omission of the sun standing still in the skies during the time of Joshua. "Is this the sacrifice Jawitz is wishing to make for the love of the rationalists?" Preil wondered.[65]

Jawitz's brother-in-law Yechiel Michel Pines encouraged his writing and used his books to teach history in the teachers' seminary in Jerusalem, but believed that, like non-Orthodox historians, Jawitz too "overused unfounded hypotheses."[66]

At the end of 1905, Jawitz left Lithuania and moved to Germany. In Berlin, he received a warm welcome from the Orthodox rabbinical seminary leaders. Abraham Berliner (1833–1915) and Hirsch Hildesheimer (1855–1910) underwrote the printing and distribution costs for volumes six to eight of *Toldot Yisrael*, and helped Jawitz gain acceptance among the German Orthodox. In addition, the reviews of Jawitz's books written by members of the rabbinical seminary were quite favorable. In David Hoffmann's critical review of volume seven of *Toldot Yisrael,* he wrote: "This section is a fitting companion to its predecessors. Like them, it is notable for its great inner strength and its pleasing outward appearance." In the same article, Hoffmann (1843–1921) lauded Jawitz for his educational goals. What was seen by others as a drawback – his Orthodox ideology – Hoffmann regarded as an advantage:

62 Moshe Leib Lilienblum, Reshit Toldot Israel. Bikoret, in: HaShiloah, 1 (1896), pp. 81–93.
63 Yedidya, Cultivate a Hebrew Culture, p. 95.
64 Joseph Klausner, Zeev Jawitz, in: HaShiloah, 21 (1909), p. 382.
65 Yehoshua Yosef Preil: Ketavim Nivharim, New York 1924 (in Hebrew), p. 278.
66 Letter of Yechiel Michel Pines to Zeev Jawitz, January 13, 1905, Central Zionist Archives, A9/129.

> "The reader will be particularly pleased by the great esteem in which the author holds the rabbis, at whose feet he respectfully sits and whose every word he eagerly imbibes. He pores over the hidden secrets of the Talmud and the Midrash, extracting their pearls and stringing them into a beautiful chain. This is not merely a history book. It also succeeds, to a great extent, in inspiring both young and old with love for our holy religion, elevating their hearts and illuminating their eyes for that which we venerate and hold most dear – our Oral and Written Law. The clarity of the Hebrew prose is a source of pleasure to the reader. We therefore recommend *Toldot Yisrael* by Jawitz to all Hebrew readers."[67]

Due to his wife Golda's sickness, she and Jawitz would frequent German health resorts such as Bad Soden and Wiesbaden. In the fall of 1906, they visited Bad Homburg, near Frankfurt. There, Jawitz met Orthodox German Jews such as Rabbis Markus Horowitz (1844–1910) and Salomon Breuer (1850–1926), Rabbi Heymann Kottek (1860–1913) from Bad Homburg, bibliographer Aron Freimann (1871–1948), and Orthodox scholar Yitzhak Isaac Halevy (1847–1914). Halevy was born in Ivanitz, near Vilna. As a youth, he thoroughly studied Talmud, and when he reached thirteen began studying at the Volozhin yeshiva, where he met Lithuania's rabbinic elite. He then moved to Vilna and married his cousin when he was eighteen years old. He came from a wealthy family, a fact that allowed him to study Torah alongside his business pursuits. Even though Halevy did not wish to serve as a rabbi, he was appointed Gabbai at the Volozhin Yeshiva and was involved in a number of struggles involving the ultra-Orthodox of Lithuania. In 1895, his business collapsed and he was forced to leave Russia. Meanwhile, he was in the midst of preparing an extensive historical enterprise, the *Dorot ha-rishonim* series, as an alternative to the secularized historical books of his time.[68]

In 1897, when living in Bratislava, he published the first volume dealing with the *gaonic* period. Four years later, upon arriving in Germany, he published the second volume dealing with the *Amoraim,* the rabbinic authorities of the time of the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud. In 1902, at the age of fifty-five, Halevy was appointed as the rabbi of the Hamburg *Kloiz* synagogue, a position which allowed him to continue his historiographical endeavor and participate in other ventures, too. He published the third volume in 1906, and

67 David Zvi Hoffmann: Bibliography, in: Tachkemoni, 1 (1910), pp. 68–69.

68 On him, see Asher Reichel: Isaac Halevy, New York 1969.

the fourth was published posthumously in 1918. The fifth volume in the series was published by his student Moshe Auerbach in 1964.

Halevy's writing was filled with polemics, apologetics, and personal attacks on *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars. Using blunt language against his predecessors, Halevy created a literary amalgam, combining polemic Orthodox rhetoric and the methodology of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.

The alternative that Halevy tried to establish was not limited to his historiographical undertaking, but also included an attempt to found a scientific school to follow his research method. The establishment of the Jewish Literary Society (*Jüdisch-Literarische Gesellschaft*) by a number of Orthodox scholars whom he influenced marked the emergence of the school he had hoped for. They created a separate school which did not collaborate at all with non-Orthodox researchers, though it did cooperate with the rabbinic seminary of Berlin. Their research activity was centered around the Society's yearbook, which Halevy edited from 1903–1914.[69]

Unlike his relations with the Hildesheimer school, Jawitz's ties with Halevy were more complex. Jawitz found Halevy's method closer to his, emphasizing the intra-Jewish sources as foundations for the historical narrative, unlike the non-Orthodox *Wissenschaft des Judentums* researchers. In a letter to Halevy from March 1905, Jawitz clarified his feelings regarding the similarity of their methods:

> "Ever since I first began analyzing the history of our fathers, I was aware of this shortcoming. For this reason, I deliberately turned away from the modern scholars until the first section of my book was completed. Then I could see how far my words deviated from theirs. However, now I have seen that his book opens a new door, and I have found what I have been seeking for the past thirty-three years. This is the work of an important scholar who studies deeply and which encompasses a vast range, based mainly on the Hebrew sources. He is a genius. His extensive researches into the sea of Talmud have helped him with his historiography. It gladdens my heart to see that my method is very similar to his. Its excellence is evident in the five volumes which have already been published […]."[70]

69 Yedidya, Criticized Criticism, pp. 182–192.

70 Asher Reichel: Iggrot Rabbi Yitzhak Isaac Halevy, Jerusalem, 1972 (in Hebrew), pp. 85–86.

Halevy respected Jawitz's writing style and his religious outlook. He placed many hopes in him, hoping that Jawitz would become the Orthodox historian to write a history based on his own methods. At first, the two merely corresponded, but following Jawitz's arrival in Germany, Halevy invited Jawitz to live near him in Hamburg and take part in the Society. He also secured financial assistance for Jawitz from the Society while he wrote the sixth volume of his history book. Before the volume was published, Halevy tried to influence Jawitz's writing. For instance, in April 1907 he wrote to Jawitz asking him to attack the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars in his preface for writing about the *mishnaic* era in a non-Orthodox way.[71]

This appeal exposed one of the differences between Jawitz and Halevy. While Halevy bluntly attacked his opponents and those opposing Orthodoxy, refusing to share a literary podium with them, Jawitz acted differently and did not hesitate to publish his articles in secular publications. These differences found expression in the different ideological streams to which each of them belonged. In 1912, Halevy would become one of the founders of *Agudat Israel (Agudas Yisroel,* Union of Israel), a movement rejecting any cooperation with secular Jews. *HaMizrahi*, of which Jawitz was a founding member, advocated Jewish solidarity and cooperation with Jews who abandoned tradition for the benefit of common goals, such as settling the land of Israel. Therefore, Jawitz's attitude toward *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars was one of honor and appreciation, even though he often disagreed with them, trying to create alternatives to their historical writings.

After reading Jawitz's sixth volume, Halevy's hopes in him were dashed. He discovered a number of "flaws" in the book, which he believed were evidence of significant differences in their methods. According to Halevy, Jawitz proved that he was in fact closer to the non-Orthodox *Wissenschaft des Judentums* people he attacked. But, first and foremost, Halevy was angry with Jawitz for not giving him credit for the scientific innovations incorporated in Jawitz's book.[72] Halevy accuses Jawitz of accepting the *Wissenschaft des Judentums'* claim that the Oral Torah was founded following the destruction of the Second Temple. Halevy argued that the rabbis of the Second Temple

71 Letter from Yitzhak Isaac Halevy to Ze'ev Jawitz, Nissan 1907, National Library of Israel (NLI) Archives, Jawitz Collection, Arc 4° 1602.

72 Letter from Yitzhak Isaac Halevy to Ze'ev Jawitz, June 24, 1907, NLI Archives, Jawitz Collection, Arc 4° 1602.

period were much greater than their followers.[73] He also blasted Jawitz for focusing on the biographies of the *mishnaic* rabbis, blurring the uniformity and continuity of the Oral Torah. Halevy accused Jawitz of essentially writing the same things as non-Orthodox *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars Abraham Geiger (1810–1874) and Heinrich Graetz.[74]

It would seem, however, that Halevy's arguments were exaggerated even according to his own methods, and stemmed from his uncompromising personality and his adamancy that Jawitz write according to his guidelines. After all, Jawitz agreed with Halevy about the original form of the Mishnah, and even cited his book *Dorot ha-rishonim* on the matter. Jawitz certainly did not mean to say that the Oral Torah began after the destruction of the Second Temple, or to belittle the rabbis of that period. He merely sought to stress Jewish vitality, which did not disappear with the loss of its place of worship, therefore highlighting the greatness of post-destruction rabbis. Unlike Halevy, who constructed his arguments based on hard logical frameworks, Jawitz emphasized descriptive and didactic aspects. He therefore chose to describe the rabbis' personalities in a literary fashion, in order to evoke the readers' identification. Naturally, he highlighted the unique aspects of each Sage based on the sources at hand, but this did not mean that he totally accepted the historicist method of researching the Oral Law.[75] Yet, according to Halevy, the biographical form, even if employed for the purest of motives, paves the way for manipulative historical writing. He therefore cautioned Jawitz in a letter written in the fall of 1907:

> "This manner of writing as the spirit moves you is what has ruined *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. For whereas you are doing it for good, any treacherous person can do likewise, casting a shadow that will mislead the readers. Only if we firmly establish the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as a distinct discipline in itself, based on clear and explicit evidence, can we save the Torah from the hands of those who would marginalize it."[76]

[73] Letter from Yitzhak Isaac Halevy to Ze'ev Jawitz, September 3. 1907, NLI Archives, Jawitz Collection, Arc 4° 1602.

[74] Letter from Yitzhak Isaac Halevy to Samuel Kottek, 1908, in: Reichel, Iggrot, p. 137.

[75] Moses Auerbach: Wolf Jawitz, in: Jeschurun (1924), p. 93.

[76] Letter from Yitzhak Isaac Halevy to Ze'ev Jawitz, September 3, 1907, NLI Archives, Jawitz Collection, Arc 4° 1602.

Halevy was cautious of all literary and biographical descriptions of Talmudic rabbis, even if made by a loyal Orthodox Jew like Jawitz, concerned that they would be used to discredit them. According to Halevy, the final conclusions were the ones essential for establishing an Orthodox position. Jawitz, on the other hand, held literary style in high regard and believed it played an important role in clarifying ideology.

5. An Encouraging Young Orthodox Scholar

At the same time, Jawitz strengthened his ties with the young scholar Benjamin Menashe Levin (1879–1944).[77] Levin was born in Belarus and studied in a number of yeshivot, including the Telz Yeshiva headed by Rabbi Eliezer Gordon (1841–1910), and with Rabbi Shmuel Alexandrov of Bobruysk (1865–1941), who initiated him into the world of literature and history. Levine's acquaintance with Jawitz began during his Vilna days, when Jawitz edited *HaMizrah* and Levin published short studies in it. Jawitz was captured by the enthusiasm and talent of the young researcher and took him under his wing. He oversaw his research and put much time into critiquing his fledgling studies. On Jawitz's advice, Levine traveled to Berlin in 1905 to study at the rabbinic seminary there. A few months later, when Jawitz arrived in Berlin, the two began working on *Corpus Tanaiticum*, arranging all *baraitas* according to the order of the Mishnah. The project was commissioned by the Union of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Breslau, but was cut short.[78] Following one year of study at the Berlin seminary, Levin decided to study at the University of Bern, completing a PhD within four years with a dissertation that was a scientific edition of the Letter of Rav Sherira Gaon, including a biography of this tenth-century scholar.

In 1910–1911, he edited the *Tachkemoni* journal of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, where a number of Jawitz's articles were published. In 1913, Jawitz wrote of Levin that he was his "prize student."[79] Ever since that time, Levin maintained close ties with Jawitz and received part of his archive just months

[77] On him, see Asaf Yedidya, Benjamin Menashe Levin and Orthodox *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, in: Cathedra, 130 (2008), pp. 103–128.

[78] Simon Federbush (ed.): Hochmath Israel. Science of Judaism in Western Europe, vol. 2, Jerusalem 1963 (in Hebrew), pp. 162–169.

[79] Letter from Zeev Jawitz to Abraham Samuel Hirschberg, February 7, 1913, NLI Archives, Jawitz Collection, Arc 4° 1602.

before his death, including the remaining volumes of *Toldot Israel* and various articles which he set upon to print.

Another Orthodox scholar who grew close to Jawitz at that period was Rabbi Chaim Heller (1879–1960). Heller was born in Bialystok in 1879, studying independently and becoming a broad scholar. Alongside the study of Torah, Halakhah and Aggadah, Heller studied ancient languages: Greek, Latin, Syrian Aramaic, Arabic, and more, investing much time into studying ancient translations of the Bible.

After marrying, he relocated to Lodz in Poland, and in 1910 became the rabbi of Lomzha for a short while. In 1911, his study on the *Peshitta*, the Syrian translation of the Bible, was published in German in Berlin. The work accorded him a PhD from the University of Würzburg. In this study Heller tried to prove, contrary to the opinion of some Bible critics, that the differences in versions did not stem from different sources. The Bible was the source of the *Peshitta*, as well as the most correct version. Heller saw his study as key in refuting the scientific system of Biblical criticism. That same year, Jawitz wrote a glowing review of Heller's study in *Tachkemoni*, hoping that the author would continue his struggle against Bible critics.[80]

Jawitz contacted Heller and encouraged him to continue researching the Bible. On Jawitz's initiative, in 1911 Heller turned to Yechiel Michel Pines, Jawitz's brother-in-law, asking him for help in his research.[81] The ties between Jawitz and Heller continued until Jawitz's death. Jawitz hoped that his studies and those of Rabbis Halevy, Heller and Levin would come together to form an Orthodox school of research and challenge the existing *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, which he believed was influenced by Christian scholars and their preconceptions:

> "I am not the only one to follow this path, thank God, because the author of *Dorot HaRishonim* does likewise. Although we do not agree with each other as we did before, I hereby declare that he has done exceedingly well, and has shown to what extent research into our history has become bogged down. The brilliant Heller in his German essay on the *Peshitta* has satisfactorily proved how flimsy and mediocre are the Biblical knowledge and translations of arrogant Bible critics. Now Dr. B. M. Levin has published a new and revised edition of *Igeret Rav Sherira* [The Epistle of

[80] Zeev Jawitz, Bikoret HaPeshitta U'Mevakreah, in: Tachkemoni, 2 (1911), pp. 43–47.
[81] Eliezer Rafael Malachi: Michtav meR' Haim Heller z"l, in: Or HaMiarach, 8 (1961) p. 8.

> Rav Sherira Gaon], with addenda and comments, which points up the difference between one who supports our literature from within, and the gentile sages who merely gnaw upon its outer rind. We four are not gentile sages but sages of Israel."[82]

During that time, Jawitz wrote a long article in Yiddish titled "The Great Confession," in which he debated his critics who argued that he was biased and not critical enough of his sources.[83] Jawitz structured his article like a Yom Kippur confession, or *Vidui*, rebuffing some of the arguments and admitting to others. Jawitz had great expectations as to the article's affect, but no one agreed to publish it. "The Great Confession" developed ideas which he had begun addressing twenty years earlier. First, Jawitz admitted that his writing his biased, arguing that "a book without bias is like a body without a soul" and that "when one writes history, his historic outlook should burn in his bones like fire. Only then can one write history, especially Jewish history."[84]

Jawitz claimed that all historians, especially those writing Jewish history, were biased. But, unlike others who were influenced by their Christian teachers in university and modern Western ideologies, his research was the result of fifty years of an authentic *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Jawitz says he takes *Wissenschaft des Judentums* seriously, but only the quality research, not the "fake, hollow, frivolous" criticism he claimed stems from antisemitism. According to him, worthy criticism is not a product of the nineteenth century, but appeared in rabbinic literature throughout the generations.

Finally, Jawitz refuted an argument raised against him, whereby he regards rabbinic Aggadah as historical fact. He repeated his view on the value of Aggadah in providing insight into the attitudes of Jews toward important historical events and the lessons drawn from them.

In his article, Jawitz claimed that the research of Halevy and Levin was properly scientific, combining far-reaching knowledge of traditional Jewish sources and true criticism. These were alternatives to the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* that emerged in Germany during the previous century.

82 Letter from Zeev Jawitz to A. S. Hirschberg, February 7, 1913, NLI Archives, Jawitz Collection, Arc 4° 1602.

83 Zeev Jawitz: The Great Confession, NLI Archives, Jawitz Collection, Arc 4° 1602. A Hebrew translation was published in Yedidya, To Cultivate a Hebrew Culture, pp. 191–203.

84 Ibid.

6. Conclusion

Jawitz was fortunate enough to complete the manuscript of his magnum opus, *Toldot Israel*. It was in the Summer of 1922, on the same day the League of Nations granted Britain the mandate over Palestine. He saw poetic symbolism in the fact that his life's work ended on this historic day, starting a new era of "the people of Israel on their land."[85] Indeed, his historiographical project served the new era in the land of Israel.

The alternative that Jawitz tried to substitute for the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* associated with Heinrich Graetz and others, was influenced not only by Orthodox ideology, which he supported, but also by his nationalist ideology. He regarded Jewish history, as well as the Hebrew language, as a national asset that expressed the Jewish national character. In his opinion, a true understanding of Jewish history was only possible for someone intimately connected with the Jewish nation and its ancient culture. This point of view was derived from his philosophical perception of the Jewish nation as the chosen people, with a vast abyss separating it from all other nations, both nationally and culturally. In fact, he perceived Judaism as a closed culture that was sufficient unto itself, with all that that implies. In his research, he tried to produce not only a comprehensive historiography, but also an original Jewish historical philosophy based on his nationalist Orthodox orientation.[86] He saw himself and his disciples as the "priests of memory," presenting the true and immanent history and character of the Jewish nation as a platform to the Jewish future in the land of Israel.

[85] Zeev Jawitz, Toldot Israel, vol. 10, p. III; Michael Brenner: Prophets of the Past. Interpreters of Jewish History, Princeton / Oxford 2010, p. 159.

[86] Yedidya, Criticized Criticism, pp. 197–221.

Rabbi Dessler's View of Secular Studies and *Wissenschaft des Judentums*

by Esther Solomon

Abstract

Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler (1892–1953) is often portrayed as antagonistic to secular studies. However, his writings show more of an intellectual hierarchy that places Torah wisdom at the top and all other wisdom a distant second. R. Dessler expended great effort promoting Torah scholarship while generally refraining from disparaging secular studies. Looking at the writings of his predecessors in the Mussar (moralist) movement, one can see that there was no disapproval of worldly education there, either: In fact, R. Dessler and his predecessors were well-educated in many secular disciplines.

This essay looks to places R. Dessler's attitude toward *Wissenschaft des Judentums* within the context of his life's mission to advance talmudic study and his consequent unwillingness to countenance anything that detracted from furthering the learning of Torah. I argue that, whereas his extreme opposition to *Wissenschaft* was the result of his aversion to its aims, methods and conclusions, his nuanced relationship to Orthodox *Wissenschaft* was the result of the hierarchy through which he viewed secular as opposed to talmudic study.

1. Introduction

Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler (1892–1953) was a scion of the Lithuanian Mussar (moralist) movement and a great-grandson of its founder, R. Israel Salanter (1809–1883).[1] He was educated from age thirteen at the Kelm Mussar Yeshivah, which was supported by his family, and married the granddaughter

[1] This article is a subsection of my dissertation, being written at Bar Ilan University under the supervision of Professor Hanoch Ben Pazi and Professor Gershon Greenberg. I have greatly benefitted from their wisdom, erudition, and dedication. The article was vastly improved through the editorial skill and scholarship of Dr. Mirjam Thulin.

of the dean of the yeshivah, R. Simcha Zissel Broide (1824–1898).[2] In 1928, R. Dessler moved to England, becoming the founder and principal of the *Kollel* (yeshivah for married men) in Gateshead in November 1941, which was the first of its kind in England. He opened a yeshivah for younger men as an adjunct to the *Kollel* in 1944 and in the same year also founded the Gateshead Teachers' seminary for women, an ultra-Orthodox institution of higher Jewish learning, which became a prototype for many such institutions now in existence. In 1948, he relocated to Israel, becoming the *mashgiach* (spiritual principal) of the Ponevezh Yeshivah in B'nei Braq, a position which he maintained until his death in 1953.[3] R. Dessler's thought was popularized in a five-volume series entitled *Mikhtav me-Eliyahu* (An Epistle from Elijah), which has become a fixture of the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) library.[4]

The academic literature is inconsistent regarding R. Dessler's perspective on secular studies. There are those who claim that he studied Freud and Kant and could quote both verbatim.[5] There is one opinion that he read Dale Carnegie and even used a basic concept from his book in a lecture at Ponevezh Yeshivah.[6] This would indicate that R. Dessler felt positively about secular studies and was ready to acquire general knowledge himself. However, there are also those who depict R. Dessler as antagonistic to secular studies.[7] Some opinions suggest that R. Dessler was a representative of the "anti-*madda*

2 Geoffrey Claussen: Sharing the Burden. R. Simchah Zissel Ziv and the Path of Musar, Alabany 2015, p. 15.

3 Esther Solomon: R. Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler. Not Quite a Mussar Traditionalist, in: Da'at 82 (2016), pp. CVI–CVII.

4 Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler: Mikhtav me-Eliyahu. 5 vols., Jerusalem 1955–1997. In this article, the respective volumes of Mikhtav me-Eliyahu will be referred to as MM1, MM2, MM3, MM4 and MM5; Yonason Rosenblum: Rav Dessler. The Life and Impact of Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler the Michtav m'Eliyahu, Jerusalem 2000, p. v.

5 Tamar Ross: Ha-Adam Ve-Koakh Bechirato Ha-Mussarit Be-Mishnat Ha-Rav Dessler. (Man and his Power of Choice in the Thought of Rabbi E.E. Dessler) in: Da'at 13 (1984), p. 114; Jonathan Garb: Mussar as a Modern Movement, in: Third International Conference on Modern Religions and Religious Movements in Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the Bábí-Bahái Faiths, March 2011, Hebrew University, Tikvah Working Paper 01/12, Lecture 6, 32 pp., here p. 6; Louis Jacobs: The Jewish Religion. A Companion, Oxford 1995, p. 120. More on this topic later in the article. See also Ze'ev Lev: Al Ha-herem al Gidulo shel Gadol. (Regarding the Ban on The Making of a Torah Giant), in: HaMa'ayan 50 (2010). https://www.machonso.org/hamaayan/?gilayon=15&id=743 (last accessed February 14, 2018).

6 Yoel Katan: Qabel Ha-Emet Meemee She-Amra, in: HaMa'ayan 32 (1992) 3, pp. 54–56; MM4, 243–245.

7 Norman Lamm: Torah Umadda, New Jersey 1990, p. 71.

(anti-science) position," and that for him, involvement in *madda* (science) was somehow "un-Jewish."[8]

What, in fact, was R. Dessler's position regarding general knowledge? This article will demonstrate that R. Dessler's perspective was controversial for his time and remains so today: He supported engagement in secular studies and approved of its acquisition by the general public, yet he valued the learning of Torah more. The equivocal nature of his attitude has led some scholars to the conclusion that he opposed the attainment of secular knowledge per se. I argue, however, that R. Dessler's prime motivation was his veneration of Torah learning and his desire to revive the traditional Torah wisdom that was lost during World War II. This perspective will then be used to explain R. Dessler's relationship to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.

2. R. Dessler's Refusal to Allow the Opening of a Teachers' Seminary

The primary sources brought in to demonstrate R. Dessler's supposed opposition to secular studies are two letters that he wrote in response to a question posed by his students.[9] They had asked about the permissibility of opening a teachers' seminary for Orthodox men near the Gateshead yeshivah, of which R. Dessler was the dean. In his response, dated May 15, 1951, R. Dessler expressed his reluctance to support the creation of an institution for higher secular education in Gateshead. This was despite the fact that it was clear to him that the institution would be run according to Halakhah (Jewish law) and that the only people admitted would be those who had already chosen not to stay in the yeshivah. R. Dessler wrote that the existence of such a seminary might lead a person who could have been in yeshivah to abandon it in order to get a degree.[10] He added that, even were that person to stay, his learning would be tainted with thoughts of the secular education which the seminary had taught him to want but that he was not getting.[11] He makes no mention of the conventional reasons for disallowing secular studies: the fear that exposure to *madda* is dangerous to religious people, the belief that only Talmud and

[8] David Shatz: Practical Endeavor and the Torah u-Madda Debate, in: Torah U-Madda Journal 3 (1991–1992), pp. 123–124, 148 n87.

[9] MM3, pp. 355–360. The sources will be addressed later in the article.

[10] MM3, p. 355.

[11] MM3, pp. 355–356.

Halakhah are religiously valid subjects of study, and the concern about wasting time that could be better spent learning Torah.[12] The only point to which he alludes in his letter is how the teachers' seminary would detract from the educational endeavors at his yeshivah.

R. Dessler's arguments in these letters appear quite clearly to be expressing opposition not to secular studies per se, but rather to the introduction of a college for Orthodox students near the Gateshead yeshivah, an institution which he had worked to establish. Support for this view comes from R. Dessler's comment that the reason he could not allow the opening of a teachers' seminary was specifically because the yeshivah was the only such institution then worldwide.[13] As a result of the Holocaust, virtually nothing had remained of the yeshivahs that had existed in Europe prior to World War II. Almost none of the American yeshivahs had been founded yet.

3. Orthodox Forerunners: R. Samson Raphael Hirsch's View of Secular Studies

In the same letter of May 15, 1951, R. Dessler comments on the worldview of the disciples of R. Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888), called *Torah im Derekh Eretz* ("Torah with the way of the land," a phrase from Mishnah Avot 2, 2).[14] R. Hirsch used the expression to refer to an educational ideal that incorporated secular knowledge into Torah studies. R. Dessler writes that this approach was somewhat imperfect as far as the complete acceptance of the Torah's perspective was concerned.[15]

R. Hirsch's view of secular studies was radically different from that of R. Dessler, even from the perspective that R. Dessler was in favor of them.

12 Lamm, Torah Umadda, pp. 47–48.

13 MM3, p. 357.

14 Regarding R. Hirsch, see Shnayer Z. Leiman: Rabbinic Openness to General Culture in the Early Modern Period in Western and Central Europe, in: Jacob J. Schacter (ed.), Judaism's Encounter with Other Cultures. Rejection or Integration?, New York 1997, pp. 180–201; Benjamin Brown: Breuer, Hirsch and Jewish Nationalism. Change and Continuity – Principle versus Supra-principle, in: Journal of Jewish Studies 64 (2013) 2, pp. 383–402; Matthias Morgenstern: Rabbi S. R. Hirsch and his Perception of Germany and German Jewry, in: Steven E. Aschheim / Vivan Liska (eds.), The German-Jewish Experience Revisited, Berlin 2015, pp. 207–230; Marc Shapiro: Samson Raphael Hirsch and Orthodoxy. A Contested Legacy, in: Adam S. Ferziger (ed.), The Paths of Daniel. Studies in Judaism and Jewish Culture in Honor of Rabbi Professor Daniel Sperber, Ramat Gan 2017, pp. 129–152.

15 MM3, p. 356.

For R. Dessler, secular studies were at most an addendum to the all-important activity of studying Torah.[16] Conversely, R. Hirsch is generally understood to have advocated a synthesis of secular and Jewish studies as a first-choice position, because that perspective "represents the ancient, traditional wisdom of our Sages that has stood the test everywhere and at all times."[17] He believed that only through Judaism could the secular be elevated to the point where it achieves its ultimate purpose, and only through secular study could Torah knowledge be fully appreciated and properly understood.[18]

What is interesting here is how R. Dessler concludes that R. Hirsch's approach was flawed. As evidence, he cites the fact that it did not produce *Gedolei Israel* (Torah giants or people of great Torah learning).[19] R. Dessler was convinced that the development of such individuals was the primary reason for the existence of any yeshivah, and therefore considered the Hirschian system a failure for not having done so.[20] R. Dessler believed that a system that does not produce Torah giants was invalid; he was concerned regarding its impact on Torah learning worldwide.[21] This idea gains further support through R. Dessler's embrace of secular studies for those not learning in yeshivah.

16 MM3, pp. 47–49.

17 Samson Raphael Hirsch: Nineteen Letters, trans. by Bernard Drachman, Jerusalem 1969, p. 98; Samson Raphael Hirsch: Horeb, trans. by Isidore Grunfeld, Jerusalem 1994, p. 11. See the explanation of R. Hirsch's educational ideal in Shimon Schwab: These and Those, New York 1966, pp. 13–16; Samson Raphael Hirsch: Collected Writings, ed. by Elliott Bondi / David Bechhofer, vol. VI, Jerusalem 1990, p. 221.

18 Mordechai Breuer: The "Torah Im Derekh Eretz" of Samson Raphael Hirsch, Jerusalem 1979, p. 9; Ephraim Chamiel: The Middle Way. The Emergence of Modern Jewish Trends in Nineteenth-Century Judaism Responses to Modernity (Hebrew), Jerusalem 2011, p. 198; Hirsch, Nineteen Letters, pp. 98–109; Hirsch, Collected Writings, vol. VII, pp. 86–100. See also Yehuda (Leo) Levi: Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch. Myth and Fact, in: Tradition, 31 (Spring, 1997) 3, pp. 5–22.

19 MM3, p. 356. This also indicates that R. Dessler thought of the yeshivah scholars as an elite. See also MM3, p. 357.

20 MM3, p. 357.

21 This position should be differentiated from that of, for instance, R. Yaakov Kamenetsky (1891–1986), who, one generation later, said that children should be taught general studies when still young. R. Dessler, in contrast, never discussed the practical benefits of secular knowledge. See Aharon Hersh Fried: Are Our Children Too Worldly? West Coast Conference of Agudath Israel of America, Palm Springs 1991, p. 43.

4. R. Dessler on Secular Knowledge

When not connected to a yeshivah framework, R. Dessler's approval of secular studies appears unambiguous. In the 1930s, while serving as a rabbi in England, he explained that the more one understands the wonders of the universe, and of the human body in particular, the more one will gain appreciation of the wisdom of God.[22] In 1940, in the same capacity, he said that through our increasing knowledge of the galaxies and the workings of the body we discern the Divine. He further stated that in order to not perceive God in the wonders of nature one would have to have "an evil inclination of iron."[23] As for philosophy, in a letter to a private student in England in July 1938, he acknowledged positive aspects of Kant's thinking, while cautioning the student not to delve into philosophy and Kabbalah while he, R. Dessler, was away.[24] According to R. Dessler, however, the fact remained that Kant wrote complete heresy. He promised that when he came back, the two of them would sit together as usual and discuss all the young man's questions.[25]

Physicist Ze'ev Lev, also known as William Low (1922–2004), who later founded the *Jerusalem Institute of Technology*, studied under R. Dessler in the 1950s when he was giving talks to professionals, particularly physicians, in private homes in Jerusalem.[26] Lev wrote that R. Dessler once gave a class on the difference between Freud and R. Israel Salanter, in which he quoted sections of Freud by heart. In another class, he spoke about Kant, quoting him verbatim.[27] These anecdotes indicate that R. Dessler had great familiarity with modern philosophers and their works and that he felt it was beneficial to share this with at least some of his students.

In England, R. Dessler interacted with university students and sometimes their professors, answering their questions and suggesting a Torah-based

22 MM5, p. 274.

23 MM5, pp. 225, 274.

24 The letter was written in England to a student there. It is dated in the Torah portion of the week, as typical in ultra-Orthodox circles. In 1938, the Torah portion of *Parshat Balak* was in the first week of July, see Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler: Sefer HaZikaron, vol. 1, B'nei Braq 2004, pp. 107–108.

25 Dessler, Sefer HaZikaron, vol. 1, p. 108.

26 William Low (Ze'ev Lev): Some Remarks on a Letter of R.E.E. Dessler, in: Harry Schimmel / Cyril Domb / Aryeh Carmell (eds.), Encounter, Jerusalem 1989, p. 205.

27 Lev: Al Ha-herem al Gidulo shel Gadol.

approach to the issues that arose from their studies.[28] His ability to establish dialogue with these people points to his fluency with the thinking to which they had been exposed. Even within the walls of a yeshivah, R. Dessler sometimes utilized his erudition. For example, in Ponevezh, when interacting with students who had come from non-yeshivah backgrounds, his "wide knowledge of the modern world, including a familiarity with recent scientific discoveries," broke down the stereotype of Torah scholars who were unfamiliar with the world around them.[29] It also seems that R. Dessler incorporated principles developed by Dale Carnegie in his book *How to Win Friends and Influence People* into a lecture given in Ponevezh Yeshivah.[30] While R. Dessler did not mention the book by name, the similarities are striking.[31] Obscuring his source allowed him to teach his students the content that he deemed important without sanctioning the pursuit of secular knowledge as a worthy pastime for yeshivah students.

All told, it seems that R. Dessler generally approved of secular studies. However, he kept any familiarity with secular knowledge discrete around his yeshivah students, even when he was teaching them secular sources. R. Dessler never publicly recommended secular studies to his yeshivah students, neither in Gateshead nor in Ponevezh. Instead, he wanted the students to focus on pure Torah learning. This dichotomy became manifest when, for example, R. Dessler censured a friend who planned to send his children to college. In a 1940 letter, R. Dessler tried to convince him to opt for full-time yeshivah instead, saying that the only way to acquire real knowledge of Torah literature was to be completely devoted to it and to eschew all other forms of study.[32]

R. Dessler's seemingly contradictory positions can be reconciled through his own notes from 1941, in which he teaches that wisdom is only valuable

28 Rosenblum, Rav Dessler, pp. 24, 302, 312–313. Meir Lambersky / Betzalel Karlinsky / Yitzchak Roth: Mechaneh Ledorot, B'nei Braq 2009, p. 375.

29 Rosenblum, Rav Dessler, p. 302.

30 Dale Carnegie: How to Win Friends and Influence People. New York 1936; Katan, Qabel Ha-Emet, pp. 54–56. MM4, pp. 243–245.

31 Katan quotes R. Aryeh Carmell, saying that R. Dessler did read Carnegie, albeit in abridged form, see Dale Carnegie: How to Win Friends and Influence People, in: Reader's Digest 30 (1937) 177, pp. 130–144. Katan, Qabel Ha-Emet, p. 244. The lecture by R. Dessler accords far more with the article than with the actual book.

32 MM3, p. 339.

when used in service of the greater good, i.e. the revelation of God, but that wisdom for its own sake was like serving evil.[33] With such a statement, R. Dessler is perhaps unwittingly echoing the position of R. Hirsch.[34] This was also the understanding of R. Esriel Hildesheimer (1820–1899), who first opened a yeshivah in Eisenstadt, Hungary, in 1851 that included secular studies in the curriculum, and then in 1873 founded the *Rabbinerseminar für das Orthodoxe Judentum* (Orthodox Rabbinical Seminary) in Berlin integrating *Wissenschaft des Judentums* into its Orthodox curriculum.[35] All three men would have agreed that secular studies had to be subjugated to the overarching goal of advancing God's agenda. The similarities, however, end there.

For R. Dessler, studying Torah was the top priority and studying anything else was less important.[36] He saw Torah study as the methodology providing the greatest connection to God, and thus as the ultimate vocation of the Jewish people.[37] While he stopped short of the view held by the *Nefesh Ha-Chaim* (literally "living soul"), which implied that learning Torah was the *only* vehicle for that connection, for R. Dessler it was certainly the preferred approach for trying to achieve it.[38] This exclusive promotion of talmudic studies was not an attitude shared by rabbis Hirsch and Hildesheimer.[39] In R. Hirsch's *Realschule*, a school he started in Frankfurt in 1853, not even ten hours per week were devoted to Judaic studies.[40] However, this was a concession to government decrees, as R. Hirsch had planned twenty hours of Judaic studies in the curriculum.[41] In

33 MM1, pp. 65–66.

34 Hirsch, Collected Writings, vol. VII, pp. 11–12.

35 Michael K. Silber: The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy. The Invention of a Tradition, in: Jack Wertheimer (eds.), The Uses of Tradition. Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era, Cambridge 1992, p. 31; David Ellenson: Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer and the Creation of a Modern Jewish Orthodoxy, Tuscaloosa 1990, p. 143.

36 MM3, p. 185.

37 MM1, p. 223; MM2, p. 41; MM3, p. 189.

38 Ross, Ha-Adam Ve-Koakh Bechirato (Man and his Power of Choice), p. 120.

39 MM1, pp. 103, 105, 195–197, 317. Ross, Ha-Adam VeKoakh Bechirato (Man and his Power of Choice), p. 120. Rosenblum, Rav Dessler, p. 316; Nurit Stadler: The Sacred and the Profane in the Concept of Work. The Case of the Ultra-Orthodox Community in Israel, unpublished dissertation, Hebrew University 2001 (Hebrew), pp. 69, 140, 152; Aryeh Carmell: Torah Im Derech Eretz. Rav Hirsch and Rav Dessler, Dvar Yerushalayim Newsletter (2008), http://dvar.org.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=361:torah-im-derech-eretz&catid=2&Itemid=289&lang=he (last accessed February 14, 2018).

40 Eliyahu Meir Klugman: Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, New York 1996, p. 228.

41 Klugman, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, pp. 228–229. Joseph Elias: Editor's Notes to the Nineteen Letters, in: Hirsch, Nineteen Letters, p. 320.

R. Hildesheimer's seminary, many compromises were made regarding Talmudic studies in order to facilitate the university training of the students.[42] Students in the fifth and sixth years were required to spend (only – E. S.) five hours per week on Talmud. The schedule of the rabbinical seminary in Berlin lends credence to claims that its students never achieved noteworthy expertise in Talmud study.[43] In contrast, R. Dessler felt that the only way to attain proficiency in Talmud was through long-term immersion. Despite this, he valued secular studies, at least for those not learning in a yeshivah. In this respect, he was echoing the sentiments of his predecessors in the Mussar movement.

5. R. Dessler's Ideological Predecessors

Eastern European Jewry, among them Lithuanian Jews (Litvaks), are characterized by certain traits, including Yiddish as a common language, a high degree of conservative religious commitment, and an ambivalent attitude towards enlightenment and modernity. Lithuanian Jews in particular were known for their extreme emphasis on rational thought.[44]

Characteristics of Lithuanian Jewry can be recognized in R. Dessler's attitudes.[45] In this respect, as in many others, his views were in accordance with those of his predecessors in the Mussar movement, specifically R. Simcha Zissel Broide and R. Israel Salanter. Lithuanian rabbis outside the Mussar movement sometimes echoed this relationship to secular studies. For instance, R. Naftali Zevi Yehuda Berlin (1816–1893), *rosh yeshivah* of the Volozhin Yeshivah, "was […] familiar with many fields of Jewish literature, and ensured that his son Me'ir learned Russian."[46] Despite these examples, the acquisition of secular

42 Ellenson, Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer, pp. 156–157. In contrast, Louis Jacobs writes that in the Gateshead *Kollel*, the Talmud was studied twelve hours per day, see Louis Jacobs: Helping with Inquiries. An Autobiography, London 1989, pp. 48–49.

43 Ellenson, Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer, p. 146.

44 Mordechai Zalkin: Lithuanian Jewry and the Concept of East European Jewry, in: Šarūnas Liekis / Antony Polonsky / Chaeran Freeze (eds.), Jews in the Former Grand Duchy of Lithuania Since 1772, Oxford 2013, pp. 58, 61; Shaul Stampfer: Families, Rabbis and Education. Traditional Jewish Society in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe, Portland, Oregon 2010, p. 230.

45 Garb writes that "[most of the prominent Mussar personalities were knowledgeable regarding the development of European thought.," (Jonathan Garb: Yearnings of the Soul. Psychological Thought in Modern Kabbalah, Chicago 2015, p. 67).

46 Shaul Stampfer: The Lithuanian Yeshivahs of the Nineteenth Century. Creating a Tradition of Learning, trans. by Lindsey Taylor-Guthartz, Portland, Oregon 2012, p. 163. At the Volozhin yeshivah (1803–1892), secular studies within a yeshivah setting were seen as a waste of time

knowledge among Lithuanian rabbis appears to have been the exception and not the rule. Still, the Lithuanian attitude to secular studies seemed to have been more tolerant than that of Hasidism, whose leadership, for various reasons, was far more disparaging of general education.[47]

R. Dessler was a product of the Kelm Talmud Torah, the yeshivah he attended from the age of 13 until his departure to England at the age of 36.[48] His affiliation with that institution was strengthened by his marriage to the granddaughter of its founder, R. Simcha Zissel Broide.[49] Accordingly, he described himself as a product of Kelm and its doctrines.[50] R. Broide was known for the schools he had previously established: the Kelm Talmud Torah in 1865 that initially was an educational institution for young teenagers and later a yeshivah of the same name, and a Talmud Torah in Grubin in 1880.[51] Both introduced secular studies into their curricula.[52] In this way, R. Broide's yeshivas were similar to R. Esriel Hildesheimer's yeshiva in Eisenstadt.[53] Although R. Dessler never attended Grubin, his description of his long association with Kelm and its yeshivah make clear that he identified with its principles.[54] R. Broide was a proponent of secular studies, although he saw them as secondary to Torah study.[55] Thus, R. Broide's support for secular studies was an early mirror of R. Dessler's.

that could be better used for the study of Torah. However, they were not forbidden, see Stampfer, Lithuanian Yeshivahs, pp. 160–165.

47 David Biale / David Assaf / Benjamin Brown / Uriel Gellman / Samuel Heilman / Moshe Rosman / Gadi Sagiv / Marcin Wodzinski: Hasidism. A New History, Princeton 2018, pp. 491–492, 549. See also Avraham Mordechai Alter to Yitzchak Meir Levine, Mikhtav Devar HaTzeirim VeHa-Bibliateken (Letter Regarding the Youth and the Libraries), in: Ossef Mikhtavim (Collection of Letters), Warsaw 1937, pp. 50–51.

48 Rosenblum, Rav Dessler, pp. 25, 113.

49 Geoffrey Claussen, Sharing the Burden, p. 7; Rosenblum, Rav Dessler, p. 99.

50 See MM4, pp. 328–331 where, in a letter to his daughter, R. Dessler traces their family's spiritual and biological roots to Kelm.

51 Claussen, Sharing the Burden, pp. 13–15, 27, 29. Rosenblum, Rav Dessler, p. 403.

52 Rosenblum, Rav Dessler, p. 42. Claussen, Sharing the Burden, p. 14. See also Low, Remarks on a Letter, p. 210; Dov Katz: Tenuat HaMussar, vol. 2, Jerusalem 1982, p. 197; Paul Johnson, History of the Jews, New York 1987, p. 328. Johnson writes that R. Broide believed in secular education but not cultural integration for his students; R. Esriel Hildesheimer differed from R. Broide in his views on integration, see Ellenson, Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer, pp. 37, 54–56.

53 See Ellenson, Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer, pp. 36–37.

54 MM3, pp. 346–349.

55 Geoffrey Claussen: Rabbi Simhah Zissel Ziv. The Moral Vision of a 19th Century Mussar Master, unpublished dissertation, Jewish Theological Seminary New York 2011, pp. 92–93.

The connection between Mussar and secular studies did not start with R. Broide but with his teacher, R. Israel Lipkin Salanter, the originator of the Mussar movement.[56] R. Salanter, too, engaged in secular studies and was supportive of gaining worldly knowledge, especially in natural sciences and foreign languages; he himself had acquired secular knowledge.[57] R. Salanter did not discourage his student, R. Broide, from opening schools that offered secular studies.[58] He also felt that R. Hirsch's *Nineteen Letters* should be translated into Russian to be available for Russian Jews who were embracing secularism.[59] After reading the *Nineteen Letters* for the first time, R. Salanter reportedly asked, "Where is there a heaven big enough for R. Hirsch?"[60] Nonetheless, he felt that R. Hirsch's *Torah im Derekh Eretz* program was appropriate for German but not Russian Jews.[61] He apparently believed that the traditional yeshivah system of exclusive Torah study was preferable and, where possible, should not be exchanged for the *Torah im Derekh Eretz* system of R. Hirsch.

R. Salanter's positive regard for secular knowledge paled in comparison to his admiration for Torah study and those who studied Torah full-time.[62] For him, it was clear that a yeshivah represented a rarefied atmosphere of purity.[63] Therefore, from the outset of the Mussar movement, the approach to secular studies versus Torah study was always nuanced. R. Dessler, as an ideological descendant of rabbis Broide and Salanter, shared their approach: Torah study as the ultimate vocation, secular study as a secondary but respectable adjunct.

56 Tamar Ross: Ha-Machshava Ha-Iyunit Be-kitvei Mamshikhav shel R. Yisrael Salanter Bi-Tenuat Ha-Mussar (Moral Philosophy in the Writings of Rabbi Salanter's Disciples in the Musar Movement), unpublished dissertation, Hebrew University 1986 (Hebrew), p. 8.

57 He had studied science, probably to be able to answer the claims of Charles Darwin, see Zalman Ury: The Ethic of Israel Salanter and Moral Education in Jewish Schools, unpublished dissertation, University of California 1966, p. 93; Menahem Glenn: Israel Salanter. Religious-Ethical Thinker, New York 1953, pp. 69–70; Immanuel Etkes: R. Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement, trans. by Jonathon Chipman, Jerusalem 1993, pp. 244–245.

