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ISSUES AND TASKS OF JEWISH HISTORIOGRAPHY.

By ALEXANDER MARX, PH. D.



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## AIMS AND TASKS OF JEWISH HISTORIOGRAPHY.

BY ALEXANDER MARX, PH. D.

It is nearly a century since Leopold Zunz in his famous essay, *Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur*,<sup>1</sup> which inaugurated his great scholarly career, drew in bold outlines the plan for the structure of the science of Judaism, a plan which was yet unrealized when reprinted about sixty years later<sup>2</sup> and which to a large extent is still unrealized. The publication of his essay in 1818 may be said to mark the beginning of the modern science of Judaism. It is interesting that in drawing up this plan Zunz left out Jewish history altogether; to this subject he intended to devote himself later, but meanwhile was anticipated by Isaac Marcus Jost, who in 1820 began the publication of his great history, the appearance of which made Zunz turn to other tasks. The fact that we are gathered to-day at the twenty-fifth annual meeting of our Society suggested to me the idea of outlining in a general way the task confronting the Jewish historian, summing up at the same time as briefly as I can the principal achievements of the last century.

Jost's *Geschichte der Israeliten*<sup>3</sup> in nine volumes is the first real treatment of the subject; for the work of his predecessor, Basnage, can in no way be compared with it. It is the conscientious work of a careful and industrious scholar who

<sup>1</sup> Berlin, 1818. The bibliographical notes are added here merely to serve as illustrations, and claim in no way to be complete. This explains the fact that the names of many prominent historians such as Isidore Loeb and Meier Kayserling nowhere appear in the following pages.

<sup>2</sup> Zunz, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin, 1875, vol. 1, pp. 1-31.

<sup>3</sup> Berlin, 1820-29.



aimed at absolute objectivity and tried to master all the accessible material. His work is naturally antiquated now and can only here and there be consulted by the specialist with profit. In his later, shorter histories,<sup>4</sup> Jost himself often corrected his earlier views. The rich material collected in the three parts of the tenth volume of his larger history which he published almost thirty years after the completion of the ninth volume<sup>5</sup> still retains its value as a contemporary source for the modern historian.

The article *Juden* in Ersch and Gruber's *Encyklopaedie*<sup>6</sup> by Selig Cassel, which covers over 230 closely printed quarto pages marks the next great advance. Here for the first and only time political history is treated independently of literary history, and many new sources are consulted to complete the picture of the condition of the Jews in the various countries. The work is of lasting value and is perhaps the best of the productions of this fertile writer. It shows less of that ingenuity which found expression in the numberless wild hypotheses scattered in the works of this author, especially those of his later years when Saul had become Paul. His enormously wide reading which often makes the perusal of his works wearisome served him in good stead in this instance.

All of these predecessors were thrown into the shade by the great historian of Jewry, Hirsch Graetz.<sup>7</sup> While Jost was characterized by objectivity, Graetz is subjective through and through. His passionate partisanship in passing judgment on

<sup>4</sup> *Allgemeine Geschichte des israelitischen Volkes*, Berlin, 1832, 2 vols.; *Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Secten*, Leipzig, 1857-59, 3 vols.

<sup>5</sup> *Neuere Geschichte der Israeliten*, Berlin, 1846-47.

<sup>6</sup> Leipzig, 1850, Section II, vol. xxvii, pp. 1-238.

<sup>7</sup> *Geschichte der Juden*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1853-76, 11 vols. Graetz published a second edition of vols. iii-x, a third of iii, v-vi, viii-ix, and a fourth of iii. Since his death ii, part 1, and xi appeared in a second, iv-v in a fourth and vii in a third edition.

the central figures of the past, his strong Jewish feeling which makes no concessions to the non-Jewish reader, whereas in the case of Jost a certain apologetic tendency is clearly noticeable, and the vividness of his style makes his history exceedingly interesting reading, while his wide learning and originality render his work indispensable to the scholar. It is an achievement which will not so easily be displaced by another, even though based on fuller sources, for it reflects so much of the rich personality of the gifted author, and presents so many brilliant hypotheses that every successor will have to take it into consideration.