58 Yakov Yechiel Weinberg: Responsa Seridei Aish (Remnants of Fire), vol. 4, Jerusalem 2003, p. 294.

59 For this article, I have used the Hebrew translation: Samson Raphael Hirsch: The Nineteen Letters, ed. by Joseph P. Elias, Jerusalem 1995. On R. Hirsch and his book, see: Klugman: Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, p. 66; Etkes, R. Israel Salanter, pp. 246–247. Controversies still exist over whether or not the *Nineteen Letters* is based on Kantian philosophy.

60 Klugman, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, p. 66.

61 Etkes, R. Israel Salanter, pp. 247, 286–287.

62 Claussen, Kelm School, p. 154.

63 Etkes, R. Israel Salanter, p. 247.

6. R. Dessler and "Modernity"

R. Dessler never compromised his ideology regarding the primacy of Torah. This is an important disclaimer for those who would take his supposed support of secular studies to an extreme. After describing a 1933 conversation between R. Abraham Isaac Bloch (1890–1941), *rosh yeshivah* of Telz (Telshey) in Western Lithuania, and writer Thomas Mann (1875–1955), Jonathan Garb writes:

> "This account, in and of itself, positions the Mussar movement in a context which is not Eastern but Central European, not insular and talmudic but entirely modern. […] I believe that the modernity of one of the great movements of 19th and 20th century traditional Judaism has not yet been sufficiently recognized."[64]

In his conclusion, Garb writes:

> "My […] view […] is that one should see 19th and 20th century movements such as Mussar […] as forms of 'multiple modernity.' […] In other words, when Bloch engages Mann or Dessler engages Freud, they are doing so from within European modernity, as an alternative form of modernity, rather [than] merely reacting in a conservative and defensive manner."[65]

Garb defines the term "modernity" as an accelerated, self-aware progression. As such, it is not related to specific processes like secularization, progressivism, or liberalization. Rather, modernity is a process in which humankind is taking part.[66] This is similar to the definition of modernity given by Roni Weinstein, who describes it as "primarily a process of ripening within the Jewish context supported by a long cultural heritage."[67]

Garb views the Mussar movement in general and R. Dessler in particular as part of this process.[68] He puts great stock in R. Dessler's familiarity with

64 Garb, Mussar as a Modern Movement, p. 3.

65 Garb, Mussar as a Modern Movement, p. 6. By "multiple modernities" Garb refers to Shmuel Eisenstadt's understanding of the interrelation of modernity with pre-existent cultures, see Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt: Multiple Modernities, New Brunswick 2002; Eisenstadt: The Great Revolutions and the Civilizations of Modernity, Boston 2006, pp. 162, 183.

66 Jonathan Garb, Modern Kabbalah as an Autonomous Domain of Research, Los Angeles 2016 (Hebrew), pp. 7–8.

67 Roni Weinstein: Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity, Portland, Oregon 2016, p. 8.

68 Tikochinsky also describes Mussar as part of the development of Judaism in the modern period, see Shlomo Tikochinsky: Renaissance Chinukhi Be-Ruach Tenuat Ha-Mussar Ha-Yehudit, in: Yeshayahu Tadmor / Amir Freiman (eds.), Chinukh: Mahut VeRuach (Education: Essence and Spirit), Tel Aviv 2012 (Hebrew), p. 260.

the ideas and vernacular of Freud and depicts the Mussar movement as the opposite of "insular and talmudic." However, Garb's thesis fails to account for other aspects of R. Dessler's thinking.[69] While R. Dessler was able to "engage Freud," he nevertheless rejected him as an authority. He was not embracing a new self-aware process of understanding, nor was he synthesizing an ultra-Orthodox theology with contemporary, secular reality. Despite his ability to use current terminology and thought patterns, R. Dessler fails the test of modernity because he does not willingly engage in its process. Regardless of how he is labelled, R. Dessler's fealty to Torah as the ultimate arbiter makes him a traditionalist. As he was described by a former student, although he "could refer with ease to Einstein, Freud, Marx and Darwin […] he was at heart an old-fashioned Mussarist."[70]

7. R. Dessler and *Wissenschaft des Judentums*

The characteristics of R. Dessler as worldly, intellectual, and yet zealously guarding Torah learning as the exclusive focus of a yeshivah raises the question of how he dealt with the concept of an academic approach to the Jewish religion such as in *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. This requires some winnowing, because he almost never addressed it directly. In his autobiography, Louis Jacobs, R. Dessler's former student, described his experiences at the Gateshead yeshivah:

> "Of this [*Jüdische Wissenschaft*, E. S.], there was hardly a mention either at the Yeshivah or the Kollel. The whole modern scholarly enterprise was not so much negated as ignored completely […] At the Yeshivah, a thick curtain was drawn to shut out any illumination that might come from outside the range of talmudic studies. Until I had begun to study formally at University even the names of [Nachman] Krochmal [1785–1840], [Leopold] Zunz [1784–1886], [Salomon] Rapoport [1873–1917], [Zacharias] Frankel [1801–1875], Shadal [Shmuel D. Luzzatto, 1800–1865], [Moritz] Steinschneider [1782–1856] and the other pioneers of historical studies were unknown to me."[71]

[69] Garb, Mussar as a Modern Movement, p. 4. Garb bases his conclusions on Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler: Sefer HaZikaron, vol. 2, B'nei Brak 2004, pp. 103–108.

[70] Jacobs, Helping with Inquiries, p. 58.

[71] Jacobs, Helping with Inquiries, p. 63.

This is to be expected, given R. Dessler's zeal for yeshivahs remaining free from outside influences. However, his attitude went further in his open antagonism toward the original devisors of *Wissenschaft*. Many of its originators have been described as feeling disgust towards rabbinic Judaism and adopting an academic methodology in order "to subvert traditional norms and justify their proposed reforms."[72] The self-defined function of the original form of *Wissenschaft* was to profane Orthodox Judaism and the Torah by examining them as a man-made system.[73] Presumably, this was done in order to "counter Christian disdain and government suspicion [toward Judaism, E.S.] [...] Put differently, the embrace of German culture would facilitate assimilation."[74] Leopold Zunz, founder of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, "countenanced eliminating irrational or desiccated ritual and the introduction of new ritual where needed."[75]

The new discipline was openly antagonistic to the place of rabbis in Judaism. For instance, Zunz wrote an essay on R. Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040–1105), known as Rashi, in which his self-declared goal was "to strip... (him) of the nimbus of saga and mythology."[76] Additionally, Abraham Geiger (1810–1874), Zunz's younger companion in *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, wrote that "[i]ntellectual life at the academies of Palestine was characterized by dull languor. The Jerusalem Gemara is bare, meager and sober, though not lacking in legendary superstition."[77]

72 See Immanuel Wohlwill's opening article from the Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, Berlin 1822, pp. 15–16, trans. as: Michael A. Meyer: Jewish Scholarship and Identity in Modern Germany, in: Peter Y. Meddling (ed.), A New Jewry? America since the Second World War, Oxford 1992, p. 182. See also Assaf Yedidya: Orthodox Reactions to "Wissenschaft des Judentums," in: Modern Judaism 30 (2010) 1, pp. 69–94, here p. 70; Chanan Gafni: The Emergence of Critical Scholarship on Rabbinic Literature in the Nineteenth Century Social and Ideological Contexts, unpublished dissertation, Harvard 2005, pp. 221, 239, 240, 264–265.

73 Regarding Zunz's sentiments, see: Ismar Schorsch: Leopold Zunz, Philadelphia 2016, pp. 15, 112, 114. For examples of how a *Wissenschaft* scholar could use the discipline to sanction evolving halakhic practice, see Bruce L. Ruben: Max Lilienthal. The Making of the American Rabbinate, Detroit 2011, pp. 11, 116. See also Yedidya, Orthodox Reactions, p. 81.

74 Schorsch, Leopold Zunz, p. 33.

75 Schorsch, Leopold Zunz, p. 82.

76 Schorsch, Leopold Zunz, pp. 7, 43. See the original article, Leopold Zunz: Salomon ben Isaac, genannt Raschi, in: Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judentums (1823), pp. 277–384.

77 Harvey Hill: The Science of Reform. Abraham Geiger and the "Wissenschaft des Judentums," Modern Judaism 27 (2007) 3, pp. 329–349, here p. 331. See also Abraham Geiger: Nachgelassene Schriften, vol. 2, p. 126, in: Max Wiener (ed.), Ernst J. Schlochauer (trans.), Abraham Geiger and Liberal Judaism. The Challenge of the Nineteenth Century, Philadelphia 1962, p. 166.

R. Dessler probably never read the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* texts. Nonetheless, their principal sentiments were well-known in the rabbinic world of which he was a part. While the movement evolved after its inception, the existence of such anti-traditional agendas was sufficient to make it unacceptable among members of the Orthodoxy. With this, the Orthodox were not alone. Kabbalah researcher Gershom Scholem's attitude toward *Wissenschaft des Judentums* is well-known and has resulted in repeated literary attacks.[78] According to him, the main motivation of the originators of *Wissenschaft* was to attain credibility in the eyes of non-Jews, a goal which he found contemptible.[79]

Thus, the enterprise of *Wissenschaft* was something with which we would not expect R. Dessler to identify.[80] In fact, he predictably disparaged *Wissenschaft* when discussing it at the Ponevezh yeshivah in 1951:

> "In the world, there were always systems that opposed the Torah, like idol worship and Greek philosophy and those who followed them. They had ideological opposition to the Torah but did not use the Torah (itself) for the sake of [developing] their errors. In our times, we are witness to a strange phenomenon that has never existed previously. Heretics are using holiness as a base for their heresy, like those who create heresy from within the text itself, and those who utilize holy concepts like the land of Israel and the Hebrew language [for the sake of heresy]."[81]

R. Dessler continued:

78 Alfred Abraham Greenbaum: The Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden in Jewish Historiography. An Analysis and some Observations, in: Michael Fishbane / Paul R. Flohr (eds.), Texts and Responses. Studies presented to Nahum N. Glatzer on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday by his Students, Leiden 1975, pp. 173–185, here p. 183. On Scholem's criticism, see Amir Engel: Gershom Scholem. An Intellectual Biography, Chicago 2017, pp. 91–92. George Y. Kohler argues that Scholem's claims were the result of his aspiration to be seen "as the one and only founding father of […] the academic treatment of Jewish mysticism"; see George Y. Kohler: Heinrich Graetz and the Kabbalah, in: Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts (forthcoming). I wish to thank Dr. George Y. Kohler for sharing his expertise as well as for sharing the manuscript of his unpublished article.

79 Gershom Scholem: Mi-Tokh Hirhurim al Chokhmat Yisrael (Reflections on the Wissenschaft des Judentums), in: Devarim be-go, Tel Aviv 1975, pp. 385–405. Noam Zadoff writes that Scholem's perception was that the goal of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was apologetic, see Noam Zadoff: Gershon Scholem. From Berlin to Jerusalem and Back, trans. Jeffrey Green, Waltham 2018, pp. 84–87.

80 All definitions and attitudes presented here regarding *Wissenschaft des Judentums* are my own understanding and my own responsibility.

81 MM4, p. 42.

> "In the last generations, there are those who use the Torah itself, according to the crookedness of their intellects, for the sake of heresy. These callous, audacious forgers come to criticize, as if such a thing could be done, the Tanakh and the Torah in their entirety. And with their intelligence, which becomes twisted due to their bad character traits and their desires, they delve into the outermost parts of the Torah in order to allow themselves to renounce it according to their corrupt desire."[82]

Hence, R. Dessler's opposition to the original form of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* is far more encompassing than just wanting to keep his yeshivah free of it. He was opposed to and appalled by *Wissenschaft* for its own sake, viewing it as a function of evil. For him, nothing was more holy than the study of the Torah. The attempt to see it as something constructed by human beings, to examine it within an academic framework or to discredit it to any degree was, for him, the ultimate in sacrilege.

8. R. Dessler's Attitude to Orthodox *Wissenschaft des Judentums*

R. Dessler's opposition to *Wissenschaft des Judentums* is a reaction to one of the goals of its originators, i. e. to discredit Orthodoxy. However, over time, Orthodox forms of *Wissenschaft* developed. They provoked two diametrically opposite reactions within Orthodox circles: One denigrated *Wissenschaft* completely; the other co-opted it.[83] The most outspoken proponent of the first school was R. Samson Raphael Hirsch. His view was that because *Wissenschaft des Judentums* initially set out to desecrate Judaism, no aspect of it could be sanctioned.[84] According to R. Hirsch, one could not accept that part which was lawful separately from the unlawful, if one would thereby endorse the unlawful.[85] With this, R. Hirsch unabashedly rejected any potential contributions made by *Wissenschaft* because of the motives of its founders. All products of this enterprise were disallowed by association, even if they were

[82] MM4, p. 43. The translations are mine, E. S.

[83] Yedidya, Orthodox Reactions, p. 71; Ran HaCohen: Reclaiming the Hebrew Bible. German-Jewish Reception of Biblical Criticism, trans. Michelle Engel, Berlin 2010, p. 157.

[84] Samson R. Hirsch, Collected Writings, vol. VII, pp. 44–45; Hirsch, "Wie gewinnen wir das Leben für unsere Wissenschaft?" in: Jeschurun 8 (1861), p. 88. See also Gafni, Emergence of Critical Scholarship, p. 171.

[85] Samson Raphael Hirsch, Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums 3 (1839), p. 516. (Translation in Breuer, Modernity within Tradition, p. 178).

produced by fellow Orthodox Jews. As he said, if one was forced to make a choice, then "[b]etter a Jew without science than a science without Judaism."[86]

Conversely, R. Esriel Hildesheimer and R. David Zvi Hoffmann (1843–1921), the leaders of the Orthodox rabbinical seminary in Berlin, made use of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.[87] They engaged in the academic study of Jewish texts and practices, but their research was premised on the uniqueness of the Jewish people and the divine origin of both the Written and Oral Law.[88] Whenever there was a conflict between secular texts and approaches on the one hand and the Jewish tradition on the other, they invariably preferred the latter as per their own stated principles.[89]

Although R. Dessler never explicitly referred to Orthodox *Wissenschaft,* there are three anecdotal incidents that give us an indication of his perspective. The first is a statement by David Zvi Hilman (1926–2010), one of the original students of R. Dessler in Ponevezh. He writes that when R. Dessler noticed that Hilman mentioned in his notes something about "R. S[alomon] Buber," (1827–1906), R. Dessler told him to remove the "R." for rabbi.[90] Beyond that, R. Dessler expressed no further objection. R. Dessler's words should be viewed in the context of his habit of weighing what he said with great precision and his self-declared practice of treating every person with respect.[91] Salomon Buber, grandfather of Martin Buber (1878–1965), was a Jewish Galician scholar who had written a commentary to the Talmud at a young age.[92] Buber was identified as one of the W*issenschaft* scholars of his time and was known for his academic editions of traditional Jewish texts.[93] His dual motivation in this pursuit was to enhance the reputation of Jews

86 Hirsch, Collected Writings, vol. V, p. 287.
87 Yedidya, Orthodox Reactions, p. 79. Meyer, Jewish Scholarship and Identity, p. 185.
88 Yedidya, Orthodox Reactions, p. 81. Breuer, Modernity Within Tradition, p. 183.
89 Marc Shapiro: Rabbi David Zevi Hoffman on Torah and "Wissenschaft," in: Torah u-Madda Journal 6 (1995–1996), pp. 129–137, here p. 135. See also Stampfer, Lithuanian Yeshivahs, p. 161.
90 Dessler, Zikaron, vol. I, p. 402.
91 Rosenblum, Rav Dessler, pp. 216–223.
92 Moshe Reiness: Dor Ve-Chakhamav. Cracow 1889, pp. 29, 30–32. Reiness corresponded with Buber and got his information about him from Buber himself. See Reiness's letters to Buber in Moshe Reiness: Mivchar Ketavim, Eliezer Brodt (ed.), Beit Shemesh 2018, pp. 529–553.
93 Phil Huston: Martin Buber's Journey to Presence, New York 2007, p. 5; Stephen M. Panko: Martin Buber, in: Bob E. Patterson (ed.), Makers of the Modern Theological Mind, Peabody Massachusetts 1976, pp. 3–5; Maurice Friedman: My Friendship with Martin Buber, Syracuse, New York 2013, p. 1. Yedidya, Orthodox Reactions, p. 85.

and their culture in the eyes of non-Jews and to broaden the range of subjects learned as "Torah."[94]

R. Dessler would have opposed both of these goals. Regarding those who wanted to enhance the Jewish reputation in the eyes of non-Jews, he wrote that their real motivation was to enhance their own reputation and that they had internalized the "non-Jewish," negative assessment of Judaism.[95] Far preferable for him was to learn about Judaism amongst Jews themselves. Regarding the second goal, the broadening of topics studied as "Torah," R. Dessler's objection is predictable given his stated purpose of engagement in Torah studies: students have to submit themselves to the text.[96] R. Dessler's uncharacteristic words regarding Buber may be seen as indicative of his general opinion of Orthodox *Wissenschaft des Judentums*: while not forbidden, it is problematic.

The second incident that describes R. Dessler's attitude towards *Wissenschaft des Judentums* is from Louis Jacobs, who referred to a scene from the year 1942, when the Gateshead kollel was in its infancy:

> "The only occasion on which I can recall, for instance, R. Dessler at the Kollel making any reference to Jewish historical studies was when he was dismissive of Dr. Hertz's Chumash [Torah edition]. 'What can you expect,' he remarked, 'of [Solomon] Schechter's disciple?'"[97]

In fact, R. Joseph Herman Hertz (1872–1946), later chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire, was not Solomon Schechter's (1847–1914) disciple. He had graduated from the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) of New York in 1894 when Solomon Schechter was still at Cambridge; he did not arrive at the JTS before 1902.[98] The JTS, of which R. Hertz was the first rabbinical graduate, had initially been an Orthodox institution.[99] As a

94 Yedidya, Bikoret Mevukeret, p. 86.

95 MM3, pp. 118, 156.

96 MM4, p. 56. See also MM3, pp. 14, 175, 191, 291–292, 323.

97 Jacobs, Helping with Inquiries, p. 63.

98 See David J. Fine: Passionate Centrism. One Rabbi's Judaism, London 2016, p. 183.

99 Miri Freud-Kandel: Orthodox Judaism in Britain since 1913, London 2006, p. 23. On the JTS and its moderate Reform status since the late 19th century, see Robert E. Fierstien: A Different Spirit. The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1886–1902, New York 1990, p. 134. Herbert Rosenblum makes mention of Jacob Schiff's (1847-1920) commitment to rapidly raise $500 000.00 for the "reorganized institution," calling it "an immense sum in 1892.", see Herbert Rosenblum: Conservative Judaism, New York 1983, p. 16. Jacob Schiff was a reform Jew as were the other members of the philanthropic group who rescued the JTS, see Marshall Sklare: Conservative Judaism. An American Religious Movement, New York 1972, p. 165. Michael

result of pending bankruptcy it was utilized by the reform movement in its attempt to Americanize Eastern European immigrants. The reform movement heavily funded the JTS, thereby preventing its closing, but established many conditions for that largesse: among them was the appointment of Solomon Schechter as president.[100] R. Dessler may have been unaware of these particulars, but his opinion was clear: he respected neither Solomon Schechter nor R. Hertz.[101] Can the Hertz commentary on the Chumash be considered *Wissenschaft des Judentums*? Some researchers make the claim that:

> "… [t]he Hertz commentary did represent a serious effort to respond to contemporary scholarship on a range of historical and contextual issues; he even mentioned non-Jewish scholars in this work."

While R. Dessler did not disallow the reading of R. Hertz's Torah edition nor speak against it, his disparagement is clear. R. Dessler's attitude toward Torah as the ultimate vocation and his intolerance of would-be detractors make his approach predictable. Interestingly, R. Dessler, as part of the Gateshead community, had his personal issues with R. Hertz, whose centrist Orthodoxy was antagonistic to the ultra-Orthodoxy of Gateshead.[102] R. Hertz's objections stemmed from his reluctance to support the creation of a bastion of ultra-Orthodoxy that would train and produce independent rabbis who would question his authority. The result was the active attempt on the part of R. Hertz to thwart the Gateshead initiative to create an ultra-Orthodox community free of obligation to the English chief rabbi.[103] Thus, R. Dessler's assessment of Hertz's Torah edition may have been influenced by his personal disputes with him.

Cohen makes no mention of Schiff, of his donation or of the Reform movement's interest in the JTS, see Michael R. Cohen: The Birth of Conservative Judaism. Solomon Schechter's Disciples and the Creation of an American Religious Movement, New York 2012.

100 Freud-Kandel, Orthodox Judaism in Britain, pp. 23, 26.

101 Steven Bayme: Embracing Academic Torah Study. Modern Orthodoxy's Challenge, in: The Torah. A Historical and Contextual Approach, http://thetorah.com/embracing-academic-torah-study-modern-orthodoxys-challenge. (last accessed February 26, 2018).

102 Freud-Kandel, Orthodox Judaism in Britain, p. 79.

103 Freud-Kandel, Orthodox Judaism in Britain, pp. 79–80; Geoffrey Alderman: Modern British Jewry, Oxford 1998, p. 356; Todd M. Endelman: The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000, Berkeley 2002, p. 221.

A third incident in which R. Dessler commented on *Wissenschaft des Judentums* appears in a letter to his brother-in-law, R. Daniel Movshovitz (1880–1941), from January 1931:

> "There is somebody named Dr. (Binyamin Menashe) Lewin [1879–1944] or Professor Lewin. He is apparently from the ultra-orthodox group [… and] learned science in Germany but is also well-versed in Torah and Rishonim [medieval rabbis], and, mainly, he studies antiquities. He is the greatest expert in our generation on the subject of the period of the Geonim [talmudic authorities]. He gathered all the writings of the Geonim… and has already printed three volumes… These contain […] some things regarding variations in their texts but more importantly, the approaches of the Rishonim were revealed and made clear through this work."[104]

Furthermore, R. Dessler describes in his letter a talk Lewin gave in London with the aim of forming a group that would examine ancient manuscripts for the purpose of publication. R. Dessler adds, "and *although this thing is very good* […] I will be surprised if something comes out of it."[105] While R. Dessler did not use the title rabbi for Lewin, his esteem of him is unequivocal. Clearly, R. Dessler appreciated Lewin's scholarship and his efforts towards the understanding of neglected Jewish works.

R. Dessler expressed extreme opposition to the original form of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and did not even engage with its originators. His reaction to *Wissenschaft's* Orthodox variant, however, demands further explanation. He discouraged his student from seeing *Wissenschaft* as a legitimate alternative to Talmud study because he advocated pure Torah learning, and he disparaged the insertion of Biblical criticism into a commentary on the Chumash because the evil and the sacred should not be mixed. In contrast, R. Dessler praised the work of Binyamin Menashe Lewin. This seeming inconsistency becomes clear when looking at R. Dessler's knowledge hierarchy: For an academic to engage in academics, even in the academic study of Judaism, was a positive. Clearly, Lewin had not crossed red lines: He was not

[104] Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler to Daniel Movshovitz, January 15, 1931, in: Beit Chayeinu. Asufa Musarit be'inyanei Limmud Ha-Tora Ve-Ha-Musar (Home of our Lives. Collection Regarding Torah Learning and Morality), vol. 6, Ponevezh Yeshivah, B'nei Braq 2014, pp. 61–62. Translation E. S. Ultimately, the work mentioned in the letter became a twelve-volume study, see Binyamin Menashe Lewin, Otzar ha-Gaonim, 12 vols., Haifa and Jerusalem 1928–1940.

[105] Dessler to Movshovitz, January 15, 1931, in: Beit Chayeinu, p. 62. Translation and emphasis E. S.

a yeshivah student, and he did not include problematic works in his writing. One could conclude that R. Dessler would not have objected to the edited texts produced by Salomon Buber and like-minded people. In their works, the authors contrasted all existing versions of the edited text, similarly to Lewin.[106] True, R. Dessler did not want Salomon Buber to be confused with those he would call rabbis, i. e., in his eyes, scholars who spent most of their time learning Talmud. However, for someone not learning at a yeshivah, there was no indication that R. Dessler would have had any objection to academic study. As the individual whose presentation of Judaism has, arguably, attained the most popularity in the Haredi community, R. Dessler's attitude is significant because it gives us insight into the thought of a little understood faction of the Jewish population.[107] R. Dessler's relationship to *Wissenschaft* describes the normative Haredi approach to that subject as well. His style of generally ignoring it, while being fully aware of its existence, is commonplace in Haredi society today. Understanding R. Dessler's hierarchy, in which Talmudic study is considered far more important than any other discipline, explains why this is so.

9. Conclusion

R. Dessler's perspective can be aptly described as a celebration of Talmud study. Following from this position, it was R. Dessler's conviction that time spent on anything other than learning Talmud, though acceptable, was not optimal, while anything that detracted from its supremacy was intolerable.[108] He did not present a binary understanding of 'traditional' versus 'secular' literature. Instead, he promoted an inclusive vision that understood academic and philosophical discourses as a lower form of divine knowledge, with Talmud study as the highest form.

This view explains how R. Dessler could be conversant in secular studies and, at the same time, disallow the opening of a teachers' seminary in close

106 Yedidya, Orthodox Reactions, p. 86.

107 Rosenblum, Rav Dessler, p. v; Stadler, The Sacred and the Profane, pp. 69, 137.

108 Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler / Sefer Mikhtav me-Eliyahu: Divrei Chokhma U-Mussar be-Avodat Chodesh Elul Ve-yerach Ha-Eitanim (Letter of Eliyahu [Dessler]: Words of Wisdom and Tradition in the Services of the Month Elul and the Month of Ethanim), vol. 2, B'nei Braq 2009, p. 698; MM3, pp. 355–359.

proximity to the Gateshead yeshivah.[109] This was not due to the nature of the material learned, but rather to the implicit message that such an institution would convey to students of the yeshivah.[110] This attitude becomes even more clear if we look at how R. Dessler dealt with *Wissenschaft des Judentums.* While he was not openly antagonistic toward Orthodox *Wissenschaft,* he did not approve of it as a replacement for Talmud study: He encouraged it for academics but not for yeshivah students. Moreover, if the modern academic study of Judaism did not infringe on a yeshivah curriculum nor introduce students to Biblical criticism, it appears that he was in favor of it.

R. Dessler's promotion of pure talmudic learning has been misperceived as general antipathy to secular studies. He was knowledgeable in the secular realm, however, which sometimes led to the opposite misconception, i. e. that he generally supported modern thought, research, and philosophy. Nevertheless, R. Dessler was not a "modernist." His self-subjugation to the wisdom of Torah and its scholars did not fit with modernism, understood as a process of self-aware innovation.

Despite this, R. Dessler was avant-garde in packaging classic Torah concepts into a contemporary, scholarly wrapping, particularly when he was dealing with secularly educated students. He adopted an academic mindset on behalf of ancient Torah ideas in order to promote pure, unadulterated Torah study within the yeshivah walls.

[109] Rosenblum, Rav Dessler, pp. 24, 302, 312–313; MM3, pp. 355–359.
[110] MM3, pp. 355–357.

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

by Samuel J. Kessler

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.

Generations of Wis*senschaft des Judentums:* The Correspondence Between David Kaufmann and Leopold Zunz

by Mirjam Thulin

Abstract

Due to the lack of acceptance of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in academia, modern Jewish scholarship in the nineteenth century organized itself along networks of institutions such as rabbinical seminaries, contacts with related disciplines like Oriental Studies, and personal relationships. This last pathway of communication was essential for the cohesion of modern Jewish scholarship. Therefore, my essay portrays the correspondence between David Kaufmann and Leopold Zunz as an example of this channel of communication. By analyzing the exchange of letters and personal encounters between the two scholars, particular attention will be paid to the following questions: How were the letters transmitted until today? What were the main topics of the correspondence between these representatives of two generations of Wis*senschaft des Judentums*? Which were the positions of Kaufmann and Zunz towards the present and future of modern Jewish scholarship? How did Kaufmann become the first biographer of Zunz?

1. Introduction

In 1875, the aged Leopold Zunz (1794–1886) wrote in a letter to David Kaufmann (1852–1899), then a young rabbinical student from the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau (Wrocław): "You can extract a piece of Jewish history from my sixty year-long correspondence."[1] Without a doubt, the correspondence of the founder and master of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* with friends, colleagues,

[1] Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 21.07.1875: "Aus meiner seit sechzig Jahren geführten Correspondenz könnte ein Stückchen jüdische Geschichte herausgearbeitet werden.", in: Markus Brann: Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel zwischen Zunz und Kaufmann I, in: Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur 5 (1902), pp. 159–209, here p. 171.

and students is a treasure of Jewish history and culture of the nineteenth century. Zunz's general correspondence and his correspondence with Kaufmann in particular is crucial for our understanding of the central issues around the transformation of Jewish knowledge into the agenda of Wis*senschaft des Judentums* and the essential role that networks of correspondence, exchange, and travel played in the process. The ethos and epistemology of Wis*senschaft des Judentums* was to uncover, transmit, and consolidate traditional Jewish knowledge. Modern academic methods helped to create new areas of knowledge and research.[2] By pursuing the ideal of Wissenschaft (academic study), as developed in the German context, part of what previously had been essential to traditional Jewish learning was preserved, while at the same time other parts were undermined or even neglected. Excluded from academia, Wis*senschaft* took refuge in wide-ranging scholarly networks of correspondence, exchange, and travel.[3] These entanglements and connections within modern Jewish scholarship integrated numerous scholars from diverse knowledge fields and many different places for a long period of time.[4]

In this regard, the correspondence between Zunz and the almost sixty years younger Kaufmann, who later became professor at the first Hungarian rabbinical seminary, exemplifies a noteworthy dialogue between the first and third generations of Wis*senschaft des Judentums*.[5] The letters of Kaufmann and Zunz provide insight into the configurations of scholarly Jewish lives in the nineteenth century, the attitudes and practices of modern Jewish scholarship,

2 Ismar Schorsch: Wissenschaft and Values, in: Schorsch, From Text to Context. The Turn to History in Modern Judaism, Hanover (N.H.) 1994, pp. 151–157; Schorsch: The Ethos of Modern Jewish Scholarship, in: Schorsch, From Text to Context, pp. 158–176; David N. Myers: The Ideology of Wissenschaft des Judentums, in: Daniel H. Frank / Oliver Leaman (ed.), History of Jewish Philosophy, London 1997, pp. 706–720; Michael A. Meyer: Two Persistant Tensions within Wissenschaft des Judentums, in: Modern Judaism 24 (2004), pp. 105–119. On the state of research, see: Kerstin von der Krone / Mirjam Thulin: Wissenschaft in Context. A Research Essay on Wissenschaft des Judentums, in: Leo Baeck Institute Year Book 58 (2013), pp. 249–280.

3 This is also the main argument in my book: Mirjam Thulin: Kaufmanns Nachrichtendienst. Ein jüdisches Gelehrtennetzwerk im 19. Jahrhundert, Göttingen 2012.

4 On intellectual networks, see: Christophe Charle / Jürgen Schriewer et al. (eds.): Transnational Intellectual Networks. Forms of Academic Knowledge and the Search for Cultural Identities, Frankfurt/Main 2004; Steven J. Harris: Networks of Travel, Correspondence, and Exchange, in: Lorraine Daston / Katherine Park (eds.), The Cambridge History of Science Early Modern Science, Cambridge 2006, pp. 341–362.

5 The essay is based on parts of Thulin, Kaufmanns Nachrichtendienst, pp. 283–350. Since all quotations from the Kaufmann-Zunz correspondence are originally in German, I give a translation or summary in the main text while the full original quotes can be found in the footnotes.

the individual experiences of the correspondents, and the development, values and self-understanding of Wis*senschaft des Judentums* in its first century of existence.[6]

In order to portray the transmission of the Kaufmann-Zunz correspondence, I first present an overview of the published and unpublished parts of the letters. Subsequently, I describe how the young Kaufmann fought for the correspondence with the aged Zunz, and how the regular exchange began after two years. In the following parts of the essay, I turn to specific topics covered in the correspondence. The general state of Wis*senschaft des Judentums* and its exclusion from academia was a prevailing topic over the entire fourteen years of the correspondence. I analyze how the correspondents reflected on Wis*senschaft* in their letters. Dissenting opinions about the subjects addressed within the scholarly community, such as the role and function of Bible criticism, illustrate how Kaufmann and Zunz imagined the Jewish subjects. Furthermore, the letters also reveal some personal information about the correspondents. Therefore, I turn as well to Kaufmann's and Zunz's private and academic travels as described in the letters. The final topic I present is David Kaufmann's interest in Zunz's life and the origins of the latter's works as reflected in the correspondence, which made Kaufmann the first biographer of the father of Wis*senschaft des Judentums*.

2. Transmission and Main Topics of the Kaufmann-Zunz Correspondence

The Kaufmann-Zunz correspondence covers a period from March 1872 to February 1886. It ends with a letter from Kaufmann six weeks before Zunz died in his apartment in Berlin, Auguststrasse 60. Unlike other correspondence of the time, the letters of Kaufmann and Zunz have been almost completely preserved. One part is kept with the Zunz papers at the archives of the National Library of Israel (NLI) in Jerusalem; the other part was edited by the Breslau historian Markus Brann (1849–1920) at the beginning of the twentieth century, in the Yearbook for Jewish History and Literature ("Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte

[6] Ismar Schorsch: Jewish Studies from 1818 to 1919, in: Schorsch, From Text to Context, pp. 345–359.

und Literatur").[7] Brann's focus was to contribute to the knowledge about the last years of Zunz's life. At the time of his edition, only three biographical works on Zunz existed. The two earlier ones were based on Zunz's estate and focused on his early life and political activities, his attitudes toward Jewish reform, and his time as a preacher in Prague.[8] However, little was known about the aged Leopold Zunz, because after the death of his wife Adelheid (1802–1874) he had mostly withdrawn from public life. Although Zunz seemed to maintain his daily routines and continued to read books and newspapers, he was depressed, downtrodden, and unkind to visitors. At the same time, he felt isolated and lonely, often expressing his feelings in phrases like: "Nobody visits me, neither Jews nor Christians."[9] Zunz frequently declared that in his later years Moritz Steinschneider (1816–1907) and Kaufmann's letters were his only means of keeping in contact with the outside world. Thus, Zunz was eager to hear "Torah news" ("Torah-Neuigkeiten") from Kaufmann.[10]

Markus Brann's other intention with the letter edition was to preserve the memory of his then recently deceased friend and former co-editor of the "Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums" ("Monthly of the History and Wissenschaft des Judentums", MGWJ), David Kaufmann. In his introduction, he recalled how he and Kaufmann had "adored the heroes of Wissenschaft des Judentums." In that sense, Kaufmann had kept Zunz's letters to him as a "precious treasure."[11] Nevertheless, Kaufmann's admiration for Zunz was well known in the Jewish scholarly community, particularly after Kaufmann defended Zunz against anti-Semitic accusations from the German philologist and orientalist Paul de Lagarde (1827–1891) in the mid-1880s.[12]

7 Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, pp. 159–209; Brann: Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel zwischen Zunz und Kaufmann II, in: Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur 6 (1903), pp. 120–157.

8 Ludwig Geiger: Aus L. Zunz' Nachlaß, in: Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland 5 (1892), pp. 223–268; S[igmund] Maybaum: Aus dem Leben von Leopold Zunz, in: Zwölfter Bericht über die Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums in Berlin 12 (1894), pp. 1–63; finally also: David Kaufmann: Art. Zunz, Leopold, in: Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie (ADB), vol. 45, Munich/Leipzig 1900, pp. 490–501.

9 Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 21.07.1875, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 171: „Auch besucht mich niemand, weder Jude noch Christ."

10 Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 12.08.1878, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 207.

11 This and the quote before see Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 161.

12 On the debate, see Elisabeth Hollender: "Verachtung kann Unwissenheit nicht entschuldigen." Die Verteidigung der Wissenschaft des Judentums gegen die Angriffe Paul de Lagarde's 1884–1887, in: Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge 30 (2003), pp. 169–205; Thulin, Kaufmanns Nachrichtendienst, pp. 254–282.

Markus Brann published the Kaufmann-Zunz correspondence in two parts. The first part appeared in 1902 and contained 54 letters from Zunz and a few from Kaufmann, covering the years between 1872 and 1878. The second part included 48 letters between 1878 and 1886 and was published in 1903. Since the letters of the aged Zunz became terser, Brann decided to add more letters from Kaufmann to the second part. Altogether, Brann's edition gives an account of over 100 letters, the majority of which were written by Leopold Zunz.

Although Brann claimed to present a "literal reprint" of the selected letters, he erased passages that referred to living persons as well as comments and opinions expressed by Kaufmann and Zunz that could have painted a negative picture of Jews and Wis*senschaft des Judentums*.[13] Therefore, Brann's edition transmits only in a censored and incomplete form. When Brann prepared the second part of the edition, he received another 61 letters from David Kaufmann to Leopold Zunz. By then, however, it was too late to include these letters in the second part. Although Brann stated in his foreword that he would publish the letters in a later edition, he never had the chance to realize his plan.

David Kaufmann's letters to Zunz are preserved as part of the so-called "Zunz Archive," in the manuscript department of the NLI Jerusalem.[14] In 1864, on the occasion of Zunz's 70th birthday, the "Zunz-Stiftung" foundation was established in order to preserve the legacy of its namesake. Friends and admirers of the father of Wis*senschaft des Judentums*, among them Moritz Steinschneider, the famous physician and chief medical consultant Salomon Neumann (1819–1908), and the writer Berthold Auerbach (1812–1882), intended to support Zunz in his final years through the funds of the foundation. After Zunz's death in 1886, the foundation devoted its efforts to the preservation of Zunz's written estate as well as to financially supporting scholars and publications of *Wissenschaft*. Among the massive collection of letters in the Zunz Archive, altogether 99 letters from David Kaufmann have been preserved. Kaufmann's letters, which Brann did not have the chance to edit, are of particular importance for this essay.

[13] Brann wrote that he erased expressions, "die unter den heutigen Verhältnissen der Verbreitung durch die Presse besser vorenthalten werden," see Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 162.

[14] On the history of the Zunz Archive, see Gotthold Weil: Das Zunz-Archiv, in: Leo Baeck Institute Bulletin 7 (1959), pp. 148–161. Part of Zunz's archive has been digitized and put online at http://www.jewish-archives.org (last accessed 15.02.2018).

3. Approaching Zunz: Kaufmann's Fight for the Correspondence

Then as now, young scholars approached veteran and leading scholars in a most humble way; often, the objective reason was a question or request for advice. Whenever a young pupil made the first step to establish contact, the question was whether or not and if so, how, the leading scholar would answer. Back in the nineteenth century, many young scholars contacted Zunz, but he did not reply to every letter.[15] David Kaufmann's first letter to Zunz, dated March 21, 1872, followed all the academic rules and included an inquiry that emerged from a course with the historian Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891) that Kaufmann attended at the Breslau Jewish Theological Seminary. However, Zunz never answered Kaufmann's letter, and he did not remember it later.[16]

Kaufmann waited two years before he began the second attempt to contact Zunz. Once again, an academic inquiry was to serve as a bridge to start the conversation. Kaufmann had reviewed Zunz's "Deutsche Briefe" ("German Letters," Leipzig 1872) for a Silesian newspaper and praised Zunz's assumptions regarding the decline of the German language in modern times.[17] Obviously, Zunz was touched by the compliments of his young devotee, and this time, Zunz did respond. However, staying in contact with Zunz became an intense affair for David Kaufmann. Zunz constantly doubted his own worth as a correspondent and spoke often of his supposedly boring and cheerless existence. A passage from a letter written by Zunz in 1878 illustrates his mercurial and sometimes offensive moods:

> "It is not meant to be funny when I say that I do not want to bother friends too often with my meaningless and joyless letters. Furthermore, my life feels empty; I neither

[15] Zunz also ignored Abraham Geiger's first attempt to establish contact in April 1831. It was only in October 1833 that Zunz replied to a letter from Geiger for the first time. Finally, an enduring friendship, as illustrated in the correspondence, developed. This exchange was only interrupted between 1853 and 1860 because of personal issues.

[16] However, the letter exists as part of Brann's edition, see Kaufmann to Zunz, Breslau, 21.03.1872, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 162; Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 23.12.1874, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 165.

[17] Kaufmann to Zunz, Breslau, 09.03.1874, National Library of Israel, Jerusalem (hereafter NLI), Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.2; see also: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 163. The announcement written by Kaufmann was published in the newspaper *Silesian Press* ("Schlesische Presse").

meet nor talk to people a lot, I don't go out, I don't read books and I don't do anything. Would such an individual be a worthy correspondent?"[18]

Unlike others, David Kaufmann was not scared away by Zunz's harshness and bad temper. Instead, Kaufmann took on the role of a caring and sensitive counterpart, attempting to understand and comfort the aged Zunz. He assured Zunz in every letter of his "childish," "deepest" and "undying" devotedness and adoration.[19] Moreover, Kaufmann confessed that he never just glanced at Zunz's books, but always took them in hand to "dwell on them devoutly."[20] Over time, Zunz was won over by Kaufmann's charm and entered the epistolary exchange with the rabbinical student on a regular basis.[21]

Over the years, Leopold Zunz and David Kaufmann touched on many topics of daily political and academic life. The topics that both men discussed over the fourteen years demonstrate the dynamics and structures between the generations of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in general, and the relationship between Kaufmann and Zunz in particular. On the whole, six main themes dominated the correspondence. Firstly, the letters document the life of David Kaufmann from his time as a rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau to his appointment as professor and librarian at the rabbinical seminary in Budapest. We learn about his daily routine at the Breslau seminary, Kaufmann's private and academic travels, and his failed application for the position of rabbi in the Jewish community in Berlin. Furthermore, the correspondence illuminates the circumstances of Kaufmann's appointment as professor at the rabbinical seminary in Budapest, in which Zunz actively took part by writing him a letter of recommendation.[22] After achieving the position

[18] Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 16.01.1878, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 188: "Es ist nicht Spaß, wenn ich sage, daß ich Freunden mit meinen leeren und freudelosen Briefen nicht zu oft lästig werden mag. Dazu kommt noch die Oede meines Lebens; ich sehe und höre wenig Personen, komme nirgends hin, lese kein Buch und thue überhaupt nichts. Ist ein solches Individuum ein gesuchter Korrespondent?"

[19] For the quotes, see Kaufmann to Zunz, Breslau, 07.07.1875, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.14; Kaufmann to Zunz, Breslau, 24.07.1875, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.15, and Kaufmann to Zunz, Kojetín, 07.09.1877, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.48.

[20] Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 21.05.1878, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 195.

[21] Ismar Elbogen: Leopold Zunz zum Gedächtnis, in: Fünfzigster Bericht der Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin (1936), pp. 14–32, here p. 15.

[22] The letter of recommendation is reprinted in: Ferdinand Rosenthal: David Kaufmann. Biographie, in: Rosenthal / Markus Brann (ed.), Gedenkbuch zur Erinnerung an David Kaufmann, Breslau 1900, pp. I–LVI, here p. XXXIX, note 1. Since mid-June 1877, Kaufmann knew about

in Budapest, Kaufmann reported to Zunz about his life in the Hungarian capital and about the close contacts between the rabbinical seminaries in Breslau, Budapest, and Berlin. On this topic, Leopold Zunz acted mainly as mentor and adviser. Reports and reflections by Zunz on his life make for a second biographical theme in the correspondence. Zunz provided information on his life and works at the request of Kaufman, who was motived by his research into Zunz's life and development.[23] Zunz, on his part, provided him with information, in the letters as well as during Kaufmann's visits in Berlin. In the following passages, this topic will be addressed in more detail.

Another prevailing topic in the Kaufmann-Zunz correspondence covers illness, old age, and death. Since Zunz was almost eighty years old when the correspondence started and a widower since 1874, scholars characterized Zunz's final years as a "decline" and as "days of twilight."[24] Thus, in an early stage of the correspondence, Kaufmann was confronted with the sorrows of the mourning old man. He tried to console Zunz in every letter. Moreover, Kaufmann himself was suffering from diabetes; many of his letters contain descriptions of his sickness, and the course of the correspondence was affected by extended periods of indisposition and stays at health resorts.

Although Kaufmann and Zunz never reflected on the language of their exchange, issues of style and multilingualism represent another major topic in the correspondence. On the one hand, Zunz was constantly upset by the style and orthography used in German newspapers.[25] On the other hand, Kaufmann, coming from a German-speaking context, had to learn Hungarian in order to teach and fulfill his functions in the seminary. Thus, he reflected on his study of Hungarian, his perception of Budapest, the country, and the culture. In this context, the establishment of a Hungarian academic journal of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* became an important issue. Ultimately, the rabbinical seminary in Budapest established the "Magyar Zsidó Szemle"

the letter of recommendation, see Kaufmann to Zunz, Kojetín, 17.06.1877, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.43; see also: Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 19.06.1877, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 185.

23 For example, see Kaufmann to Zunz, Breslau, 07.07.1875, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.14.

24 Nahum N. Glatzer: Leopold and Adelheid Zunz. An Account in Letters 1815–1885. Edited and with an Introduction, London 1958, pp. 337–354; Ismar Schorsch: Leopold Zunz. Creativity in Adversity, Philadelphia 2016, pp. 215–239.

25 This fact was also referred to in later generations, for example see: Brann to Ludwig Geiger, [Breslau?], 28./29.(?).06.[191]6, NLI, Arc. Ms. Var. 308/440.

("Hungarian Jewish Review") that was published, with interruptions, between 1884 and 1948. In the end, however, the journal was not edited by Kaufmann but by his native Hungarian colleagues Wilhelm Bacher (1850–1913) and Josef Bánóczi (1849–1926).