But such a strong subjective note is bound to have its serious drawbacks. The author has his pronounced prejudices to which he gives unrestricted vent. He has *e. g.*, no sympathy with and no understanding for mysticism, and the mere fact that any writer is mystically inclined is in his eyes a sufficient warrant for condemning him. He equally dislikes Polish Judaism, and Polish Jews, as a rule, find no favor in his eyes, whatever be their merits. His treatment of their history is perhaps the most unsatisfactory part of the whole work, although, to be perfectly fair, we must not forget that he had less preliminary work to draw upon for this period than for most of the others. But it seems that he did not care to devote too much research to this branch of Jewry. Graetz's book not only means an advance in the careful study of new sources and the fresh and independent examination of the old ones, it also offers most thorough and methodical discussions of mooted points which, taken by themselves, are masterpieces of historical criticism. It is very much to be regretted that the notes and excursuses which constitute one-fifth of the book and give it its scientific background are entirely omitted in the English translation of this standard work. Graetz corrected his book in the later editions in many details, but he did not incorporate all the additions and corrections resulting from later investiga-



tions, not even some of those published by his own pupils, among others, in the *Monatsschrift* of which he was the editor.

In the volumes of the work which have appeared in new editions since the author's death as well as in the Hebrew and Russian translations an effort has been made to bring the work up to date by adding in the footnotes references to later investigations. As to the parts dealing with the history of the Jews in Eastern Europe, the Hebrew translator, Saul Pinchas Rabinovitz, found himself compelled to enlarge and rewrite those chapters.

Thus we see that it is not easy to keep this standard book of Jewish history abreast of modern research into the history of the Jews in various parts of the world. Still, it is not at all likely that another comprehensive history will be written in the near future and it is therefore highly desirable that as far as possible, Graetz's work be kept up to date. Future editors would do well to follow the example of Bury in his famous edition of Gibbon. By supplying additional notes they would give us at least one source of information to draw upon on subjects or periods in which we are not specialists. These notes also ought to draw attention to the not infrequent cases in which the author records as an assured historical fact what is only a subjective hypothesis, since the sources quoted hardly warrant his conclusions.

The political history of the Jews after the loss of their national independence became, as the Middle Ages proceeded, more and more a history of persecutions. This is a painful and dreary subject, proud though we may be of the steadfastness displayed by our forefathers in all their sufferings to which, as Judah Halevi put it,<sup>8</sup> they could so easily have made an end by pronouncing a short formula of conversion. To relieve the monotonous description of their agonies we, therefore, have become accustomed to turn to their spiritual activity;

<sup>8</sup> Kusari iv, 23.

and thus literary history has come to take up perhaps undue space in our histories.

Now, though we cannot well imagine a Jewish history in which the greatest men Judaism has produced would be passed over without mention, still their literary merits will have to be assigned much less space in a general history of the Jews, just as the great men who formerly constituted the main subject of historiography have to a large extent yielded their places to the common people from whose ranks they had risen and whose life has now become the object of our investigations. Literary history will have to be superseded by constitutional, social and economic history. The description of the ordinary life of the people, their legal status and their economic activities will not only relieve the dreary picture of the periodically recurring persecutions, but also help to explain the causes of these persecutions and contribute towards a better understanding of the course of events. Wilhelm Roscher<sup>9</sup> in his famous article on the position of the Jews in the Middle Ages from the point of view of economic development ascribes the unhappy condition of the Jews in the later Middle Ages to the jealousy of the commercial classes in the cities. The latter wanted to free themselves from the tutelage of the Jews who up to that time had had the monopoly of trade in their hands. Georg Caro, on the other hand, maintains that the Church-law is mainly responsible for their degradation and that they were drawn into the whirlpool of the continuous

<sup>9</sup> *Die Stellung der Juden im Mittelalter, betrachtet vom Standpunkt der allgemeinen Handelspolitik in Zeitschrift für die gesammte Staatswissenschaft*, Tübingen, 1875, vol. xxxi, pp. 503-26 (reprinted in *Ansichten der Volkswirtschaft*, 3d edition, Leipzig, 1878, vol. ii, pp. 321-54). Roscher's view has been enlarged upon in Hoeniger's able paper *Zur Geschichte der Juden Deutschlands im frühen Mittelalter*, in *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*, Braunschweig, 1887, vol. 1, pp. 65-97, see especially p. 78 et seq.



struggle between the municipalities and the smaller nobility. In this struggle their financial support in the form of loans strengthened the nobility with the result that the Jews going counter to the trend of the time incurred the merciless hatred of the guilds, which were striving to obtain control of the cities and predominance over the nobility.<sup>10</sup> Whichever theory we accept, one thing is evident: Entirely new emphasis has to be laid on the economic question in connection with the general history of the Jews in order to reach a clearer understanding of the social and economic development of the Jews in mediaeval Europe.