Discussions from the correspondence regarding the history and culture of *Wissenschaft* formed another central topic in the Kaufmann-Zunz exchange, and are addressed in detail in the following section. They present and exemplify the dialogue between two generations of modern Jewish scholarship in the course of the nineteenth century through the eyes of the correspondents.

4. *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Light of the Correspondence

During their correspondence, Kaufmann and Zunz discussed central issues of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, such as its exclusion from academia and the increasing anti-Semitism, as well as the lack of acceptance and support for Jewish Studies in the Jewish communities themselves. The discussion of hostility towards Jews and anti-Semitism emerged mainly in 1879, when a national debate over anti-Semitism ("Antisemitismusstreit") waged in imperial Germany.[26] When the Berlin court chaplain and founder of the Christian Social Labor Party ("Christlich-Soziale Arbeiterpartei") Adolf Stoecker (1835–1909) attacked the Jews in one of his speeches during the debate over anti-Semitism, Kaufmann decided to get involved in the debate. He anonymously published a booklet attacking Stoecker and also sent a copy to Zunz.[27] Zunz thanked Kaufmann for the "Anti-Stöcker."[28] At the beginning of the anti-Semitism debate, Zunz supported Kaufmann's comments and involvement with heartfelt and even zestful encouragement. However, he gradually became resigned and monosyllabic on this topic, too. Instead, Zunz advised his young correspondent to challenge the Prussian administration and state officials, who

[26] On the debate, see Karsten Krieger (Bearbeiter): Der "Berliner Antisemitismusstreit" 1879–1881. Kommentrierte Quellenedition, 2 vols., Munich 2003; Uffa Jensen: Gebildete Doppelgänger. Bürgerliche Juden und Protestanten im 19. Jahrhundert, Göttingen 2005.

[27] David Kaufmann: Ein Wort im Vertrauen an Herrn Hofprediger Stöcker von einem, dessen Name nichts zur Sache tut (1880), in: Markus Brann (ed.), Gesammelte Schriften von David Kaufmann, vol. 3, Frankfurt/Main 1915, pp. 520–536.

[28] Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 23.12.1879 and 07.01.1880, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.64 and 99; Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 16.02.1880, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel II, p. 144.

were notoriously ambivalent towards the Jews, Christian theologians and religious thinkers, and associated reactionary movements and attitudes with the increasing hostility toward Jews.[29] He was convinced that as long as the "Christian priesthood" existed, Jews would suffer from persecutions and resentment.[30] If Zunz recognized modern anti-Semitism as coming from primarily religious origins, this was especially true in the case of Christian Prussia and the court chaplain Adolf Stoecker. On his side, David Kaufmann also realized the critical situation in Berlin. Thus, at the end of 1880, Kaufmann cynically offered Zunz sanctuary in Budapest in case the Jews were expelled from Berlin and Brandenburg.[31] In spite of the antagonistic climate between Germans and Jews in Berlin, however, Zunz acknowledged that the situation for Russian Jews was even more difficult. Kaufmann, for his part, felt secure in Budapest where he was not confronted with anti-Semitic agitation as he would be in Germany, nor persecutions and pogroms such as those in Russia. In contrast, he often noted that Hungary was safer and more tolerant.[32] Even after the Tiszaeszlár blood libel case in 1883, Hungarian anti-Semitic agitations did not dominate in society, in Kaufmann's opinion. Since that time, however, anti-Semitic attitudes and ideas had gained ground in Hungary's conservative and national circles.[33]

Between 1875 and 1881, Kaufmann and Zunz discussed the hostility toward Jews and anti-Semitism broadly, but also specifically with regard to academia. Both complained about the lack of acceptance of modern Jewish Studies in the universities and Jewish communities at large. Zunz was certain that the rejection of Jews and Judaism in society was linked to the exclusion of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* from academia. He thought that full political and social acceptance of Jews and Judaism would be followed by the acceptance

29 Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 05.10.1875, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 174. See also Elbogen, Leopold Zunz zum Gedächtnis, p. 26.

30 Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 10.07.1878, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 201.

31 Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 08.11.1880, NLI Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.72: "Wenn Sie merken sollten, daß es in Berlin nicht geheuer wird, d. h. wenn z. B. die Juden aus der Mark vertrieben werden sollten – sauberes Jahrhundert, in dem man solche Witze reißen darf –, dann flüchten Sie sich in das Asyl, das für Sie bereit hält Ihr […] David Kaufmann."

32 Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 18.01.1882, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.82: "Wir leben hier, dem Himmel sei Dank, noch immer unangefochten von preußischer Theorie und von russischer – Praxis."

33 Andrew Handler: Blood Libel at Tiszaeszlar, New York 1980.

of modern Jewish scholarship.[34] At the same time, Zunz criticized the Jewish communities and organizations and ironically demanded "an academy of brave Jewish scholars with the financial support of the Rothschild family."[35] Such statements demonstrate Zunz's long-held disappointment in Jewish communities and patrons.[36] In the same manner, Kaufmann turned against Jewish welfare facilities "for which our Jews still have money," and frequently criticized the establishment of Jewish nursing homes.[37] Zunz agreed with Kaufmann that "wealthy Jews" usually supported hospitals and orphanages.[38] Both correspondents were certain that *Wissenschaft des Judentums* helped to reduce prejudice and improve tolerance and should therefore be funded by Jewish organizations. Kaufmann complained that Jewish scholarship still had no professional elite and was performed by men who worked as rabbis, teachers, and librarians, instead. Since the rabbinical seminaries were mere training institutions for rabbis, teachers, or cantors, he characterized them as inadequate and insufficient frameworks for professional scholarship.[39] He thought that most students in the rabbinical seminaries – and also at his home institution, the rabbinical seminary in Budapest – came from poor families, because "millionaires do not send their sons to a rabbinical school, of course."[40]

Furthermore, Kaufmann and Zunz often discussed the history and development of modern Jewish scholarship and were deeply concerned about the

34 Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 21.08.1876, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 179: "Das Herabsetzen jüdischer Autoren, selbst der getauften, wird in Deutschland so lange bestehen, als nicht an allen Universitäten jüdische Geschichte und Litteratur von Juden, die ordentliche Professoren sind, vorgetragen wird." See also: Leopold Zunz: Die jüdische Literatur (1845), in: Zunz, Gesammelte Schriften. Herausgegeben vom Curatorium der "Zunzstiftung." vol. 1, Berlin 1875–1876 [Reprint Hildesheim 1976], pp. 41–59, here p. 59.

35 Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 05.07.1875, in Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 170.

36 Elbogen, Leopold Zunz zum Gedächtnis, p. 18.

37 Kaufmann to Zunz, Breslau, 07.07.1875, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.14: "Man möchte […] die Lahmen und die Blinden hassen, für die unsere Juden allein noch Geld haben. Eher werden Kranken- und Siechhäuser wie Pilze aufschießen, ehe das Geld zu einer jüdischen gelehrten Gesellschaft von irgend welcher Seite legirt wird."

38 Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 21.07.1875, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 170: "Daß die reichen Juden nur für Hospitäler und Waisenhäuser Sinn und Theilnahme haben, habe ich bereits vor dreißig bis vierzig Jahren gedruckt."

39 Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 10.06.1878, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 198: "[…] der arme Krüppel: Jüdische Wissenschaft, der mit seinen Krücken die Schranken der Unduldsamkeit einreißen geholfen, hat noch kein Haus, in das er unterzubringen wäre, denn die Seminarien sind wohl Pflanzstätten jüdischen Wissens, aber mehr um der Praxis als um der Sache selber willen."

40 Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 23.09.1881, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.80.

future of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. On the one hand, they felt that Jewish scholarship was only important when universities or libraries wanted their books and manuscripts catalogued. On the other hand, Kaufmann and Zunz were skeptical about the prospects of German Jewry and *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the German-speaking lands. Kaufmann anticipated a prospering English-speaking Wis*senschaft des Judentums* and therefore welcomed the establishment of a Jewish literature society in England.[41] Zunz disagreed with Kaufmann's positive assessment. From his point of view, Jewish scholars in England only translated books and studies, but did not carry out their own research.[42] In the course of the correspondence, Kaufmann began to share Zunz's skepticism. But, even though he noted that the Jewish literature society in England published only "insignificant, semi-academic" writings, Kaufmann kept his optimism toward an English Jewish scholarship, mostly because it had financial support.[43]

5. Kaufmann and Zunz on Higher Criticism

On the occasion of his 80th birthday, Leopold Zunz's collected works ("Gesammelte Schriften") were published in Berlin in a three-volume edition in 1875 and 1876.[44] Proudly, Zunz pointed his correspondent to these writings and asked Kaufmann to evaluate the books, emphasizing that Kaufman should do so "irrespective of the person."[45] Among the large number of articles that were reprinted in the first volume, it was an article entitled "On Bible Criticism" ("Bibelkritisches") which raised Kaufmann's particular interest.[46] In this essay, Zunz set out to date selected books from the Hebrew Bible with

41 Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 20.01.1878, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.53: "Bald werden die Zigeuner ihre Akademie haben, nur die Juden leben vom Bettel bei den Anderen; was nicht die Regierungen herausgeben, kommt nicht zu Stande, weshalb das Katalogisiren in Blüthe steht. Das deutsche Judenthum wird bald ganz aufhören, für jüdisches Wissen Verständniß und Interesse zu bethätigen, aber Andere werden an seiner Statt eintreten, wie denn die Engländer mit Erfolg angefangen haben, einen jüdischen Literaturverein zu gründen."

42 Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 18.02.1878, in Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 189: "Von einem englischen Litteraturverein erwarte ich für die jüdische Wissenschaft wenig; Bis jetzt sind sie dort über Uebersetztes nicht hinausgekommen, obgleich die meisten Arbeiter keine Engländer sind."

43 Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 22.02.1878, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.54.

44 Zunz, Gesammelte Schriften.

45 Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 01.03.1875, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 166.

46 Leopold Zunz: Bibelkritisches, in: Zunz, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 1, pp. 217–270.

the help of the methods of higher criticism.[47] Kaufmann had already known about that article since 1873, when the Journal of the German Oriental Society ("Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft," ZDMG) had first printed the piece.[48] Back then, Zunz's study had already addressed the young rabbinical student. Kaufmann remembered his "bafflement, partly also pain" when he first read the essay in 1873. Thus, in a note to Zunz, Kaufmann allowed himself a "personal word" to explain his initial reaction.[49] For him, Judaism did not depend on the age of documents, but rather meant a way of life and traditional habits. Therefore, a perception of the Jewish religion that depended mainly on philological evidence was insufficient and precarious for him. Kaufmann referred to a "number of indispensable rabbinical rules" that were important in his eyes and could not reduce the value of the Jewish religion.

A month later, Zunz replied to Kaufmann's critical note. He opened his letter with a lamentation about the "eight demons of mankind," which were for him "selfishness, lying, hypocrisy, imperiousness, lack of judgment, superstition, cowardice, and bad habits."[50] With respect to Kaufmann's understanding of Judaism, Zunz explained that he was never won over by these eight demons. Instead, he believed in a consistent academic approach that provoked reason and truth, and that could, in consequence, cause a type of an inner inconvenience.[51]

In order to broaden his uneasiness and criticism, Kaufmann answered Zunz by pointing him to further rejections expressed by the Jewish community. He referred to a review of Zunz's collected works in the Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums ("General Newspaper of Judaism", AZJ), published at

47 On Zunz's Bible criticism, see also Ismar Schorsch: Leopold Zunz on the Hebrew Bible, in: The Jewish Quarterly Review 102 (2012) 3, pp. 431–454.

48 In the *Gesammelte Schriften* of Zunz, the original essay was enriched by parts F and G.

49 For this and the next quote, see Kaufmann to Zunz, Breslau, 05.03.1875, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.8.

50 Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 09.04.1875, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 166. Zunz's answer can be found in Kaufmann's letter to Zunz, Breslau, 05.03.1875, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.8. Obviously, Zunz also replied with his "eight demons" to Kaufmann's report about the difficulties and tensions in the Breslau rabbinical seminary after the death of the first director, Zacharias Frankel, see Kaufmann to Zunz, Breslau, 12.04.1875, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.9.

51 On Zunz's concept of Wissenschaft des Judentums, see: Michael A. Meyer: The Origins of the Modern Jew. Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany, 1749–1824, Detroit 1967, 144–182; Schorsch, Leopold Zunz.

the end of March 1875.[52] The anonymous author of the review – probably the editor Ludwig Philippson (1811–1889) himself – also commented in particular on Zunz's essay "Bibelkritisches." The reviewer questioned the academic value of Zunz's article and concluded that "Bibelkritisches" rather "confuses but does not enlighten." Apparently, the critique adopted the position of Göttingen orientalist Heinrich Ewald (1803–1875), who had attacked Zunz's essay already in 1873, but in a clearly anti-Judaic tone.[53] Since the review in the AJZ accused Zunz of fostering a "fragmentation of Judaism and its religious issues," Kaufmann called upon Zunz to respond to the accusation.[54] In his reply to Kaufmann, Zunz took a firm stance. He insisted that he was already "blunt" toward such accusations, and emphasized that he had always spoken up "for Jews and Judaism."[55]

In his next note, Kaufmann described once again the feelings he had when he first read "Bibelkritisches." He wrote that "many things surprised" him, "but some made me [i. e. Kaufmann] crazy."[56] Kaufmann, presenting himself as a "Jewish theologian," explained that Judaism would not be in good standing if "we were to build upon letters and measure the value of our teachings according to the age of the documents and institutions." For him, a historical-critical perspective on the Hebrew Bible was not acceptable. Zunz's study alienated the young student of the Breslau Jewish Theological Seminary, which excluded Bible criticism from its curriculum until 1910. Instead, Kaufmann tried to prove the insignificance and limited insights of higher criticism. He reproved Zunz's "statistical method" as mainly based on counting and measuring letters and words. Moreover, for Kaufmann, Zunz's linguistic and stylistic analysis denied the significance of the Jewish religion.[57] Zunz, for his part, insisted

52 [Anonymous]: Literarischer Wochenbericht. Bonn, 16. März, in: Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums 39 (1875), pp. 217–219; for the following quote, see p. 218.

53 H[einrich] E[wald]: Bibelkritisches von Dr. Zunz. (Aus der Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 1873. S. 669–689), in: Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen 13 (1875), pp. 395–402.

54 Kaufmann to Zunz, Breslau, 12.04.1875, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.9.

55 Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 05.05.1875, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, pp. 167–168.

56 The following quotes see Kaufmann an Zunz, Breslau, 08.05.1875, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.10. Moreover, see Brann's partial transcription in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel II, p. 120–121, note.

57 On the quotes, also the following, see Kaufmann to Zunz, Breslau, 08.05.1875, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.10: "Das Wägen und Zählen gewisser Ausdrücke, ich möchte das Ihre statistische Methode nennen, scheint mir für die Kritik keine genügende Wahrscheinlichkeit zu

that truth meant "conviction" to him, and that he dedicated his entire life to the search for this truth. He accepted that people disagreed with him and that his opinions challenged "traditional views in a destructive way." However, for Zunz, this was a "secondary question." Unlike Kaufmann, he challenged the intentions and aims of the Jewish religion and theology. Instead, he saw himself not as a fighter for "a religion but only for the human rights of its believers."[58]

David Kaufmann was still not ready to abandon the issue. In a letter from May 1875, he added yet another critical opinion to the debate, this time from the Orthodox camp. After he acknowledged Zunz's Bible studies as an act of liberation in a fight lead by "our pious brethren since Spinoza," he advised Zunz of the harsh criticism "from different camps."[59] Kaufmann reported to Zunz that his Bible studies kept "pious Jews" away from "studying your [i. e. Zunz's] other works," because Orthodox Jews feared that their Judaism might be destroyed. Zunz was upset, and replied in his next letter that readers of his essay proved themselves to be "even more miserable" the more they complained about it. Nevertheless, Zunz was shocked that his article, which he understood to be the "truth," could be a reason not to study anymore.[60]

6. Academic and Private Travels in Light of the Correspondence

In addition to the debate on the situation of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the exchange about specific topics such as Bible criticism, the correspondence also offers insight into the cultural history of Wis*senschaft des Judentums*. Over the course of the fourteen-year correspondence, Kaufmann and Zunz consistently discussed the conditions of research and the journeys they made, and they reflected on encounters experienced during their travels. Due to Zunz's old age, it was mainly Kaufmann who wrote about his academic and private traveling. The Berlin-based Zunz became a frequent travel destination

geben. Bei der Armuth des überkommenden Sprachgutes, bei der Willkür des Styles, wie soll da ein vorkommender oder fehlender Ausdruck etwas beweisen?"

58 Zunz's quotes see Zunz to Kaufmann, Dresden, 27.05.1875, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, pp. 168–169. See also Zunz's note at the bottom of the letter from Kaufmann to him, Breslau, 08.05.1875, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.10.

59 Kaufmann to Zunz, Breslau, 28.05.1875, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.11.

60 Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 05.07.1875, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 170.

for Kaufmann in the 1880s. In contrast, Zunz often remembered past journeys in his letters and shared his travel experiences that way.[61]

Kaufmann's first journey reflected in the correspondence took the then twenty-four-year-old to Berlin, when he applied for the position of preacher ("Prediger") in the local Jewish community. For this application, Kaufmann came to Berlin twice, for Shavuot in May and for the Jewish high holidays in September 1876. As was usual at the time, Kaufman gave trial sermons, and afterwards the community leaders interviewed him. Although Kaufmann did not have his rabbinical diploma yet, the Breslau Jewish Theological Seminary had strongly recommended him as one of the most promising future rabbis. He graduated a year later, in January 1877, from the Breslau. During his stays in Berlin, Kaufmann visited Zunz several times in his apartment in Auguststrasse. Then, Zunz was mourning for his beloved wife Adelheid, who had died in 1874.[62] The aged and lonely master was known for his unapproachability and reclusive existence, which he usually justified with his old age. Therefore, it is not surprising that, after his death, experiences with visits at Zunz's home became legends and were published in Jewish newspapers and journals.[63] Even though Kaufmann must have encountered a depressed and perhaps unfriendly Zunz, he admired him even more after the meetings. In a thank-you letter, Kaufmann recalled Zunz's words about aging and the absence of creativity. Nevertheless, he interpreted the meetings as a fulfilled "destiny" and assured Zunz that speaking with him was an "uplifting" experience and made everybody "a better person."[64] After his second visit to Berlin, when he gave sermons for the Jewish high holidays, Kaufmann once again expressed his appreciation of the "uplifting hours in your [i. e. Zunz's] company."[65]

61 At an early stage of the contact, Zunz did travel once to Dresden and stayed with his "friend Mister Philipp Zunz," see Zunz to Kaufmann, Dresden, 27.05.1875, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, pp. 168–169. Philipp may have been a cousin of Leopold Zunz. His life data and occupation could be not verified.

62 Kaufmann to Loeb(?), Budapest, 30.03.1879, Archives de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle, Paris (hereafter AAIU), Hongrie I B: "[…] Ich stehe mit Z[unz] in ziemlich reger Verbindung, seine Müdigkeit ist gross, aber sein Geist ist der alte, jugendliche. Der Gram über den Tod seiner Frau lässt ihn jedoch nicht arbeiten."

63 For example, see Adolf Frankl-Grün: Ein Besuch bei Leopold Zunz, in: Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums 60 (1896) 41, p. 487.

64 Kaufmann to Zunz, (Breslau?), 07.06.1876, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.29.

65 Kaufmann to Zunz, Kojetín, 05.10.1876, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.34.

After Kaufmann was appointed professor at the rabbinical seminary in Budapest in the summer of 1877, he did not return to Berlin before August 1881. Instead, his next travel destination was Italy. In July 1877, the rabbinical seminary tasked him with transferring the precious library of the eminent Italian Jewish scholar Lelio della Torre (1805–1871) from Padua to Budapest.[66] Since Kaufmann realized that Zunz and the influential Italian Jewish scholar Samuel David Luzzatto (1800–1865), a colleague of della Torre, had known each other, he told Zunz that he had met Luzzatto's family in Padua.[67] Then, Luzzatto's son Isaia (1836–1898) was collecting and organizing his father's papers, a matter in which Kaufmann took great interest because he sought to preserve the legacies of significant Jewish scholars of the time. Thus, the journey became the beginning of a long-lasting collaboration and friendship between Kaufmann and Isaia Luzzatto. Working as a lawyer in his hometown, Luzzatto had little time and understanding of how to edit the writings of his father.[68] Five years later, in March 1882, Kaufmann proudly informed Zunz that he had found a publisher for an edition of the Hebrew letters of Samuel David Luzzatto.[69] Three months later, Kaufmann was already working on a foreword and an introduction to the edition.[70] At the end of 1882, the first of ultimately nine volumes of Luzzatto's letters were published in Przemyśl, Poland, with an in-depth introduction about Luzzatto's significance and a short survey on his correspondence, both written by David Kaufmann.[71]

66 In fact, della Torre's collection became an essential part of the seminary library in Budapest, see Kaufmann to Martin Schweiger, Padua, 13.07.1877, in: Samuel Krauss: David Kaufmann. Eine Biographie, Berlin 1901, pp. 55–56.

67 Zunz and Luzzatto met once in Padua in 1863. On their relationship: Schorsch, Leopold Zunz, pp. 188–191, 199, 241.

68 Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 31.07.1877, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.46: "In Luzzatto's Familie habe ich viel verkehrt. Der mittlere Sohn, Benjamino, ist Arzt und soll große Hoffnungen erwecken. Der älteste Isaïe arbeitet unermüdlich an der Hinterlassenschaft seines Vaters. Er ist sehr zu bedauern, daß er nur die Liebe, aber nicht die nöthige Sachkenntniß besitzt, um die Herausgabe der etwa hinterlassenen Schriften zu leiten. Wie S. Antonio unter den Christen, so ist Luzzatto's Name unter den Juden in Padua der Heilige schlechthin. Ich habe auch sein schlichtes Grab besucht, das nur die Inschrift: S. D. Luzzatto trägt. Ein Denkmal, das man ursprünglich errichten wollte, ist nicht zu Stande gekommen."

69 Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 03.03.1882, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.83.

70 Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 05.06.1882, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.84.

71 David Kaufmann: Kurze Inhaltsübersicht zu S. D. Luzzatto's Briefen, in: Eisig [Isaak] Graeber (ed.), Iggerot Shadal. S. D. Luzzatto's hebräische Briefe gesammelt von seinem Sohne Dr. Isais Luzzatto, vol. 1, Przemysl 1882, pp. I–XXII [Hebrew and German].

In the summer of 1878, Kaufmann's destination was Paris. Again, he gave Zunz a detailed report about his travels and encounters in several letters. Originally, Kaufmann had planned to travel to Palestine, but as the vacation period of the seminary in Budapest was in the "hottest months" of the region, he decided to visit the world exhibition in the French capital instead.[72] Although Kaufmann stayed in the central sixth arrondissement, close to the historic sites, he wrote Zunz, he did not "work through the litany of sights." Instead, it was more important for him to meet the "representatives of our science." After the meetings, however, he felt deeply shocked at the poor conditions in which the Parisian Jewish scholars worked and lived, and he described them as "veterans" and "invalids" of the Jewish literature. During his visit, Kaufmann was unable to see the precious library of the Günzburg family due to "continuing negotiations of the legacy." He also missed Senior Shneur Sachs (1815–1892), the former editor of the early Hebrew Wis*senschaft des Judentums* journal *Kerem hemed* ("Vineyeard of Delight") and then librarian of the Günzburg collection. He did, however, meet with Adolph Neubauer (1832–1907), librarian of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, who at that time worked in the Parisian libraries. Moreover, he visited the orientalist Joseph Derenbourg (1811–1895), secretary of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Isidore Loeb (1839–1892), and the French chief rabbi Zadoc Kahn (1839–1905). Kaufmann viewed the world exhibition twice but, except for the Trocadéro palace, where the festive receptions of exhibition took place, the event left him unimpressed.[73] As he described it in his letters, the journey to Paris was mainly an exhausting affair.

In the following summer of 1879, Kaufmann traveled first to his hometown Kojetín in Moravia, and afterwards had a leg disease treated in the spa town of Vöslau in Lower Austria.[74] He planned to visit Zunz again finally in the summer of 1880 but, burdened with work, he spent that summer at his parents' home in Kojetín.[75] In return, Leopold Zunz recalled his academic travels in a letter to Kaufmann. More than twenty years after his dissertation, in the mid-1840s,

[72] Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 21.05.1878, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 197.

[73] For all previous quotes, see Kaufmann to Zunz, Paris, 17.09.1878, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel II, pp. 120–123.

[74] Kaufmann to Zunz, Kojetín, 16.07.1879, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.57; Kaufmann to Zunz, Vöslau bei Wien, 27.07.1879 and 08.08.1879, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.58 and 59.

[75] Kaufmann to Zunz, Kojetín, 09.08.1880, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.68.

Zunz and his wife Adelheid had traveled to the great libraries in Paris, London, and Oxford. At that time, notable Hebraica and Judaica collections had been transferred from Germany to England, such as the library of Zunz's friend Heiman Michael (1792–1846) in Hamburg.[76] As a result, Zunz had no access to essential Hebrew books while he worked on his two-volume "Synagogal Poetry of the Middle Ages" ("Synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters," 2 vols., Berlin 1855–1859). He was forced to ask friends and scholars to provide him with copies of books and transcriptions from books and manuscripts. Finally, in 1846, Zunz was able to follow the book collections to England. In a letter dated June 14, 1880, he told Kaufmann about his journey to London. He wrote that, during the stay, his wife Adelheid usually visited the greenhouses while Zunz himself worked in the manuscript collection of the British Museum. One day in the greenhouses, Adelheid met Queen Victoria and was introduced to Her Majesty, as Zunz proudly reported.[77] Ten years later, he told Kaufmann, he traveled again to Paris and Oxford, and in 1857 he went to Italy, as well.[78]

Following his wedding with Irma Gomperz (1854–1905), David Kaufmann traveled together with his wife in April 1881. The first trip the young couple made to Italy, however, was – and Kaufmann felt he needed to make excuses in a letter to Zunz – "completely non-academic."[79] But, such "non-academic" journeys to spas, especially to health resorts in Northern Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium, from 1881 on became the possibility for David and Irma Kaufmann to stop over in Berlin and visit Zunz. For example, when the Kaufmanns returned from a holiday trip to the island of Norderney in the North Sea in the summer of 1881, they visited Leopold Zunz for his 87th birthday. During this first visit by the married couple, the Kaufmanns met

[76] On the transfer of the Michael collection, see Gregor Pelger: Wissenschaft des Judentums und englische Bibliotheken. Zur Geschichte historischer Philologie im 19. Jahrhundert, Berlin 2010, pp. 121–144.

[77] Zunz to Kaufmann, Berlin, 14.06.1880, in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel II, p. 145.

[78] On Zunz's journeys, see: David Kaufmann, Art. Zunz, reprinted as: David Kaufmann: Leopold Zunz (1899), in: Brann (ed.), Gesammelte Schriften von David Kaufmann, vol. 1, pp. 333–351, here pp. 347–348; Alexander Marx: Zunz's Letters to Steinschneider, in: Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research 5 (1933–1934), pp. 95–153, here pp. 99–100; Elbogen, Leopold Zunz zum Gedächtnis, p. 25; [Abraham] Berliner: Zum Briefwechsel zwischen Michael und Zunz, in: Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Literarischen Gesellschaft 4 (1906), pp. 269–274. The philosopher Moritz Lazarus (1824–1903) advised Kaufmann on Zunz's trip to Italy, see Lazarus to Kaufmann, Meran, 27.10.1884 (transcript), Leo Baeck Institute, New York (hereafter LBI), AR 2051 (MF 100), correspondence.

[79] Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 05.04.1881, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.77.

Zunz's niece Theodora Meyer. After Adelheid Zunz had died, Theodora maintained the widower's house. She was the daughter of Zunz's sister Julie Meyer in Bielefeld.[80] Theodora Meyer made friends with Irma Kaufmann and, since then, Zunz and Kaufmann gave their regards to one another in their letters on behalf of the women.

Shortly before Zunz's eighty-eighth birthday in July 1882, the Kaufmanns came again to Berlin. During this visit, Zunz returned to Kaufmann the letters he had written to him in the past years. When Markus Brann edited the second part of the Kaufmann-Zunz correspondence, he found a note by Kaufmann from July 22, 1882, which explained that Zunz wished for Kaufmann to preserve the correspondence "as a whole" in Budapest. Zunz only kept the letters of Kaufmann that he had not answered.[81]

In the summer of 1884, Kaufmann planned to visit Zunz again, primarily because of Zunz's 90th birthday.[82] In July, however, cholera broke out in Northern Germany. Since attempts to contain the epidemic failed, the Prussian government placed Berlin under quarantine, and, for their part, the Hungarian officials refused to issue passports for the Kaufmanns.[83] In the summer of 1885, David and Irma Kaufmann came to Berlin again. On their trip from the Belgian seaside resort Ostende back to Budapest, the Kaufmanns met Zunz and his niece several times at his home on Auguststrasse.[84] Those encounters would be the last reunion of the correspondents. On March 17, 1886, Zunz died in Berlin.

80 Very few details on Theodora Meyer's life could be found in a letter, written by Adelheid Zunz to Philipp and Julie Ehrenberg, (Berlin?), 24.10.1851, in: Nachum Glatzer, Leopold and Adelheid Zunz. An Account in Letters, pp. 238–239. Leopold Zunz reported about Theodora's support in his letter to Victor Ehrenberg, Berlin, 17.10.1874, in: Glatzer, Leopold and Adelheid Zunz, p. 341.

81 The note can be found in: Brann, Mitteilungen aus dem Briefwechsel I, p. 161. The wording is as follows: "Von Zunz Sonnabend, den 22. Juli 1882 zurückerhalten, damit sie, wie er sagte, sicher verwahrt seien und mit seinen Antworten zusammen ein Ganzes bildeten. Die noch nicht beantworteten behielt er, wie er ausdrücklich sagte, zurück. Norderney, 27. Juli 1882."

82 Since there is a gap in the records of the Kaufmann-Zunz correspondence for 1883, it remains unclear whether Kaufmann and Zunz met in that year.

83 Kaufmann to Zunz, Aussee, 31.07.1884, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356. 91; Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 08.09.1884, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.93.

84 Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest 08.09.1885, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.96: "Ich habe mehr als billig bisher von mir gesprochen statt daß ich Ihnen vor Allem zu danken hatte, daß Sie in den Tagen unseres Berliner Aufenthaltes uns so gastfreundlich den Besuch bei Ihnen gestattet haben. Besonders an dem letzten Abendbesuch und Ihre Äußerungen beim Schein der Lampe werden wir oft und mit wahrem Vergnügen zurückdenken."

7. David Kaufmann as the First Biographer of Leopold Zunz

David Kaufmann's visits to the esteemed master of Wis*senschaft des Judentums* led to a particular academic contribution: He became the first biographer of Leopold Zunz. In many letters to and during his encounters with Zunz, Kaufmann had asked Zunz about his life.[85] Kaufmann was particularly interested in Zunz's personality, the beginnings of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin, and Zunz's relationships with other leading Jewish scholars. For example, in his last letter, written in February 1886, he asked about Zunz's relationship with merchant and Maskil Mattityahu Strashun (1817–1885) from Vilna.[86] During his visits in Berlin, Kaufmann made copious notes about Zunz's stories. Kaufmann recorded the meetings stenographically and in great detail. A transcript of Kaufmann's memos shows that he had documented every subject, every aphorism, and every facial expression and gesture of Zunz.[87]

Based on such first-hand information, David Kaufmann compiled the first biography on Zunz for the "General German Biography" ("Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie").[88] In his eleven-page essay, Kaufmann drew a lively picture of the "creator and master of Wissenschaft des Judentums."[89] He frequently included his personal memories and phrases like, "Zunz remembered then […]."[90] Kaufmann first sketched Zunz's childhood, his youth in the Samson'sche Freischule in Wolfenbüttel, and his relocation to Berlin. Moreover, he illustrated the academic influences on the young Zunz and his work for the "Society for the Culture and Wissenschaft of the Jews" ("Verein für Cultur and Wissenschaft der Juden") in Berlin. This was followed by a description of Zunz's position as an editor for the Spener Newspaper ("Spenersche Zeitung"), a tradition-steeped Berlin newspaper, his application for rabbinic appointments,

85 For example, see Kaufmann to Zunz, Breslau, 07.07.1875, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.14.

86 Kaufmann to Zunz, Budapest, 10.02.1886, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/G 16a–356.98.

87 Kaufmann to Schechter, Budapest, 06.03.1890, Archive of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York (hereafter JTS), Arc. 101, 4/47.

88 Kaufmann was asked to write on Zunz in 1898, see Kaufmann to Salomon Neumann (Kuratorium der Zunz-Stiftung), Budapest, 15.09.1898, NLI, Arc. 4° 792/Z 7–143. The General German Biography still exists, nowadays in an updated version online. Kaufmann's original entry on Zunz has not been updated and can be found under https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz60694.html#adbcontent (last accessed January 15, 2018).

89 Kaufmann, Leopold Zunz (1899), p. 333.

90 Kaufmann, Leopold Zunz (1899), pp. 333, 335.

his temporary position as preacher in Prague, and finally his presidency at the Jewish teacher's seminary in Berlin.

For the period after Zunz's retirement in 1850, Kaufmann concentrated on Zunz's activities and published works. In the last passage of the biography, the entry focused on Zunz's final years after Adelheid had passed away and Kaufmann himself established contact with Zunz. Kaufmann emphasized that the corrections to the "Gesammelte Schriften" occupied Zunz until 1876 because, as Kaufmann stated, they connected him "with his academic past." Afterwards, however, the biographer observed that Zunz's "pen fell from his hand."[91] Though Zunz was no longer open to a "stable awakening and confidence,", Kaufmann emphasized that even in the later years visitors could always recognize a slight "flare-up" of Zunz's "brilliance" and irony.[92]

8. Conclusion

The epistolary exchange between the master and the young student of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* represents a significant dialogue between the first and third generations of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Between the first generation, to which belonged the founding figures such as Isaak M. Jost (1793–1860), Moritz Steinschneider, and Zunz, and Kaufmann's generation with scholars born in the mid-nineteenth century such as Markus Brann, Wilhelm Bacher, and Solomon Schechter (1847–1915), was the second generation with great intellectuals such as Zacharias Frankel (1801–1875), Heinrich Graetz, and Abraham Berliner (1833–1915). The letters between Kaufmann and Zunz offer profound insights and a panorama of the configurations of Jewish scholarly life in the nineteenth century, its practices, individual life paths, and experiences.[93] Moreover, they exemplify the values and self-images held by *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in its first hundred years. The correspondence reveals two central aspects of the history of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*: the rather broad concept of academic study of Judaism on the one hand, and the importance of networks of letters, travel, and exchange on the other.

91 Kaufmann, Leopold Zunz (1899), p. 350.

92 Kaufmann, Leopold Zunz (1899), p. 351.

93 On the configurations of scholarly lives, see: Gadi Algazi: Eine gelernte Lebensweise. Figurationen des Gelehrtenlebens zwischen Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit, in: Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte 30 (2007), pp. 107–118.

David Kaufmann, a gifted young scholar of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, adored the founder of the discipline. He thus worked hard for the contact and exchange with Leopold Zunz. Nevertheless, Kaufmann learned about Zunz's writings at the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau and through the teachings of its director Zacharias Frankel, the founder of Conservative Judaism. Frankel appreciated Zunz as the "creator of the Jewish Wis*senschaft*," but was also convinced that Zunz understood himself too much as a philologist and bibliographer rather than as a *J*ewish scholar. David Kaufmann was impressed and influenced by Frankel's assessment. Thus, when Kaufmann and Zunz argued over Bible criticism, Kaufmann was confronted for the first time with differing concepts and methods of Wis*senschaft des Judentums*. Zunz promoted a highly rational and quasi-anticlerical understanding of modern Jewish scholarship, which was mainly based on a philological approach to Jewish knowledge. In contrast, Frankel understood *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as an "academic discipline of faith" ("GlaubensWis*senschaft*").[94] Therefore, it becomes clear that *Wissenschaft des Judentums* must be understood not as a monolithic subject, but rather as an academic movement that lived by and through its many members.

Often, the differences provoked disagreement and ideological fights between religious camps. Unlike other intellectuals, however, David Kaufmann succeeded in dealing with the wide range of scholars of different denominations and views of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. While his teacher Heinrich Graetz, for example, constantly attacked the neo-Orthodox leader and rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer (1820–1899) in his writings and letters, Kaufmann maintained friendly relations with Hildesheimer.[95]

In addition to the various concepts of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* that become visible in the correspondence, the letters of Kaufmann and Zunz are an outstanding example that illustrates the importance of networks in modern Jewish scholarship. Jewish scholarly networks were nothing new in the

[94] Andreas Brämer: Rabbiner Zacharias Frankel. Wissenschaft des Judentums und konservative Reform im 19. Jahrhundert, Hildesheim 2000, pp. 255–275; Brämer: The Dilemmas of Moderate Reform. Some Reflections on the Development of Conservative Judaism in Germany 1840–1880, in: Jewish Studies Quarterly 10 (2003), pp. 73–87.

[95] See Kaufmann's report on a joint vacation with the Hildesheimer family in: Kaufmann to his parents, Heringsdorf, 05.08.1896, Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem (hereafter CAHJP), P 181/8.

nineteenth century, nor did they appear out of thin air. Instead, they built on the foundations of the existing networks of the Jewish diaspora that had emerged along trade routes, Jewish autonomous and super-communal organizations, and intellectual exchange.[96] In light of the Haskalah and in the hope of emancipation, the existing networks transformed and accelerated, similar to the ways in which knowledge and academic organizations in the surrounding cultures transformed and enhanced.

Subsequently, Jewish academic networks in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries ran along three main channels of communication: One channel was built along organizations and institutions such as the rabbinical seminaries, but also associations, learned societies, and academic journals. These institutions were the most visible means of communication inside, as well as outside, the Jewish networks. Contacts or even controversies with disciplines related to *Wissenschaft des Judentums* became the second vital path of communication among Jewish scholars. For example, modern Jewish scholarship shared many central research questions and fields with Oriental studies and Protestant theology. The relationship between Wis*senschaft des Judentums* and Oriental studies was particularly close, since numerous Jewish scholars earned their doctoral degree in Oriental studies.[97] At the same time, related disciplines also challenged central topics, attitudes, and methodologies of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, as the confrontations with Protestant theology show.[98] Personal relationships and friendships constituted the third means of Jewish academic communication. Connections between the individual scholars were crucial for cohesion and solidarity within the networks. Today, these personal relationships can be studied through the correspondence between the scholars, which has been preserved in the written estates and archival collections. Moreover, from the perspective of historical epistemology, the letters illuminate the self-organization, structure, and significance of Jewish scholarly networks. Inasmuch as they were consistent and regular, the correspondence

[96] Sophia Menache (ed.): Communication in the Jewish Diaspora, Leiden 1996; Mirjam Thulin: Jewish Networks, in: European History Online, ed. by the Institute of European History (IEG) Mainz 2010-12-03, URL: http://www.ieg-ego.eu/thulinm-2010-en, URN: urn:nbn:de:0159-20100921358 [2012-04-25] (last accessed 15.01.2018).

[97] Ismar Schorsch: Converging Cognates. The Intersection of Jewish and Islamic Studies in Nineteenth Century Germany, in: Leo Baeck Institute Year Book 55 (2010), pp. 3–36.

[98] Christian Wiese: Challenging Colonial Discourse. Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany, Leiden 2005.

between the scholars not only reveal the relationship between two particular writers, but also show the connections to and with other scholars. Thus, correspondence such as the Kaufmann-Zunz letters contains valuable information about the social and everyday lives of the scholars.

Manuscripts, Images, and Biographies of Daniel Chwolson: New Details from the Archives of St. Petersburg[1]

by Dimitri Bratkin

Abstract

The St. Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy (PFA RAN) contains two manuscript biographies of Daniel Chwolson, the Russian-Jewish Orientalist, advocate of Jewish scholarship, and bridge builder to the Breslau Jewish Theological Seminary. They were written by his pupil and colleague, Pavel Kokovtsov, and his grandson Yevgeny Chwolson, respectively. These two texts are studied against the background of published texts and popular opinion of Chwolson in late Imperial Russia. Apart from some details, these manuscripts offer limited additional information as factual sources, most of their contents being mere variation of published texts. However, the biography of Chwolson written by his grandson is a valuable source on the reception of Chwolson and illustrates the potential of further mythological appreciation of his personality and works in the Soviet time as a defense strategy for Chwolson's family. It also contains crucial information on the fate of Chwolson's archive.

1. Introduction

For the history of scholarship, Daniel Chwolson (1819 [1822]–1911) remains the founder of Semitic studies in St. Petersburg.[2] His academic record covers an

[1] This article was written for the project 16-18-10083 of the Russian Science Foundation "The Study of Religion in Social and Cultural Contexts of the Epoch: The History of Religious Studies and Intellectual History of Russia from the nineteenth to the first half of the twentieth century.

[2] Note on transliteration: Despite a strong recent tendency to introduce the English transliteration "Khvolson" or "Khvol'son" for the Cyrillic "Хвольсон," I use the German "Chwolson", since it was favored by the bearer himself. For the sake of consistency, it is applied to the rest of his family as well. Note on archival references: The St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Academy Archive is abbreviated PFA RAN by its transliterated Russian acronym. Archival references are indicated as

unusually long period of service across three institutions of higher education. Yet, from 1855 until his death in 1911, he taught Hebrew and Aramaic in the Oriental Languages Faculty of the Imperial St. Petersburg University. In 1858, he was appointed to teach Hebrew and Biblical Archaeology at the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, which belonged to the state Orthodox Christian Church, and remained in service until 1883. Within that same interval of 1858–1884, he also taught Hebrew at the St. Petersburg Roman Catholic Academy.

No surprise, indeed, that the very figure of Chwolson should attract biographers' interest. He was a Jewish child prodigy from the poorest backcountry regions of Vilna, an autodidact who managed to study later under Abraham Geiger (1810–1874) and Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (1801–1888), and then in less than a decade secured himself a position as *the* personal protégé of a Russian Imperial Minister of Public Education, *the* professor of Semitics, and a member in correspondence of the Imperial Russian Academy, whose would-be theologians were later to study under his supervision for the price of his conversion to state-sanctioned Catholicism. Chwolson taught Hebrew to the Catholic students, who mostly came from Polish and Lithuanian territories occupied by the Russian Empire and who were meant to return as trained parish priests to care for the congregations that rubbed shoulders with Jewish neighbors in the Pale. Chwolson was an ardent polemicist against blood libels and all other sorts of Antisemitism. In his later decades, he advocated for the promotion of education among Jews, and especially among candidates for rabbinic office. In the field of scholarship, he is best known for his participation in the lengthy and heated debate over the famous Abraham (Firkovich) Firkowicz's collections and the highly disputable accusations of alleged forgeries it was said to contain. Abraham Firkovich (1786–1874) was the famous Karaite Hakham ("Wise") and antiquarian, whose vast collections were eventually acquired into the Russian Imperial Public Library in 1860s and 1870s. Although the value of those was undisputed, Firkovich was repeatedly accused of forgery, which produced a lengthy disputation among the learned. Of those Chwolson was most sympathetic towards Firkovich, and by and large, the only scholar whose case for him would be most sustained. One could imagine that such a diverse, controversial, and important figure

follows: *fond* number, *opis* number (inventory list, abbreviated *op.*), item number in preservation (*edinitsa khraneniia*, abbreviated *ed. khr.*), folio number (*list*, abbreviated *l.*).

would become the subject of extensive research. Yet, this is far from the case. Chwolson's life is painfully understudied.[3]

This historiographical lacuna may at least partly be explained by the fact that public archives provide a very limited number of documentary materials on Chwolson's life and work. As of this writing, there are some 200 items available that are mainly shared between the St. Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy (*fond* 959) and the Archive of the Orientalists in the Institute of Oriental Studies (*fond* 55). The collection is neither a full *Nachlass*, nor even representative as a corpus of personal papers. Likewise, there is no hint of any memoirs or autobiographical narratives presented by Chwolson himself, such as those of Simon Dubnov (1860–1941). One may suppose that his reluctance to touch on the subtle and controversial issues of his career and conversion may account for that. However, the disappearance of his personal papers goes against every custom that existed in Russian academia prior to the Bolshevik takeover and is even more clamant when compared with the careful preservation of Chwolson's library. Such a situation urges researchers to take the fullest possible account of every piece of evidence that has survived. This evidence, in turn, is very diverse and, in general, strongly opinionated.

Chwolson's memory and reception was forced into a limited number of standard narrative plots. These plots sometimes overlapped to such an extent that Chwolson would be depicted mainly, if not only, as a convert *par excellence* and even a confessing opportunist.[4] Solomon Zeitlin (1886/1892–1976), who claimed personal knowledge of Chwolson, pronounced a harsh judgment on Chwolson,[5] whereas another witness of Chwolson's final days had a much

[3] There is no full biography on Chwolson written either in Russian, Hebrew, or any other Western language. The most important works include Shulamit Magnus: Good Bad Jews. Converts, Conversion, and Boundary Redrawing in Modern Russian Jewry. Notes Toward a New Category, in: Susan A. Glenn / Naomi B. Sokoloff (eds.), Boundaries in Jewish Identity, Seattle 2010, pp. 132–160; Andrew C. Reed: For One's Brothers. Daniil Avraamovich Khvol'son and the "Jewish Question" in Russia 1819–1911, Arizona State University 2014, online: https://repository.asu.edu/attachments/135002/content/Reed_asu_0010E_13920.pdf (last accessed 25.02.2018).

[4] Lucy Dawidowicz: The Golden Tradition. Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe, New York 1967, p. 335; Louis Jacobs: The Jewish Religion, Oxford 1995, pp. 99–100; Christoph Gassenschmidt, in: Khvol'son, Daniil Avraamovich. YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, online: http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Khvolson_Daniil_Avraamovich (last accessed 14.09.2017).

[5] Zeitlin, S. Review: Blood Accusation. The Strange History of the Beiless Case by Maurice Samuel, in: The Jewish Quarterly Review 59 (1968) 1, pp. 76–80.

more sympathetic opinion of him.[6] Shulamit Magnus has recently shown that the image of Chwolson in the works of Jewish historians who wrote in Yiddish such as Shmuel Leib Zitron (1860–1930) and Shaul Ginzburg (1866–1940) was prone both to apologetic and accusatorial intonations.[7]

There exist five biographical narratives of Chwolson that have received little, if any, attention from Western scholars, for the most obvious reason: all but one is written in Russian. The genre of a journal article limits extensive translations from these narratives, however, having biographical interest in Daniel Chwolson, one may expect that the sources discussed below will in due course appear in some more readable language. Where those translations would nevertheless be helpful. In cases where the original texts are either unpublished or printed, I quote the parts that I consider most important.

In this essay, I concentrate on two linked aims. My first aim is to introduce the sources that essentially comprise *the* corpus of biographic material on Daniel Chwolson. Although documents and letters can be found elsewhere, e. g. in Moscow, the archival materials of St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Academy Archive provide much more insight in his life and work. Of these we are fortunate to have biographical narratives composed by authors who claim personal knowledge of him and draw on interviews with him. In order to incorporate them into the broader scholarly narrative, one has to analyze the patterns behind these biographical presentations which is the second aim of the article. In total, I present five documents. Of these all but one was written by former students or by Chwolson's academic colleagues. The fifth biography was composed by Chwolson's grandson, long after the death of the scholar, and after the October Revolution of 1917. In regard to the last biography I argue that the text is secondary as a factual source of Chwolson's life, however, it is important to understand it as an attempt to accommodate Chwolson within the early Soviet context, and thus to produce a novel version of "Chwolson folklore" posthumously.[8]

6 Zalman Shazar: Baron David Günzberg [sic!] and His Academy, in: The Jewish Quarterly Review 57 (1967), p. 3.

7 Shulamit Magnus, Good Bad Jews, pp. 143–146.

8 Unless otherwise stated, translations from the Russian originals are mine. For the sake of brevity and following the suggestion of the reviewer of the article, I omitted most of the reasoning behind the dates of the archival documents; they will be published separately. The Publication of the original texts from the unpublished documents is planned for 2018.

2. David Günzburg's Eulogy

The first source I wish to introduce is a jubilee eulogy that was published as a series of articles in *Voskhod* from November 21, 1899 until January 13, 1900[9] to mark Chwolson's eightieth anniversary.[10] This is the least unknown contemporary biography of Chwolson, since parts of it (less than one-tenth in total) were published in English by Lucy Dawidowicz.[11] Her translation, however, is at best misleading, since Dawidowicz compiled different parts of the original text arbitrarily. No wonder Shulamit Magnus merely mentioned this abridgement in passing apparently without knowledge of the full text.[12] And truly, it is strange to imagine why one would feel obliged to consult the full original version as Dawidowicz's rendering has almost turned it into a piece of puffed rhetoric. And albeit this jubilee publication is inevitably rhetorical by demand of its date, its genre, and its author's deep affection towards Chwolson (so aptly presented by Dawidowicz), it has value as a biographical source on top, and in spite, of all that standard language of admiration. Andrew Reed, who worked with Chwolson's papers in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Academy Archive apparently consulted only the first part of the copy that is available in the same *fond* in the file of newspaper clippings.[13]

The first part of the article was printed in No. 51 on the very day of Chwolson's jubilee on November 21, 1899, and the subsequent No. 52 contained an account of the celebrations. First to visit the octogenarian was a "large delegation from the Jewish institutions of St. Petersburg, then that of the colleagues from the Oriental Faculty of the University."[14] This account quoted the honorific addresses from the Jewish and academic institutions on the whole and listed Jewish societies, professors and rabbis who sent congratulation telegrams.

[9] Yubilei professora D. A. Khvolsona. (Jubilee of Professor Chwolson), in: Voskhod (Sunrise) 51 (1899), col. 1604–1607; Vos'midesyatiletni yubilei professora Khvolsona (Prodolzheniye) (Eightieth Jubilee of Professor Chwolson, Continued) 52 (1899), 1635–1637; D. A. Khvolson (Prodolzheniye) (D. A. Chwolson, Continued) 54, col. 1707–1709; 58, col. 1834–1839; 2 (1900), col. 13–17; D. A. Khvolson (Okonchaniye) (D. A. Chwolson, End) 3, col. 11–17. Hereafter referred to by issue and column number.

[10] (Unsigned) Chestvovaniye professora D. A. Khvolsona [Honouring Professor D. A. Chwolson], in: Voskhod 52 (1899), col. 1642–1645.

[11] Dawidowicz, Golden Tradition, pp. 336–338

[12] Magnus, Good Bad Jews, p. 158.

[13] PFA RAN. F. 959, op. 1. ed. khr. 53, l. 16–23. The copy of *Voskhod* in the Russian National Library (former State Public Library) may not be accessible at the time of Reed's stay in St. Petersburg.

[14] (Unsigned) Chestvovaniye. 1641.

The eulogy was written by the same person who had organized the celebrations: Baron David Günzburg (1857–1910), one of the most notable members of the Jewish community in St. Petersburg at that time. He had been a student of Chwolson, one of his ardent admirers and close younger friends. The published text is at least partly based upon oral history, and thus it is the most important biographical source. The first article in the series covers Chwolson's family background, childhood, and early years until the age of 18. Then, young Joseph Chwolson[15] mastered the Latin alphabet, and three languages, namely German, French, and Russian. He went on foot from Vilna to Riga, whence he then tramped to Breslau.[16] The second part describes his work on his dissertation and preparation to its publication, up until his return to Russia in 1851.[17] Part three deals first with Chwolson's marriage, his subsequent divorce, and second marriage to the girl from the Cohn family.[18] Part four discusses Chwolson's return to Russia, the patrons he acquired in academia, and his friendship with Avraam Norov (1795–1869), a civil servant, historian, writer, and traveler, that resulted in his professorial appointment.[19] Günzburg mentions no baptism at all, and only an understanding and keen reader will notice an oblique allusion to Chwolson's conversion (and to the suspicions of career-seeking) in the words:

> "One thing I may say for sure: bad motives and a desire to secure his own future have never governed Chwolson in any decision that relates to moral duty, and he has never acted against his conscience. For this reason, he has always had the most devoted friends in every part of society. Thus, my grandfather nimbly compared him to Queen Esther."[20]

Part five covers Chwolson's scholarly works and progress as professor in the Oriental Faculty. Touching upon the subtle issue of Abraham Firkowicz's collection, Günzburg writes:

15 Daniel was Chwolson's baptismal name, see also next footnote.
16 Voskhod, №51, col. 1604–1607.
17 Voskhod, №52, col. 1635–1637.
18 Voskhod, №54, col. 1707–1709.
19 Voskhod, №58, col. 1834–1839. Avraam Sergeyevich Norov became deputy minister since 1840, then minister of public education from 1853–1858. Norov was the godfather of Daniel Chwolson at his baptism, thus Chwolson's Christian patronymic 'Avraamovich' or colloquial 'Abramovich' was derived from Norov's Christian name.
20 Voskhod, №58, col. 1837.

> "[Chwolson's] work [on Hebrew manuscripts and epigraphy] was impeded by the pursuing of personal and national goals on the side of the tireless collector, the Karaite Firkowicz. It was difficult for an honest and straightforward man [i. e. Chwolson] to get used to the idea that the elder known to him and distinguished in intelligence and energy set sail into bargaining with his conscience and indulged himself in erasures, additions and alterations to the letter-forms of the antique monuments and even subscripts to the manuscripts. This advanced into the heated debate from which a new discipline arose, that is, Hebrew palaeography. […] These palaeographical investigations caused, in passing, that the Imperial Public Library acquired, in two instalments, the collections of Firkowicz, which now give honour to the Library and nourishment to many learned minds. […] Is it not to the merit of Professor Chwolson that he caused the retention of such valuable manuscripts in St. Petersburg athwart the minds of pusillanimous advice-givers? Much could be said in general about this side of Daniil Abramovich's [i. e. Chwolson's – D. B.] activities in the field of Hebrew palaeography, but there is no place to get deep into a strictly scholarly evaluation of his works. This will be the subject of a fuller biography of him that is to appear in French. In general, it is sufficient for us for the time being to rest satisfied with a few strokes that mark his moral image. Not resting upon the period of passionate discussions about the Jewish inscriptions, we should say that now those two mighty pugilists, Chwolson and [Albert Abraham] Harkavy, who were isolated for so long and who are equally dear to the heart of every Russian Jew, both returned honoured from the battlefield, where neither has won or lost, and have shaken hands."[21]

Günzburg avoids commenting about Chwolson's stance on the Firkowicz collection and his relationship with Albert Harkavy (1835–1919).[22] Finally, the sixth part covered the subject that was even more problematic for the Jewish audience, namely Chwolson's professorship in Christian theological institutions.[23] Here, Günzburg emphasizes the difference between Chwolson and his

[21] Voskhod, №2, col. 15–16.

[22] Albert (Abraham) Harkavy was a notable Jewish Russian historian who contributed mainly to the history of Jews in early medieval Russia. Moreover, he was a renowned authority in Hebrew and Semitic paleography. In 1876 he was appointed head of the Oriental department of the Imperial Public Library. Unlike Chwolson, Harkavy was promoted to a position in the state service not at the expense of baptism but remained a prominent leader of the Jewish community in St. Petersburg. He was a critic of Firkovicz's integrity and, admittedly, a lifelong rival of Chwolson.

[23] Voskhod, №3, col. 11–17.

immediate predecessor, "half-ignorant Jewish convert [sic!] Levison," who was said to be a former Jewish butcher *(shochet)*. Chwolson's arrival brought true knowledge and expertise. He participated in the translation of the Bible into modern Russian and was one of the first scholars to use rabbinic texts in New Testament exegesis. However, Chwolson's top concern was to explain the absurdity of blood libel to students of theology (he gave an annual lecture on it in the Roman Catholic Academy), which then grew into his books against blood accusation and his participation as an expert witness when this nonsensical indictment was admitted into the courtroom.

Since there is no hint of the fuller biography of Chwolson in French ever written, we must admit that this series is the longest and most contextual narrative of Chwolson's life written by one of his supporters and admirers. Even though David Günzburg gives a highly sympathetic (if not panegyric) image of Chwolson, his account is rich in detail and coherent in his case for Chwolson.

3. Günzburg's Manuscript Source for the Eulogy

The personal *fund* of Günzburg that is now preserved in the manuscript department of the Russian National Library (former Imperial / State Public Library) contains a manuscript that is most likely to be one of the sources for Günzburg's published eulogy.[24] The document is in German; it has neither title nor date. The library catalogue and the folder cover of the manuscript contain both the erroneous name "David Chwolson" and the over-cautious date "after 1880." I am inclined to suggest that the manuscript is a draft for Günzburg's published eulogy of 1899–1900. The published Russian text is undoubtedly an expanded and ornamented translation of a rather succinct German account. However, there is one detail that proves this document to be extremely valuable.

On l. 3 verso, the narrative that had hitherto been styled in the third person ("Chwolsons Vater war ein in Wilna sehr bekannter, ausgezeichneter Talmudist …" l. 1) suddenly slips into the first person ("… einer der grössten Gelehrten seiner Zeit protegirte mich sehr als einen seinen Lieblings-Schüler. Als ich ihn zum ersten male die überraschenden Resultate meiner Studien

[24] OR RNB. F. 183 [D. G. Günzburg] ed. khr. 51.

mitgetheilt hatte…" etc. l. 3 verso[25]) and runs in the first person for half a page. Later, apparently in the course of revising, the same hand of Günzburg in the same ink corrected all the first-person forms (ich, mich, meiner, mir, etc.) into their third-person equivalents (er, ihn, seiner, ihm) referring to Chwolson. The only explanation for this occasional slip is that Günzburg was taking notes on Chwolson's dictation or copying earlier drafts that recorded his personal narrative. In either case, this proves that the manuscript is based on Chwolson's oral history and contains his *ipsissima vox*. This is important, for it is possible now to conclude that Günzburg's eulogy, at least in its factual and chronological outline, was informed by Chwolson's own oral transmission. In particular, it authorizes certain details, discussed below, as part of Chwolson's self-presentation.

4. An Academic Obituary by a Colleague

Unlike Günzburg, Pavel Konstantinovich Kokovtsov (1861–1942) came from the family of established Russian hereditary nobility. Like him, Kokovtsov knew Chwolson closely, both personally and professionally, from his very first admission to the Hebrew-Syriac-Arabic department of the Oriental Faculty in 1880 until Chwolson's death on March 23, 1911. In 1894, Kokovtsov became an associate professor (*Privatdozent*) and inherited from Chwolson the teaching of elementary language classes. The promotion to extraordinary professor followed in 1900, and then a full professorship in 1912. In 1903, he was elected corresponding member of the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg, and full membership was bestowed upon him in 1906.

Kokovtsov was one of the pallbearers at Chwolson's funeral and on April 2, 1911 presented an obituary to the General Assembly of the Academy, which was published in June.[26] The style of this text differs greatly from that of Günzburg's eulogy. First, for obvious reasons, it is written from the position of an academic scholar, rather than from a national or religious perspective, and it is much more formal, albeit not unemotional. Kokovtsov's aim is to

[25] Orthography of the document.

[26] Chitan v zasedanii Obshchego Sobraniya 2 aprelya 1911 g. akademikom P.K. Kokovtsovym (D.A. Chwolson. 1819–1911. Obituary. Presented to the meeting of the General Assembly on 2 April 1911 by P.K. Kokovtsov), Izvestiya Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk (Bulletin of the Imperial Academy of Sciences / Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg) 10 (1911), pp. 741–750.

delineate Chwolson's position among the great Orientalists of his generation: Heinrich Ewald (1803–1875), Heinrich Fleischer (1801–1888), Ernest Renan (1823–1892), Abraham Geiger (1810–1874) and Franz Delitzsch (1813–1890). This selection of names includes Protestant theologians (Ewald, Fleischer, Delitzsch), free thinkers (Renan) and Jews (Geiger) who were mentors and patrons of Chwolson (like Geiger and Fleischer), or his companions in scholarly polemics (Renan, Delitzsch). Kokovtsov is peering over the barriers of religious persuasion. He pays less attention to any personal or novelistic details of Chwolson's life but concentrates almost exclusively on his scholarly work and the subjects which Chwolson had touched upon. Kokovtsov pays equal attention to each of them, discussing Chwolson's contribution to Russian biblical translation and New Testament exegesis in detail. He concludes the obituary with an important statement on Chwolson's character:

> "Here, in front of us, is a life which has completely passed in incessant, selfless, and altruistic service of scholarly progress. One may say, in this sense, that the scholar has almost eclipsed the human being inside Daniil Abramovich [i.e. Chwolson – D.B.]. The author of these words had the blessed privilege of standing in close connection to the deceased, first as a disciple of a beloved teacher, then as a companion in various scholarly subjects. It is not new to say that scholarly interests imbued his entire life, and that every new finding, every discovery incited his most passionate desire to live longer, so that he might observe the future of his discipline. It was this deep interest in the purest knowledge, in the truth, that encouraged him to step fearlessly into understudied areas, and to pave there the way for future researchers, notwithstanding the peril of getting lost himself. On his way, he sometimes was mistaken, yet mistaken *bona fide* and it was his honour to acknowledge these mistakes without recalcitrance".[27]

Apart from the scholarly work, Kokovtsov gives a full summary of Chwolson's struggle with the tradition of blood libels, and in two years he would have to stand as expert witness into the Beilis trial together with other former students of Chwolson, such as Ivan Troitsky.[28]

[27] Kokovtsov, Nekrolog, pp. 749–750.

[28] Ivan Gavrilovich Troitsky (1858–1929) was an Orthodox Christian Hebraist who studied under Chwolson in St. Petersburg at the Orthodox Christian Theological Academy and, since 1884, succeeded Chwolson as lecturer in Hebrew and Biblical Archaeology. In 1913, Troitsky was an expert witness for the defense in the Beiliss trial.

Thus, Günzburg and Kokovtsov provide an integral and comprehensive image. Looking from liberal Jewish and liberal academic angles, respectively, they give the same essentially coherent picture of a great mind and a brilliant scholar. The St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Academy Archive preserved these two unpublished biographies of Chwolson. Both manuscripts are undated but can be easily placed within a short interval of time.

5. Unpublished Encyclopaedia Entry by the Colleague

There is another biography of Chwolson autographed by Pavel Kokovtsov, entitled *Biography and list of works by Professor D.A. Chwolson. Compiled by P. Kokovtsov.*[29] Although undated, I am inclined to suggest 1917 or 1918 as the date of origin. The second pencilled note at the bottom of the page reads: "I ask that this to be destroyed after my death. P.K." Nothing clearly justifies such a harsh decision. However, if one looks closely at the text, it immediately appears to be a version of the above-mentioned obituary that was already published in 1911. The handwritten text follows the published version rather closely, with a few alterations, of which some are minute, others important. One of the latter is a footnote to the traditional date of birth (November 21, 1819), which reads:

> "This date is based upon D.A. Chwolson's own testimony. Correspondingly, he celebrated his eightieth jubilee on November 21, 1899 and in ten years on the same day of November 21 his 90th birthday was celebrated. According to the official evidence of Petrograd University, Chwolson was born on December 9, 1822."[30]

At the time of writing, I do not have any confirmation for the later date, but, given the customary distortion of dates of birth as a means of avoiding future conscription, it looks generally plausible and should be added as a possibility to standard biographies of Chwolson. This addition indicates that the text recycling was not an original decision of Kokovtsov and he had done a certain amount of research, at least in the very beginning. A slip of paper, written in pre-1918 orthography of the Russian language old orthography as well and inserted between leaves 3 and 5 shows further indications of that preliminary research:

[29] PFA RAN. F. 779, op. 1, ed. khr. 134. Neither Andrew Reed nor Shulamit Magnus have apparently seen it.

[30] PFA RAN. F. 779, op. 1, ed. khr. 134, l. 2.

"On the biography of Chwolson
Lost his father around the age of 13
(His father was a lamdan. Trader in Saffian leather)
Lived in severe poverty in Vilna
Studied and lived at the rabbi's place (came home for dinner)
Ate meat on Fridays and Sabbaths
Three sisters, all married. Had children, nobody left, except one nephew,
Mr Braunshveig (now runs a pharmacy in Petersburg)
Through his wife related to the Cohn family (Breslau, Amsterdam …)."[31]

It looks as if Kokovtsov planned to write a new text that would include biographical data and, plausibly, reminiscences of oral narratives he heard from Chwolson himself. For some reason, that proved impossible, and I would suggest that the troubles that followed the Bolshevik takeover in October 1917 provide the best explanation. However, Kokovtsov added a full bibliography of Chwolson here. Yet, once forced to submit his own reused text to the volume that was never printed, Kokovtsov apparently felt obliged to avoid its further publication, and this does perfectly explain his decision to have it destroyed. But, even in the existing form it does contain some valuable pieces of data unavailable elsewhere.

6. Fitting Chwolson into Post-1917 Scenery

Chwolson's *fond* contains another handwritten biography of him, written by Chwolson's grandson.[32] The document is most interesting both in terms of its content and of the likely story behind it. It looks as if Andrew Reed is the only Western researcher who has ever seen it. However, as he did not consult the article series by David Günzburg, Reed erroneously used it as a primary source on Chwolson.[33]

Judging by the internal evidence of the text, it is likely to have been completed between 1924 and 1927. The manuscript underwent two corrections. One, in violet ink by a less than calligraphic hand, improves the syntax, corrects imprecise wording and adds an inserted slip of paper with an extensive quotation

31 PFA RAN. F. 779, op. 1, ed. khr. 134, l. 4.
32 PFA RAN. F. 959, op. 1, ed. khr. 54.
33 Reed, For One's Brothers, pp. 36, 54, 65.

from Chwolson's book on blood libel accusations.[34] These sense-bearing alterations presumably belong to the author himself. Another hand has corrected some punctuation and crossed off two paragraphs, namely those on Chwolson as a revolutionary and on the fate of his archive (the latter then restored). This pencilled correction is likely to have been left by the newspaper or magazine editor; to me, it looks like an indication that the article was submitted to be published in a Soviet periodical, but eventually rejected.

The biography was written by Yevgeni Anatolievich Chwolson (1891–1960), son of Anatoli Daniilovich Chwolson and Gulda (Olga Germanovna) Chwolson.[35] Anatoli, the middle son of Daniel Chwolson, lived with him and took care of the elderly professor. Olga Chwolson served as her father-in-law's assistant secretary as he grew visually impaired in his later years; she read and took down his dictations. The definitive version of Chwolson's testament, drawn up on March 24, 1908, bequeathed one half of the estate to Anatoli and his wife on the condition that Olga's and Yevgeni's proprietary rights would be protected in case Anatoli died and Olga remarried. The rest was shared between Orest (1852–1934) and Vladimir (1862–1931), with no precautions for their spouses or children.[36] Yevgeni mentions that he lived under the same roof with Chwolson "for the last fifteen years of his life".[37] That presumably means that, in the year 1896 or 1897, when Yevgeni was about six, his parents moved to professor Chwolson's flat to take care of him. The testament stipulated that Anatoli alone inherit all movable property that was in Chwolson's flat, apart from the library, which was sold, and its price shared between the sons in the same proportion. By the time of Chwolson's death, his library was already moved to the Asiatic Museum, and the Academy paid its price in annual instalments. That means that, in legal terms, the professor's unpublished manuscripts and his entire archive belonged to Anatoli.

In the year of Yevgeny's birth, his father served as an inspector in one of the major national insurance companies. In 1913, Yevgeny was admitted to the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics at St. Petersburg University, and by January 1917 he "completed auditing" of the full course as an irregular student.

[34] D. A. Chwolson: O nekotorykh srednevekovykh obvineniyakh protiv evreev (On certain medieval accusations against the Jews), second edition, St. Petersburg, 1880.
[35] Reed, For One's Brothers, p. 36, gives his patronymic erroneously: Antonovich.
[36] PFA RAN. F. 4, op. 2 (1909), ed. khr. 65, l. 20–21.
[37] PFA RAN. F. 959, op. 1, ed. khr. 54, l. 15.

Apparently, he did not formally graduate. From 1912 on, he worked in the Meteorological Bureau of the Institute of Agriculture, first as technician, then as laboratory assistant, and finally, as of 1920, as librarian. In 1914–1922, he published a few popular articles on meteorology in German and in Russian. In 1923, his research institution (by that time called the "State Institute of Experimental Agronomy") was closed, and Yevgeny became unemployed. He worked at the State Public Library first as an unsalaried employee, then as a staff member from 1923 until 1930. In April 1924, Yevgeny Chwolson applied for any available job at Leningrad University, and in July was appointed to supervise the Department of Agronomical and Applied Sciences in the university library. In 1930, he was forcefully relocated to the position of meteorological worker.[38] Yevgeny Chwolson survived the Soviet state terror and the war. His last job was in a district administration of Leningrad, which meant that he was unblemished in the eyes of the state.[39]

What Yevgeny wrote about his 15 years living with his grandfather and the fact that Chwolson's archive was kept with Yevgeny's family sounds promising, especially as we read:

> "certain details of this article are taken from Chwolson's autobiography that he dictated to his son, my father, *there are many extracts from the article on him by his student, D. Günzburg*. But, it was mostly personal impressions of him that served as a primary source to the author, his grandson, who lived the last fifteen years of his life together with him under the same roof."[40]

The italicized words above were crossed out and replaced with the more oblique phrase "… and from the reviews of his works." If the author foresaw its publication in Soviet Russia, this could be easily explained. First, for the purposes of the author, it could seem unsafe to refer openly to a "representative of

[38] L. A. Shilov: Khvol'son Yevgeny Anatolievich, in: Sotrudniki RNB – deyateli nauki i kul'tury. Biograficheskiy slovar', vols. 1–4 [Staff members of the Russian National Library is science and culture], online: http://www.nlr.ru/nlr_history/persons/info.php?id=595 (last accessed 10.11.2016).

[39] In 1966, six years after his death, Yevgeny's widow, who was moving out of their old apartment, offered a stack of papers to the Leningrad Branch of the academic archive (now PFA RAN). These were deposited as the personal *fond* of Daniel Chwolson (Fond 959). It is then justified to suppose that Yevgeny knew, or at least is likely to have been familiar with all the documents in the *fond*. I wish to thank Tatiana Kostina, staff research fellow of PFA RAN, for her inquiry in *Delo fonda 959* on my behalf.

[40] PFA RAN. F. 959, op. 1, ed. khr. 54, l. 17.

the nobility," who, in addition, had a title. Second, it may had been even more dangerous to mention *the Baron* Günzburg, whose library at that very moment was at stake in the disputation between the Soviet state and its "capitalist surrounding."[41] Indeed, almost all the novelistic content of this biography is taken, in a slightly paraphrased form, from the first part of Günzburg's eulogy (above, text 1) that was in Chwolson's grandson's possession, or similarly from the newspaper clippings that make up a separate file within the same *fond*.[42] Despite the author's claims, there is hardly any additional information on Chwolson that had not already been published. On the other hand, all the additions centre around the main idea of the work.

> "…he said some 10 years before the world war, or maybe even earlier, that 'a European war would one day erupt because of Serbia, and Serbia will be not a cause, but a pretext to it', and that this war is to end in revolution, adding that 'I will not live to see it, but my children will'. He died only three years before it."[43]

The grandson's narrative strategy is straightforward. First, Chwolson is portrayed as an accomplished polymath able to advise university professors from almost every field.[44] He is a keen analyst, visited by newspaper editors who strive to obtain his comment on various issues (especially "those of Eastern politics, the Balkans, India and China") and mentions it in the next-day editorials.[45] On some notable occasions, Yevgeny modified the picture he loaned from Günzburg's text. For the latter, Chwolson was a Jewish child prodigy who strove to understand ideas and opinions beyond the background and scope of rabbinic education[46] Instead, Yevgeny portrays young Chwolson as a *tabula rasa*:

> "18 years old, he hadn't yet had an idea of any language, other than his native. […] For a Jew who knows no language other than his own jargon, it is a matter of great difficulty to learn his first language on his own, without the simplest basics of

41 Michael Stanislawski: An Unperformed Contract. The Sale of Baron Gunzburg's Library to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, in: Transition and Change in Modern Jewish History. Jerusalem 1987, pp. lxxiii-xciii (repr. in: Herman Dicker: Of Learning and Libraries: The Seminary Library at One Hundred. New York 1988, pp. 89–110).

42 PFA RAN. F. 959, op. 1, ed. khr. 53.

43 PFA RAN. F. 959, op. 1, ed. khr. 54, l. 14.

44 PFA RAN. F. 959, op. 1, ed. khr. 54, l. 15.

45 PFA RAN. F. 959, op. 1, ed. khr. 54, l. 14.

46 Voskhod, № 51, col. 1606.

grammar and a dictionary in his native language. He has to master not only words, but very ideas and opinions far beyond his scope that have not a single expression in his native jargon".[47]

From the modern point of view, this sounds simplistically counterfactual. Yeshiva students obligatorily mastered Hebrew and Aramaic, as a professed listener of Chwolson's childhood recollections would probably know. On the other hand, though, a mistake about Chwolson may reveal more about his descendants. However, this is an almost verbatim Russian translation of a passage from Günzburg's German transcript from the late 1890s that reads:

"Für einen Juden, der ausser seinem Jargon keine Sprache kannte, ist es überhaupt ungeheuer schwierig die erste Sprache zu erlernen, da er in seiner Muttersprache keine Grammatik und kein Wörterbuch besass. Er hatte dabei nicht blos die fremde Sprache, sondern auch die Begriffe zu erlernen, die in seiner Muttersprache nicht existierten, Grammatik zu erlernen gehörte zu den Unmöglichkeiten, da er von Grammatik keine Idee hatte."[48]

That sensitive message was absent from the eulogy published in *Voskhod*. As Yevgeny surely had no access to Günzburg's unpublished archive, that striking similarity would undoubtedly mean that this *tabula rasa* motif comes from Daniel Chwolson himself. The picture of a person who self-taught himself almost *ex nihilo* into a luminary of learning and the narrative plot of a self-made man who rose due to his own persistence and nerve are thus likely to go back to Chwolson's own self-presentation in his lifetime.

Yevgeny makes no mention of Chwolson's baptism, let alone any moral difficulty of his conversion. However, he hurries to convert Chwolson again, this time into a revolutionary:

"*He did indefatigably work in the spirit of the future revolution and helped to prepare ways for it. Like the revolution, he strove for the highest goal of humankind, namely to conjoin in a brotherly manner diverse peoples and tribes and to destroy centuries-old bullying and slander.* He fought with the weapon that he mastered, the weapon that is straight-shooting and convincing. He fought with his deep learnedness, clear intellect and humanitarianism." (l. 1)

47 PFA RAN. F. 959, op. 1, ed. khr. 54, l. 4–3.

48 OR RNB. F. 183 [D. G. Günzburg], ed. khr. 51. L. 1 verso. The text is written in the old German orthography of the time.

The italicized words were crossed out by the pencil of a supposed Soviet editor and, in fact, such interpretation of what a revolutionary figure essentially was, looked deeply out of place, if not heterodox. Furthermore, Yevgeny wanted to demonstrate the deeply anticlerical inspirations of his grandfather, which made for a puzzling challenge.

We have seen that Chwolson had been teaching in two theological academies undisturbed for decades. His penultimate article, published two months before his death, straightforwardly opposed "the false idea that Jesus Christ never existed" – an idea that in the 1920s became a part of officially promoted anti-religious propaganda.[49] Yevgeny had to present the contents of Chwolson's studies in the field of biblical exegesis as proof of his grandfather's anticlerical stance. In an exegetical note on Matthew 26:64, Chwolson showed that Jesus' reply "You have said that" was negative, and not positive as traditional Orthodox Christian interpretation believed. Yevgeny wrote:

> "With that, one of the important points of ecclesiastical reasoning was ruined […] On many occasions, he had to argue against Christian theologians, whose arrogance and ignorance he mercilessly castigated. Among other things he demonstrated that the church was completely erroneous in its interpretation of Christ's trial." (l. 12).

The double-aimed remark affirms Chwolson's sense of patriotism and the family's loyalty to the new cultural authorities of the country:

> "He refused to sell abroad his enormous library that was carefully and skilfully collected over his long life and included many rare books (and incunabula among them) and manuscripts. *All manuscripts of his works, and all the most valuable correspondence with other scholars that included letters from Renan, are now kept by Narkompros*" (l. 16).

A supposed periodical editor crossed the italicized words out, and then restored them. The logic behind the erasure is obvious. The first sentence implied that Chwolson's library remained in Russia in the property of the family. *Narkompros* (lit. 'People's Commissariat of Enlightenment') was the new Soviet structure to replace the former ministry of public education. Mention

[49] D. A. Chwolson Vosrazhenie protiv lozhnogo mneniya, chto Iisus Khristos v deistvitel'nosti ne zhil (Objections against the false opinion that Jesus Christ has actually never lived), in: Christianskoye chtenie (Christian Reading), 1 (1911), c. 3–22. This journal was the main scholarly periodical of St. Petersburg Theological Academy prior to its closure in 1918.

of it looked like a gesture of loyalty to the Soviet government, and the phrase was restored.

Thus, Yevgeny Chwolson produced a picture that was essentially mythological. His account is indeed backed by the tradition leading either directly or indirectly back to Chwolson himself. However, under his grandson's pen, both Joseph and Daniel Chwolson were planted into a totally strange setting of revolution, anticlericalism, patriotism, and eventual proleptic loyalty to the new Soviet regime. In the context of the 1920s, this is a clear strategy of political survival.[50]

Furthermore, the extended Chwolson family had every reason to feel unsafe. They belonged to the hereditary nobility after Daniel Chwolson earned the civil rank of Active State Councillor in 1878 and the Order of St. Anne First Class, in 1889. He had taught in two Christian theological academies, of which the Orthodox one was closed in December 1918, and the other moved to Poland (then seen as an enemy of the USSR). His eldest son Orest Chwolson was personally defamed by Lenin in a pamphlet that was canonized as a major source of Marxist philosophy.[51] Joseph's youngest son, Vladimir Chwolson, lawyer and advocate, had served in the Senate and, as he moved to Yurjev (previously Dorpat, now Tartu) in 1891, he became an emigrant when Estonia gained independence in 1918. His daughters were married to men of the Bennigsen and Chavchavadze noble families. Therefore, Yevgeny's Sovietizing text would look naturally like an attempt to secure the position of the Chwolson family.

[50] See, for instance, Sofya Chuykina: Dvoryanskaya pamyat'. "Byvshiye" v sovetskom gorode Leningrad, 1920–1930-ye gody (Memory of the Nobility. 'The former' in a Soviet city Leningrad, 1920–1930s), St. Petersburg 2006.

[51] "The Russian physicist Mr. Chwolson went to Germany to publish a vile reactionary pamphlet attacking Haeckel and to assure the respectable philistines that not all scientists now hold the position of "naïve realism." V.I. Lenin. Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, Moscow 1972, p. 423. What is translated here as "reactionary" in the Russian original literally reads "belonging to the Black Hundred" (*chernosotennaya*, see Lenin, ПСС [PSS], 5th edition. Moscow, 1968, p. 370), that is, to a monarchist, extremely anti-semitic organization. Of course, there was no trace of any Antisemitism in Orest Chwolson's pamphlet on the philosophy of science.

7. Conclusion

Manuscript biographies of Chwolson from the St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Academy Archive offer limited additional information to the history of Chwolson's life. Apart from the different date of birth, as mentioned by Kokovtsov, most of the contents are mere variations of the published texts. However, the biography of Chwolson written by his grandson is a valuable source on the reception of Chwolson and illustrates the potential for further mythological appreciation of Chwolson's character and work. We knew of two Chwolson narratives – sympathetic and derogatory. Yevgeny Chwolson added a third one, which betrayed the deliberate political constructivism and illustrated the dangerous position of the Chwolsons in Soviet Russia.

We know how tragic the fate of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was in its cradle country, Germany, under the Nazis. Chwolson's heritage suffered similar moral devastation in his own country under the Soviets. Chwolson's lifelong ideals were academic integrity, pursuit of truth, public defense of the persecuted and vilified minority, and learned apologies that appealed to logic, sense, and intellect. Within a decade after his death, Chwolson's grandson had to do essentially the same, namely to defend Daniel Chwolson and his family. But the new political landscape forced him to draw far-fetched conclusions, to conceal, to hide, and to embellish.

Wissenschaft and Jewish Thought: Ismar Elbogen's Early Influence on Franz Rosenzweig

by Benjamin E. Sax

Abstract

Ismar Elbogen (1874–1943) and Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) were both pioneers in Jewish thought and culture. Elbogen authored the most comprehensive study on Jewish liturgy, while Rosenzweig's magnum opus *The Star of Redemption* has emerged as one of the twentieth century's most innovative and elusive works of Jewish thought. Even though Rosenzweig is not known for his work on or appreciation for the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, this article will explore this overlooked aspect of his thought by exploring the influence of Ismar Elbogen. Commentaries to Rosenzweig's views on prayer are numerous, yet none mention the work of Elbogen. This is a problem. By comparing Elbogen's work on Jewish liturgy with Rosenzweig's writings on prayer in the *Star*, we are able to demonstrate how methods seminal to the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* helped articulate several of Rosenzweig's most innovative contributions to Jewish thought.

1. Introduction

> "There is only one truth. No honest man can pray to a God whose existence he denies as a scientist." (Franz Rosenzweig)[1]

In a letter to Margrit Rosenstock-Huessy, dated November 8, 1918, Franz Rosenzweig lamented Germany's defeat in World War I by evoking a verse from the Book of Jeremiah (31.5): "one again plants the vineyards of the Samarian mountains."[2] To express his profound disillusionment with political

1 Franz Rosenzweig: A Note, in: Nahum Glatzer (ed.), Franz Rosenzweig. His Life and Thought, 3rd ed., Indianapolis 1998, p. 209.

2 Inken Rühle / Reinhold Mayer (eds.): Franz Rosenzweig Die „Gritli"- Briefe: Briefe an Margarit Rosenstock-Huessy, Tübingen 2002, pp. 169–70.

liberalism and the Enlightenment's confidence in reason, politics, history, and humanism, Rosenzweig adopted the rabbinic practice of employing midrashic aphorisms or quotations from the Hebrew Bible. Less than a year later, in a letter penned to his cousin Hans Ehrenberg, Rosenzweig argued that this particular rabbinic practice is essential to understanding the power of language in the Jewish liturgy. He suggested that while a person communicates to God through the language of Jewish liturgy, God too responds through a concatenation of biblical quotations. He writes, "besides the explicit relation with the Old Testament (manifested by citation), there is a secret relation to Jewish Liturgy, which commands partly unfolding the categories."[3] Rosenzweig argued that God's response, God's word, is ascertained through a study of the biblical text. God speaks by quoting Himself. Furthermore, a person's response is also comprised of quotations – through Jewish liturgy – which, although at times remarkably intimate, is an expression of the overall communal religious experience. Jewish liturgy, as quotations of God's word in the Hebrew Bible, is for Rosenzweig, as one commentator wrote, a "citation of a citation" that sends "back to God as He whose true essence is absent from the text that speaks of him or that cites his words."[4] The community evokes the divine by quoting the divine word. The task of liturgy then, for Rosenzweig, was to grasp not only the dialogical nature of this divine-human relationship, but also to discern a Jewish dialogical hermeneutic, which is found precisely in the process of quotation.

Shortly after the publication of the *Star of Redemption*, in a lecture series from January to March 1921 entitled "An Introduction to Jewish Thought," Rosenzweig started to write about the role quotations play in modern Jewish life. "Everyone should be his own poet, be his own musician (singing *Niggunim*)," he wrote. "He should not let this source flowing from his breast, which is already sparse, spill. At least he should–quote quite freely; the words of the Great One should be good enough to throw them as firewood into his own little fire."[5] Like many during his lifetime, Rosenzweig sought life in the words of others. Yet "quoting freely" clearly belonged to a Jewish poetic and liturgical

3 Edith Rosenzweig (ed.): Franz Rosenzweig, Briefe, Berlin 1935, p. 367. Letter 275 to Hans Ehrenberg 7.7.1919.

4 Stéphane Mosès: System and Revelation. The Philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig, Detroit 1992, p. 106.

5 Franz Rosenzweig: Anleitung zum Jüdischen Denken, in: Reinhold Mayer / Annemarie Mayer (eds.), Franz Rosenzweig. Der Mensch und sein Werk, Bd. III.2, Dordrecht 1984, p. 613.

imagination, which became even more evident in the "Afterword" of his translation of the work of the medieval Jewish poet Jehudah Halevi, in which he argued that *Musivstil*–a complex intertextual style found in medieval poetry, in which quotations from the Hebrew Bible form a mosaic throughout the poem–characterizes a Jewish liturgical world steeped in language.[6]

Until recently, little work had been done on Rosenzweig's use of quotations.[7] Commentaries to Rosenzweig's views on liturgy, however, are numerous,[8] though none of them mentions "Weimar's premier Jewish historian,"[9] Ismar Elbogen, who in 1913 published the "most exhaustive compendium of factual information about the Jewish liturgy," *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*.[10] This is a problem. Many of the biblical and rabbinic texts Rosenzweig used in his discussions of Jewish prayer in the *Star of Redemption* (1921) appear in Elbogen's seminal work on Jewish liturgy, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst*. Rosenzweig was not only familiar with this text, but also,

6 See Barbara Ellen Galli (ed.): Franz Rosenzweig and Jehuda Halevi. Translating, Translations, and Translators, Montreal,1995; Mara Benjamin: Rosenzweig's Bible. Reinventing Scripture for Jewish Modernity, Cambridge 2009.

7 See Irene Kajon: Some Literary Sources in The Star of Redemption. Vita Nova, Hamlet, and Don Quixote, in: Wolfdietrich Schmied-Kowarzik (ed.): Franz Rosenzweigs 'neues Denken'. Internationaler Kongreß Kassel 2004, Band II, Freiburg / München 2006, pp. 431–445; Jacob Turner: A Reading of Psalm 90 in Light of Franz Rosenzweig's Notion of Time, in: Martin Brasser (ed.), Rosenzweig als Leser, Tübingen 2004, p. 500; Luc Anckaert: The Literary Genres and Alterity. Plato and Rosenzweig, in: Wolfdietrich Schmied-Kowarzik (ed.), Franz Rosenzweigs 'neues Denken'. Internationaler Kongreß Kassel 2004, Band II, Freiburg / München 2006, pp. 470–486; Nobert Samuelson: Exploring Rosenzweig's Sources – The God of Maimonides, in: Rosenzweig Yearbook 1. Rosenzweig Today, Freiburg / München 2006, pp. 155–165; Benjamin E. Sax: Das geflügelte Wort. Franz Rosenzweig as Post-Goethekenner, in: Naharaim 5 (2011), pp. 115–148; Mara Benjamin: Rosenzweig's Bible. Reinventing Scripture for Jewish Modernity, Cambridge 2009.

8 See Martin D. Yaffe: Liturgy and Ethics. Hermann Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig on the Day of Atonement," in: Journal of Religious Ethics 7 (1979) 2, pp. 215–228; Moshe Schwarz: The Idea of Prayer in Franz Rosenzweig's "Star of Redemption," in: Gabriel H. Cohn / Harold Fisch (eds.), Prayer and Judaism: Continuity and Change, Northvale, New Jersey 1996, pp. 163–178; Almut Sh. Bruckstein: Zur Phänomenologie der jüdischen Liturgie in Rosenzweigs Stern der Erlösung. Ein Versuch über das Schweigen mit Husserl, in: Martin Brasser (ed.), Rosenzweig als Leser. Kontextuelle Kommentare zum "Stern der Erlösung," Tübingen 1994, pp. 357–368; Norbert Samuelson: Rosenzweig's Epistemology. A Critique of the Way of Drawing Lines between Philosophy, Theology, and Liturgy, in: Wolfdietrich Schmid-Kowarzik (ed.), Franz Rosenzweigs 'neues Denken', Band 1, Freiburg / München 2006, pp. 90–110; Steven Kepnes, Jewish Liturgical Reasoning, Oxford 2007, pp. 79–130.

9 Ismar Schorsch, From Text to Context. The Turn to History in Modern Judaism, Hanover, NH 1994, pp. 166.

10 Raymond P. Scheindlin: Foreword, in: Jewish Liturgy. A Comprehensive History by Ismar Elbogen, Philadelphia 1993, pp. xi.

as we will learn below, admired Elbogen's talent as a teacher and scholar. This is important. Elbogen's history of Jewish liturgy was not only widely understood as a paragon of scholarship, but also the critical importance of Elbogen's life's work, as Michael Meyer argued, was found "in his conceptualization of the Wissenschaft des Judentums."[11]

In this article, I will argue that to better understand how Rosenzweig employed his midrashic method of quotation to provide a living commentary through liturgy and prayer, it would be helpful to put these two texts – Rosenzweig's *Star* and Elbogen's *Der jüdische Gottesdienst* – in conversation with one another. When we compare Elbogen's rabbinic and biblical sources in his *Der jüdische Gottesdienst* to those found in Nahum Glatzer's list at the end of the second edition of the *Star*,[12] we immediately discover similar sources, especially in Elbogen's constructions of the *Amidah* and *Shema* prayers. A hyperbolic response might be that the structure of the *Star* could be based on Elbogen's research on the *Shema*, since when dissected, the *Shema* prayer bares an uncanny resemblance to the structure of the *Star*: there are three categories of prayer that evoke creation (*ha-me'orot*), revelation (*ve'ahavta*) and redemption (*ga'al Yisrae'el*). The structure also corresponds to the Sabbath: creation on Sabbath evening, revelation in the morning, and redemption at *Minchah* (*mi ke-'amkha Yisra'el*). By comparing the research of Elbogen on Jewish liturgy to Rosenzweig's use of it in the *Star*, we can better understand parts of the third book of the *Star* and how Rosenzweig uses the texts quoted in Elbogen's work. In so doing, we learn how the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* played a critical role in the development of Rosenzweig's philosophical methodology.

This article is divided into four sections. In the first section, I will briefly highlight Rosenzweig's thoughts on Elbogen and his work. In the second, I will lay out how Elbogen's work on Jewish liturgy played a role in how Rosenzweig developed his own views on liturgy and prayer. The third section is an analysis of these connections: Here I will argue that examining Elbogen's

11 Michael A. Meyer: Without Wissenschaft There is no Judaism. The Life and Thought of Ismar Elbogen, Ramat-Gan 2004, p. 31.

12 Franz Rosenzweig: The Star of Redemption, William W. Hallo (trans.), Notre Dame,1985, pp. 427–436. Glatzer wrote in the "Foreword" to Hallo's translation that "Rosenzweig […] shortly before his death, asked [Glatzer] to prepare an extensive list of references to his Judaic sources to be included in the second edition of the work." p. ix.

influence on Rosenzweig can help us provide a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the place of prayer within Rosenzweig's philosophical system. The final section is the conclusion.

2. Rosenzweig's Experience with Elbogen

Shortly after his acclaimed conversion experience in September 1913, Rosenzweig studied Moses Maimonides' (1135/38–1204) *Guide for the Perplexed* with Hermann Cohen (1842–1918) at the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* during the winter and spring of 1914. During this time, he also read Ismar Elbogen. Throughout his diaries and letters, Rosenzweig discussed his studies of Jewish texts and concepts. In a letter to his parents from September 10, 1914, Rosenzweig first mentioned his experience with Rashi's commentary to the *Shema* prayer.[13] On February 15, 1915, he first mentioned Ismar Elbogen as the "Vorsänger" (precentor) in his *Geschichte des jüdischen Gottesdienstes*.[14] Three years later, in a letter to his mother, Rosenzweig commented how much he enjoyed a lecture by Elbogen presented in the *Brannsche Zeitschrift*, where "everything was correct."[15] Rosenzweig's portrayal of Elbogen was hardly unique. Elbogen was a scholar of immense erudition.[16] Michael Meyer has argued that: "Indeed, no scholar was more central to the development of Jewish studies in Germany in the early twentieth century than Ismar Elbogen.[17] As the most seminal and influential member of the faculty at the *Hochschule*, Elbogen was regarded as a master pedagogue.[18] Through the course of his thirty-five-year tenure there, students always remarked on his capacity to explain extremely difficult or seemingly opaque texts in ways that appealed to each student's interest or ability. He was well known for his wit, humor, and occasional sarcasm. Elbogen was able to communicate to a variety of Jewish

13 Rachel Rosenzweig / Edith Rosenzweig-Scheinmann (eds.), Franz Rosenzweig. Briefe und Tagebücher, Band I, Haag 1979, p. 175.