I need not say that these remarks are not meant to belittle the importance of the history of Jewish literature; on the contrary, without it an understanding of the development not only of Judaism but of the cultural conditions of the Jews in general is utterly impossible. Furthermore the spiritual activity of our forefathers is certainly in many respects more deserving of admiration than their financial transactions. But literary history ought to be studied by itself, not as a mere section of the general history of the Jews. Its less important phenomena have no proper place in it and only the great lines of development ought to form part of it.

But before we shall be able to substitute these economic and social facts for literary history, we first must do the preliminary work that will enable us to write a history along these new lines. This work, however, is still in its initial stages.

<sup>10</sup> *Die Juden des Mittelalters in ihrer wirtschaftlichen Betätigung*, in *Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Breslau, 1904, vol. xlviii, pp. 423-39, 576-603, see especially p. 588 ff.; 599 ff.; see also Julius Guttmann, *Die wirtschaftliche und sociale Bedeutung der Juden im Mittelalter* in *ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 257-90 (1907); Ignatz Schipper, *Anfänge des Kapitalismus bei den abendländischen Juden im früheren Mittelalter*, Wien, 1907, reprinted from *Zeitschrift für Volkswirtschaft, Sozialpolitik und Verwaltung*, vol. xv (1906).



Researches in detailed phases of the history of the Jews did not stop with Graetz's monumental work. When the structure had been erected students naturally turned to the interior decoration, *i. e.*, the investigation of the minutiae of the historical and literary development in various countries, provinces and cities, etc. Through these studies the knowledge of the social and economic as well as of the legal status of the Jews in various parts naturally made considerable progress. Some more comprehensive studies like Guedemann's history of education and culture in several countries,<sup>11</sup> to mention only one example, contributed towards broadening the scope of Jewish history, but there still remains an immense amount of labor to be done in this field and, moreover, to be done systematically in order to enable us to take up once more Jewish history as a whole.

When these special investigations will have reached a certain degree of completeness, a new comprehensive history of the Jews may be written at some future day such as will be worthy of its great subject. But unlike its predecessors this history, in all likelihood, will be the result of the coöperation of a group of scholars, who will have specialized in the history of various countries and periods and will be in a position to illuminate the course of Jewish history in its relation to the general conditions of the particular time and place. Only thus can we gain the true perspective, which will enable us to

<sup>11</sup> *Das jüdische Unterrichtswesen während der spanisch-arabischen Periode*, Wien, 1873; *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Cultur der abendländischen Juden während des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit*, Wien, 1880-88, 3 vols., dealing with Germany and Italy. For the former Guedemann had a predecessor in A. Berliner, *Aus dem inneren Leben der deutschen Juden im Mittelalter*, Berlin, 1871 (second enlarged edition, *ibid.*, 1900), one of the most suggestive writings of the author. See also, Israel Abrahams, "Jewish Life in the Middle Ages," Philadelphia, 1896.

interpret correctly the facts and events of the Jewish past. For Jewish history offers on a smaller scale the same difficulties which to-day make it virtually impossible for one individual historian to undertake the writing of a universal history. The Jews have lived in every country, and the indispensable knowledge of the conditions and the history of all these countries cannot be expected from any historian in our time of specialization, the more so as in the case of some countries our knowledge of their general history is not quite adequate. The future Jewish history, then, will have to make connections with general history and the great advance made in the methods applied to historiography in general will benefit it in the fullest measure. But a very great deal will have to be done before we can seriously take up this task of raising the study of Jewish history to the height attained in other fields of historical research and making it an organic part of the history of the world.