14 Ibid, Bd. I, p. 179.

15 Ibid., Bd. II, p. 609.

16 See Alexander Marx: Ismar Elbogen. An Appreciation, in: Ismar Elbogen, A Century of Jewish Life, Philadelphia 1944, pp. xi–xx; Regi Elbogen: Ismar Elbogen 1874–1943. A Bibliography, in: Historia Judaica 8 (1946), pp. 69–94; Erwin I. J. Rosenthal: Ismar Elbogen and the New Jewish Learning, in: Judaism, Philosophy, Culture, Richmond, Surrey, 2001, pp. 327–352; Meyer, Without Wissenschaft There is no Judaism.

17 Meyer, Without Wissenschaft There Is No Judaism, p. 5.

18 Ibid., pp. 5–6.

movements, most likely, according to Meyer, due to his "middle of the road position on Zionism."[19] Similar to the prevalent Orthodox attitude towards the movement, Elbogen was wary of the Zionist's secular interpretation of Jewish history and identity. He also resented how the Zionists seemed to ignore the genuine cultural success of German Jews. These efforts to delegitimize German Jewish culture were, in Elbogen's view, historically untenable. However, like many Eastern European Zionists, Elbogen appreciated the cultural benefit of Hebrew language.[20] Like the early Zionists, Elbogen was also anxious about the peripheral status of *Wissenschaft* in contemporary culture. Because it was regarded as part of the larger ambit of assimilation, and to no small degree, Jewish emancipation, *Wissenschaft* was limited to a German-speaking world and thus only accessible to a limited number of Jews. This number would grow as soon as *Wissenschaft* appeared in other Jewish languages and, Elbogen argued, as a result the cultural benefits would abound. By producing scholarly works in Hebrew, yet with an explicitly German *modus operandi*, Elbogen sought to associate philological scholarly efforts with a living, breathing Judaism.[21] The cultural and intellectual malaise characterizing German-Jewish society was, according to Elbogen, not a result of a devitalized Jewish tradition. Similar to the position of nineteenth-century German-Jewish rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Elbogen maintained Jews, not Judaism as a whole, needed to be reformed.

By focusing on the theme of Jewish education, Rosenzweig, in his open letter to Hermann Cohen "Zeit ists" (1917), and in contrast to many of his contemporaries, portrayed the development of Judaism not as the verisimilitude of a living, apposite tradition that draws on its historical texts in order to provide contemporary religious meaning, but rather as the transmission of a living cross-generational reality.[22] Elbogen embraced Rosenzweig's letter to Cohen, adding that Jews needed academicians before establishing an actual academy. By interweaving the relationship between texts, traditions, and customs, in this essay Rosenzweig stressed that each generation discovers its

[19] Ibid., p. 11.

[20] Nahum Glatzer: Yitzhak ben Moshe Elbogen the Historian, in: American Jewish Yearbook (5705), New York 1945, pp. 435–436 [Hebrew].

[21] Elbogen, Ein Jahrhundert Wissenschaft des Judentums, Berlin 1922, p. 8.

[22] Franz Rosenzweig: Zeit ists. Gedanken über das jüdische Bildungsproblem des Augenblicks, in: Zweistromland, Berlin, 2001, pp. 10–11.

own voice by incorporating said relationship into their lives. For him, only by embracing the idea that within the Jewish sources exists an epistemology that informs the reader's experience, and only through dialogue with the sources can a sustainable Judaism be built. Jews learn how to build this Judaism through an understanding of the sources in Jewish liturgy: they are "the secret relation" to engaging the divine word.

3. The Influence of Elbogen's *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* on Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption*

In his comprehensive history of Jewish liturgy, Elbogen cited hundreds of rabbinic and biblical sources. In this work, Elbogen, like Rosenweig in the *Star*, argued that the petition is the most important aspect of Jewish prayer. He also contended that a salient feature of Jewish liturgical poetry is its ability simultaneously to employ and reinterpret quotes from the Hebrew Bible. During the period of the *Piyyutim*, there was, according to Elbogen, "no denying a certain connection between the flourishing of *masoretic* studies and the spread of poetry, for a revival of poetry would presuppose the study of the Bible and preoccupation with the Hebrew language."[23] The poets, during this and subsequent periods, had three different approaches to how they employed biblical quotations in their poetry: (1) they simply quoted the biblical text next to the poem but did not incorporate it into the poem itself; (2) they used biblical quotes as ornaments; and (3) they incorporated the quotes into their poetry.[24] For instance, in regard to the first usage, biblical quotes are placed next to the poem and are incorporated into the poem through adjoining words such as *Kakatuv* ("as it is written" [in the Bible]) or *Vene'emar* ("as it is [also] said"). For Elbogen, a biblical quote placed next to the poem determined its meaning. This works differently in the second and third cases, where quotes from the Hebrew Bible determine the poet's hermeneutical innovation rather than his knowledge of the actual biblical texts themselves. Only well-versed members of the liturgical community would discover these

[23] Elbogen, Jewish Liturgy, p. 239.
[24] Ibid., pp. 237–270.

innovations and gain a deeper appreciation of the poetry.[25] They would also be more equipped to employ God's word into their own speech and thus to renew God's word through a poet's recreation of it during the liturgy.[26]

We learn in Elbogen's work that the Hebrew Bible in rabbinic literature played a significant role in influencing the creation and innovation of Jewish liturgy.[27] The range of expression in the historical development of Jewish liturgy extended from the actual recitation of biblical passages – for example the public readings of the *Megillah* and the Torah, as well as those in the *Hallel*, *Amidah*, and *Shema* – to prayers that imitated biblical grammar and style. A clear example of the latter is found in the personal prayer of R. Alexandri in *Berakhot* 17a. Here the prayer was written in rabbinic Hebrew without any quotations from the biblical text. Yet biblical forms appeared within the grammar. Even though knowledge of such a reference was limited to a scholar like Elbogen, Rosenzweig quoted this passage in the conclusion of book two of the *Star* – the transition from theology to liturgy, which we will examine in the next section.[28]

Elbogen's *Der jüdische Gottesdienst* (1913) was a work of *Wissenschaft* in relation to the development of Jewish liturgy. Yet, despite its plethora of quotations and references attesting to this colossal mind, the book was not merely a work of pure *Wissenschaft*. The accuracy of inane historical references was a Lilliputian task when compared to the existential and spiritual needs of a generation of German Jews. As a microcosm of challenges confronting the future of Judaism and Jewish religiosity, the fate of liturgy for Elbogen actually represented the fate of Judaism. Liturgy was not only an existential matter, but it

25 See Joel L. Kraemer: Maimonides. The Life and Work of One of Civilization's Greatest Minds, New York 2008, pp. 50–53; Jakob J. Petuchowski: Theology and Poetry. Studies in Medieval Piyyut, London 1978, pp. 20–30; Raymond P. Scheindlin: The Gazelle. Medieval Hebrew Poems on God, Israel, and the Soul, Oxford 1991, pp. 3–30; Raphael Lowe: Ibn Gabirol, London 1989, pp. 78–104.

26 As we will learn in the third section of this article, Rosenzweig made a similar point. See also Sax, Das geflügelte Wort.

27 Elbogen, Jewish Liturgy, pp. 4–10.

28 See Rosenzweig, Star, p. 253. It is also worthwhile comparing this section of the Star to Elbogen's passage, in his Jewish Liturgy, constructing the history of the Shema prayer. Elbogen wrote: "The beginning and the end, twelve words in all, are quoted in B. Ber. 11b and 12a; and of what follows, the words 'He who renews every day the act of creation," occur in B Hag 12b, though not in connection with prayer. Parallel to the opening of the benediction is the eulogy, which is prefaced by the verse "Who made the great lights" (Psalm 136:7)." Elbogen, Jewish Liturgy, pp. 16–17.

was also an urgent one. The ability to conform an ancient liturgy to modern sensibilities while at the same time preserving and authenticating seemingly antiquated customs was therefore essential to the survival of Judaism.

In this work, Elbogen sought to highlight the bond between poetry and prayer.[29] In so doing, he also sought to reignite an interest in prayer. While Elbogen was aware of the inability of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* to communicate to the contemporary generation of German Jews, he also understood Orthodox Jews' refusal to recognize the immanent spiritual crisis facing the future of Judaism as an indication of what Buber would call a "spiritual Lethargy." [30] For Elbogen, the ancient Jewish liturgy provided Jews with the opportunity to glimpse the mere, simple truths of the tradition. These truths could be only renewed through *Wissenschaft.* He maintained that historical knowledge of the development of Jewish liturgy would afford German Jews in general, but Reform Jews in particular, the capacity to renew the tradition from within. *Wissenschaft,* Elbogen argued, sought to legitimate renewal and change within the tradition. For example, in his historical analysis of *Berakhot* 9b, Elbogen broached the topic of "das Gebet des Einzelnen" [individual prayer] in order to highlight this ancient proclivity toward renewal.[31] By stressing the priority of individual prayer in Judaism, Elbogen emphasized the inherent conflict of Jewish communal prayer. He argued that authentic prayer is personal, yet an "authentic religion" [*echte Religion*] such as Judaism was unable to forsake the communal aspect of prayer, since this aspect characterized the essence of Jewish teachings and religious life. In order to

[29] Elbogen's efforts in some capacity drew upon methods of his teacher Israel Lewy, but he also drew from Leopold Zunz's previous work on liturgy. Even though Zunz certainly benefited from previous scholarship on Jewish liturgy, most would agree, as Elbogen did, that Zunz founded the critical study of this topic. Subsequent scholars were and even today are unquestionably indebted to Zunz's efforts. He examined the myriad ways historically that Jews redressed basic liturgical language as well as rites and customs in the synagogue service. He even ascertained how Talmud-Torah emerged as one of the salient features of worship.

[30] Paul Mendes-Flohr: Wissenschaft des Judentums at the Fin-de-siècle, in: Michael Graetz / Aram Mattiel (eds.), Krisenwahrenahmungen im Fin-de-siècle. Jüdische und Katholische Bildungseliten in Deutschland und der Schweiz, Zürich 1997, p. 69. Mendes-Flohr wrote: "There was the feeling that somehow Wissenschaft des Judentums had thrust Jewish self-understanding into the grips of a deadening historicism. Already since the early 1890s, there were increasingly voices that complained that the academic study of Judaism had become excessively specialized, scholastic, and removed from Judaism as a living faith – and irrelevant to the Jewish community."

[31] Ismar Elbogen: Studien zur Geschichte des jüdischen Gottesdienstes, Berlin 1907, pp. 40–41.

maintain a "living piety" [*lebendige Frömmigkeit*], the vocation of any authentic religion is to reconcile the existential needs of the supplicant with the conventional tendencies of communal prayer. Only because contemporary Christian theologians portrayed the Judaism described in the New Testament as heteronomous did the individual aspect of prayer in Judaism become disregarded. Striking a polemical tone, Elbogen argued that, in contrast to what these theologians espoused, Judaism was the first religion to divorce itself entirely from the sacrificial cult and the only religion that merits the distinction of the "Gottesdienst des Herzens" ["the service of the heart"].[32] He later expounded on this position in his *Der jüdische Gottesdienst* where he argued that this service of the heart,

> "freed itself of all external paraphernalia, such as worship sites endowed with special sanctity, priests, and other incidentals, and became a completely spiritual service of God. Because its performance required no more than the will of a relatively small community, it was able to spread easily throughout the world. It was also the first public liturgy to occur with great regularity, being held not only on Sabbaths and festivals, but in every day of the year, thus bestowing some of its sanctity upon all of life. This effect was all the more enduring in that the daily morning and evening services, originally the practice of the community, soon became the customary practice of individuals, even when they were not with their community."[33]

According to Elbogen, only the Jewish tradition resolved the liturgical predicament. Elbogen stressed that Judaism affords individuals the distinct option to offer their own personal petitions at the conclusion of the communal religious service. In fact, in his essay, "Die messianische Idee in den alten jüdische Gebeten" in the *Festschrift zu Hermann Cohens Siebzigstem Geburtstag*, Elbogen provided several examples, while simultaneously demonstrating how the prayers of ancient Israel deftly interweaved the general and universal prophetic calling for the redeemed future of humanity with the parochial and more particularistic promise of the redemption of Israel and a place in the kingdom of God.[34] Balancing the individual and communalistic aspects

[32] Ibid.

[33] Elbogen, Jewish Liturgy, pp. 3–4.

[34] Ismar Elbogen: Die messianische Idee in den alten jüdische Gebeten, in: Judaica: Festschrift zu Hermann Cohens Siebzigstem Geburtstage, Berlin 1912, pp. 669–680.

of prayer is not only animated by a prophetic impulse, but also discloses the ecumenical hope for redemption of all people.

In sum, Elbogen's research disclosed an ancient style of quotation in Jewish liturgy that was not only innovative, but also critical to understanding how the Hebrew Bible played a role in Jewish religious life. Elbogen meticulously analyzed the role of biblical language in relation to the crafting of liturgical poetry. The intimacy involved in reading this poetry, whether communally or individually, leads the supplicant, according to him, toward an encounter with something ineffable. Judaism for him, as we just learned, is unique in this aspect. It is here where we find an important influence on Rosenzweig's views of Jewish prayer. Firstly, Elbogen's balance between the scholarly – bound by a commitment to *Wissenschaft* – and the popular – bound by the commitment toward a future for Judaism – played a crucial role in Rosenzweig's philosophy of translation and its relationship to his liturgical reasoning.[35] Elbogen's work is also helpful in discerning how Rosenzweig argued that communal worship engenders a redeemed world. Secondly, Elbogen's work puts readers in a better position to grasp how the petition in prayer – including thanksgiving prayers and poetic praise – was not only the most salient form, but also why Rosenzweig argues that the *leitmotif* of all petitions is temptation.[36] Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, Elbogen's work on how Jewish poets quoted biblical texts stylistically influenced Rosenzweig's early relationship to biblical texts and how they functioned pedagogically and philosophically in distinguishing a Jewish worldview from others. Each case will be analyzed below.

[35] Elbogen was not alone when he argued that the principles of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* could determine Jewish identity, especially in Weimar Germany. For example, in 1901, a then young Martin Buber published a short essay entitled "Jüdische Wissenschaft" where he emphasized that the importance of the Wissenschaft des Judentums lay entirely in its existential task. The goal is to ameliorate the lot of the Jewish people first by unpacking the development of Jewish Civilization. See Martin Buber: Jüdische Wissenschaft, in: Die Jüdische Bewegung. Gesammelte Aufsätze und Ansprachen, Berlin 1916, p. 50.

[36] Rosenzweig, Star, pp. 265–267. Compare with Elbogen, Jewish Liturgy, p. 23: "The function filled by the second benediction [of the Shema], 'With great love,' which accordingly was called 'The Benediction of Torah,' [Revelation] containing as it does thanksgiving for the revelation [and the giving of the Torah and the commandments]. That originally this was the only benediction before the biblical passages is attested by the liturgy of the priests, reported in M. Tam 5:1–'One Blessing' (compare B. Ber. 11b). 'True and Certain,' in which every community in its time affirms it acceptance of the ancient revelation, served as a conclusion to the expression of faith. After the solemn declaration of God's unity was joined to the morning service, and expression of gratitude for the physical light and for the continual daily renewal of nature was added; appropriately, it took the first place."

4. Analysis

4.1 From Scholarship on Liturgy, to Philosophy, and to the Future of Judaism

In the first case, Elbogen argued that the goal of translation should satisfy both the layperson and the scholar. This is especially important in the translation of liturgy and of poetry.[37] It is also important to highlighting in history the innovative character of Jewish tradition. The urgency to balance the needs of many readers in works of translation can be found in Elbogen's scholarly work on Jewish liturgy. For him, this project met a similar need in the community. The work functioned pedagogically by illuminating the historical context of Jewish prayer. For example, he traced the numerous sources and styles of liturgical language, to demonstrate not only how Jewish liturgy was steeped in biblical terminology, but also how remnants from Temple practices and even some sectarian tendencies endured. He argued that a sanctioned Jewish liturgy emerged in the Talmudic and post-Talmudic periods. Elbogen's work provided a theological role in the Jewish community as well. Not unlike other scholars of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Elbogen was wary of mysticism and other recondite forms of devotion. Yet even though he sympathized with the need for it, Elbogen still resisted reform. Elbogen was, for example, clearly uncomfortable with the gravity of the "Germanic rite (Ashkenaz in the broad sense)"[38] and seemed to neglect the aspects of its theology and Halakhah. In fact, throughout his work, Elbogen investigated the historical development of the cardinal Jewish prayers, but circumvented any of the textual, linguistic, and literary aspects of the minor ones. Even though Elbogen acceded to the reality of more than one "*Ur-type*," scholars today believe that he exaggerated and possibly oversimplified the tendency in the Talmud towards a more normative and fixed authorized liturgy.[39]

The reason for this tendency, Elbogen argued, is that there existed a tension between revealed scripture and fixed liturgy. In the Hebrew Bible, God's

[37] Rosenzweig also took this responsibility seriously. See Galli, Franz Rosenzweig and Jehuda Halevi, pp. 344–359.

[38] Elbogen, Jewish Liturgy, p. 9.

[39] See Hebrew Translation of Elbogen's Der Jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung, Yehosha Amir / Joseph Heinemann (trans. and eds.), Tel Aviv 1972. Heinemann is especially wary of Elbogen's assertion that Jewish prayer remained inactive between the years 600 CE and 1800 CE.

word was usually designated to the whole of humanity; however, prayer was the moment in which individuals speak personally to their God. In fact, there are only a few examples in the Hebrew Bible where the protagonist is able to transpose the dialogue with the divine and petition it. In his section on the *Amidah* in his *Der jüdische Gottesdienst* Elbogen provided a variety of examples from the Talmud, Midrash, and rabbinic liturgy that clarify this point.[40] For example, Nehemiah 9:32 states: "And now, our God, great, mighty, and awesome God, who stays faithful to His covenant, do not treat lightly all the suffering that has overtaken us—our kings, our officers, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all Your people—from the time of the Assyrian kings to this day." These epithets for God in the prophet's prayer are repeated several times a day in the introduction section to the *Amidah*.[41] In an effort to delimit the freedom of individual, personal affirmation in prayer, R. Hanina castigated the deeply impassioned recitation of the *shaliah tsibbur* who, in fact, augmented the established number of epithets for God: "O God, the great, mighty, awful, majestic, powerful, terrible, strong, fearless, sure and honored." He goes on to complain that, "you have no right to add to the sages' formulation of the blessings [Ber 33a]." While representative of the *amoraic* restriction on any innovative or creative amendments to liturgical custom, R. Hanina's position, according to Elbogen, was short-lived. In fact, Elbogen argued that the post-*amoraic* period witnessed a proliferation of liturgical innovation and creativity. Rosenzweig, in fact, quoted the same passage from *Berakhot* in the introduction to the third book of the *Star* – "everything is in God's hands" – to offer his own Midrash on prayer.[42]

40 Elbogen, Jewish Liturgy, pp. 24–36.

41 Ibid., p. 38.

42 Rosenzweig, Star, pp. 266–67: "Thus man must know that he is tempted from time to time for the sake of his freedom. He must learn to believe in his freedom. He must believe that his freedom, limited though it may be everywhere else, is limitless vis-à-vis God. The very commandments of God, 'graven on stone tablets,' must be for him, as in the untranslatable rabbinic play on words, 'freedom on tablets.' Everything, it says in the same source, everything is in God's hands except for one thing: the fear of God. And how can this freedom show itself more audaciously than in the certainty of being able to tempt God? In prayer, then, the possibilities of temptation really do converge from both sides, from god's side as well as man's. Prayer is strung between these two possibilities; while fearing God's temptation, it nevertheless knows itself capable of itself tempting God." Rosenzweig juxtaposes his interpretation of prayer with the Jewish blessing that concludes the public Torah reading. Rosenzweig interprets "in our midst" as emerging from the rays of the eternal consuming fire, which signifies and represents a chain of tradition. The eternal life, for him, characterizes the unification of past, present, and

Rosenzweig advocated for a Jewish world assembled by language as opposed to orthopraxy, which calls for a textually centered Jewish identity. In the *Star* and throughout his post-*Star* writings, Rosenzweig imagined a Judaism experienced through language and study. The Jewish liturgy as an expression of quotations of the Hebrew Bible was evidence that Jews transformed and translated the words of the Hebrew Bible into the language for contemporary Jewish communities, but also that Jewish prayer is a way of life. By analyzing quotations within the *Star* and within the oeuvre of Rosenzweig's writings, we learn, through his quotation methods, how biblical texts operate as inter-texts within his complex concept of revelation. The same is true for Jewish liturgy.

It is thus unsurprising that Rosenzweig quoted the majority of Jewish texts in the third part of the *Star*, which marked the transition in his philosophical system to a form of what Steven Kepnes has termed "liturgical reasoning."[43] In the second book of the *Star*, Rosenzweig employed his method of Speech-thinking to interpret the meaning of religious texts, namely the Hebrew Bible. By tracing the hermeneutic strategies in the second book, we witness a shift in the genre of the texts Rosenzweig chose to quote: he moved from philosophical texts to theological and liturgical texts. By providing an interpretation of the book of Psalms in the second and third parts of book two, which, like the "Songs of Songs," are also interpretations of revelation, Rosenzweig placed these writings at the center of his transition from revelation to redemption. Even though the third book of the *Star* also interpreted sacred texts from the Jewish tradition, it marked the move from textual hermeneutics to liturgical reasoning by interpreting several seminal prayers in Jewish liturgy, namely the *Shema* and the *Amidah*. Interestingly, Rosenzweig employed a hermeneutic found in Elbogen's discussions of *Piyyutim*, the *Shema*, and the *Amidah*.

future, which is experienced proleptically. The divine, then, "planted" this eternal life, which is best exemplified by the genealogy of the patriarchs in the Hebrew Bible. In Genesis 15:5, God says to Abraham, "look toward the heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them," and adds, "so shall your offspring be." As such eternal life -- expressed through Jewish prayer – is best characterized by the eternal people, the community of Israel.

43 Steven Kepnes, Jewish Liturgical Reasoning, pp. 117–120.

4.2 Liturgy as Polemic and Propaedeutic: Petition and Temptation

The two most prevalent and ancient prayers in rabbinic liturgy are the *Amidah* and the *Shema*.[44] According to Elbogen, "the *Shema* contains the confession of faith, the core of Israel's belief, while the *Amidah* consists of a number of petitions touching the chief needs of the individual and the community."[45] Because of the numerous developments in the redaction of the *Amidah*, Elbogen argued that it was a post-biblical text. Even though within the prayer itself there are many allusions to and even direct quotations from the Hebrew Bible, the *Amidah* was composed according to rabbinic sources during the period between the rabbis of the great assembly to the destruction of the second Temple and period of R. Gamaliel.[46] The *Shema*, however, is composed of three biblical phrases (Deut. 6:4–9; 11:13–21; Num. 15:37–41). Elbogen points out that in *Berakhot* 2:2, the third passage was recited only in the morning.[47] Also, the *Shema* is a "confession of faith" orated to a human audience, the community, rather than a mere prayer.[48] The petitions in both the *Shema* and *Amidah*, for Elbogen, are what distinguish these prayers from others. Not only do they provide Rosenzweig an archetype to distinguish Jewish prayer from Christian prayer, as we will learn below, but also Elbogen's research into these prayers provide Rosenzweig with the necessary rabbinic texts to construct his liturgical-philosophical argument.

"For Prayer," wrote Rosenzweig, "everything comes down to this in the final analysis: is the future of the kingdom accelerated by it or delayed?"[49] He argued that individuals yearn for the coming of the Kingdom since the devotional bedrock of prayer is the acknowledgment of the ineffable that has not yet been fully discovered in life. Following a similar intellectual trajectory, the redactors of the fixed Jewish liturgy, according to Elbogen, asked the same question: Can petitionary prayer truly fulfill "the Service of the Heart."[50] This

44 Elbogen, Jewish Liturgy, p. 16.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., pp. 25–37.
47 According to Glatzer's list, Rosenzweig cites this text twice in the Star: first in relation to the afternoon during Shabbat and the meal (Star, p. 313); and the second in the section regarding election (Star, p. 414).
48 Ibid., p. 16.
49 Ibid., p. 272.
50 Elbogen, Introduction, in: Jewish Liturgy, pp. 3–11.

question characterizes Rosenzweig's discussion of prayer in general in the *Star*:

> "Even if prayer, by opening a window on the world for the supplicant, shows it to him in a distinctive system, does that then have any consequences whatever for this one divine world-order itself? Can prayer possibly have the power to intervene tyrannically in the course of the world as this proceeds from its divine origin at creation? If prayer in essence is no more than prayer for enlightenment, if enlightenment is, consequently, the most that can accrue to the supplicant through the power of prayer, how then is prayer to be able to intervene in the course of events? Enlightenment after all, appears to accrue only to the supplicant; his are the eyes that are enlightened. Of what concern is that to the world?"[51]

Because the "power of prayer" lies in its petitions, individuals who pray are transformed from their present existential and historical situation to the meta-existential kingdom of the redeemed world. By classifying the "act of love"[52] differently than the event of prayer, Rosenzweig explained how prayer, in fact, can impel the world to come. Because the "act of love," for Rosenzweig, "is blind," it lacks intellectual and conceptual introspection, and thus cannot connect to the world or the divine.[53] Yet this "act of love" establishes a bond to the "neighbor" [*der Nächste*]. Conversely, supplicants [those who tempt God] are "not blind." They see "into the light of the divine countenance," which prayer "puts [into] the moment, including the act first performed and the will just resolved which constitute the nighest past and nighest future of this one lonely moment."[54] For Rosenzweig, the supplicants see beyond the "neighbor" they are "divinely ordained" to love. Because their neighbor exists within time and space, the "act of love" between individuals remains within this domain. For Rosenzweig, "prayer, however, pleads for enlightenment and thereby, without overlooking the neighbor, sees beyond the neighbor, sees the whole world to the extent that it is illuminated for it."[55] In contradistinction to the "act of love," prayer, then, can both illuminate the world and ascertain God's relationship to it. In so doing, Rosenzweig contended that supplicants "appeal to

51 Rosenzweig, Star, p. 268.
52 Ibid., p. 267.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid., pp. 267–268.

enlightenment" and echo the call of the Psalmist, as a petition.[56] Rosenzweig quoted Psalm 13.4 as a proof text so that he can demonstrate how prayer tempts God: "Look at me, answer me, O Lord, my God! Enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death."

By emphasizing the role that the petitional prayer (*Erbeten*) plays in both Christianity and Judaism, Rosenzweig argued that the supplicants, gathered communally, call on God not exactly to tempt them, even though God may only tempt those who in fact tempt God. Here, in the opening sentences to the introduction of the third part of the *Star*, Rosenzweig drew upon obscure medieval commentaries to the Book of Job in considering the ostensibly theological solecism that individuals actually manage to tempt God.[57] In fact, Rosenzweig contended that prayer is contingent upon "two possibilities; while fearing God's temptation, it nevertheless knows itself capable of itself tempting God."[58] These possibilities are known only through a model of reasoning that itself assays beyond the efforts of both abstract philosophical contemplation as well as theological hermeneutics. This type of reasoning – "liturgical reasoning" – is also a Midrash on the liturgical use of Biblical texts; otherwise, how would it be possible for Rosenzweig to argue that through penitential prayer the congregation can tempt God? If one were to rephrase Rosenzweig's position here in the language of the Babylonian Talmud (Ber 33a, cited above), we would revisit the discussion regarding *Havdalah* by two highly regarded third-century *Amoraim*: Shmuel and Rav. If God is truly omnipotent (referred to metaphorically as "*shamayim*"), how can we evaluate and judge the choices and behavior of individuals? The answer is "everything is in the hand of heaven except fear of heaven." God's power is limited. God cannot cause people to obey God. Rosenzweig's earlier use of the *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana* is a case in point.[59] However, by drawing on the language of piety

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., p. 265.

58 Ibid., p. 267.

59 See Rosenzweig, Star, p. 171. Quoting the Pesikta de-rab Kahana on Isaiah 43.12 in part two of the second book of the Star, Rosenzweig writes: "If you testify to me, then I am God, and not otherwise." This statement might trouble theologians, since divine freedom is circumscribed to human belief. Rosenzweig employed this quotation to address this paradox related to divine love and divine freedom. Because God's love requires renewal, this love compromises divine freedom. The Midrash Rosenzweig quoted, reminded readers that this love belongs to the individual, which, in fact, preserves divine freedom. Rosenzweig employed this quotation when empirical reason was unable to adjudicate an impasse in axiology. In both cases (in

and worship in this case, we run into another troubling theological predicament: Is the language of fear and obedience appropriate for liturgy, especially for petitions?

To answer, Rosenzweig, like Elbogen, polemicized against Christianity. Rosenzweig, in this move, wanted his readers to look to Goethe: the prayer of the non-believer, what Rosenzweig understood as Goethe's concept of prayer – which he called "Goethe's prayer" – played a formidable role in characterizing the aim of prayer.[60] Although it only serves as a propaedeutic to the archetype of prayer, which is the "prayer of Moses, our teacher," Rosenzweig, in the *Star*, uses Goethe to challenge conventional Enlightenment tropes.[61] Rosenzweig quotes Goethe's poem *Hoffnung* – "Labor of my hands that I / finish, grant, oh Fortune high!"[62] – to accentuate the idealist image of personal fate when he discusses the efficacy of prayer. We already know, at this point, that Goethe, for Rosenzweig, was a transitional figure. Even before Rosenzweig wrote the *Star*, Goethe, for him, "discovered in himself the first Christian."[63] In the *Star*, Rosenzweig wrote, "Goethe is truly the great heathen and the great Christian at one and the same time."[64] So unsurprisingly, then, Goethe shall represent a problematic liturgy when compared to the biblical one, even though Goethe's prayer when compared to Moses', at first "hardly seems distinguishable."[65] However, Rosenzweig distinguishes between the two midrashically by focusing on the phrase the "labor of our hands." This phrase is juxtaposed to Psalm 90.17 – "let the labor of our hands prosper" – to once again renew a Jewish religious sensibility predicated on a notion of biblical tradition.[66] Also, similar to the case in the Introduction to the *Star*, Rosenzweig quoted texts from both these cultures in proximity to one another with the hope to preserve the

Rosenzweig's Star and in the Pesikta de-rab Kahana), the quoted text values ethics over ontology. The quoted text is imbued with a trust in the divine beyond empirical or practical reason, which, even for Hermann Cohen, signified the role quotation played in rabbinic culture and thought. According to Glatzer's list, Rosenzweig is citing the Pesikta de-Rav Kahana on Isa. 43.10. However, the citation comes from the text's quotation of Isa. 43.12 in section 12.6.

60 Rosenzweig, Star, p. 287.

61 Sax, Das geflügelte Wort, pp. 121–122.

62 Rosenzweig, Star, p. 275.

63 Franz Rosenzweig: "Urzelle" to the Star of Redemption, in: Paul W. Franks / Michael L. Morgan (eds.), Philosophical and Theological Writings, Indianapolis 2000, p. 69.

64 Rosenzweig, Star, p. 283.

65 Ibid., p. 275.

66 Turner, A Reading of Psalm 90, p. 500.

memory of both by renewing them in the present – by making them living texts.[67] Because Goethe is "truly the great heathen and the great Christian at one and the same time," Rosenzweig used his poem to revalorize and transform his poem into biblical language. In Psalm 90, "A Prayer of Moses, the man of God." Moses petitions God to allow the labor of his hands to prosper As "the man of God," Moses repeats his petition to God in the same verse. On the other hand, the prayer of Goethe, "the man of life"[68] does not petition God at all, rather he petitions fate and repeats this petition "in ever new formulations for years and decades until he attained a great and visible fulfillment."[69] The coupling of these two examples of petition prayer, according to Rosenzweig, assist in differentiating between the various types of prayer, more specifically, that of the sinner and of the fanatic and the good form of prayer.

Because Goethe petitions fate, as opposed to God, his prayer, for Rosenzweig, exhibits that of the heathen. While stylistically compelling, Goethe's form of prayer, as pagan, is bereft of the self-disclosing divine love of revelation. By portraying Goethe's prayer as the prayer of the "man of life," Rosenzweig not only argues that this prayer is indeed pagan, but that it represents the call of an isolated individual – existing in darkness – who has not experienced the world of revelation. By focusing on Goethe's form of prayer, Rosenzweig establishes how such a prominent cultural and historical figure was able to exhibit at once the pagan disposition as well as that of the entire culmination of the Christian ideality. Goethe, as he first stated in his *Urzelle* and echoed throughout his life, was "the first Christian, as Christ wanted him, thus of the first 'man straightforwardly' – 'the great pagan' and the 'decided non-Christian.'"[70] By repairing the myriad historical foibles of Christianity through his form of prayer, Goethe, for Rosenzweig, radically alters the accustomed prayers of Christianity, since the supplicant in Goethe's prayer is,

> "concerned only that whatever comes should merge into his life, that he be privileged to offer up all in the sanctuary of his own fate, own as well as alien, alien as well as own, all. It is for this that he prays. To preserve his own is not at all what he desires. True, he is prepared to lose himself in the current of the outside, to expand

67 Sax, Das geflügelte Wort, pp. 123-130.
68 Rosenzweig, Star, p. 275.
69 Ibid.
70 Rosenzweig: Urzelle, p. 50.

> his narrow existence here into eternity. And he does so. But in this desire he feels himself servant to his own destiny."[71]

By using the prayer of Moses midrashically, Rosenzweig argues that this approach to prayer allows supplicants to accomplish two tasks: the earthly, which merely petitions for one's possessions, as well as the empyrean, which petitions for a transition from a simple, isolated existence to the redeemed state of eternity. Goethe's prayer, as a propaedeutic, contains the necessary framework for the true form of prayer, since it affords supplicants the anticipation of eternity. True prayer, for Rosenzweig, affirms the bond between the supplicant, the world, and the divine.

4.3 Rosenzweig's Application of a Jewish Liturgical Hermeneutic

As we have seen above, Rosenzweig developed his concept of true prayer through polemics: a strategy employed by Elbogen. In this process he also developed a unique hermeneutic – one that incorporates aspects of Elbogen's research – which he applied to the third book of the *Star*, which will be examined below. Despite his unease with historicism, Rosenzweig still wrote positively about the theological underpinnings of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. In the *Star* he argued that the divine word is both the event of revelation and act of creation. It is also the hope of redemption. Rosenzweig explained that creation is the a priori for theological discourse. He demonstrated an interdisciplinary analysis that juxtaposes the epistemology of Jewish theological categories with the precepts of philosophy. Rosenzweig argued that just as *Wissenschaft* and philosophy are progressive fields of knowledge that refine their assumptions when older ones are trumped by empirical data, theology, too, is an asymptotic activity that requires it to become more reasonable with each generation's evolving *zeitgeist*. In this vein, Jewish tradition is a dynamic reaffirmation of itself: it is never static, and its goals and needs change with each generation that accepts and interprets it. Because revelation and creation are incomplete acts that unfold throughout history, only to be completed when God redeems the world, Jewish theology is not even concerned with the origins and sources of the Bible. Rather, it is the result of a "meeting" with the divine that extends beyond the empirical world. As the world continues to

[71] Rosenzweig, Star, p. 276.

change, so does the written account of the Jewish people's relationship to the divine. For Rosenzweig, the Jewish people's relationship to dogma, theology, and revelation changes in time as well. Elbogen, of course, agreed. This point led Michael Meyer to make the following comparison:

> "Taken as a whole, Elbogen's writings evidence a tension between the scientific and the Jewish elements in Wissenschaft des Judentums. Like Franz Rosenzweig, he regretted that Jewish studies in the last generation had developed into a specialized discipline (*Fachwissenschaft*), removed from the concerns of the average Jew and therefore unable to affect Jewish life. He preferred that it be a directed discipline (*Zweckwissenschaft*), devoted to the purpose of enhancing Jewish life."[72]

The major difference here between Elbogen and Rosenzweig is that the former located the virtue and dynamism of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in its material, whereas the latter located it in its method. For Rosenzweig, *Wissenschaft* and philosophy were methods amenable to Jewish theological contemplation. In fact, he argued that they laid the foundation upon which a philosophically cogent conception of revelation could be built. Simply put, creation, according to the sources of Judaism, is incomplete without redemption. Since creation is in fact God's first revelation, and as long as it remains incomplete without redemption, revelation, too, is incomplete.

At the beginning of the *Star*, Rosenzweig also argued that creation – a world marked by God's providence – must be associated with revelation before the above-described experience can ever perforce take place.[73] All knowledge must account for creation. In a *midrashic* play on words, Rosenzweig explored the etymological significance of the German word *Schöpfung* (Creation). By arguing that *Schöpfung* (creation) – which is our source for knowledge – can

[72] Meyer, Without Wissenschaft There Is No Judaism, p. 25.

[73] Rosenzweig, Star, p. 103. Rosenzweig wrote: "Thus creation has once more to be placed next to the experience of revelation in the full gravity of its substantiality. More than this: the only connection which hope is able to establish between revelation and redemption, and which today is felt to be the essential core of belief, is the trust in the coming of an ethical kingdom of eventual redemption; revelation itself, together with its involvement in and foundation upon this trust, must once again be built into a concept of creation. Both revelation and redemption are creation in a certain manner that cannot be analyzed as yet. Here, then, lies the point from which philosophy can begin to reconstruct the whole edifice of theology. It was creation which theology neglected in the nineteenth century in its obsession with the idea if a vitally present revelation. And precisely creation is now the gate through which philosophy enters into the house of theology."

only be discerned through an experience of revelation, Rosenzweig alludes to the myriad ways of applying the verb *schöpfen* (from the noun *Schöpfung*).[74] *Schöpfen* can be used "to draw out," for instance "to draw breath," or "scoop out" and "to create." "It is characteristic of knowledge," Rosenzweig writes, "to get to 'the bottom' of things, and we therefore allow it to realize this characteristic by constructing it on the concept of creation."[75] By alluding to Hermann Cohen, he continued: "We make belief wholly the content of knowledge, but of a knowledge which itself lays its foundation on a fundamental concept of belief."[76] Thus, creation for Rosenzweig, is our philosophical first principle from which we explore and experience the world. It is also the first principle from which Jews participate in their liturgical cycle.

Yet, conveying a philosophical method in liturgical language may at first glance seem odd. In order to connect the philosophical first principle with the liturgical one, in the *Star*, Rosenzweig quoted Genesis 10, *Midrash* Tanhuma to Lev 19:2, Psalm 35:10, and Rashi on Talmud Sukkah 55b to evince the ecumenical, universal character of the Jewish holiday of Sukkot. By writing about the "number of bones of the human body," Rosenzweig also referred to the legend of 248 bones in relation to the *Shema* prayer. This is a move from a universal to the particular. In another midrashic move, Rosenzweig demonstrated how the number of words in the *Shema* prayer correlates to the traditional number of bones in the human body (248).[77] In quoting the psalmist, Rosenzweig disclosed how, through liturgy, the words of prayer could culminate in the life of the body.[78]

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.

77 See also Elbogen, Jewish Liturgy, p. 20. Elbogen's view on this relationship: "Now in the Talmud (B. Shab. 119b) we find: 'What does 'amen' mean? Said R. Hanina: God faithful King'. When the kabbalists came along and began to count the words of the prayers, seeking the mysteries concealed in numbers, they found that the three biblical passages contain 245 words, so that by adding the three words, 'God, faithful King,' they reached the mystical number 248, corresponding to the number of limbs in the human body or the number of positive commandments. The precentor does not say, 'God, faithful King,' but he reaches the same total number by concluding aloud 'the Lord God is true.'"

78 Rosenzweig, Star, p. 409. He wrote, "The seventy offerings of Tabernacles [Numbers 29.12–38] are offered for the "seventy nations of the world" – as counted by legend [Sukkah 55b] on the basis of the Tabula Gentium in Genesis [Genesis 10]. The number of the bones of the human body are juxtaposed to the numerical value of a passage in the prayer book so that the words of the psalmist must be fulfilled and all bones [Midrash Tanchuma to Leviticus 19.2] praise the Eternal. The revealed name of God is concealed in the words which recount the completion

As in philosophy, creation plays a role in the liturgy. It also plays a role in the classical rabbinic texts Rosenzweig quotes above. There is a pedagogy involved in these quotations. From the very beginning of the *Star*, Rosenzweig instructs his readers to use his method of "Speech-thinking" to reduce the absolute transcendence of the divine, in order to enter into relationship with God. Rosenzweig characterized the situation of individuals before this relationship as "metaethic."[79] When the individual's soul is awakened through divine speech (revelation), it is able to experience the love of *der Nächste* – the neighbor, he or she who is nearest – so that it may emerge as an ethical person. Prayer, then, provides such an opportunity. In fact, this view of the ethical person may be a direct response to R. Hanina's call in *Berakhot* 33a cited above.

The transition from theology to liturgy (from book two to book three of the *Star*), requires this ethical person to be open to revelation. What is important about the transition here was that Rosenzweig understood revelation to be "contentless" – a mere concatenation of biblical words.[80] As in Jewish liturgy, he gave biblical texts a speaking role in the *Star*, bestowing on them the responsibility of embodying revelation itself. The *Star*'s abundant citations bespoke *sui generis* a distinctive canon within a canon. According to Glatzer's list, in the third part of the *Star*, Rosenzweig employs 212 quotations from Jewish sources (the majority of the list) to further expound the universal dialectic of God and the world.[81] In this part, Rosenzweig illustrates how a Jewish worldview is characterized by quotations from the Bible, *Midrash*, Talmud, and, at times, from Kabbalistic works. This is where we notice this hermeneutic of quotation at work. As the *Star* reaches its crescendo with the fundamental words of the book, *into life*, Rosenzweig narrated the "Wandering of the Shekhina" midrashically. By citing *Megillah* 29a, *Pesachim* 54a, and *Bereshit Rabba* 1, Rosenzweig described this moment:

of creation. One could continue endlessly. In itself, this biblical exegesis appears peculiar and even ridiculous to the observer unaccustomed to it. But its sense is none other than that the entire creation is interpolated between the Jewish God and the Jewish law, and that God and his law thereby both prove to be equally all-embracing as – creation."

79 Ibid., p. 10.

80 Rosenzweig, Der Mensch und sein Werk. Gesammelte Schriften I:2: The Hague 1979, p. 1196. Letter 1213 to Richard Koch.

81 Rosenzweig, Star, pp. 427–436.

> "God himself separates himself from himself, he gives himself away to his people, he shares in their sufferings, sets forth with them into the agony of exile, joins their wanderings. The Torah was thought to have been created prior to the world, and the world for its part on behalf of the Torah; in this conception, the law had become, for Jewish feelings, more than just the Jewish law; it was really sensed as a fundamental pillar of the world, and even the notion that God himself studies his law thus now gained a supra-Jewish sense."[82]

By weaving these Midrashim, kabbalistic themes, and biblical texts together in this passage, Rosenzweig's writing, like in many places in the *Star*, assumed the character of a palimpsest. Each quotation of a Jewish text in the *Star* eclipsed previously quoted texts but does not in any way fully conceal them – Rosenzweig always alluded to previous texts. By quoting these texts and themes, Rosenzweig was not only trying to portray a Jewish literary world, but also exhibit how this textual palimpsest oscillates between innovation, originality, and mimesis. Interestingly, the quotations of Jewish texts in the *Star* are not discerned merely through a list at the end but rather within the text itself. In the passage I just quoted, Rosenzweig demonstrates how the Midrash portrays the Torah as something other than law. He also demonstrated how the myths and narratives within the Hebrew Bible do not define it, but function differently as a condition for a pre-existent Torah. Here, Rosenzweig evokes the relationship of the creation of the world to the Torah as a relationship between the "God of our fathers" and the written law. By clustering these mythic traditions together, Rosenzweig composed an anthology that, in many ways, characterizes a new, living myth as a cultural template of ancient themes and traditions and contemporary sensibilities. For Rosenzweig, the written law of Torah augments divine speech. By emphasizing God's speech as Torah, Rosenzweig understood this act as the hermeneutical foundation of Jewish thought. God, for Rosenzweig, is ascertained through speech, which, in turn, allows eternity (revelation) to enter into time.

One of Elbogen's greatest achievements as a scholar was his meticulous reconstruction of rabbinic prayers, more particularly how the rabbis used biblical texts. The rabbis were creative. Biblical quotations for them served, as we learned, a variety of functions. In Rosenzweig's *Star*, we learn that quotations

[82] Rosenzweig, Star, p. 409.

perform a similar task to not only the construction of these prayers, but also to the use of words in conventional speech. Similar to the process of continually producing new sentences with the same words, these quotations are a cluster of semiotic forms that refashion the antiquated words of venerated religious and cultural texts into continually innovative and renewed ones. In the same fashion as words would appear in a dictionary or lexicon, Rosenzweig, by juxtaposing their linguistic similarities and differences in the *Star*, situated these quoted texts together so that he could not only establish their similarities and differences, but also manifest the various hermeneutical possibilities ensconced in each corresponding quotation, thus opening the reader up to the possibility of revelation. By focusing on the spontaneity of speech in his philosophy of language in the *Star*, Rosenzweig demonstrated that quotations, by appearing elliptically, function in the same way that words do in speech. Quotation and language, then, are inexorably bound to tradition, prayer, and life.

5. Conclusion

In 1936, a few years after Rosenzweig's death, the German novelist Thomas Mann was in Vienna commemorating the eightieth birthday of the pioneer psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). In honor of Freud's birthday, Mann penned the essay "Freud and the Future," in which he coined the phrase *zitathaftes Leben* (a life in quotation), which, he argued, sought to establish continuity with the past while renewing it in the present.[83] This phrase appropriately describes Rosenzweig's interpretation of Elbogen's research. "Life" for Rosenzweig denoted living a Jewish life. The "secret" to living a Jewish life, then, is disclosed within the Jewish liturgy, more particularly the quotations of the divine word therein. Elbogen's magnum opus on the history of these texts, as we have learned, influenced one of the twentieth century's most innovative ways into Jewish life, thus, illustrating the important impact of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* on Jewish theology.

[83] Thomas Mann: Freud und die Zukunft, in: Gesammelte Werke, Band 9, Teil 1: Frankfurt am Main 1974, p. 497.

Gershom Scholem's Critical Appropriation of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the Necessary Fiction of Historical Objectivity

by Rose Stair

Abstract

Gershom Scholem (1897–1982) portrayed modern Zionist historical scholarship as both a rejection and a corrective fulfillment of earlier eras of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Through attacks on his scholarly predecessors, Scholem detailed his vision for the potential of this renaissance of *Wissenschaft* to entail both objective research and a commitment to treating Judaism as a "living organism," an approach that would ultimately ensure the scholarship could deliver value to the Jewish community. This article will explore the tensions that arise from Scholem's commitments, his occasional admissions of these tensions, and his attempts to overcome them.

1. Introduction

"The creation of a completely new image of our history in the broadest sense of the word – that is the task imposed upon the Science of Judaism during the generation of the renaissance."[1] The monumental challenge that Gershom Scholem (1897–1982) identified as facing contemporary Jewish scholarship was not only to produce a rigorous and vital body of historical research, but also to productively appropriate the flawed heritage of the scholarly movement at its origin, *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Scholem's presentation of the new mode of scholarship as both in opposition to and in continuity with earlier *Wissenschaft* portrayed the new scholarship as a corrective fulfillment of *Wissenschaft* potential. This article will explore

[1] Gershom Scholem: Reflections on Modern Jewish Studies, in: Gershom Scholem / Avraham Shapira (eds.), On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism in our Time and Other Essays, Philadelphia 1997, p. 67.

how Scholem elucidates the nature of this new chapter of *Wissenschaft* via his sharply critical attacks on its prior incarnations, which served as rhetorical counterpoints for his optimistic vision. For Scholem, the new *Wissenschaft* was to entail both objective scholarship and a commitment and ability to regard Judaism as a "living organism." Tensions emerge between these two claims, which Scholem's critics illustrated. Exploring these tensions and the degree of Scholem's acknowledgement of them, this article will also consider Scholem's attempt to maintain his ambitions for the new *Wissenschaft* to be objective, by theorizing distinctions between the scholar, teacher and audience.

2. Survey of Scholem's Criticism of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*

Attacks on *Wissenschaft des Judentums* pepper Scholem's work; however, the two most extensive articulations of his criticism are found in the 1944 article "Reflections on Modern Jewish Studies," published in Hebrew in the Ha-Aretz newspaper for a public audience, and the 1959 lecture "The Science of Judaism – Then and Now," delivered in English to a Jewish audience at the London Leo Baeck Institute.

"Reflections on Modern Jewish Studies" divides the history of *Wissenschaft* into three periods. The first is that of early *Wissenschaft* scholars, particularly Leopold Zunz and Moritz Steinschneider, whom Scholem praises for their scholarly rigor, despite criticizing aspects of their research. Scholem consistently names these scholars when he cites examples of productive methodology and research in early *Wisssenschaft.*[2] The second and most harshly attacked period includes scholars such as Abraham Geiger and Heinrich Graetz, whose work Scholem regularly invokes as a polemical counter-example to his own research methods. The third period of *Wissenschaft* was centered in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where Scholem worked. Although it doesn't escape criticism, Scholem portrays this new chapter as fulfillment of the discipline's potential and the ambitions of the first *Wissenschaft* scholars, as well

[2] Joseph Dan describes the "great esteem" Scholem held for Steinschneider's work and how he identified with him academically. Joseph Dan: Gershom Scholem. Between History and Historiosophy, Jerusalem 1985, p. 74.

as a corrective to the pervasive failings of the apologetic middle period of *Wissenschaft* in particular.

Scholem's criticism of *Wissenschaft* crystallizes around two main poles: the apologetic and ideological compromises to its scholarly integrity and objectivity, and its failure to apprehend Judaism as a living organism and consequent neglect of the vitality of chapters of its history. In his criticism of the early period of *Wissenschaft*, Scholem charges Zunz and Steinschneider primarily with the second failing, characterizing their work in macabre language as "a kind of procession around the dead," and a cold "embalming" of historical facts, invoking one of his favorite quotes from Steinschneider that their task was merely to give Judaism a "decent burial."[3] Despite calling Steinschneider and Zunz "demonic figures" for the coldness with which they carried out this task, Scholem deems them as in possession of "the full measure of that spiritual asceticism which is demanded of the ideal scholar," and recognizes their work as a pinnacle of *Wissenschaft*'s detached objective research.[4]

Scholem also criticizes this first generation for a failing he deems characteristic of all historic *Wissenschaft*, the intrusion of political ideologies that compromised the scientific value of the research. He suggests that the scholars' claims to be producing disinterested "pure and objective science" were naïve if not disingenuous, in light of the "blatant political aim" that for many the discipline served in the struggle for Jewish equal rights.[5] Despite his general denigration of the impact of European ideologies upon *Wissenschaft*, Scholem also curiously laments the influence of romantic ideology, not for being incompatible with objective research, but rather for having been applied

[3] Brenner suggests that Scholem's "eerie" choice to use such violent imagery of death was influenced by the increasing contemporary reports of the mass killings in Europe. Michael Brenner: Prophets of the Past. Interpreters of Jewish History, Princeton 2010, p. 164.

[4] Scholem, Modern Jewish Studies, p. 59.

[5] Brenner notes, for example, how in "Über den Begriff einer Wissenschaft des Judentums," Immanuel Wolf claimed both that "Wissenschaft des Judentums…deals with its object in and for itself, for its own sake, not to some special end, or out of a specific intention," and that the discipline's goal was to produce knowledge that would serve the battle for civil rights, saying "scholarly knowledge of Judaism must decide regarding the Jews' worthiness or unworthiness, their ability or inability, to have the same respects and rights as other citizens." Brenner, Prophets of the Past, pp. 29–30. As Michael Meyer notes, Zunz's apologetic and ideological commitments also colored his scholarship, from predicating Jewish political emancipation upon the emancipation of Jewish *Wissenschaft,* to seeking the acceptance of Jewish *Wissenschaft* within broader European *Geisteswissenschaften.* Michael Meyer: Two Persistent Tensions Within Wissenschaft des Judentums, in: Modern Jewish Studies, 24 (2002) 2, p. 112.

in an unproductive manner. Defining Romanticism's tendencies as elevating the past and focusing upon the *Volk*, he suggests that whilst it "might have been good had it been directed toward the building of the Jewish nation," it was instead destructive, as Jewish scholars internalized the "anti-Jewish" tendencies of German Romantic scholarship. These tendencies were manifested in *Wissenschaft's* distortion of Jewish history to present an idealized picture of Judaism. Scholem suggests the one exception to this negative manifestation of romantic ideology was Zunz's original program, which aimed to elevate the Jewish past and *Volk*, but was "never executed," as it was incompatible with the scholarly climate amongst his contemporaries.[6] In this assessment and his later claim for Zionist *Wissenschaft* to fulfill this original program, Scholem reveals an affiliation with certain aspects of romantic ideologically motivated scholarship, which stands in tension with his overall rejection of European ideologies as inhibiting objective *Wissenschaft.* This affiliation nevertheless speaks to the second pole of his ambitions for the new scholarship: to achieve what earlier research failed to do, to treat Jewish history as a living whole.

As Scholem turns to discuss the second period of *Wissenschaft*, his criticism intensifies, particularly regarding the destructive romantic influence, which had now developed into a "morose sentimentality" and tendency to spiritualize the past. For Scholem, this second period's particularly strong desire to make Judaism palatable to nineteenth-century European values undermined any possibility of inquiry that was either objective or sensitive to Judaism's holistic vitality:

> "I do not believe that it would be an exaggeration to say that over the course of fifty years (1850–1900) there did not emerge from this circle so much as one authentic, living, non-petrified word concerning Jewish religion, one which did not stink of the rot of artificiality in its bones and which was not chewed up by the worm of apologetics."[7]

The romantic sentimentality of this "generation of gushers" was paired with the destructive influence of enlightenment thought, which motivated scholars to portray Judaism as exemplifying "the doctrine of progress," and as the product of a neat historical line of development.[8] "Irrational" and "demon-

6 Scholem, Modern Jewish Studies, p. 55.
7 Scholem, Modern Jewish Studies, p. 65.
8 Scholem, Modern Jewish Studies, pp. 59; 64.

ic" chapters from Judaism's past that delivered no apologetic value, such as mysticism and Sabbatianism, were thus removed in what ultimately became a "sentimental and idyllic dismantling" of Jewish history.[9] Only a totally new perspective could provide the basis for a constructive reappraisal of the Jewish past.

Shifting to the first person plural, Scholem credits the "national movement" with bringing this much-needed reorientation to *Wissenschaft*, as distorting external perspectives and ideologies could finally be cast off in order to afford an authentically Jewish point of view; to "see from within." Naming their task as "the creation of a completely new image of our history," Scholem suggests that the "living flow" could be restored to sources to reveal their vitality, and previously neglected chapters of Jewish past could be productively engaged. Placing the discipline in sharp contrast to previous generations' "castration of the truth," Scholem presents the full-scale reevaluation of the past that this new perspective demanded as "the dismantling of the dismantling."[10]

Scholem's trifold structure of the history of *Wissenschaft* places the new Zionist mode in continuity with the earlier chapters of the discipline. Although many earlier practices were to be rejected, certain tendencies were to be retained, such as the intellectual rigor of Zunz and Steinschneider. However, where they applied their scientific methods towards a destructive and desiccating mode of scholarship, the new generation of scholars was to use these methods at the service of "construction and affirmation." With this new perspective and attitude, the smallest historical details could finally be revealed as sources of "turbulent vitality" for the Jewish people. Scholem's program for such affirmation of the past reflects his desire to finally unleash the positive potential of German Romanticism when paired with rigorous scientific methods. For Scholem, this new *Wissenschaft* would be a "necessary surgery" to remove "the cancer from within the living body of the Science of Judaism."[11] Although he suggests that the new scholarship had not yet ascended to this great task, and still suffered shortcomings inherited from earlier generations, he remains optimistic about the potential of *Wissenschaft* when properly and purely executed.

9 Scholem, Modern Jewish Studies, pp. 63–65.
10 Scholem, Modern Jewish Studies, p. 69.
11 Scholem, Modern Jewish Studies, p. 69.

The first striking difference between this article and Scholem's later lecture "The Science of Judaism – Then and Now," is the far more positive and generous appraisal the lecture gives to earlier *Wissenschaft*. Although Scholem still criticizes the tendency of earlier scholars to "censor" the past and idealize Judaism, he forgivingly accounts for many cases as a necessary side effect of the important political functions that the scholarship served. The essential struggle for equal rights "forced the Jews to select certain themes," a coloring of the past that Scholem not only justifies but names as "a great achievement" in light of its successes.[12] However, whilst this work had served a valuable function, neither its methods nor the image of the past it bequeathed were now relevant. The new unapologetic Zionist scholarship did not share the earlier generations' motivation of "pleasing rationally inclined Gentiles."[13] Nevertheless, Scholem does not portray his generation's scholarship in such a stark contrast to that of their predecessors as he had in his earlier essay. The continuity he invokes is more extensive than recommencing the intellectual rigor of Zunz and Steinschneider, suggesting rather an intergenerational collaborative effort to construct a picture of Jewish history. The challenge described in this lecture as facing Scholem's generation was less a full-scale reconstruction, than a building upon and correction of the work of earlier scholars, to repair the picture of Jewish history by restoring what earlier "naturally and quite understandably fell victim to self-censorship."[14]

Ephraim Urbach suggests that the contrast in tone between these pieces is due to Scholem having first overstated his criticism, before later using his more moderate lecture to characteristically self-correct.[15] David Myers considers Scholem's early tendency towards sharp polemics against his scholarly predecessors to reveal a "recurrent psychological dynamic." Citing Scholem's first lecture at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1925 on the authorship of the *Zohar*, which was structured as a refutation of Graetz's claim that it was written by the thirteenth-century rabbi Moses de Leon, Myers suggests that the compulsion to undermine the scholarship of earlier generations reflects

12 Gershom Scholem: The Science of Judaism – Then and Now, in: Gershom Scholem, The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality, New York 1995, p. 308.

13 Scholem, The Science of Judaism, p. 309.

14 Scholem, The Science of Judaism, p. 309.

15 Ephraim Urbach: Gershom Scholem and Judaic Studies, in: Paul Mendes-Flohr (ed.), Gershom Scholem. The Man and his Work, Albany 1994, p. 32.

Scholem's tendency towards "filial rebellion."[16] On Scholem's comments thirteen years later that he had come to accept Graetz's conviction that Moses de Leon was in fact the author, Myers suggests that this subsiding of the "Oedipal dynamic" could be "part of a complex process of scholarly maturation by which Scholem grew more confident in his academic surroundings and thus more willing to endorse the views of his scorned predecessors."[17]

However, Scholem's use of nineteenth-century scholars as rhetorical counterpoints to his own research was not limited to his early years, and therefore cannot be explained away as a sign of scholarly immaturity. Much like he did in his first lecture at the Hebrew University at the age of 28, in his mid-sixties Scholem began his book *Origins of the Kabbalah* by repeatedly and emphatically setting out his methods in direct contrast to those of Graetz and David Neumark. Whilst he may have come to accept Graetz's conviction on the *Zohar*'s author, decades later he was still at pains to reject his general approach and the grounds for any correct conclusions he happened to have reached. The book opens with a summary of Graetz's and Neumark's conceptions of the Kabbalah, which Scholem immediately points out, are "so utterly different in both principle and method from those presented in this book."[18] He attacks Graetz's and Neumark's scholarly integrity and research into Kabbalah, slighting their arguments as "intuitive" and based on weak foundations, citing as an example Neumark's "inconceivable naïveté" in failing to undertake the necessary philological groundwork on the dating of texts. Such polemically emphatic articulations show that Scholem did not grow out of his desire to strongly distance himself from certain previous *Wissenschaft* figures.

A more compelling explanation for the differences between "Reflections on Modern Jewish Studies" and "On the Science of Judaism – Then and Now" is the difference in the social settings of their delivery. Scholem explicitly reflects on this in a 1978 interview, suggesting that only the "uninitiated" confuse the two pieces. "Reflections on Modern Jewish Studies" was written for an audience capable of thinking more critically than the London "bourgeois" Jews to whom Scholem addressed his later lecture. Suggesting that this audience

16 David Myers: Re-inventing the Jewish Past. European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History, Oxford 1995, p. 161.

17 Myers, Re-inventing the Jewish Past, p. 161.

18 Gershom Scholem / Raphael Zwi Werblowsky (eds.): Origins of the Kabbalah, Philadelphia, 1997, p. 7.

would not have been able to take the severity of critique he had launched against the *Wissenschaft* scholars in the "linguistic rage" of his former, "in part, untranslatable" Hebrew article, he says that he "deeply regrets" having had to adapt his ideas "for the Philistines."[19] Avraham Shapira suggests that the contexts fully explain the difference between the two pieces, warning against seeing Scholem's underlying opinion as having changed. Shapira cites a conversation in which Scholem illustrated his reluctance to allow the later lecture to be published by describing it as "watery."[20] Nevertheless, Shapira deems the lecture as worthy of consideration, suggesting that it offers a rare example of the two levels of Scholem's evaluation of scholarship being brought together: the rigorous critical first level of philological inquiry, and the second synthetic level of drawing meaning from this foundation.

Particularly given Scholem's description of the article as in a "linguistic rage" and the lecture as "watery," it seems productive to treat neither as an absolute expression of Scholem's core position, but to consider both as part of the spectrum of Scholem's responses to *Wissenschaft*, which incorporated both searing polemics that distanced his work from earlier *Wissenschaft*, and appraisals of the potential and select achievements of the discipline, which his work continued and fulfilled. Scholem displays this spectrum even within individual works. Calling to mind the implication that any correct conclusions Graetz reached were in spite of himself, in 1937 Scholem stated that early *Wissenschaft* scholars were "often enough […] in the right, though not for the reasons they themselves gave."[21] He shortly continued, "we should be thankful to those zealous early critics who, though their judgment and sense of values may have been affected and warped by their prejudices, nevertheless had their eyes open to see certain important things with great distinctness." [22] In 1970 Scholem similarly followed a sharp criticism of the failures of *Wissenschaft* with an admission of the "enormous amount of plodding, meticulous work"

19 Gershom Scholem / Jean Bollack / Pierre Bourdieu: L'identité juive. Entretiens avec Gershom Scholem, in: Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales, 35 (1980), p. 4. Translated by: Joel Swanson.

20 Avraham Shapira: The Symbolic Plane and its Secularization in the Spiritual World of Gershom Scholem, in: Jewish Thought and Philosophy, 3 (1994), p. 344.

21 This formation is repeated almost verbatim in the opening remarks of the first lecture in: Gershom Scholem: Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, New York 1954, p. 2.

22 Gerhard [Gershom] Scholem: Kabbala at the Hebrew University, in: The Reconstructionist, 10 (1937) 3, p. 10.

of earlier scholars, from which current scholars profit, "despite the altered perspective from which historical developments are viewed."[23]

By deeming aspects of prior *Wissenschaft* as of enduring value, Scholem validated the outputs of methods he deemed productive, and justified recommencing or continuing them, supporting his presentation of his own research as building upon the better parts of earlier *Wissenschaft*. Furthermore, as Shapira argues, despite its reserved tone, the lecture offers a particularly useful glimpse into Scholem's evaluation of good scholarship on a level beyond pure philological rigor. Fleshing out his earlier hint about Zunz's "never executed" plan to channel romantic ideals towards the elevation of the Jewish past and people, Scholem here defines this "splendid plan" as to develop a "grand, youthful program for a genuine folklore of the Jews which, in his view, embraced everything that is part of a living organism."[24] Scholem suggests that unlike his contemporaries, Zunz alone took "the great representatives of German romanticism" who were "emotionally attached to the living people" as his role models.[25] Whilst Zunz's plan was unsurprisingly ignored in the following generations, Scholem asserts that this plan had at last been "seized upon in earnest," by Zionist scholars. In conjunction with rigorous scholarly method, this "genuine folklore" was not to be a speculative or intuitive historical fable, but rather a history of the *Volk* that only a living connection with history could deliver.

Scholem's careful distinction between productive and genuine folklore and disingenuous, apologetic or ideologically colored historical "constructions" that were incompatible with objective analysis is anticipated in "Reflections on Modern Jewish Studies." His characterization of Zunz and Steinschneider as possessing the qualities of the "ideal scholar" is swiftly followed by his arch characterization of Geiger and Graetz as typifying the characteristics of the "great historian," in an articulation that is shocking even for Scholem:

> "[Geiger's] talent for refining and purifying is impressive, and he has that sovereign ability, which makes for the great historian, to rape the facts for the sake of his construction, and to clarify the contexts through historical intuition, a dangerous and creative power possessed also by Graetz – and one completely lacking in Zunz and Steinschneider."[26]

[23] Leo Baeck Institute (ed.): Perspectives of German-Jewish History in the 19th and 20th Century, Jerusalem 1971, p. 42.
[24] Scholem, The Science of Judaism, p. 306.
[25] Scholem, The Science of Judaism, p. 306–307.
[26] Scholem, Modern Jewish Studies, p. 60.

The dangers of "historical intuition" recall Scholem's rejection of the methods of Graetz and Neumark in *Origins of the Kabbalah*. Aligning himself with the earlier *Wissenschaft* ambitions and rigor, throughout multiple lectures and essays Scholem defines the new Zionist *Wissenschaft* as seeking to objectively treat the whole of Jewish history, including restoring to consideration chapters such as mysticism, with an attentiveness to its vitality that only a quasi-romantic attitude could generate.

3. Critical Reception of Scholem's Presentation of *Wissenschaft*

David Biale defines his well-known categorization of Scholem's "counter-historical" method of inquiry with reference to Scholem's relationship to his predecessors, as "unearthing the 'hidden virtue' from Wissenschaft des Judentums."[27] Examples abound of Scholem presenting his mode of scholarship as redeeming the potential of the work of early *Wissenschaft* figures such as Zunz. For Biale, Scholem's "dialectical appropriation of the past" was underwritten by his belief that "true history lies in a subterranean tradition that must be brought to light."[28] Steven Wasserstrom similarly suggests that Scholem's work contains counter-historical qualities, which imply "a study into some secret inside historical time." He suggests that Scholem and his Eranos conference colleagues offer a "metahistorical hint – *that they know more than they are historically saying*." For Wasserstrom, they could only intimate this "*real* knowledge," as their scholarly approaches demanded studying religious history from an "insurmountable distance."[29] However, on multiple occasions Scholem more than intimates that his work approaches such "*real* knowledge." In "Reflections on Modern Jewish Studies," the climactic description of Zionist *Wissenschaft*'s ability to seek hidden life in the Jewish past is termed as offering an insight into "true being":

> "The new slogan was: to see from within, to go from the center to the periphery without hesitation and without looking over one's shoulder! To rebuild the entire structure of knowledge in terms of the historical experience of the Jew who lives

[27] David Biale: Gershom Scholem. Kabbalah and Counter-history, Cambridge MA 1982, p. 7.
[28] Biale, Scholem. Kabbalah and Counter-history, p. 7.
[29] Steven Wasserstrom: Religion After Religion. Gershom Scholem, Mircea Eliade, and Henry Corbin at Eranos, Princeton 1999, p. 160, emphasis in the original.

> among his own people and has no other accounts to make than the perception of the problems, the events and the thoughts according to their true being, in the framework of their historical function within the people."[30]

This is a passage that several scholars have engaged in support of their theses that Scholem was promoting a historiography in the mode of Ranke. Michael Brenner suggests that it demonstrates how, "like the great Ranke, Scholem implicitly endorsed the belief that historians could depict events and ideas as they really were."[31] Similarly, David Myers suggests that this passage reflects Scholem's desire to "realize the objective potential of science." Whereas in the Jonathan Chipman translation cited above, the motivation of the new *Wissenschaft* scholar is rendered as to seek "the perception of the problems, the events and the thoughts according to their true being, in the framework of their historical function within the people," Myers supports his argument by offering an alternative translation that instead reads, "to see problems, events, and ideas as they actually were."[32] By leaving out Scholem's subsequent important qualification of the framework of reference for understanding historical data, Myers awards the phrase denoting their significance ("אמיתות הוייתם") an absolute status that is absent in the Hebrew. In this passage Scholem in fact tasks *Wissenschaft* with investigating historical data, not from an absolutely objective or non-situated perspective, but rather by their significance, or "true being," in relation to a specific social and ideological framework.

This debate on the relationship between Scholem's claims to objectivity and the compromising intrusion of his own ideological positions goes to the heart of much critical discourse on Scholem's work. Early critics such as Baruch Kurzweil, a professor of Hebrew literature at Bar-Ilan University and literary critic, argued that Scholem's Zionist ideology and opposition to normative conceptions of Judaism was incompatible with his claims to scholarly objectivity.[33] Eliezer Schweid similarly suggested that Scholem's commitment to "religious anarchy" and the multiple possible incarnations

30 Scholem, Modern Jewish Studies, p. 66 [translated by Jonathan Chipman].

31 Brenner, Prophets of the Past, p. 167.

32 David Myers: The Scholem-Kurzweil Debate and Modern Jewish Historiography, in: Modern Judaism, 6 (1986) 3, p. 268. The Hebrew original is as follows, Gershom Scholem: Devarim be-go. Pirke morashah u-tehiyah, Tel Aviv 1976, p. 398. "לבנות מחדש את כל בנין המדע לאור הנסיון ההיסטורי של היהודי היושב תוך עמו ואשר אין לו חשבונות אחרים אלא ראיית הבעיות, המאורעות והמחשבות לפי אמיתות הוייתם, במסגרת של תפקידם ההיסטורי באומה".

33 See Myers, The Scholem-Kurzweil Debate.

of Judaism it sanctioned reflected his "typical nationalist-zionist perspective," through which he tried to undermine the dogmatic definitions of Judaism that *Wissenschaft* and idealistic nineteenth-century Jewish philosophy offered, as well as Orthodoxy's notion of orthopraxis.[34] Characterizing Scholem's work as an attempt to find "a scientific, historical-philological confirmation for his original premise," Schweid defines this "intuitive" a priori premise as "almost a central article of faith, that mysticism entailed the essence of Judaism and source of its ability to renew."[35] Joseph Dan responded with a passionate defense of his teacher, deeming Schweid's "historiosophical" characterization of Scholem incorrect. He argued that the only fitting description of Scholem was as an objective "historian," as Scholem had consistently and "determinedly enforced the principles of 'pure' scientific scholarship, of an impersonal academic approach, the objective veracity of research results and the possibility of measuring them with exact scientific and philological tools."[36] Dan argued that Scholem's conclusions were based only on the material before him and the rules of philology, rejecting Schweid's suggestion that Scholem's research was motivated by confirming a priori ideological commitments. Dan defined the historian Scholem as a "student and perpetuator" of his *Wissenschaft* predecessors, who criticized them only regarding instances where they failed to meet their own scientific standards, like in their treatment of Jewish mysticism.[37]

Whilst Dan's comments may usefully delineate the grounds for Scholem's criticisms of *Wissenschaft* scholars for failing to undertake rigorous objective inquiry, they do not account for his second mode of criticism, regarding the vital living dynamic of Judaism that even Zunz and Steinschneider's precise scholarship could not capture. Furthermore, Dan does not address the degree to which Schweid's characterization of Scholem's intuitive grasp of the importance of Jewish mysticism accords with some of Scholem's self-descriptions,

34 Eliezer Schweid: Judaism and Mysticism according to Gershom Scholem. A Critical Analysis and Programmatic Discussion, Atlanta 1985, pp. 78–79. On Scholem's notion of "religious anarchy," a non-normative commitment to the validity of multiple expressions of Judaism, cf.: Gershom Scholem: Reflections on the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism in our Time, in: Scholem, On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism, p. 16. See also Gershom Scholem: What is Judaism?, in: Scholem, On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism.

35 Schweid, Judaism and Mysticism according to Gershom Scholem, pp. 33–34.

36 Dan, Gershom Scholem. Between History and Historiosophy, p. 7.

37 Dan, Gershom Scholem. Between History and Historiosophy, p. 55.

such as in his famous letter to the publisher Salman Schocken. This letter declared its intention to share "a candid word" on Scholem's "true intentions in studying the Kabbalah."[38] Admitting that he held an "intuitive affirmation" of the "mystical theses" in the Kabbalah, Scholem says that he did not enter the field of study "with the intention of writing the history of Kabbalah, but rather its metaphysics." To seek the "higher level" that he believed to lie within Kabbalah, Scholem awards himself the necessary task of cultivating "the daring to penetrate beyond the symbolic plane and to break through the wall of history." He continues, "it may, of course, be that fundamentally history is no more than an illusion. However, without this illusion it is impossible to penetrate through temporal reality to the essence of the things themselves."[39]

This reference to the "essence of the things themselves" is a remarkable but not isolated articulation. In the same year, Scholem wrote the article "Kabbala at the Hebrew University," which once again delineates Scholem's dual aspirations for the new *Wissenschaft* to be objective and vital, in critical contrast to earlier periods, defining "one of the main functions" of the Jewish Studies department at the Hebrew University as "the formulation of a new approach to Jewish history, based on an attempt to view that history objectively and as a whole." Offering a further example of the second of the elusive "two levels" that Shapira sees as so key to Scholem's work, Scholem speaks of the "interpretation" of historical data, which the new *Wissenschaft* sponsored:

> "The new approach to Jewish history affects not only the elucidation of historical facts in the narrower sense of the word; it equally changes the interpretation of the spiritual elements which have directly influenced those facts, namely, the development of Jewish thought and faith, philosophy and religious history."[40]

Scholem continues, defining the task of the Hebrew University scholars as "to estimate the true value" of the historical periods they considered.[41] He argues that this "true value" was not attainable by the unscientific scholarship of his *Wissenschaft* predecessors. Similarly, the allusion to the "essence of things themselves" in the letter to Schocken is deemed as having been

38 Gershom Scholem: A Candid Letter About My True Intentions in Studying Kabbalah, in: Scholem, On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism, p. 3.
39 Scholem, A Candid Letter, pp. 4–5.
40 Scholem, Kabbala at the Hebrew University, p. 8.
41 Scholem, Kabbala at the Hebrew University, p. 9.

unattainable for earlier *Wissenschaft*, as Scholem shares his hope that rigorous historical research would now allow truth to not only break through the illusory mists of history, but "from what is called development." This refers to the Enlightenment ideology of progress that motivated nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft*. In both cases Scholem illustrates his mode of "objective" scholarship as the necessary foundation to sponsor access to this secondary level of significance.

The passage considered from "Reflections on Modern Jewish Studies" that defines the "true being" of historical phenomena as determined by the social and ideological framework of the Jewish society to which it pertains, rather than in any Rankean detached objective sense, gives a clue to the nature of the ultimate significance of historical research for Scholem. The notion of a situated relationship between the scholarly community and historical material is also developed in "The Science of Judaism – Then and Now," which suggests that by relinquishing apologetic approaches and theological definitions, Scholem's generation of scholars could finally enter into a "living relationship" with the full array of Jewish sources, which "no longer sent their rays outward but, as it were, radiated only into themselves."[42] The notion of a "living relationship" is essential to Scholem's vision for the impact of historical scholarship on both its producers and consumers, although he does not yet describe what exactly these hidden rays were to illuminate, now that there was a chance that they could be seen.

These sources each negotiate the two poles of Scholem's criteria for productive scholarship, which motivate both his criticisms of *Wissenschaft* and his manifesto for productive Zionist scholarship – objective philological groundwork, and an affirmation of the living spirit of Judaism, which the historian was to both recognize and reveal. This duality in Scholem's presentation of historiography leads scholars like Schweid to dismiss Scholem's calls for objectivity as insincere. Scholem's affirmation of values that he deems characteristic of romantic ideology certainly stands in tension with his calls for the rejection of distorting ideologies. Yet, it is important to note that on occasion Scholem alludes to and even acknowledges the tensions within his approach. This article will conclude with a discussion of several occasions of Scholem's reflection upon the non-objective qualities of his

42 Scholem, The Science of Judaism, p. 307.

scholarship, before considering a mechanism he engages to project these implications out of the realm of the scholar and into the domain of the audience and community.

4. Scholem's Admissions and Projections of Subjectivity

Scholem generally claims to undertake objective historical research, particularly in contrast to earlier *Wissenschaft*. In the introduction to *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, for example, he claims that his overarching view on the history of Jewish mysticism was born from his philological "spadework," an articulation that satisfies Dan's characterization of Scholem's conclusions as not historiosophically motivated but sponsored only by the material before him.[43] Occasionally, however, Scholem explicitly alludes to certain choices he made that were not derived from philological analysis, particularly in his perhaps more spontaneous oral contributions at conferences. At a 1970 Leo Baeck Institute conference, during a symposium on the impact of German *Wissenschaft* upon modern research in which Urbach noted Scholem's criticisms of historic *Wissenschaft* and ambitions for "purely scientific" scholarship, Scholem advocated Zionist *Wissenschaft* as engendering a new critical turn to treating Judaism as a "living body." He continues:

> "The issue whether Jewish history should be regarded as a single whole or not has not been finally resolved to this day. It is still a moot point whether all Jewish history is subject to the same determinant dynamics or is merely a collection of different fragments of episodes, each explicable by specific circumstances of general history. From our understanding and personal experience we are rather inclined to the holistic view."[44]

This presents the development of Scholem's view of Jewish history in a way that strongly differs from his articulation in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. Rather than being a product of philological analysis, it is here described as motivated by an inclination born of personal "understanding" and "experience." Giving examples of factors that would inform such inclinations, Scholem states, "the work of scholars is essentially based on living contemporary experience," before reflecting that "the two outstanding events of our

[43] Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, p. xxv.
[44] Leo Baeck Institute, Perspectives of German-Jewish History, p. 43.

period, the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel, will no doubt have tremendous effect on scientific developments." The impact upon research "carried out against the background of this experience" would "become apparent only in the future."[45]

Several years later, following a presentation on the philosophy of history by Paul Ricoeur at a 1974 conference at the Hebrew University, Scholem similarly admitted to holding certain positions and making choices, which colored his scholarship. He describes the subjective and naturally biased processes by which historians deem facts to be historically significant: "what the historian will call an event, which he sees as a member in the chain of history, or in the process of history, depends on what ideas implicitly – even if he doesn't want to speak out about it – he has about the aim or meaning of that process."[46] Quoting Isaiah Berlin's assertion that reconstructing the past is necessary but not enough, Scholem acknowledges that "philosophical prestructures" govern every historian's decisions and intuitions about the "character of history." He reflects with candor on his own choices, namely to see Jewish history as a living process rather than something defined by dogmatic formulas, and to focus on previously neglected chapters of Jewish history.[47] By Scholem's admission, these "prestructures" would inform the selection, ordering and implied causal relationship of the data within his historical narratives.[48]

What Scholem here admits to is far more pervasive than what Robert Alter describes as Scholem's "large imaginative interpretations of the texts he invokes and of their relation to their sundry historical settings."[49] More than mere interpretation of historical material, Scholem's notion of "philosophical prestructures" reflects the fundamental act of forming a historical narrative, akin to Hayden White's theory. White characterizes all narratives as requiring an organizational principle or order of meaning that bestows the elements of

45 Leo Baeck Institute, Perspectives of German-Jewish History, p. 43.

46 Gershom Scholem: On History and Philosophy of History, in: Naharaim, 5 (2011), p. 4.

47 Scholem, On History and Philosophy of History, pp. 6–7.

48 Yaacob Dweck's introduction to the 2016 edition of Scholem's *Sabbatai Sevi* offers an example of the impacts of Scholem's choices upon his historical account of the Sabbatian movement, from the pervasive commitment to seeing all developments in Jewish history as immanent, to his characterization of Sevi as mentally ill. (Yaacob Dweck: Introduction to the New Princeton Classics Edition, in: Gershom Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi. The Mystical Messiah 1626–1676, Princeton 2016, pp. xlvii–li).

49 Robert Alter: Foreword, in: Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, xv.

the narrative a significance that they do not possess as a "mere sequence."[50] He argues that the organizing framework of a historical narrative is inevitably a code of morality sanctioned by the authority that defines a culture or social group; and that events are selected and ranked in relationship to the group, with the resultant narrative functioning as an illustration of the ideology or "moral universe" of the group that orients it.[51]

Whilst Scholem's admissions of his "philosophical prestructures" does not cite his Zionist ideology in a way that would fully satisfy White's theory about the orientation of narratives, in these conferences he admits to the tensions that ultimately arise between his claim to objective scholarship and his ideological positions. Suggesting that this is a ubiquitous phenomenon, Scholem argues that "every historian" tries to avoid acknowledging the intrusion of their own "pre-structures," and "in a way poses, as an objective man – 'objective' meaning he tries to do his best in his critique of tradition, which is the historian's business: the lighting up of the field of tradition, legend, myth."[52] Scholem's rare admissions of the impact of his ideological commitments upon his scholarship fuel criticisms such as those of Kurzweil and Schweid. In two further important essays Scholem attempts to escape or minimize the implications of these tensions by reflecting upon the social role of the scholar within the Jewish community.

In the 1946 lecture "Memory and Utopia in Jewish History," Scholem argues that whilst barriers to scholarly objectivity are inevitable, it is the duty of the scholar to resist them. Through delineating the paradigm of "historical memory," Scholem strictly identifies the only domains where an ideological coloring of history is acceptable. "Historical memory" is the subjectively formed individual conception of history, built from the "symbols" of historical data, which happen to have been arbitrarily retained, perceived "as worthy of remembering" or entered the consciousness involuntarily. These are "crystallized" into a memory under the influence of the remembering agent's values and hopes for the future; a process once again reminiscent of White's theory of the narrative structure of historiography.[53] Any "crystallization" of histor-

50 Hayden White: The Content of the Form. Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation, Baltimore 1987, p. 5.

51 White, The Content of the Form, pp. 10; 21.

52 Scholem, On History and Philosophy of History, p. 4.

53 Gershom Scholem: Memory and Utopia in Jewish History, in: Scholem, On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism, pp. 156–157.

ical memory is always just one of many possibilities, formed by an ideologically motivated mixture of remembering and forgetting. Scholem deems this process acceptable and productive for the individual as they relate to the past.

Scholem cannot accept such a subjective construction of historical memories on the part of the scholar, however. Despite the inevitable subjectivity that arises from the contingencies of time, place, and ideology, for Scholem, scholars have a duty to resist subjectivism: "the great danger is tendentiousness of choice – against which the only safeguard is the desire for truth." Such a desire for truth motivates the scholar's attempts to accurately apprehend the whole of Jewish history, a task that Scholem deems impossible but necessary: "man needs to seek truth even though he knows that it is far beyond him [...] for even if he makes full use of everything, he can only write from the givens of his time and from its memories."[54] This refuses to award any value to the subjective narrative role of the historian, whose work is deemed valuable only in so far as it resists the subjective tendency. Scholars such as Myers reflect on the impossibility of this notion, describing the historian's role as an inevitably "existential task," and historiography "from the Wissenschaft generation until the present" as having "served as nothing less than a literary act of Jewish affirmation and self-identification." Yet crucially for Scholem, the historian's work was to enable Jewish affirmation and self-identification in others, by seeking to de-subjectivize the historical symbols they bequeathed.[55]

Scholem develops his demarcation of realms in a talk several decades later, "On Education for Judaism" (1971). This discusses the obligations of educators to inspire a living connection between students and the Jewish past, by providing historical material from which they could form historical memories. Describing how each generation of Jews interprets and defines Judaism for itself, Scholem notes that the ways that future generations will do this cannot be anticipated. His commitment to "religious anarchy" informs his definition of the responsibility of one generation as merely to "arouse in the next generation a sense of understanding and of general identification with the great heritage of the generations," so that it can "take from it that which speaks to its heart."[56]

54 Scholem, Memory and Utopia, p. 159.

55 Myers, The Scholem-Kurzweil Debate, p. 279.

56 Gershom Scholem: On Education for Judaism, in: Scholem, On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism, p. 84. Benjamin Lazier argues that the most significant contribution of Scholem's early

Withholding chapters of the past, as earlier *Wissenschaft* scholars had done, ran the grave risk of inhibiting future Jewish communities from finding parts of their history to which they could relate. Describing the "severance of the living tie with the heritage of the generations" as "educational murder,"[57] Scholem continues, reflecting on the consequences of inhibiting the accessibility of the past to future generations:

> "A people that destroys its living feeling that it is bound up with the continuity of its existence and its historical reality, the heritage of the generations – such a people will disappear. I believe in the future of our people. However, a future built upon a severance from this tradition is tantamount to handing down a death sentence on the people."[58]

Scholem invokes several different roles in the process of sponsoring renewed engagement with the Jewish past. Delineating the scholar as the provider of historical data, he defines himself in this role, stating several times that he is not a teacher, but rather "a teacher of future teachers at the Hebrew University," with the duty "to explain known or unknown phenomena."[59] Teachers were, by contrast, to model an example of a subjectively determined living relationship with the past, but not to impose it upon their students.[60]

The distinction between scholar and teacher is key for Scholem for two reasons. Firstly, in order to maintain his claim that scholarship could sponsor true "religious anarchism," Scholem could not define the role of the historian as anything other than to produce objective historical accounts. To acknowledge that historians impose a narrative shape onto history that might impinge upon the audience's formation of their own individual historical memories would be to concede that every historian commits at least a degree

research into Sabbatianism was validating new chapters of history as grounds for Jewish identity formation by, for the first time, "describing heresy as a mode of Jewish self-assertion." Benjamin Lazier: God Interrupted. Heresy and the European Imagination Between the World Wars, Princeton 2008, p. 144.

57 Scholem, On Education, p. 85. This resonates with Scholem's description of earlier *Wissenschaft* as "historical suicide," in: Scholem, Modern Jewish Studies, p. 56.

58 Scholem, On Education, pp. 91–92.

59 Scholem, On Education, p. 81.

60 Scholem's division between scholar and teacher reflects a further criticism of earlier *Wissenschaft*, by rejecting the vision of early scholars such as Zunz for "emancipation and scholarship" to become "the fountainhead of morality" that would be directly disseminated through educational institutions; see Leopold Zunz: Scholarship and Emancipation, in: Paul Mendes-Flohr / Jehuda Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World. A Documentary History, New York 2011, p. 255.

of "educational murder." Scholem thus relegates the task of making subjective selections from history for educational purposes to the teacher, naming this as simply a model of the process that each student is to undertake. Secondly, to acknowledge that the historian's role was influenced by subjectivities and choices would be to admit that the failings of nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft* scholars were inevitable. By defining his own mode of scholarship so heavily through critical contrast to the ideologically colored practices of his predecessors, Scholem is almost always unable or unwilling to acknowledge the ideological choices that he has himself made, as he does in his exceptional contributions at the 1974 Hebrew University conference.

5. Concluding Remarks

Although by Scholem's own occasional admissions the notion of scholarly objectivity was impossible, it was also impossible for him not to call for it. Scholem defines the goal of scholarship as to use objective inquiry to reveal a historical vitality that could be engaged by individual Jews in a "religiously anarchic" manner as they developed their historical memories and Jewish identities. This recalls the tension that arises between his commitment to both scholarly objectivity and the "prestructure" of viewing Jewish history in a certain way, which marked both his criticisms of past *Wissenschaft* and his ambitions for Zionist scholarship to fulfill its latent potential. Both the choices that Scholem admitted to in 1974 and the inherent impossibility of the scholar escaping the contingencies of their time and place challenge the notion that his, or any, scholarship could be objective. Despite moments where Scholem alludes to the contradictions in his position, his scheme of the division between scholar and teacher represents an attempt to, if not deny, then resist the problems arising from the impossibility of the scholar's task. By demanding that scholarship always strive towards objectivity, and defining the realm of the teacher and student as the only domain in which subjectivity could play a valuable role, Scholem attempts to avoid letting subjective conclusions attain a damaging normative status, by displacing the subjective process of forming "historical memory" out of the scholar's domain. This artificial distinction was a response to the looming threat of "educational murder," and represents a logical outcome of Scholem's commitment to multiple positions that entailed contradictory implications.

Book Reviews

Ismar Schorsch: Leopold Zunz. Creativity in Adversity. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2016. 329 S., 54.00 €

Leopold Zunz (1794–1886) was a major figure in the evolvement of scholarship on Judaism as an academic field, as well as a crusader for Jewish equality in Germany of the 1810s-1850s. His life and work merit attention and Ismar Schorsch, former chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and a veteran historian of German Jewish scholarship, has taken upon himself to write an intellectual biography of this early pioneer of Jewish studies.

Lipmann (later Leopold) Zunz was born in 1794 in Detmold. Orphaned in a young age, he was sent to the Samson Free School in Wolfenbuettel, where the director, Samuel Ehrenberg, took him under his wings. Zunz proved to be a prodigy, mastering mathematics, classical and modern languages, and Jewish texts. Completing his *Abitur,* he proceeded to the University of Berlin shortly after it opened its doors in 1811. While providing unprecedented opportunities to young aspiring Jews to study and expend, Berlin's political and cultural atmosphere also presented serious challenges. Contextualizing Zunz progress, Schorsch points out that Jews were increasingly moving from the periphery to the center of German economy and culture, acculturating and hoping for full integration into the German polity. However, they did not enjoy full civil rights, and the Prussian government revoked, during the reaction that came about in the aftermath of Napoleon's defeat and the Congress of Vienna, even the partial emancipation that the edict of 1812 had offered Jews.

Jewish intellectuals, like Zunz, found it impossible to gain a foothold in academia, which, being part of the state apparatus, was closed to Jews. A number of Zunz' friends opted for conversion to Christianity, a move that helped secure positions in academia, the professions, or state bureaucracy. Zunz rejected that option and chose instead to remain in the Jewish fold and devote his energy and talents to advance the position of Jews and Judaism in German society and culture. Schorsch's thesis highlights, very convincingly, the connections between Zunz's struggles in the political, cultural and professional fronts and his scholarly and literary endeavors. While active in public struggles for civil reform, Zunz's contribution was mostly in the realm of scholarship, which, he believed, could combat prejudice, and transform the image of Judaism among Christian readers. A critical and even-handed research, which utilizes the latest academic tools, Zunz and his comrades hoped,

would present the richness and creativity of post-biblical Judaism and convince Christian thinkers that Judaism was a legitimate community of faith, whose members were worthy of trust and respect.

Together with a handful of other young Jewish university graduates, Zunz founded, in 1819, the 'Society for the Critical Study of the Jews' (Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden). Although it disbanded merely a few years later, the pioneering group provided a beginning for the larger and more enduring movement of Wissenschaft des Judentums that set the stage for the creation of Jewish Studies as a field of academic inquiry. Zunz himself published prolifically on important aspects of Jewish literature, such as *Piyyut*, and was involved with numerous educational and literary projects.