The basis of all historical investigation is free access to all the sources. To attain this end large collections of historical records for all the countries of the world are necessary and many such collections have actually been published or are in the course of preparation. This task cannot be undertaken by individuals if the necessary completeness and uniformity are to be attained, and for this reason all such series of publications have been brought out under the supervision of academies of the respective countries, which direct the work and provide the necessary funds for traveling, photographs, copies, assistants, etc. I need only refer to the missions entrusted to Adolf Neubauer<sup>13</sup> for the preparation of the two half-volumes

<sup>13</sup> See his reports on his missions to Spain, Southern France, Italy, Eastern France, Switzerland and Germany in *Archives des missions scientifiques*, 1869, pp. 423-35; 1873, pp. 551-75. For another case of support of Jewish studies by the French government see note 32, *infra*.

of the literary history of France devoted to Jewish writers," which led him through the libraries of England, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Austria and Russia. We, unfortunately, lack an organization that could take the place of an academy and could by means of financial grants and wise guidance help to place the science of Judaism gradually on an equal plane with the progress of other studies in modern times. Only such an academy could inaugurate important serial publications necessary in various branches of Jewish scholarship which must be based on an exhaustive use of the available material and on uniform modern principles without curbing the individuality of the collaborators. Only in such a way could we hope, in the special subject under discussion, to get truly satisfactory collections of sources. An academic body, such as I have in mind has, unfortunately, but little chance of coming into being at the present time. I venture to suggest, therefore, a project for the speedy realization of which there is unfortunately very little hope, and what may actually be done must needs fall far short of the goal to be attained.

The sources of Jewish history are of widely different character. What occupies the largest place in similar collections of other peoples, chronicles and historical accounts, is not very largely represented in the literature of the "people of the Book."<sup>13</sup> Somehow, the historical sense was not very strongly developed in mediaeval Jewry. But those chronicles which have come down to us ought to be made accessible in uniform critical editions<sup>14</sup> with full scientific apparatus. Similarly a

<sup>13</sup> Renan [-Neubauer], *Les Rabbins français du commencement du quatorzième siècle*, Paris, 1877; *Les Ecrivains juifs français du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1893; reprinted from vols. xxvii and xxxi of the *Histoire littéraire*.

<sup>14</sup> See Steinschneider, *Geschichtsliteratur der Juden, I, Bibliographie der Hebraeischen Schriften*, Frankfurt a. M., 1905.

<sup>15</sup> Neubauer, "Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles," Oxford, 1887-95, 2 vols., is not intended to present a complete collection nor are all the texts edited in a satisfactory manner.



full collection of elegies and other religious poems containing historical references ought to be brought together in chronological order. The old minute-books of important communities are another rich and valuable source which has nowhere, perhaps, been fully utilized. If we think, *e. g.*, of the important extracts from the *Pinkasim* (minutes) of the Cracow and Posen communities published in various places<sup>14</sup> and the light they throw on the Council of the Four Lands, that central body which for nearly two centuries directed all the affairs of Polish and Lithuanian Jewry, we at once realize how important it would be to have a complete edition of all these materials as far as they have been preserved. But even the few remnants of the official minute-book of that Council itself which were discovered by Dubnow<sup>15</sup> have remained unpublished up to the present day.

Systematic examination of another class of sources, deeds and documents, enables us to gain an insight into the commercial activities of the Jews and gives an entirely new aspect to their economic history. The history of English Jewry of the preexpulsion period has had to be entirely rewritten since we have become more intimately acquainted with the masses

<sup>14</sup> Wettstein gave extracts from the Cracow minute books in *Ozar ha-Sifrut*, 1892, vol. iv, pp. 577-642; *Ha-Eschkol*, 1898, vol. i, pp. 161-76; 1899, vol. ii, pp. 161-76; *Luach Schaaschuim*, 1902, pp. 193-214; *Meassef*, Petersburg, 1902, pp. 7-78; *Kaufmann Gedenkbuch*, Breslau, 1901, Hebrew part, pp. 69-84. From the Posen *Pinkas* Perles published important extracts in *Monatsschrift*, 1867, pp. 108-11, 152-4, 222-6, 304-8, 343-8; and Louis Lewin in *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Literarischen Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt a. M., 1904, vol. ii, pp. 1-26; 1905, vol. iii, pp. 79-130.

<sup>15</sup> See Dubnow in the Sokolow Jubilee Volume, Warsaw, 1904, p. 250, note; "The Jewish Encyclopedia," vol. iv, pp. 307-8, with facsimile of a page. Dubnow is also publishing the Minute Book of the Lithuanian Council for the years 1623-1761 as an appendix to his periodical *Yevreiskaya Starina*, 1909 *et seq.*

of information buried in the Exchequer<sup>18</sup> which even now are by no means fully accessible. Again the private correspondence of Jews which has come down to us is frequently of very great interest for the study of conditions and adds much to our knowledge of times and persons. We are but rarely in the fortunate position of possessing collections of letters from any particular circle which taken together give us more than a casual glimpse into the life of a group of people, such as the Judæo-German Gratz letters described at our last meeting which surely deserve publication.<sup>19</sup> How much new material of a purely historical character we may gain from private letters which a kind fate has saved from destruction can best be seen from some of those which were published from the inexhaustible treasures of the Geniza, recovered through our revered master, Solomon Schechter.<sup>20</sup> It is very much to be regretted