Schorsch writes about Zunz's endeavors with abundant admiration, and his book is a labor of love. Schorsch identifies with Zunz and sees in him a forerunner of Solomon Schechter, who arrived in New York from England in the early twentieth century to re-create the Jewish Theological Seminary as a renowned center of Jewish scholarship. He makes the connection between Zunz and Schechter explicit in the epilog, where the author asserts that: "Emblematic of the explosion of new knowledge ignited by Zunz is the iconic stage photograph of Solomon Schechter pouring over the hoard of manuscripts in Cambridge…" (p. 240). A scion of the Historical School, Schorsch also applauds Zunz's decision not to follow in the path of increasing reforms in German Judaism, and to remain close to tradition. The book is infused with sentences conveying the admiration of the biographer to the object of his inquiry. In discussing Zunz's publication *On History and Literature*, Schorsch writes that "The originality and richness of Zunz's book demands and deserves multiple readings" (p. 137). In discussing Zunz's appeal for Jewish educational efforts in Berlin, the author claims that "not only was this appeal infused with common sense, but also filled with intensive conviction" (p. 35).

Some readers might find Schorsch's evaluation of Zunz's achievements to be a trifle too laudatory. However, the biography serves a purpose, reminding students of Jewish history, as well as the larger public, of the contributions of the early masters of Jewish research in Germany to both the civil and academic realms. His work points out that Zunz and his comrades militated, via high quality academic publications, for respect and appreciation on the part of Germans towards the Jewish tradition and its literary creativity. Lack of gratitude towards the early pioneers of Jewish scholarship has been endemic. Schorsch

relates, at times in a cursory manner, to some of the defamations. While many Christian scholars either ignored, or thought little of, the emerging movement of Jewish academic inquiry, demeaning attitudes also came from Jewish quarters. Orthodox and Zionists have often regarded this brave and gifted group of scholars with contempt, and presenting them, and the culture they had represented, as turning their backs on their heritage. In recent decades, a number of scholars have re-evaluated the writings and contributions of the early masters of Jewish scholarship. One such seminal work has been Susannah Heschel's groundbreaking study of Abraham Geiger and in which Heschel demonstrated both Geiger's outstanding intellectual accomplishments and his proud Jewish stand. Ismar Schorsch's biography of Leopold Zunz follows in that vein, making an impressive contributing to the new wave of revisionist history. Scholars and students of Jewish culture and history should welcome the new study as an important addition to a more even history of Judaism in the modern world, as they will learn a great deal from it.

Yaakov Ariel, Chapel Hill

Amir Engel: Gershom Scholem. An Intellectual Biography, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2017. 240 S., 40.99 €.
Noam Zadoff: Gershom Scholem. From Berlin to Jerusalem and Back, Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2018. 344 S., 37.99 €.

Gershom Scholem gehört immer noch zu den wichtigsten deutsch-jüdischen Intellektuellen des 20. Jahrhunderts. Der Begründer der modernen Erforschung der Kabbalah, der engagierte und kritische Zionist, der Zeitgenosse und Freund Walter Benjamins und vieler anderer Intellektueller war eine komplexe Gestalt. Die in den letzten Jahrzehnten erschiene Brief- und Tagebuchbände haben sein Bild noch reicher und vielschichtiger gemacht – und offensichtlich attraktiv für Biographen. Fast zeitgleich sind nun zwei Biographien Scholems erschienen, die sich an dieser Gestalt und dem sie umgebenden Nimbus abarbeiten: Amir Engels *Gershom Scholem. An Intellectual Biography* und Noam Zadoffs *Gershom Scholem. From Berlin to Jerusalem and Back.*

Engels Buch, als Dissertation am German Department der Stanford University entstanden, ist dezidiert skeptisch und möchte eine „demystified figure of Scholem" (S. 200 f.) präsentieren bzw. einen „disenchanted view" (S. 202) auf seinen Gegenstand werfen. Einleitend (Kap. 1) betont Engel, es sei „important

to carefully distinguish between what Scholem said he wanted to do and what he actually did" (S. 15): Nicht die wenigen ‚metaphysischen' Andeutungen Scholems sollen im Zentrum stehen, sondern sein umfassendes historiographisches Werk. Zugleich müsse man Scholem als „poet" (S. 18) lesen, dessen Werk wie „fiction" (S. 19) eine Sinnstiftung eigenen Rechts sei. Was zunächst vage klingt, charakterisiert das Vorgehen der Biographie, die „aims to place Scholem's history in the context of his life story, and, in turn, to put his life story in his own historical context" (S. 22): Scholems Lebensgeschichte und seine Forschung seien Teile einer einzigen Geschichte, die in drei Schritten erzählt wird.

Die Darstellung beginnt (Kap. 2) mit Scholems Jugendzeit, der Abwendung von seiner assimilierten Herkunft, der Auseinandersetzung mit Jugendbewegung, Sozialismus und Weltkrieg etc. Im Zentrum steht dabei das Interesse für den Mythos – hier wird weit ausgeholt über „the idea of myth in Germany" (S. 47) bis zum deutschen Idealismus, überraschenderweise aber kaum auf die viel spezifischeren Überlegungen zur Kritik des Mythos, zu Sprache und Tradierbarkeit eingegangen, die der junge Scholem in seinen Tagebüchern entwickelt und die auch in den späteren Texten oft zitiert werden. Im Werk entspricht dieser frühen Sehnsucht nach Mythos den – allerdings erheblich späteren – Forschungen zum Mythos in der Kabbalah (Kap. 3). Besonders die lurianische Kabbalah lasse sich unter Rekurs auf neuere Forschung vor allem als Mythos der Gemeinschaft lesen, nach dem der junge Scholem gesucht hatte: „Scholem's study of the lurinanic myth of exile brings his mature work full circle by fulfilling his fanciful youthful aspirations" (S. 64). So erkläre etwa die Lehre vom Tikkun die Juden zu „active aprticipants in the formation of World history" und transformiere sie daher „into a nation in the modern sense" (S. 75).

Das folgende Kapitelpaar behandelt die biographische und politische Krise, die mit Scholems Einwanderung nach Palästina einhergeht. Engel zeigt (Kap. 4), dass Scholem „relatively little in common with most members of the Yishuv" (S. 107) hatte und dass sein politisches Engagement im Brit Schalom „marginal" (S. 108) geblieben sei. Letztlich sei er Außenseiter geblieben: „he had felt more at home in exile than he felt now in Zion" (S. 115). Seine Lebensgeschichte sei daher viel weniger teleologisch verlaufen als er im Rückblick behauptete: „Scholem had lost not merely his influence, but, more important, that which faciliates influence, namely, a sense of belonging. His thoughts

and ideas had lost their relevance." (S. 114) Im Werk entspreche dieser Krisenerfahrung und die damit einhergehende Kritik des Zionismus der Auseinandersetzung mit dem häretischen Messianismus der Sabbatianischen Bewegung (Kap. 5), „arguably his most provocative and compelling work" (S. 182). Engel zeichnet – erneut mit Rekurs auf die jüngere Forschung – nach, dass sich Scholems Auffassung des Sabbatianismus durchaus wandelte und jeweils verstehen lasse als „reflection on the political situation in Palestine and his disappointment at what he had discovered there", aber auch als Versuch „to describe the roots of the spiritual confusion that he himself had experienced as a young man" (S. 128).

Diese beiden Kapitel sind der stärkste Teil von Engels Buch, weil hier Leben und Werk wirklich koinzidieren. Demgegenüber ist den späteren Jahren Scholems, in die der Großteil seines wissenschaftlichen Werkes fällt, nur ein einziges eher kurzes Kapitel (Kap. 6) gewidmet. Scholem äußert sich später nur selten über seine Absichten und Motive, aber trotz dieses „lack of hard and clear evidence" (S. 169) meint Engel hier einen „turn form the fringe to the mainstream of Zionist thinking" (S. 168) ausmachen zu können. Schon in den dreißiger Jahren habe es einen „silent withdrawal" (S. 180) Scholems aus der politischen Aktivität gegeben, später zeige etwa die Kontroverse mit Arendt, „that he himself has changed and has now, after so many years of bitter struggle, become an insider" (S. 190). Das bleibt nicht nur aufgrund der schematischen Gegenüberstellung (Insider vs. Outsider) wenig überzeugend, sondern konzentriert sich leider auch auf allzu wenige (und bekannte) Diskussionen wie die mit Arendt und lässt den Leser neugierig zurück, wie denn Scholems intellektuelle Karriere nach dem Krieg verlaufen ist.

Glücklicherweise liegt genau auf dieser Epoche das Schwergewicht von Noam Zadoffs *Gershom Scholem. From Berlin and Jerusalem and back,* als Dissertation an der Universität Jerusalem entstanden und bereits 2014 auf Hebräisch erschienen. Der Untertitel drückt präzise das Problem aus, dass jede Biographie von Scholem hat: Sie muss sich mit der mächtigen Selbstdeutung auseinandersetzen, die Scholem in seiner Autobiographie eingeführt hatte. Zadoff setzt konsequenterweise dort ein, wo die Autobiographie endete, bei der Ankunft in Jerusalem, und erzählt vor allem sein Leben seit den zwanziger Jahren, einzelne Exkurse greifen weiter zurück. So stellt das erste Kapitel Scholems Immigration dar, die äußerlich problemlos verlaufen sei, es schildet den Einfluss von Chaim Nachman Bialiks Sammelprojekten und

Scholems Etablierung der Kabbalah als Forschungsthema am Beispiel seiner Mitarbeit an der Jakob Klatzkin herausgegebenen *Encylopedia Judaica*, ohne freilich auf den Inhalt dieser Forschungen näher einzugehen, so dass die Behauptung „the ultimate goal of research in Kabbalahh is of metaphysical or religious value" (S. 64) eher blass bleibt. Die folgenden Kapitel stellen Scholems politisches und religiöses Engagement in der Zwischenkriegszeit dar, auch hier wird detailliert das Engagement im Brit Schalom dargestellt, der „marginal in the Zionist consensus" geblieben sei (S. 49) und von dem sich Scholem ab 1929 zurückgezogen habe. Seine religiösen Ansichten entwickelt Scholem in Verbindung mit dem Ha-Ol (Joch) Kreis, wobei hier 1939 einen „certain turning point" (S. 67) darstellt, nachdem auch sein Interesse an religiösen Fragen nachgelassen habe.

In Zadoffs Geschichte liegt die eigentliche Peripetie allerdings später: Der zweite Teil des Buches, mit „Despair" überschrieben, behandelt die Reaktion auf den Holocaust. Zwar gebe es von Scholem „no direct public reference to the subject", aber das „does not indicate that it had little influence on him –perhaps just the opposite" (S. 151). Zadoff zeigt (Kap. 4), dass Scholem zwar – anders als manche Zeitgenossen – dem Zionismus nicht vorwirft, zu wenig auf den Holocaust reagiert zu haben, dass dieser aber jenen grundsätzlich problematisch machte, weil die intendierte Rettung des Judentums zu spät kam. Das erkläre den heftigen Pessimismus der Kriegszeit, der etwa seine Kritik der Wissenschaft des Judentums präge: „the condition of Jewish studies and its direction can be seen as a metonymy for the situation and direction of Judaism". (S. 91). Im Zentrum dieses Teils und des ganzen Buches stehen die beiden Kapitel über die Europareise, die Scholem 1946 im Rahmen der Versuche der Restitution jüdischer Bibliotheken unternimmt. In diesem auf intensiven Archivrecherchen und der Lektüre von Scholems Tagebuch basierenden Teil – mit fast sechzig Seiten zugleich der umfangreichste des Buches – verringert sich die Distanz der Erzählung extrem und wir bekommen eine fast tägliche Chronik der der verschiedenen administrativen, politischen und juristischen Probleme sowie der persönlichen Erlebnisse: das Ringen der verschiedenen jüdischen Institutionen um die Bücher, Scholems Eindrücken vom zerstörten Europa und von seiner alten Heimat, seine Begegnung mit den überlebenden Juden, seine Verzweiflung, zu spät zu kommen und nichts mehr ausrichten zu können: „These books could also easily become a symbol of the surviving Jews of Europe, who – like the books – became both a symbol of the hope for

the continuity of Jewish existence and a monument to the millions who had been annihilated." (S. 148)

Die Tatsache, dass „the events oft the Holocaust touched very intimate and vital level's of Scholem's soul" (S. 151) bestimmt auch den dritten Teil des Buches. Denn die bittere Gleichzeitigkeit der Vernichtung der europäischen Juden und der Gewinnung der Staatlichkeit „paradoxically symbolized the beginnng of a process of return to Europe" (S. 153) für Scholem. Zadoff analysiert diese Rückkehr – das „and back" des Untertitels – an verschiedenen Beispielen: Die Eranos-Tagungen in der Schweiz (Kap. 7), an denen Scholem trotz einiger Ambivalenzen regelmäßig teilnahm fungierten für ihn als „intermediary Space" (S. 187) und als „personal intellecutal refuge" (S. 188). Auch hier spielt die Auseinandersetzung mit Arendt eine wichtige Rolle, wobei allerdings eher schematisch Scholems und Arendts Ansichten als „emotional and tribal" vs. „rational grounds" (S. 191) einander gegenübergestellt werden. Besonders wichtig ist Zadoff die vorsichtige und langsame Wiederannäherung an Deutschland (Kap. 8), die mit Scholems bekannter Zurückweisung der Rede vom Dialog beginnt, bald aber selbst von Brücken spricht: „Scholem suggests that academic research in Jewish history can create an opportunity to build a bridge over the chasm and renew relations between Jews and Germans" (S. 208). Insbesondere manifestiere sich die Annäherung in der Zusammenarbeit mit Adorno an der Herausgabe Benjamins, dessen Werk Zadoff eigenartig verkürzt als durch „Nostalgia and longing for the German empire" (S. 221) geprägt sieht. Jedenfalls wird überzeugend gezeigt, wie Scholem im Laufe der siebziger Jahre in Deutschland zu einer zentralen Gestalt wird: „The combination of these three factors —that Scholem was a German Jew, a Berliner, and an Israeli – was unique" (S. 244). Der Schluss des Buches schildet detailliert Scholems letzten Aufenthalt im Wissenschaftskolleg kurz vor seinem Tod, den Zadoff interpretiert als „effort to tie together the ends of his life and create a biographical continuity in gestures toward his childhood, whose scenery had been lost" (S. 231). Allerdings scheint diese Lektüre eher der Dramaturgie der Erzählung als den Quellen geschuldet zu sein – wie überhaupt die fraglich erscheint, ob man das Leitmotiv der Nostalgie (vgl. zu ihrer Theorie S. 186 ff.) dieses dritten Teils wirklich als Rückkehr beschreiben kann. Sicherlich: Scholem hatte viel von Berlin und viel von Jerusalem, aber so wenig es hier eine klare Bewegung von dort nach hier gab, so wenig eine umgekehrte, letztlich bleibt das „and back" eben doch zu sehr dem Modell verhaftet.

Die beiden Bücher unterscheiden sich also inhaltlich, in ihrem Vorgehen und in ihrer Dramaturgie deutlich und stellen gerade dadurch die Frage, was eine Biographie, zumal eine intellektuelle, leisten kann. Engels Buch präsentiert wenig neues Material, umfasst aber Leben und Werk in einer klaren Konstruktion von „two transitions – from Berlin to Jerusalem and from fringe to mainstream" (S. 203), die allerdings nur in der Mitte wirklich überzeugt, wo Leben und Werk konform gehen. Als Geschichte einer Entzauberung präsentiert Engel einen Scholem, der nach einer heftigen Krise schließlich normal wird und – gewissermaßen verspätet – dann doch in Jerusalem ankommt. Zadoffs Scholem ist fast diametral entgegengesetzt, wird nicht normal, sondern wendet sich zunehmend vom politischen Kurs Israels ab: „This attitude developed as he felt a growing closeness to Germany and Berlin, which began to take shape for him as the place of Jewish memory" (S. 257). Zadoffs Biographie ist auch methodisch ganz anders ausgerichtet, es erhellt viele bisher wenig bekannte Kontexte und auch Quellen wie die Tagebücher des späten Scholem. Allerdings fehlen dabei das Werk und die Jugendgeschichte fast komplett und die Darstellung des Höhepunkts, der Europareise 1946, ist nicht wirklich mit dem Rest des Lebens ausbalanciert wie auch die Leitfigur der Nostalgie überzeichnet erscheint. Welches Buch man zur Hand nimmt, wird von den Interessen abhängen; deutlich machen beide, dass Scholems Leben und Denken noch nicht auserzählt ist und noch einiges birgt.

Daniel Weidner, Berlin

Lorenz Jäger: Walter Benjamin. Das Leben eines Unvollendeten, Berlin: Rowohlt 2017, 396 S., 26.95 €.

Es gebe zwei Arten der Biographik, behauptete Walter Benjamin einmal: Während die „klassische" ihre „Helden bildlich, oft vorbildlich, immer aber dem Leser durch und durch äußerlich" hinstelle, suchten die Vertreter einer „neueren Modebiographik" ihren Helden „dem Leser und vor allem sich, dem Autor, innerlich zu machen." Ein solcher Autor verleibe sich seinen Helden ein, „er saugt ihn aus, es bleibt nichts."[1] Hinter diesem Gegensatzpaar verbergen sich

[1] Walter Benjamin: Zur Kritik von Ludwig, Strachey, Maurois etc. (fr 118), in: ders., Gesammelte Schriften, Bd. VI, hrsg. v. Rolf Tiedemann und Hermann Schweppenhäuser, Frankfurt am Main 1985, S. 143–144.

zwei Physiognomien, die Benjamin seit Ende der 1920er Jahre immer wieder beschäftigt haben: Der Erzähler, der Distanz zu seinem Stoff wahrt, und der Romancier, dessen Metier die Einfühlung ist. Mit diesen poetologischen Kategorien Benjamins ist sein Biograph Lorenz Jäger vertraut, beschränken lässt er sich von Benjamins Parteiname für die Erzählung und gegen den psychologisierenden Roman indes nicht, Lorenz Jäger ist beides, Erzähler und Romancier.

So wird Benjamins Leben in Jägers Darstellung einerseits paradigmatisch für eine ganze Generation deutsch-jüdischer Intellektueller – Kindheit im Kaiserreich, Begeisterung und Ernüchterung des Ersten Weltkrieges, die Avantgarden der Weimarer Republik, Vertreibung, Exil, Internierung, schließlich der Freitod. Mit großer Sorgfalt und beeindruckender Kennerschaft erschließt Jäger das intellektuelle Umfeld, in dem sich Benjamin bewegte, zeigt ihn nicht als Einzelnen, sondern als Zeitgenossen, nicht als unantastbaren Geisteshelden, sondern als einen „Unvollendeten", wie der Untertitel von Jägers Biographie lautet. „Wie geht es weiter?", möchte man am Ende mit Benjamin fragen. Oder mit Jäger: Wie hätte es für Benjamins Denken weitergehen können, wie wäre „Benjamins geistige Existenz vorzustellen […], wenn er sich nicht das Leben genommen hätte" (S. 330). Gerade dieser Abbruch seines Denkens, die Fragment-gebliebene Passagenarbeit, die nicht für die Veröffentlichung gedachten *Thesen über den Begriff der Geschichte*, das Rätsel, das seine genauen Todesumstände und den Verbleib der mysteriösen Reisetasche mit seinen Papieren umgibt, macht einen Teil der Strahlkraft aus, die Benjamin bis heute umgibt und die eine Beschäftigung mit ihm immer wieder produktiv werden lässt.

Andererseits gibt es bei Jäger diesen Willen zur romanhaften Rundung: Aus dem frühsten Text, der von Benjamin überliefert ist, – einer kleinen Erzählung des etwa Vierzehnjährigen, die das Blaubart-Motiv variiert – extrahiert Jäger Themen und Gedankenkonstellationen, die ihm auf Positionen hinauszuweisen scheinen, die Benjamin Jahrzehnte später entwickelte. Noch in den berühmten *Thesen über den Begriff der Geschichte*, die Benjamin kurz vor seinem Tod im französischen Exil verfasste, begegne, so Jäger, „uns zum letzten Mal das Mädchen, das wir im ersten Kapitel kennengelernt hatten" (ebd.). Die Beschreibung von Benjamins Flucht über die Pyrenäen schließlich stellt Jäger in die Nähe eines weiteren sehr frühen Textes, der *Metaphysik der Jugend*, dessen Formulierungen Benjamins Weg durch das Gebirge prophetisch zu antizipieren scheinen.

Jägers Vorgehen ist nicht unbenjaminisch, aber vielleicht sollte man den Vergleich mit Benjamins poetologischen Physiognomien auch nicht überstrapazieren. Ergiebiger als zu fragen, was für ein Autor Lorenz Jäger ist, scheint es ohnehin, zu fragen, was für ein Leser er ist. Denn dies ist eine der großen Stärken seines Buches: Mit Jägers akribischer, kritischer, manchmal eigenwilliger Lektüre erschließen sich viele Texte Benjamins neu, erschließen sich vor allem unerwartete Verbindungslinien zwischen dessen oft disparat wirkenden Arbeitsbereichen. Auf Benjamins weitreichende Theorie der Geste etwa macht Jäger aufmerksam, die nicht nur dessen Auseinandersetzung mit Brecht und Kafka bestimmte, sondern die selbst, wie Jäger anhand des Protokolls eines Drogenversuchs Benjamins zeigt, „aus Körperbewegungen" erwachsen sei, „gewissermaßen ihren Abdruck" (S. 261) nehme.

Generell richtet Jäger sein Interesse auf die persönlichen Erfahrungen und Begegnungen, aus denen Benjamin Theoretisches entwickelt. Zahlreiche intellektuelle Weggefährten kommen zu Wort, Jäger hat sich in die Gedankenwelt eines Oskar Goldberg (dem Begründer der Philosophischen Gruppe, dessen Hauptwerk *Die Wirklichkeit der Hebräer* 1925 erschienen war) ebenso eingearbeitet wie in die Theosophie Erich Gutkinds, er zeigt sich als Kenner Florens Christian Rangs, der avantgardistischen Experimente Bert Brechts – und lässt all die heterogenen Einflüsse, zwischen denen Benjamin sich bewegte, in seiner Lektüre verschmelzen.

Bei aller Breite der Bezüge ist Jäger allerdings kein Leser, der sich selbst zurücknimmt. (Die zahlreichen Exklamationen sind hierfür Beleg genug.) Als Weg einer Entzauberung stellt sich ihm Benjamins persönliche und intellektuelle Entwicklung dar, die er bedauernd kommentiert. „Man hätte ihn [Benjamin] sich gut mit einem sehr hohen Hut und mit einer Art von magischem Stab vorstellen können" (S. 136), so zitiert er Theodor W. Adornos Beschreibung von Benjamins Äußerem. Doch spätestens mit den 1930er Jahren diagnostiziert Jäger eine Übermacht der „Entzauberungsbegriffe" (S. 304), der „Gewaltmetaphern" (S. 305): „Nichts mehr von Magie!" (S. 307) Als „fast zwanghaft" (S. 306), „maschinenhaft" (S. 308) erscheint ihm Benjamins Denken nun, „eingeschrumpft, „ausgekühlt" (S. 306). Jäger arbeitet auf solche Zuspitzungen hin, er ist deutlich und streitbar in seinen Urteilen. Das macht sein Buch äußerst anregend. Auch wenn man ihm nicht in allem folgen mag - er verleibt sich seinen Helden gewiss nicht ein, er saugt ihn nicht aus.

Sophia Ebert, Oldenburg

Ellen D. Haskell: Mystical Resistance. Uncovering the Zohar's Conversations with Christianity, New York: Oxford University Press 2016, 235 S., 94.99 €.

Der *Zohar* ([Buch des] Glanzes) ist eines der faszinierendsten Zeugnisse der im 13. Jahrhundert in Südfrankreich und Nordspanien aufblühenden Kabbalah. Das liegt nicht zuletzt an dem außerordentlichen Erzählrahmen dieses mystischen Kommentars zum Pentateuch, der die Leser in einen Kreis von zehn Kabbalisten der römischen Provinz Palästina im zweiten nachchristlichen Jahrhundert führt. Neben anderen Indizien war es vor allem das eigenwillige, um Authentizität werbende Kunstaramäisch, das die durchaus nicht *tannaitische* Autorengruppe entlarvte und zum Gegenstand der Mittelalterforschung machte.

Ellen D. Haskell schlägt in ihrer Studie *Mystical Resistance. Uncovering the Zohar's Conversations with Christianity* nun eine Lesart des kabbalistischen Werkes vor, die seinem pseudepigraphischen Charakter eine neue, in der Forschung bislang kaum wahrgenommene sozialpolitische Dimension verleiht. Die nach Art eines rabbinischen Midrasch vorgeführten Narrative des einflussreichen „mystischen Romans" (Scholem) sollten im Kontext ihres tatsächlichen regionalen und zeitlichen Entstehungsraums betrachtet und als eine Art verschlüsseltes Transkript des extrem angespannten jüdisch-christlichen Verhältnisses im Nordspanien des 13. Jahrhunderts interpretiert werden. Massiver Antijudaismus innerhalb der spanischen Bevölkerung, missionarischer Eifer von Seiten der erstarkenden Bettelorden, Zwangsdisputationen und -predigten, gewalttätige Ausschreitungen gegen „Ungläubige" und Minderheiten sowie die allgegenwärtige Zensur der christlichen Machtträger sind nur einige Elemente, die Haskell als Ursache für die Entscheidung der Kabbalisten liest, ihre subversiven Ansichten zum Christentum in das harmlose Tarnkleid antiker Exegese zu hüllen. Die Abfassung des *Zohar* war dementsprechend ein versteckter Akt der Rebellion und des Widerstands – so die These Haskells –, der der jüdischen Leserschaft durch subtile Modifikationen bekannter Volkserzählungen die Schwäche des christlichen Glaubens vor Augen führen sollte.

Haskell beginnt ihre Argumentation mit einer Analyse der Rezeption des biblischen und rabbinischen Rachel-Stoffes im *Zohar*. Sie zeigt, wie sich die Rolle Rachels von der Stammmutter Israels, die bei der Geburt ihres zweiten Kindes tragischerweise verstarb, im *Zohar* zu einer theologischen Figur

entwickelt, deren Tod mit der Manifestation der göttlichen Präsenz in der Welt – der *Schechinah* – verknüpft wurde. Ihr Leiden und die Geburt Benjamins erscheinen nun als Teil eines göttlichen Plans, der die Vervollkommnung des Hauses Israel in *Malchut*, der untersten Sefira „Königreich", vorsieht. Mit diesem Kunstgriff, so Haskell, schufen die Kabbalisten einen Gegenentwurf zum christlichen Erlösungskonzept vom Himmelreich auf Erden, das nunmehr als „Königreich des Götzendienstes der Anderen" (S. 43) seiner messianischen Wahrhaftigkeit entkleidet ist. Nicht die Passion Christi, sondern der Leidenstod Rachels brachte das Göttliche in Form der *Schechinah* in die Welt; die *Schechinah* wirkt anders als das „Königreich des Götzendienstes" nicht nur in der Gegenwart, sondern bestand bereits lange vor der Entstehung des Christentums und wird in der Zukunft ganz Israel Erlösung bringen. Das jüdische Gesetz ist nicht etwa überholt, sondern essentieller Bestandteil des göttlichen Erlösungsplans.

Im zweiten Kapitel vertieft Haskell ihre Beobachtungen zur Verwendung der Begriffe „Königreich des Götzendienstes" und das „Andere", die im *Zohar* eng mit den antiken Synonymen für christliche Macht „Esau", „Edom" oder „Rom" verknüpft sind. Sie macht auf die Tatsache aufmerksam, dass der *Zohar* bei seiner Auffassung dieses „Anderen" offensichtlich auf mittelalterliche jüdische Polemiken gegen das Christentum wie beispielsweise den *Sefer Nestor ha-Komer* (Buch Nestors des Priesters, 9. Jhd.) oder Jakob ben Reuvens (12. Jhd.) *Milchamot ha-Schem* (Kriege des Herrn) zurückgreift, um zwischen den Zeilen Kritik am zeitgenössischen Christentum zu üben. Obwohl im *Zohar* nie explizit ausgesprochen, ist Haskell davon überzeugt, dass die Autoren mit der negativen Zeichnung dieser „anderen Seite" (S. 45) dem massiven Missionsdruck entgegenwirken und jüdische Apostaten verhindern wollten.

Das dritte und vierte Kapitel wendet sich der Rezeption des heidnischen Propheten Balaam bzw. Bileam im *Zohar* zu. Auch hier spricht Haskell von einer narrativen Dekonstruktion christlicher Lehren über Leben, Tod und Auferstehung Jesu, die in der Darstellung Bileams karikiert würden. Bileam erscheint im *Zohar* als Chiffre für Jesus, der als eine Art unheiliger Magier den dunklen Gegenpart des Moses darstellt. Die Assoziation des Bileam mit Jesus, dessen Anziehungskraft auf eine nur in dieser Welt wirkenden Magie beruht, hat eine lange Tradition im Judentum, die von Haskell leider nur am Rande genannt wird. Wie bereits frühere, von Haskell zwar erwähnte, aber nicht diskutierte Forschungen (Daniel Matt, Elliot Wolfson) darlegten, rezipierte der

Zohar diese Auslegungstradition. Allerdings eröffnet die Autorin eine neue Perspektive, da sie mittelalterliche Quellen zur Bileam-Rezeption wie beispielsweise den Midrasch *Numeri Rabbah* oder die polemische Schrift *Toledot Jeschu* (Geschichte Jesu) in ihre Analyse einbezieht und überzeugend darlegt, wie stark diese mehr oder weniger offen antichristlichen Polemiken als „thematisches Echo" (S. 80) im *Zohar* nachklingen. Irritierend ist die Behauptung Haskells, dass Bileam auch in der christlichen Tradition als Prototyp Jesu rezipiert wurde, auch wenn bei beiden der Esel als Fortbewegungsmittel eine gewisse Rolle spielt.

Das fünfte Kapitel beleuchtet die immense Wirkung der christlichen Kunst im öffentlichen Raum auf alle Bereiche der mittelalterlichen Gesellschaft – auch auf die jüdische Kultur. Das ikonographische Programm auf den Fassaden von Kathedralen, Kirchen und den Artefakten entlang der Pilgerrouten war auch an Nichtchristen adressiert. Haskell bezieht die monumentalen Außenreliefs christlicher Bauwerke Nordspaniens in ihre Betrachtung ein, um auf Parallelen zwischen der bildlichen Darstellung des Abendmahls sowie der Niederkunft des Heiligen Geistes in Gestalt einer Taube und der narrativen Darstellung ähnlicher Szenen innerhalb jüdischer Volkserzählungen im *Zohar* aufmerksam zu machen. Auch dies kann nach Ansicht der Autorin als eine subversive Form des Widerstands gegen das christliche Machtinstrument der Kunst gelesen werden.

Haskells Studie öffnet einen frischen Blick auf den *Zohar*, dessen Kontextualisierung in seinem intellektuellen und materialen Entstehungsumfeld eine neue Facette preisgibt, die sich die LeserInnen mit viel Hintergrundwissen erarbeiten muss. Die Arbeit basiert methodologisch u. a. auf den Thesen von James C. Scott und Leo Strauß zum Ausdruck subversiver Kritik unter großem politischen Druck. Darüber hinaus führt Haskell den Begriff der „inward acculturation" (S. 36) an, mit dem Ivan Marcus in seiner bahnbrechenden Studie *Rituals of Childhood* vor beinahe zwei Jahrzehnten als einer der Ersten die Auffassung von einem europäischen Judentum, das ein von seinen christlichen Nachbarn isoliertes kulturelles Eigenleben führte, in Frage stellte. Marcus versuchte damit, einen wesentlichen Unterschied zur Akkulturation der jüdischen Minderheit in der modernen Welt zu beschreiben. Bei einer nach innen gerichteten Akkulturation handelt es sich um einen subtilen Prozess des kulturellen Austauschs, der auf den ersten Blick nicht unbedingt sofort als ein solcher zutage tritt. Jüdische Gemeinschaften in der Diaspora – seien

sie nun Teil einer muslimischen oder christlichen Majoritätsgesellschaft – assimilierten sich Marcus zufolge nicht in die Umweltkultur. Sie gaben ihr jüdisches Erbe und damit ihre Gruppenidentität nicht auf, sondern transformierten zu manchen Zeiten „Christian themes and iconography, which they saw all around them every day, and fused them – often in inverted and parodic ways – with ancient Jewish customs and traditions."[2] Die Studie Haskells ist ein Beispiel dafür, dass sich diese Herangehensweise mit Blick auf die Kabbalah lohnt, selbst wenn damit sicherlich nur ein kleiner Mosaikstein aus dem komplexen Bild, das der *Zohar* in seiner theologischen, mystischen und nun auch politischen Vielfältigkeit abgibt, schärfer hervortritt.

Annett Martini, Berlin

William Hiscott. Saul Ascher. Berliner Aufklärer. Eine philosophiehistorische Darstellung. Hrsg. von Christoph Schulte und Marie Ch. Behrendt. Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag 2017. 797 S., 48.00 €.

Am 29. Januar 2013 brachte William Hiscott neun Kapitel seiner Dissertation über Saul Ascher ins Potsdamer Büro seines Doktorvaters Christoph Schulte. Das zehnte Kapitel, das sich der politischen Publizistik Aschers widmen sollte, und ein Teil des resümierenden Schlusskapitels fehlten noch. Hiscott konnte die Dissertation nicht mehr zu Ende schreiben; er verstarb zwei Tage später an einem Herzinfarkt. Christoph Schulte und Marie Ch. Behrendt ist es zu verdanken, dass das Manuskript lektoriert und korrigiert wurde und, mit einem hilfreichen Vorwort von Schulte versehen, 2017 als Buch mit nahezu 800 Druckseiten erscheinen konnte. Es handelt sich ohne Zweifel um die umfassendste und detaillierteste Aufarbeitung und Würdigung von Aschers essayistischem und belletristischem Werk, eingebettet in weit ausgreifende Darstellungen von gesellschaftspolitischen und philosophischen Entwicklungssträngen und Verästelungen der Aufklärung, aus der Aschers radikale Positionen hervorgingen. Auch in Bezug auf Aschers Biographie und die Geschichte seiner Familie, die Hiscott kenntnisreich in die Geschichte des Berliner Judentums seit der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts einbettet, hat der Band viel Neues zu bieten. Aschers essayistische Auseinandersetzung mit

[2] Ivan Marcus: Rituals of Childhood. Jewish Acculturation in Medieval Europe, New Haven 1996, p. 12.

der Todesfurcht (u. a. in den *Ephemeren*, 1797), die Hiscott auf eine ernsthafte Erkrankung zurückführt, ist in der Hinsicht besonders aufschlussreich. „Fast alles, was man überhaupt über Ascher und seinen intellektuellen Kontext wissen kann, ist hier aufgeschrieben, reflektiert und interpretiert." (S. 8) So lautet das Verdikt des Doktorvaters, dem man sich nur anschließen kann.

Wie schon Walter Grabs politisch ausgerichtete Darstellung von Aschers publizistischem Werdegang (1977) zeigen konnte,[3] war Ascher war vor allem ein engagierter Zeitgenosse, der die Diskurs- und Öffentlichkeitsethik der Aufklärung beim Wort nahm und sich mit Gusto und starken Worten in die brisantesten Debatten und Kontroversen seiner Zeit einmischte. Hiscotts Verdienst ist nicht zuletzt, in Aschers spekulativen Ausflügen zur gesellschaftlichen, ideellen, politischen und religiösen Geschichte und Zukunft Europas und hinter seiner bisweilen polemischen Journalistik und situationsbedingten Standpunktverschiebungen – das einzuräumen, tut seiner Essayistik keinen Abbruch – eine Folie konstanter Überzeugungen mit durchaus nachvollziehbaren Modifizierungen aufzuzeigen. Für Hiscott schrieb Ascher dabei in erster Linie als praktischer Philosoph. Vielleicht ließe sich zuspitzend sagen, dass sein stärkstes Interesse der politischen Philosophie galt, und dass er insbesondere mit seiner Revolutionstheorie, aber auch mit seinen Überlegungen zur Religionspolitik und mit seinen Analysen neuer Qualitäten des europäischen Antisemitismus zur methodischen Reflektion dessen beitrug, was wir heute als Politikwissenschaft betreiben. Hiscott zeigt, dass Aschers Analysen an Überlegungen zur Bestimmung des Menschen geknüpft sind, die weitgehend materialistisch orientiert sind, und dass er einem Kosmopolitismus verpflichtet bleibt, der im durchaus modernen Sinne pluralistisch und konstitutionell (zumindest in seiner mittleren Phase auch republikanisch) ausgerichtet ist. „Auf dieser Grundlage sucht Ascher den Weg für eine emanzipative Philosophie, für ein passendes Denken, für seine Projektion des aufgeklärten Menschen und Bürgers anno 1789." (S. 52)

Auch wenn Hiscott bedauert, dass er Aschers belletristische Arbeiten nur streifen und hauptsächlich in Bezug auf sein philosophisches Denken interpretieren konnte, handelt es sich m. W. dennoch um die umfassendste und detaillierteste Darstellung von Aschers literarischem Werk, wiederum

[3] Walter Grab: Saul Ascher, ein jüdisch-deutscher Spätaufklärer zwischen Revolution und Restauration, in: Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte, 6 (1977), S. 131–180.

vorbereitet und begleitet von einer umfassenden Verortung in der Geschichte des jüdischen Wegs zur Literatur. Mit den *Ephemeren* erschloss Ascher sich laut Hiscott neue publizistische Felder: die philosophische Unterhaltungsliteratur, die Essayistik und die Belletristik. Hiscott beobachtet, dass der Schreibstil sich dabei verändert: „Statt ernsthaft philosophisch, bisweilen polemisch und herausfordernd, sind die thematisch eklektischen Texte in den *Ephemeren* zumeist literarisch und humorvoll verfasst." (S. 523) Aschers *Orientalische Gemälde* (1802) bezeichnet Hiscott als Moralerzählungen im orientalischen Gewand und bietet auch hier meines Wissens die erste umfassende Betrachtung der Texte in ihrem literarhistorischen Kontext

Das gilt auch für Hiscotts Darstellung von Aschers frühen Ansätzen zu einer eigenständigen Ästhetik in den *Skolien* (1790). Im Mittelpunkt steht eine anthropologische Betrachtung des menschlichen Urteilsvermögens, ein Ansatz, den Ascher zwei Jahre später auch in seiner Religionsphilosophie (*Leviathan*, 1792) zum Tragen bringt und sowohl Mendelssohns Vertrauen auf eine dogmenfreie Vernunftreligion als auch Kants moralpolitischer Disziplinierung des religiösen Vermögens entgegenhält. Hiscott zeigt, dass Aschers Überlegungen zum ästhetischen und religiösen Vermögen nicht bei einem sensualistischen Realismus stehen bleiben, sondern auf die Überzeugung hinauslaufen, dass sittliche Gesellschaftlichkeit (aufgefasst als selbst erlassenes Regulativ) sich erst aus der freien Kommunikation über individuelle Empfindungen und Urteile herausbilden kann.

Hiscott unterzieht Aschers ambitionierten Vorstoß zur Reform der jüdischen Religion einem minutiösen *close reading*, das der Komplexität und bisweilen idiosynkratrischen Begrifflichkeit des *Leviathan* gerecht wird. Er kann viele dunkle Stellen und strukturelle Verstrickungen der Gedankenführung erklären, auch wenn seine resümierende Interpretation sich schließlich eng an Ellen Littmann (1960) anlehnt, die betont, dass für Ascher die Freiheit des Menschen nicht nur vis-à-vis des Staates, sondern auch vis-à-vis der Glaubensvereinigung des Judentums höchstes Gut ist. Die Frage ist freilich, auf welche Weise Ascher den Gedanken der Erziehung zur Freiheit, den er religionshistorisch eruiert, für eine potenzielle Reformtheologie mit einer neu zu begründenden Dogmatik fruchtbar machen will. Es ist symptomatisch für den religionsphilosophischen Diskurs der Aufklärung, dass Aschers Ansatz letztendlich in einem Plädoyer für eine wissenschaftlich fundierte theologische Dogmatik endet, die sich einerseits der gesellschaftlichen Vernunft

verschreiben und andererseits an das unmittelbare (sensualistische) religiöse Vermögen des Individuums anknüpfen soll.

Ascher konnte mit seinem *Eisenmenger der Zweite* (1794) an Fichtes Revolutionsphilosophie und Elementen von Kants Religionsphilosophie eine neue (politische) Qualität des aufgeklärten Antisemitismus diagnostizieren. Hiscott macht diese Schrift zugänglich, indem er sie in eine breite Darstellung der Geschichte des Antisemitismus einbettet. Auch sein genauer Nachvollzug von Aschers Argumenten überzeugt und führt dem Leser den Kern der Problematik umfassend und plastisch vor Augen.

Aschers *Ideen zur Geschichte der politischen Revolutionen* (1802) lassen ihn als ein Bindeglied zwischen dem Aufklärungsmaterialismus und dem politischen Materialismus des 19. Jahrhunderts erscheinen, zumal Ascher die Historie bereits als eine Geschichte der Revolutionen begreifen will und der Revolution eine progressive Triebkraft zuschreibt. Das zunächst von der Zensur unterdrückte Buch nimmt entsprechend als einziges von Aschers Werken einen anerkannten Platz in der Aufarbeitung der Genese gegenwärtiger politischer Theorien ein. Hiscotts *close reading* zeichnet sich wiederum durch eine umfassende historische Kontextualisierung aus. Für mich waren seine klugen Ausführungen zur zeitgeschichtlichen Kontextualisierung von Aschers Begriff der Metapolitik, mit dem er seine Vorstellung einer künftigen Politikwissenschaft zu charakterisieren versuchte, besonders interessant. In der Gesamteinschätzung schließt Hiscott sich weitgehend Emil Ottokar Weller (*Die Freiheitsbestrebungen der Deutschen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert,* 1847) an.

Eine Interpretation der *Germanomanie* (1815) – Aschers mit Abstand bekanntester Schrift –, die dem zehnten Kapitel vorbehalten gewesen wäre, konnte Hiscott nicht mehr zu Ende schreiben. Stattdessen haben die Herausgeber einen Lexikonartikel zur *Germanomanie* eingefügt, den Hiscott 2012 veröffentlicht hatte. Auch die anderen politischen Schriften der Spätphase – *Napoleon oder über den Fortschritt der Regierung* (1808), *Idee einer Pressfreiheit und Zensurordnung* (1817), *Die Wartburgs-Feier. Mit Hinsicht auf Deutschlands religiöse und politische Stimmung* (1818), *Ansicht vom künftigen Schicksal des Christentums* (1818; worauf Heine sich in der Gespenstergeschichte der *Harzreise* bezieht), *Der deutsche Geistesaristokratismus* (1819) und *Europa's politischer und ethischer Zustand seit dem Congreß von Aachen* (1819) – konnte Hiscott nicht mehr diskutieren. Damit fehlt leider auch eine Aufarbeitung von Aschers ideologischer Auseinandersetzung mit der Romantik und dem

Idealismus, die ihn in den letzten zehn Lebensjahren umtrieb. Es kann kein Zweifel bestehen, dass Hiscotts genaues Lektüreverfahren auch dazu viel Erhellendes zu sagen gehabt hätte und – nicht weniger interessant – dass er die Texte wiederum in aussagekräftige ideen- und gesellschaftshistorische Kontexte gestellt hätte.

Aber auch ohne diese Diskussion endet das Buch mit einem zwar fragmentarischen, aber dennoch fundierten Resümee zur philosophischen Verortung der berücksichtigten Texte. Es könne laut Hiscott nicht darum gehen, „Ascher nachträglich in das Pantheon der großen Philosophen zu hieven." Vielmehr versuche sein Buch, „durch die Einbettung politischer, kultureller und sozialer Aspekte in eine Philosophiegeschichte den Fokus auf die Leitfiguren und -diskurse zu mindern, und somit einerseits Platz für einen Philosophen in den ‚hinteren Reihen' der Geschichte einzuräumen und andererseits der während der Aufklärung exemplarisch entstandenen Breite und Tiefe der intellektuellen Auseinandersetzungen Rechnung zu tragen" (S. 696 f.). Das und mehr ist William Hiscott auf vorbildliche Weise gelungen.

Bernd Fischer, Columbus/Ohio

Joachim Schlör: „Liesel, it's time for you to leave." Von Heilbronn nach England. Die Flucht der Familie Rosenthal vor der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung. (=Veröffentlichungen des Archivs der Stadt Heilbronn 49). Heilbronn: Stadtarchiv 2015. 259 S., 25.00 €.

Joachim Schlör, Kulturwissenschaftler und Professor an der Universität Southampton (UK), rekonstruiert mithilfe einiger hundert Briefe und Postkarten aus der Zeit von 1937 bis 1947 einen Abschnitt im Leben der Familie Rosenthal, im Mittelpunkt steht die Tochter Alice, genannt Liesel. Die Dokumente wurden Schlör von Baroness Julia Neuberger, der Tochter von Liesel Rosenthal (später Alice Schwab) und Werner Schwab, ihres Zeichens Reformrabbinerin in London und Mitglied des House of Lords, übergeben. Sie waren „seit 1948, zu Bündeln geschnürt und in Kisten verpackt, nicht mehr geöffnet worden" (S. 9). Schlör tritt in einen Dialog mit Liesel und den anderen „Briefstimmen", setzt sie zueinander in Beziehung durch zusätzliche Materialien und Informationen, macht sie hörbar, kommentiert und befragt sie. Er versteht in den Briefen (besonders denen der Mutter) die Formeln, den Ton und die Färbung, er spürt dem Wechsel zwischen Sprachen und Varietäten nach,

und diese Aufmerksamkeit für die Sprache und ihre Nuancen ist für mich, als Sprachwissenschaftlerin, eine Entdeckung.

Das Buch hat zehn Kapitel, inklusive zweier Exkurse, enthält ein Literatur- und Quellenverzeichnis, ein Namensregister und ist bebildert mit Fotos, Reproduktionen von Briefen, Postkarten und Dokumenten. In der Einleitung geht Schlör auf die Bedeutung der Briefe für die kulturhistorische Forschung ein, beschreibt die Schwierigkeiten, das teilweise beschädigte und unvollständige Material zu rekonstruieren und klärt die Prinzipien seiner Methode (S. 14 f.):

> „Ich lese also die Briefe, so gut es geht, chronologisch und schiebe Erläuterungen oder Exkurse zum Kontext ein, wenn es mir notwendig erscheint. Dabei geht es mir einmal darum, eine Emigrationsgeschichte *aus den Briefen* zu rekonstruieren und zugleich darum zu fragen – und, wenn möglich, zu zeigen –, wie eine historisch interessierte, empirisch arbeitende Kulturwissenschaft mit solchen Quellenfunden umgehen kann: Was erfahren wir aus den Briefen selbst? Wie und wo können wir weitere Informationen zu den genannten Personen, Orten, Wegen, Ereignissen ausfindig machen? […] Dabei geht es um Emigration und Immigration als kulturelle Praxis und Performanz, um eine interdisziplinäre Ausleuchtung der Passagen und der Zwischenräume in den Migrationsprozessen, es geht um Dinge und ihre Bedeutung, also um die materiellen Objekte der Migration, um den Sprachwechsel, aber auch darum, Zugänge wie die Geschlechter- und die Familienforschung oder die Erinnerungskultur in einen Dialog mit der Migrationsforschung zu bringen."

Heilbronn ist geographischer Ausgangs- und Bezugspunkt dieser Geschichte(n). Die jüdische Geschichte der Stadt ist bedeutend, zu ihr gehören auch zahlreiche jüdische Weinhändler wie Ludwig Rosenthal. Als Weinhändler konnte er bereits auf eine Familientradition blicken, im Haus in der Götzenturmstraße: „Das war kein ‚Häusle', wie es im klischeehaften schwäbischen Diminutiv heißt, sondern ein großes Stadthaus am Rande der Altstadt, nahe am Neckar, und seit 1868/69 im Besitz der Familie" (S. 213). Es wurde am 4. Dezember 1944 bei der Bombardierung Heilbronns durch die Royal Air Force zusammen mit der gesamten Altstadt total zerstört und gelangte nie wieder in den Besitz der Familie, wie Schlörs Rekonstruktion der Rückerstattungsakten im Exkurs „Jetzt Ruine" zeigt.

Liesel Rosenthal kommt 1937 in London an, wo sie – nach einer eher unglücklichen Etappe als *domestic servant* in Birmingham – als gelernte

Buchhändlerin nach einer Arbeit sucht, die sie dann bei Marks & Spencer in der Strumpf-Abteilung findet. Schon sehr bald wird sie beim *Jewish Refugee Committee* im Woburn House aktiv, der 1938 wichtigsten Londoner Anlaufstelle für die aus Deutschland Geflüchteten. Über einen Teil der freiwilligen Arbeit dieses und anderer Komitees wurde von Susan Cohen in PaRDeS (2012)[4] berichtet; es ist ein komplexes und noch immer zum Teil aufzuarbeitendes Thema, bei dem die besondere Rolle der Frauen auffällt. Zu diesen Frauen gehört auch Anna Schwab, Liesels spätere Schwiegermutter. In London ist das tägliche Networking von Liesel unerlässlich, zunächst zugunsten des Bruders Helmut Rosenthal, der im September 1938 (allein) nach Brighton kommt und aus dem bald Jack Rosen wird. An seinen Postkarten und Briefen lässt sich gut verfolgen, wie er in die neue Sprache hineinwächst und erwachsen wird.

Die Eltern erfahren hingegen zunehmend Ausgrenzung. Sie suchen nach Ländern, die noch jüdische Emigranten aufnehmen, wo die Familie später einmal zusammenkommen könnte. Von Bedeutung werden hier transnationale Verbindungen unter den jüdischen Emigranten, die Emigration und Akkulturationsprozesse in Großbritannien, Palästina und Übersee ganz unterschiedlich erleben. Immer dringender werden die Bitten um Hilfe, vermischt mit Vorwürfen wegen Liesels Lebensführung, mangelndem Engagement für die Familie, Egoismus. Mutter und Tochter können sich wohl kein richtiges Bild von dem schwierigen Leben der anderen machen. Besonders die Mutter drängt Liesel, zu heiraten, Liesels Herz schlägt aber nach einem anderen Takt. Der Konflikt, der hier brieflich lange ausgetragen wird (wobei Liesels Antworten nur zu erahnen sind, Schlör ihre Position jedoch gut darstellt), ist ein Rollenkonflikt, ein Familienkonflikt, der auch in der Emigration weiterbesteht, ein Prozess, in dem sich Liesel zunehmend emanzipiert. Sie wird eine wichtige Kontaktfigur für eine Vielzahl von Verwandten, Freunden, Bekannten, die Schreckliches erfahren und berichten. Schließlich kommen die Eltern im Frühjahr 1939 durch Liesels Bemühungen in Großbritannien an. Wie es dort weitergeht, welche Reibungspunkte den Alltag prägen, die Wohnungssuche und Geldprobleme, erfährt man im Kapitel „‚An alien of a most excellent type.' Die Kriegsjahre in London". Ab Kriegsbeginn durften Angehörige feindlicher Staaten in Großbritannien sich nicht mehr frei bewegen, sie werden zu

[4] Susan Cohen: Voluntary Refugee Work in Britain, 1933–39. An Overview, in: PaRDeS 18 (2012), S. 21–34.

„aliens", ihr „degree of loyality" wird überprüft und vor allem Männer werden auf der Isle of Man interniert, was für die jüdischen Emigranten als Opfer von Nazi-Deutschland schwer zu verarbeiten ist. Anderseits schafft die Solidarität der Bevölkerung während der Bombardierung Londons für Liesel eine starke Verbindung. In diese persönlich auch glückliche Zeit – Alice und Werner Schwab haben 1942 geheiratet – brechen die Nachrichten über den Massenmord an den Juden ein: „der *News Chronicle* war am 5. Dezember 1942 das erste Blatt, in dem die Bezeichnung ‚a holocaust' verwendet wurde" (S. 172). Der Titel des Kapitels „‚Der Gedanke an Deutschland'. Aus einem zerrissenen Bilderbuch" drückt aus, wie die späten Kriegsjahre von vielen verschiedenen tragischen Nachrichten geprägt sind.

In den letzten Kapiteln geht es um das Bilanzziehen nach dem Krieg, aber auch um sich wieder anbahnende Kontakte zwischen emigrierten jüdischen HeilbronnerInnen und engagierten HeilbronnerInnen, die eine Brücke bilden wollen („‚Ihre Heimat'. Neue Kontakte nach Heilbronn"), sowie um die Erinnerungsarbeit der Stadt, bei der Heilbronn eine Vorreiterrolle gespielt hat. Auch die Rosenthals waren wieder in Heilbronn, haben private Kontakte gepflegt und an offiziellen Besuchen teilgenommen. Als Ludwig Rosenthal 1967 in London stirbt, schreibt seine Frau an den Oberbürgermeister Paul Meyle: „Er war mit Leib und Seele Heilbronner". Tochter Liesel macht dorthin wohl einen privaten Besuch, bleibt aber eher auf Distanz.

Joachim Schlör ist es gelungen, Geschichtsschreibung und Alltagsgeschichte in einem Patchwork aus Dokumenten, Berichten und Erzählungen sowie Reflektionen zu einer Einheit zusammenzubringen. Er zeigt explizite und implizite Bezüge in den verschiedenen Erzählsträngen auf, gerade dann, wenn diese aus den Briefen nicht ersichtlich werden. Indem er die Spannungen und Widersprüche der Erfahrungen im Zeitraum 1937–47 am Beispiel der Familie Rosenthal nicht glättet, ergibt sich ein Einblick in die kulturelle Praxis und Performanz einer spezifischen Emigration. Durch den Informationsgehalt und den leserfreundlichen Stil ist das Buch einem breiten Publikum zugänglich, enthält aber durch die weite thematische Fächerung methodische Reflektionen und Anstöße für alle, die sich aus jeweils unterschiedlichen Perspektiven mit Fragen der Migration beschäftigen.

Eva-Maria Thüne, Bologna

Primo Levi: So war Auschwitz. Zeugnisse 1945–1986. Hg. v. Domenico Scarpa und Fabio Levi. Aus dem Italienischen von Barbara Kleiner. München: Hanser 2017. 303 S., 24.00 €.

Die Literatur über die Shoah ist mit keiner Stimme so eng verbunden wie mit der von Primo Levi. Das Werk des in Turin geborenen Auschwitz-Überlebenden hat den literarischen Kanon grundlegend geprägt und belebt den Diskurs über die Möglichkeiten und Bedingungen des Erinnerns bis in die Gegenwart.[5] Das 30 Jahre nach seinem Tod erschiene Konvolut *So war Auschwitz. Zeugnisse 1945–1986* ist eine beeindruckend sorgfältig edierte Sammlung von teils unveröffentlichten Berichten, Manuskripten und Artikeln, die in vielerlei Hinsicht einen Schaffensprozess abbildet, der das gesellschaftliche Wissen über Auschwitz maßgeblich beeinflusst hat.

Primo Levi, 1919 als erstes Kind von Ester Luzzati und Cesare Levi in Turin geboren,[6] wuchs in einem liberalen jüdischen Elternhaus auf. Trotz Einführung der Rassengesetze 1938 in Italien konnte Primo Levi sein Ende Oktober 1937 begonnenes Chemiestudium beenden und wurde 1941 an der Universität in Turin promoviert. Als Teil einer der ersten Partisanengruppen wurde er im Dezember 1943 von der faschistischen Miliz in Amay im Aostatal verhaftet und ins Lager Fossoli verschleppt. Von hier aus wurde Levi mit insgesamt 650 Menschen, darunter sein zukünftiger Freund und Weggefährte Leonardo De Benedetti, am 22. Februar 1944 nach Auschwitz deportiert, wo er im Teil Monowitz Zwangsarbeit leisten musste. Beide erlebten die Befreiung von Auschwitz am 27. Januar 1945 und trafen sich in einer Krankenstation in Kattowitz wieder.

Der von den Herausgebern Domenico Scarpa und Fabio Levi zeitlich-chronologisch angeordneten Textauswahl steht der *Bericht über die hygienisch-medizinische Organisation des Konzentrationslagers für Juden in Monowitz (Auschwitz – Oberschlesien)* voran, den Levi und De Benedetti vor ihrer Rückkehr nach Italien 1945 gemeinsam „auf Bitten des russischen Kommandos des Sammellagers Kattowitz für ehemalige italienische Gefangene zur Vorlage bei der Regierung der UdSSR verfasst" (S. 13, vgl. S. 191–198) und 1946, ergänzt „um einige Beobachtungen allgemeinerer Natur" (S. 13), in der

[5] Vgl. zum Erinnerungsdiskurs insbesondere Primo Levi: Die Untergegangenen und die Geretteten, München 1990.

[6] Ester Luzzati und Cesare Levi heirateten am 7. Oktober 1918 in der Turiner Synagoge. Vgl. Ian Thomson: Primo Levi, London 2002, S. 16.

medizinischen Fachzeitschrift *Minerva Medica* veröffentlicht hatten. Das „ehrgeizige Ziel dieses Artikels […] [bestand] eben darin, die Aufmerksamkeit eines gebildeten Publikums auf die soeben verübte Vernichtung zu lenken" (S. 196). Insbesondere Primo Levi verspürte jedoch die Absicht, „noch weiter zugehen. An diesem Punkt war die Aufgabe nicht mehr allein die des Arztes und auch nicht allein die des Chemikers: Die Feder des Schriftstellers war gefragt." (ebd.) Dem Bestreben Primo Levis treu bleibend, zeichnen Domenico Scarpa und Fabio Levi mit der Anordnung der Texte eine Kontinuitätslinie seines Schaffens, die sowohl die durch Primo Levi empfundene Pflichtauffassung des Zeitzeugens als auch die Wissenschaftsauffassung des Naturwissenschaftlers abbildet, und die durch einen knapp 60-seitigen Aufsatz der beiden Herausgeber narrativ gerahmt wird (vgl. S. 185–244).

Primo Levis „Achtung vor der Wahrheit" hat den Herausgebern, wie sie in den Vorbemerkungen ausführen, „größtmögliche philologische Treue in der Edition der Texte sowie vollkommene Transparenz in der Rekonstruktion ihrer Entstehungsgeschichte [auferlegt]" (S. 9). Resultat dieser Gewissenhaftigkeit ist ein umfangreicher Anmerkungskatalog, der augenscheinlich polarisiert. Während er einerseits als ein „unübersichtliche[r] philologische[r] Exzess" beanstandet wird, der sich in „minutiösen editorischen Angaben" verliere und deshalb nur „wenig zum Verständnis der Texte beitragen" würde,[7] attestieren andere Rezensionen dem Buch eine „transparent übersetzte Textsammlung mit wertvollen Anmerkungen".[8] Allen Besprechungen ist dagegen gemein, dass sie das zugrunde liegende Hauptmotiv in den Texten von Primo Levi herausstreichen: Sprechen trotz allem. Während sich bereits aus den frühen Erklärungen und Stellungnahmen der 1940er-Jahre Levis Impetus herauslesen lässt, beobachtet und konstatiert der Autor mit dem auf 1955 datierten und mit *Jahrestag* (S. 73–76) überschriebenen Dokument ein erinnerungspolitisches Schweigen und Vergessen, das er in einem empathischen Gestus auf zahlreiche Faktoren zurückführt, aber für nicht zulässig erklärt.

Mag sich Primo Levi angesichts dieses Schweigens sowie des anhaltenden Desinteresses gegenüber seinem 1947 veröffentlichten Text *Se questo è un uomo*[9]

[7] Janika Gelinek: Schweigen wäre unzulässig, in: Neue Züricher Zeitung (30.04.2017).

[8] Susanne Fritz: Man muss sprechen. Wiedergefundene Berichte, Reden und Briefe Primo Levis zum 30. Todestag des Auschwitz-Zeugen, Badische Zeitung (22.04.2017).

[9] Ausführungen zur Publikationsgeschichte finden sich bei Anna Baldini: Primo Levi and the Italian Memory of the Shoah, in: Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History. Journal of Fondazione CDEC 7 (2014), S. 156–177.

als Rufer in der Wüste vorgekommen sein, so fungiert der *Brief an die Tochter eines Faschisten, die nach der Wahrheit fragt* (S. 82–84) in der Rückschau als Zäsur. Der am 29. November 1959 in der Turiner Tageszeitung *La Stampa* veröffentlichte Brief einer Schülerin, in dem sie Bezug auf eine Ausstellung über die deutschen Konzentrationslager nimmt und nach der Wahrhaftigkeit ihrer Existenz fragt, gab Primo Levi Anlass, öffentlich zu antworten. Levi erkannte in dem „(unerwartete[n]) Erfolg der Ausstellung" (S. 84) – die in Turin mehrfach verlängert wurde und im Rahmen des ‚Gesprächs mit jungen Leuten' an zwei Abenden bis zu 1500 Besucher mobilisierte (vgl. S. 274f.) – und dem Interesse der Schülerin einen „Hunger nach der Wahrheit" (S. 84), der in Levis Augen nicht nur symbolisch für eine gesellschaftliche Öffnung gegenüber der Erinnerung an die Shoah stand, sondern auch faktisch mit einer differierenden Rezeptionshaltung einherging, die das kulturelle Klima insgesamt veränderte.[10]

Der Band, der so gründlich von Fabio Levi, dem Direktor des *Centro Internazionale di Studi Primo Levi*, und Domenico Scarpa, dem langjährigen Betreuer der wissenschaftlichen Redaktion des Instituts, ediert wurde, ist eine Antwort auf die in den letzten Jahren vielfach gestellte Frage, wie nach dem Tod der Zeitzeugen mit dem Erinnerungsnachlass aus geschichts- und kulturwissenschaftlicher Perspektive umzugehen ist. Es ein besonderes Verdienst der Herausgeber, dass sie zugunsten einer überwiegend handlungs- und deutungsoffenen Rezeption sowohl einen dokumentierenden, als auch einen narrativen Zugang zu den Texten von Primo Levi ermöglichen. Denn *So war Auschwitz* erlaubt im verschränkten Lesen von Primärkorpus und Anmerkungskatalog eine historische und philologische Spurensuche, während der am Schluss des Konvoluts stehende Aufsatz den Leser zugleich erzählerisch durch die Materialien führt und hier instruktive Deutungsangebote unterbreitet.

Insgesamt leistet die kommentierte Textsammlung einen wichtigen Beitrag dazu, Querverbindungen zwischen den einzelnen Bestandteilen von Primo Levis Gesamtwerk offenzulegen und auf kluge Weise miteinander zu verknüpfen. *So war Auschwitz. Zeugnisse 1945–1986* wird Anlass geben, Fragen zu stellen und sich auch weiterhin mit Auschwitz auseinanderzusetzen. Damit würde der Text einen Zweck erfüllen, für den Primo Levi Zeit seines Lebens gestritten hat.

Dennis Bock, Hamburg

[10] Vgl. Baldini: Primo Levi and the Italian Memory of the Shoah, S. 163.

Jörn Wendland: Das Lager von Bild zu Bild. Narrative Bildserien von Häftlingen aus NS-Zwangslagern. Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau 2017. 409 S., 70.00 €.

„Ein kurzer Blick auf diesen *Überrest an Bildern*", schreibt Georges Didi-Huberman in *Bilder trotz allem*, „auf dieses erratische Korpus aus *Bildern trotz allem* genügt, um zu verstehen, daß es nicht länger möglich ist, über Auschwitz in den absoluten Begriffen des ‚Unsagbaren' und ‚Unvorstellbaren' zu sprechen."[11] Er bezieht sich in seiner Untersuchung auf jene vier Fotografien, die Mitglieder eines jüdischen „Sonderkommandos" im KZ Auschwitz anfertigen und der Nachwelt überliefern konnten. Sie zeigen Momente der Massenvernichtung, sind „Beweise" des Unvorstellbaren.

Neben diesen fotografischen Bildzeugnissen, diesen „Bildern trotz allem", die „einige Deportierte der schrecklichen Wirklichkeit ihrer Erfahrung für uns entrissen haben"[12], sind auch noch weitere Bild-Dokumente von KZ-Insassen entstanden, die nicht weniger Aussagekraft über die Orte der Vernichtung in sich gespeichert haben. Neben zahlreichen Skizzen, Zeichnungen und auch Gemälden existieren auch künstlerische narrative Bildserien von Häftlingen aus NS-Zwangsarbeiterlagern. Sechzehn von ihnen hat der Kunsthistoriker Jörn Wendland in seiner Studie *Das Lager von Bild zu Bild* zusammengetragen, deren Einzelbilder sich über die ganze Welt verstreut im Besitz von Museen und Privatpersonen befinden und die bislang wissenschaftlich noch nicht systematisch erfasst und untersucht wurden. Während Didi-Huberman der Fotografie die besondere Fähigkeit zuspricht, „sich dem absoluten Willen zur Auslöschung zu widersetzen"[13], scheinen die Philosophie, Bild-, Literatur, Kunst- und Geschichtswissenschaft der subjektiven Sicht auf die Situation in den Lagern in Form von Zeichnungen, Skizzen, Aquarellen und anderen Gestalt bildkünstlerischer Überlieferung weniger Reflexionsvermögen sowie weniger Fähigkeit zuzutrauen, sich dem Grauen adäquat anzunähern. Damit teilen sie das Schicksal biografischer und autobiografischer Comics zur nationalsozialistischen Vernichtungsmaschinerie, die lange Zeit nicht als ernstzunehmende Auseinandersetzung mit der Thematik angesehen wurden. Als prominentestes Beispiel sei die Publikation des später mit dem Pulitzer-Preis

11 Georges Didi-Huberman: Bilder trotz allem. München: Wilhelm Fink 2007, S. 44.
12 Ebd., S. 15.
13 Ebd., S. 41.

bedachten ersten Bandes von Art Spiegelmans *Maus* genannt. Der Comic über Spiegelmans Vater, der als junger Mann Auschwitz überlebt hat, wurde nach Erscheinen 1986 von der Öffentlichkeit, Presse und Wissenschaft zunächst kritisch betrachtet, in seinem Buch *MetaMaus* (2011) hat Spiegelman die zahlreichen Ablehnungsschreiben von Verlagen zugänglich gemacht, die diese Skepsis belegen. Heute gilt *Maus* als eine der wichtigsten künstlerischen Auseinandersetzungen mit der Shoah. Der Comic ist nunmehr aus literatur-, erzähl-, bild- wie auch kunsttheoretischer Perspektive untersucht worden. Im Falle der narrativen Bildserien aus den KZs fühlte sich dagegen lange Zeit keine wissenschaftliche Disziplin zuständig. Als Quelle erschienen viele der Bilder Historikern nicht ergiebig genug, aus literaturwissenschaftlicher Sicht waren sie zu wenig narrativ und für Kunsthistoriker zu wenig künstlerisch ausgearbeitet, wie Jörn Wendland in der Einleitung seiner Studie ausführt (S. 16). Umso verdienstvoller, dass sich mit ihm nun ein Kunsthistoriker der systematischen Erfassung und Analyse eines Teiles der künstlerischen Bild-Dokumente angenommen hat.

Wendlands Blick auf die Bilder, seine Einzelbildanalysen und Einordnungen in künstlerische Disziplinen und Traditionen, sind präzise, jede Bildserie wird hinsichtlich ihrer Entstehungsbedingungen, ihres Materials, Inhalts und Stils analysiert. *Das Lager von Bild zu Bild*, in dessen umfangreichem Anhang sich auch farbige Reproduktionen sämtlicher behandelter Bildfolgen befinden, leistet damit einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Holocaustforschung. Allerdings zeigt sich bei der Lektüre des Buches auch die Problematik der verengten Perspektive der Kunstgeschichte auf die überlieferten Bilder von Häftlingen aus NS-Zwangslagern: Wenig hilfreich sind etwa die Auseinandersetzungen mit dem künstlerischen Material, wenn dieses auf die gleiche Weise betrachtet wird wie etwa die Gemälde Caravaggios oder die Collagen Hannah Höchs, da die Häftlinge keine Freiheit in der Wahl ihrer Materialien besaßen, sondern schlicht alles benutzen mussten, was zufällig vorhanden war. Auch ist die Einordnung der Bilder in kunsthistorische Traditionen und Motivgeschichten angesichts der Tatsache, dass die wenigsten der Schöpfer ausgebildete Maler waren, einen künstlerischen Anspruch verfolgten oder, wie im Falle von Helga Weissová, erst zwölf Jahre als waren, nur bedingt ergiebig. Die seit Jahrzehnten vor allem in der Literatur- und Filmwissenschaft geführten Diskurse über die Grenzen der Abbildbarkeit, über Trauma-Erfahrungen und die Ästhetik und Bedeutung von Leerstellen, und die Spezifika von Berichten

Überlebender der Shoah[14], die in der wissenschaftlichen Beschäftigung mit beispielsweise Comics zum Holocaust in der Regel herangezogen und auf die ästhetischen Spezifika des Mediums übertragen werden[15], streift die Studie nur am Rande.

Zwar bezieht sich Wendland in seinen Analysen auch auf zentrale Publikationen der wissenschaftlichen Auseinandersetzung mit dem Medium Comic der letzten Jahre, über die die narrativen Aspekte der überlieferten Bilder genauer fokussiert werden können. Leider beschränkt sich die Studie jedoch in der Aufarbeitung des Materials auf die kunsthistorische Perspektive und macht jene Methoden und Fragestellungen, die sie aus anderen Disziplinen übernimmt, nicht wirklich fruchtbar. So wird etwa auf die Bedeutung des Zwischenraums im Comic zwar verwiesen, auf jenes Weiß, das die Einzelpanels voneinander trennt. Für Wendlands Analyse der Bilder spielen diese Zwischenräume, in denen der Leser auf sich zurückgeworfen wird, dann jedoch keine Rolle mehr. Einzig an einer Stelle bemerkt der Autor zur ästhetischen Funktion der Störung der Narration durch die Panelgrenzen: „Die Sequenz erzeugt mithilfe der Fantasie des Betrachters eben keine sinnstiftende Einheit, sondern bewirkt eine Mehrdeutigkeit, die sich letztendlich nicht auflösen lässt. Somit bleibt der Massenmord in den Gaskammern auch hier in der besonderen Darstellung als narrative Leerstelle bildlos." (S. 168) Doch bleibt diese Analyse einzig auf einige wenige Bildfolgen bezogen, jene nämlich, die mit achronischen Strukturen arbeiten, Strukturen also, die sich durch das Fehlen einer chronologischen Relation zwischen den erzählten Ereignissen auszeichnen. Dagegen bietet die Leere, der Zwischenraum in allen Formen narrativer Bildsequenzen einen Ort der Reflexion des Abgebildeten, einen Ort der Selbstreflexion über das Erzählte, bzw. wird gerade das Nichterzählte in diesen Lücken dokumentiert.

Über das Verdienst von Jörn Wendlands Studie soll mit dieser inhaltlichen Kritik keineswegs hinweggegangen werden. Als Ausgangspunkt für weitergehende Untersuchungen narrativer Bildserien von Häftlingen aus NS-Zwangslagern wird sie zurecht ein Standardwerk werden. Doch gleichzeitig offenbart

[14] Vgl. z. B. Matías Martínez (Hg.): Der Holocaust und die Künste. Medialität und Authentizität von Holocaust-Darstellungen in Literatur, Film, Video, Malerei, Denkmälern, Comic und Musik. Bielefeld: Aisthesis 2004.

[15] Vgl. Ole Frahm: Genealogie des Holocaust. Art Spiegelmans MAUS – A Survivor's Tale. Paderborn: Fink 2006.

sie die Notwendigkeit einer interdisziplinären Sichtweise auf Dokumente wie die untersuchten Bildserien, denen weder einzig die kunsthistorische noch die literaturwissenschaftliche oder geschichtswissenschaftliche Perspektive gerecht werden kann, wenn sie in standardisierten Herangehensweisen ihrer Disziplinen verharren. Die Dokumente sind mehr als ein beliebiger wissenschaftlicher Untersuchungsgegenstand, dem die Theorien und Methoden der eigenen Disziplin übergestülpt werden können. Überlieferungen von Ermordeten und Überlebenden der Shoah bleiben Dokumente, die „Deportierte der schrecklichen Wirklichkeit ihrer Erfahrung für uns entrissen haben“[16] und in ihrer Komplexität erfasst werden müssen.

Jonas Engelmann, Mainz

Nathanael Riemer (Hg.): Einführungen in die Materiellen Kulturen des Judentums (=Jüdische Kultur. Studien zur Geistesgeschichte, Religion und Literatur, Bd. 31). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2016, 261 S., 29.80 €.

Der vorliegende Sammelband, der sich mit Aspekten materieller Kulturen des Judentums beschäftigt, geht auf eine Ringvorlesung am Institut für Jüdische Studien und Religionswissenschaft an der Universität Potsdam von 2014 zurück. Er versammelt die dort gehaltenen Vorträge und ist mit einer kurzen Einführung versehen. Diese konstatiert die bisherige Vernachlässigung materieller Kultur in den Jüdischen Studien und betont unter anderem die zentrale Bedeutung materieller Dinge, wie zum Beispiel koschere Schreibfeder, Tinte, Pergament, ohne die die Produktion ritueller Texte unmöglich wäre. Die Beiträge konzentrieren sich auf das deutsche Landjudentum zwischen dem 17. und 19. Jahrhundert, wobei einige Beiträge ihrem Gegenstand bis ins 20. Jahrhundert folgen. Die einzelnen Aufsätze bieten vor allem Einblicke in die Materialität religiöser Lebensfelder und Objekte wie dem Ritualbad, Torah-Wickelbändern, Objekten in der Synagoge oder den Genisot, Friedhöfen, synagogaler Musik und allgemein jüdischen Kultusobjekten.

Nur die Beiträge von Nathanael Riemer zum jüdischen Haus und Michaela Schmölz-Häberlein zum Warenangebot jüdischer Händler gehen stärker auf lebensweltliche Objekte ein. Schmölz-Häberlein zeigt in ihrem Beitrag, wie Dinge

16 Didi-Huberman, Bilder trotz allem, S. 15.

des täglichen Bedarfs oder modische Accessoires, die Juden auf dem Land im fränkischen Raum vertrieben, jüdischen wie nichtjüdischen Kunden als Distinktionsobjekte dienten. Riemer fragt in seinem Beitrag danach, was ein Wohngebäude zu einem „jüdischen Haus" machte, ob es materielle Aspekte gab, die es als jüdisch hervorhoben. Trotz einer Reihe spannender Fragen, die der Beitrag aufwirft, kann er aber aufgrund der für die Vormoderne lückenhaften Quellenlage keine definitive Antwort darauf geben. Aufschlussreich ist allerdings die Erkenntnis, dass feste Laubhüttenkonstruktionen im süddeutschen Raum, „jüdische Häuser" von anderen unterschieden. Während in einer einfacheren Variante einige Dachziegel entfernt wurden, um den Dachboden zur Sukkah zu machen, wurde, laut Riemer, vor allem in Mittelschwaben und Hessen eine typisch jüdische Hausform mit sogenanntem „Sukkah-Giebel" entwickelt. Bei diesen Zwerchgiebeln konnten die Dachteile mit Scharnierkonstruktionen und Seilzügen aufgeklappt werden. Dies widerspricht älteren Annahmen, nach denen es der Bauform nach keine spezifisch jüdischen Wohnhäuser gab.

Katrin Keßler thematisiert in ihrem Beitrag vor allem Konstruktionen und Praktiken jenseits der klassischen Mikwe, die aufgrund ihrer steinernen Materialität bis heute existiert. Sie zeigt dabei die Vielfalt der Möglichkeiten auf, mit denen rituellen Geboten nachgekommen werden konnte. Dazu gehörten zum Beispiel Flussmikwen, wie die an der Redwitz in Fürth, wo im frühen 19. Jahrhundert eine Holzkonstruktion mit Badekästen errichtet worden war. Allerdings sind solche Objekte wie auch andere bewegliche Dinge, die in Mikwen genutzt wurden, nur noch in Beschreibungen oder zeitgenössischen Abbildungen erhalten. Ulrich Knufinke nimmt mit der Synagoge einen weiteren rituell konnotierten Ort in den Blick und fragt nach der Ordnung und Funktion von Dingen in der Synagoge, die gleichzeitig ein Raum der Handlung war. Dabei entsprach die „Disposition [der ‚Dinge'] im Raum […] ihrer jeweiligen Funktion im Rahmen dieser Handlungen" (S. 171). Funde in Genisot, die Andreas Lehnardt behandelt, und jüdische Friedhöfe und deren Materialität, die Nathanja Hüttenmeister beschreibt, beleuchten weitere Objekte, die jüdischen Orten konkret zugeordnet werden können.

Räumlich mobilere Objekte betrachtet dagegen Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, die nach der mehrschichtigen Bedeutung von jüdischen Kultobjekten wie Besamim-Behältern, Seder-Tellern oder Torah-Schildern fragt. Heimann-Jelinek geht dabei vor allem den verschiedenen Identifikationszeichen nach, die einerseits die Zugehörigkeit des Objekts zum Judentum anzeigen, andererseits aber

eben auch, z.B. durch die Verwendung bestimmter Formen und Materialien, auf die Zugehörigkeit zur Mehrheitsgesellschaft verweisen. Diese materiellen Objekte machen so die Schnittstellen zwischen jüdischer und Umgebungskultur sichtbar. Mit einem spezifischen Objekt, den Torah-Wickelbändern, beschäftigt sich der Aufsatz von Linda Wiesner und Annette Weber, in dem nach der Biographie des Objekts und dem damit einhergehenden Handlungszusammenhang gefragt und konstatiert wird, dass es keine Trennung zwischen der materiellen und der immateriellen Sphäre solcher Objekte geben kann. Im konkreten Fall bieten die Torah-Wickelbänder die Möglichkeit, ein Bild der Frömmigkeit und lokaler und regionaler religiöser Bräuche und Traditionen des Landjudentums nachzuzeichnen. Mit ihrem Beitrag zu synagogaler Musik greift Martha Stellmacher die Verbindung von Materialität und sozialer Praxis auf, indem sie einerseits die Mittel zur Klangerzeugung und andererseits die materielle Verkörperung von Musik in Notenheften und Tonträgern beleuchtet.

Die Beiträge machen in ihrer Vielfalt deutlich, wie fruchtbar der Ansatz der materiellen Kultur, sei es aus historischer oder anthropologischer Sicht, auch für die Jüdischen Studien ist. Insgesamt bietet der Band viele interessante Anregungen für die Beschäftigung mit bislang wenig genutzten Quellen der materiellen jüdischen Kultur, auch wenn manche Beiträge eher einen Überblick und eine Aufzählung von Objekten bieten als eine Diskussion und Analyse der Frage, welche neuen Erkenntnisse das Studium dieser Objekte für die Jüdischen Studien oder die jüdische Geschichte bereithalten könnte. Hier wird deutlich, wo die Gefahren des Ansatzes liegen, wenn nur beschreibend vorgegangen wird, ohne explizit zu fragen, wie solche Objekte konkret genutzt wurden und welche neuen Erkenntnisse über das jüdische Alltagsleben sie uns liefern können.

Auch der Schwerpunkt des Landjudentums ist aufgrund der bisherigen Vernachlässigung in der Forschung sicher gut gewählt. Allerdings kann es nicht zielführend sein, diese scharf vom Studium anderer jüdischer Bevölkerungsgruppen abzugrenzen, da zu „schriftstellernden Intellektuellen, gelehrten Rabbinern und reichen Hoffaktoren und Industriellen“ (S. 2) zwar unzweifelhaft mehr historische Studien vorliegen, neue theoretisch gesättigte Studien zur materiellen Kultur dieser Bevölkerungsgruppen aber ebenfalls kaum darunter sind.

Cornelia Aust, Mainz

Conference Report

Fünfte Nachwuchstagung Judaistik/Jüdische Studien. Fifth Conference for Young Researchers in Jewish Studies. Methods and Disciplines between Germany and Israel, Universität Potsdam, 3.–5. Juli 2017

Die fünfte Nachwuchstagung, organisiert von der Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien e. V., stand in diesem Jahr im Zeichen der wissenschaftlichen Vernetzung zwischen DoktorandInnen und PostdoktorandInnen aus Israel und Deutschland. Die Veranstalter, Michał Szulc (Professur für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte, Universität Potsdam) und Enrico Lucca (Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) luden ihre Gäste, die neben den Gastgeberländern auch aus Polen und Italien angereist waren, in den Universitätskomplex am Neuen Palais ein. In bewährter Form – interdisziplinäre, von Senior-Scholars geleitete Panels – kamen die internationalen TeilnehmerInnen miteinander ins Gespräch.

Nach einem Grußwort des Vorsitzenden der Vereinigung Jüdische Studien e. V., Rafael Arnold (Rostock) und des Lehrstuhlinhabers der Gastinstitution, Thomas Brechenmacher (Potsdam), begann die Tagung *in medias res* mit dem von Eva Lezzi (Berlin) geleiteten ersten Panel, das unter dem Titel *Jewish Presence in Literature* unterschiedliche disziplinäre Zugänge vereinigte. Den Anfang machte Tuvia Singer (Jerusalem) mit der Vorstellung seiner historisch-anthropologischen Studie zu Bildern von Fremden und Minderheiten (Juden, Schwaben, Sinti und Roma, Sorben) in deutschen Volkserzählungen des 19. Jahrhunderts. Singer untersucht darin die Verbindung zwischen der Ausformung und der sozialen Funktion dieser Bilder im Prozess der Kanonisierung deutscher Literatur vor dem Hintergrund von Nationalismus, Regionalismus und Kosmologie als konkurrierende Ideologien des 19. Jahrhunderts. Im Anschluss daran stellte Rolf Blase (Potsdam) die Ergebnisse seiner Masterarbeit vor, die er als Gegenentwurf zu den bereits vorliegenden Interpretationen von I. L. Peretz (1852–1915) Erzählung מסירת-נפש (Mesires-nefesh) verstanden wissen will. Während sich die Forschung auf die Herausarbeitung von Parallelen zu nicht-jüdischen Stoffen (Wagners Oper „Der Tannhäuser“) konzentriert hatte, konnte Blase zeigen, dass das Werk darüber hinaus starke intertextuelle Bezüge zu jüdischen Traditionen, insbesondere zur jiddischen

„Folklore“ aufweist. Den Abschluss der ersten Sektion bildete der Vortrag der Literaturwissenschaftlerin Judith Müller (Be'er Sheva), die sich anhand ausgewählter Werke Aharon Appelfelds (*Zeit der Wunder* und *Alles, was ich liebte*) mit literarischen Räumen der Grenzüberschreitung auseinandersetzte.

Das zweite Panel, das unter dem Titel *Translation and Exegesis in Jewish Culture(s)* von der Professorin für Hebräische Bibel und Exegese, Shani Tzoref (Potsdam) kommentiert wurde, bildete den Abschluss des ersten Konferenztages. Dort diskutierten zwei Referentinnen die komplexen Voraussetzungen sowie Möglichkeiten und Grenzen von Übersetzungen. Lena Bindrim (Heidelberg) erörterte diesen Problemkomplex anhand ihrer Übersetzung zweier Erzählungen des Autors Scholem Jankew Abramowitsch, auch bekannt als Mendele Moicher Sforim (1835–1917), aus dem Hebräischen ins Deutsche. Im Mittelpunkt von Martina Mampieris (Rom/Hamburg) kürzlich abgeschlossenem Dissertationsprojekt stand die englische Übersetzung einer hebräischen Chronik. Verfasst wurde sie von dem relativ unbekannten italienisch-jüdischen Autor Benjamin Neḥemiah ben Elnathan, der damit seltene Einblicke in die Geschichte einer jüdischen Gemeinde im Italien des 16. Jahrhundert offerierte.

Der konzeptionelle Bezugspunkt des thematisch heterogenen dritten Panels mit dem Titel *Intellectual History and Cultural Property between Germany and Israel*, dessen Vorsitz Thomas Brechenmacher (Potsdam) am zweiten Konferenztag einnahm, kann mit dem Begriff des Transfers gefasst werden. Während sich Amit Levy (Jerusalem) in seiner Dissertation mit der Migrationsgeschichte deutsch-jüdischer Orientalisten und dem damit verbundenen Transfer von Ideen, Methoden und Konzeptionen zwischen Deutschland und Palästina/Israel ab den 1920er Jahren beschäftigte, stand im Zentrum von Anna Kawałkos (Jerusalem) Vortrag die Geschichte der Restitution von NS-Raubgut, das in Form von Büchern und Archivmaterial gegen Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges aus Deutschland in das damalige „Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren“ gelangt war. Die Darstellung der israelischen und der tschechoslowakischen Perspektive verdeutlichte die Komplexität der Nachkriegsbeziehungen zwischen jüdischen Akteuren in Europa auf der einen und Palästina/Israel auf der anderen Seite.

Um Perspektiven der deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte zwischen „Ost und West“ ging es den Referentinnen des von Andreas Brämer (Hamburg) geleiteten vierten Panels. Gleich zwei Vorträge standen dabei im Zeichen der Integration der Wirtschaftsgeschichte in die Jüdischen Studien. Während Vladyslava

Moskalets (Krakau) die galizische Ölindustrie in den Blick nahm, präsentierte Nancy Walter (Dresden) ihre Untersuchung der sozialen und ökonomischen Verflechtungen (osteuropäisch-)jüdischer Pelzhändler in Leipzig auf lokaler und globaler Ebene. Schließlich lenkte Rebekka Denz (Berlin) die Aufmerksamkeit auf den bis heute kaum erforschten Bereich der Migrationsgeschichte jenseits der Metropolen. Gemeinsam mit der Gedenkstätte KZ-Außenlager Schillstraße in Braunschweig verfolgt Denz ein Projekt zur Geschichte der osteuropäisch-jüdischen Einwanderung ins Braunschweiger Land.

Im sich unmittelbar anschließenden fünften Panel diskutierte Christoph Schulte (Potsdam) mit den ReferentInnen *New Perspectives on German-Jewish Thought*. So fragte beispielsweise Sebastian Kunze (Erfurt) danach, inwieweit der hauptsächlich als politischer Aktivist bekannte Gustav Landauer auch als Intellektueller gelesen werden kann. Gilad Shenhav (Frankfurt am Main) präsentierte in seinem Vortrag theologische und philosophische Überlegungen zum Begriff des „Abgrundes" in Gerschom Scholems Werk. Ansgar Martins (Frankfurt am Main) schloss die Sektion mit seiner Untersuchung zu jüdischen Motiven und Gegenständen im Werk des deutsch-jüdischen Schriftstellers Siegfried Kracauer (1889–1966) ab.

Am Ende des zweiten Konferenztages fand ein Workshop unter der Leitung von Rebekka Denz (Berlin) und Judith Müller (Be'er Sheva) statt, in dem sich die TeilnehmerInnen und OrganisatorInnen über das Selbstverständnis sowie Unterschiede in den Fächern Judaistik/Jüdischen Studien in Israel und Deutschland austauschten. Die Diskussion wurde durch die Referentinnen aus Polen, Italien und der Ukraine um weitere europäische Perspektiven erweitert, die aufzeigten, dass die Jüdischen Studien in diesen Ländern im Hinblick auf Studien- und Forschungsmöglichkeiten sowie (Auslands-)Stipendien Nachholbedarf haben. Die Anwesenden waren sich einig, dass das Fach von einem Ausbau der transnationalen Vernetzung der WissenschaftlerInnen und Forschungsgegenstände und der wachsenden Interdisziplinarität nur profitieren kann. Dies bedeute für die Zukunft aber auch, die sephardischen Studien stärker miteinzubeziehen, die sowohl in Deutschland als auch in Israel gegenüber den aschkenasischen Studien marginalisiert sind.

Den Abschluss der dreitägigen Konferenz bildete das von Markus Krah (Potsdam) geleitete sechste Panel über kulturelle Transfers zwischen Osteuropa und den USA um die Jahrhundertwende. Binjamin Hunyadi (Jerusalem) lenkte den Fokus auf die jiddische Publizistik junger Anarchisten aus Osteuropa,

die sich, intellektuell stark beeinflusst von der deutschen Anarchiebewegung, in den USA und England formierten. In einer ebenfalls akteurszentrierten Studie untersucht Yael Levi (Jerusalem) die Anfänge hebräisch-und jiddischsprachiger Zeitungen in den USA in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts.

Die mittlerweile fünfte Nachwuchstagung, konzipiert als Gemeinschaftsprojekt der Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien e. V. und des Verbandes der Judaisten in Deutschland e. V., zeichnete sich insbesondere durch die gelungene Vernetzung junger WissenschaftlerInnen aus Europa und Israel aus. In den folgenden Jahren gilt es, diese mit Blick auf den englischsprachigen Raum weiter auszubauen.

Die Durchführung der Tagung wurde ermöglicht durch die finanzielle Unterstützung der Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach-Stiftung, der Potsdam Graduate School, des Lehrstuhls für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte der Universität Potsdam und der Buber-Rosenzweig-Stiftung.

Nancy Walter, Dresden

Contributors

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Bernd Fischer, Dr. phil., Universität Siegen, 1982; Professor of German at The Ohio State University since 1982; Department Chair, 1996–2008; visiting appointments at Essen, Hamburg, Siegen, and Case Western Reserve University. Editor of *The German Quarterly*, 1997–99. Recent book publications: *Transcultural German Studies: History, Theory, Analysis* (2017); *Ein anderer Blick – Saul Aschers politische Schriften* (2016); *Cultural Transformations of the Public Sphere*

(2014, with May Mergenthaler); *Heinrich von Kleist and Modernity* (2011, with Tim Mehigan); *A Companion to the Works of Heinrich von Kleist (*2010/2003).

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Markus Krah teaches Jewish Religious and Intellectual History at the School of Jewish Theology at University of Potsdam. He received his Ph. D. in Modern Jewish Studies from the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York. His research focuses on Jews and Judaism in the U. S., particularly in light of their entanglements with other Jewries. His first book is *American Jewry and the Re-Invention of the East European Jewish Past* (Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 2018). His current research project explores the transnational history of *Schocken Books, New York,* and its attempt to create a cultural Jewish canon for post-traditional Jews.

Annett Martini, Dr. phil., studierte Judaistik, Religionswissenschaft und Germanistik in Berlin und Jerusalem. Sie leitet das vom Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung finanzierte Forschungsprojekt „Die hebräischen Handschriften der Erfurter Sammlung als kulturhistorische Zeugen jüdischen Lebens im Mittelalter". Forschungsschwerpunkte sind u. a. die christliche Rezeption jüdischer Mystik in der Renaissance (*Yosef Giqatilla. The Book of Punctuation: Flavius Mithridates' Latin Translation, the Hebrew Text, and an English Version.* Edited with Introduction and Notes by Annett Martini. Turin 2010) und die Konzeptionen rituellen Schreibens im Mittelalter.

Michael A. Meyer is the Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Jewish History Emeritus at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. Among other works, he is the author of *The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity*

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PaRDeS, die Zeitschrift der *Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien e. V.*, erforscht die fruchtbare kulturelle Vielfalt des Judentums sowie ihre Berührungspunkte zur nichtjüdischen Umwelt in unterschiedlichen Bereichen. Daneben dient die Zeitschrift als Forum zur Positionierung der Fächer Jüdische Studien und Judaistik innerhalb des wissenschaftlichen Diskurses sowie zur Diskussion ihrer historischen und gesellschaftlichen Verantwortung.

PaRDeS, the journal of the *German Association for Jewish Studies*, aims at exploring the fruitful and multifarious cultures of Judaism as well as their relations to their environment within diverse areas of research. In addition, the journal promotes Jewish Studies within academic discourse and reflects on its historic and social responsibilities.

ISSN 1614-6492
ISBN 978-3-86956-440-1