<sup>18</sup> See Charles Gross, "The Exchequer of the Jews of England in the Middle Ages," in *Papers read at the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition*, London, 1888, pp. 170-230; Joseph Jacobs, "The Jews of Angevin England," New York, 1893; J. M. Rigg, "Select Pleas, Starrs and Other Records from the Rolls of the Exchequer of the Jews, 1220-1284," London, 1902; "Calendar of the Plea Rolls of the Exchequer of the Jews," i, Henry III, 1218-72, 1905; ii, Edward I, 1273-75, 1910.

<sup>19</sup> See *Publications*, *supra*, No. 22, p. xxii; *ibid.*, No. 25, p. xlii; for an interesting older collection see also Alfred Landau and Bernhard Wachstein, *Jüdische Privatbriefe aus dem Jahre 1619*, Wien, 1911, a batch of over 50 letters by Jews of Prague to Co-religionists at Vienna which were intercepted by the authorities at the time and deposited in the Vienna archives, where they were recently discovered.

<sup>20</sup> Thus Schechter's discovery of the letter of Hushiel, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. xi, pp. 643-50, disposed of the legend of the dissemination of Jewish learning in Northern Africa by emissaries of the Babylonian academies and showed, on the other hand, the influence of Italy and, indirectly, of Palestine on these schools. The letter published by Cowley, *ibid.*, vol. xviii, pp. 400-403, to quote another notable example, threw a great deal of light on the relations of Spain to Babylonia.



that no one has seriously thought of undertaking a comprehensive publication of the letters and documents found in the Geniza which would again bring together these *disjecta membra* which, after having rested in the dust for so many centuries, are now dispersed through so many libraries and can only be made to yield their rich information in full when they are again placed together in systematic order. Even though many of them are incomplete and full of puzzles, since we find allusions frequently to facts entirely unknown to us, a complete *corpus* of these texts will immensely increase our knowledge of conditions during the period of transition when the center of Judaism gradually shifted from East to West. We will, then, perhaps be granted a deeper insight into the private life of the people during this epoch for which we formerly had no sources whatever than we possess now even for periods opened up more fully by historical research. Moreover, this work does not devolve on the Jewry of any particular land, as is the case with the examination of archives which of course will have to be carried on by scholars of the respective countries—just as we do not expect others to publish for us the records found on this side of the Atlantic. These Geniza MSS., however, were—fortunately—carried away from the places the past of which they reveal to us and we cannot depend on Egyptian Jewry, not to speak of communities long ago destroyed like that of Kairovan, to take up this task.

For a similar reason outsiders will have to help and are actually helping<sup>21</sup> in the investigation of the archives of Spain.

<sup>21</sup> See Joseph Jacobs, "An Inquiry into the Sources of the History of the Jews in Spain," London, 1894; and especially Jean Régéné, *Catalogue des actes de Jaime I, Pedro III, et Alfonso III, rois d' Aragon, concernant les Juifs (1213-91)*, Paris, 1911-14, reprinted from the *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 1910-14; the third part dealing with the reign of Alfonso was interrupted through the suspension of the *Revue* during the war; so far 1845 entries have been published reaching up to the end of 1287 and giving us some



That country, from which the Jews were expelled over four centuries ago, possesses enormous stores of documents dealing with the Jews, consisting not only of records of the Inquisition relating to the Marannos which after all are of only secondary importance to us, but also about the earlier period. A very great deal has been done in Spain in recent years by non-Jewish scholars like Bofarull<sup>22</sup> and Miret<sup>23</sup> and above all the president of the Madrid Royal Academy of History, Fidel Fita,<sup>24</sup> whom we have the distinction to count among the honorary members

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idea of the wealth of information to be gleaned from the Aragonian archives. In 1893 Heinrich Finke, in *Römische Quartalschrift*, pp. 229 et seq., wrote: "Die Registerbände der aragonesischen Könige in Barcelona beginnen mit dem Jahre 1237 und enthalten bis in den Beginn der Neuzeit hinein über 6000 Bände mit über eine Million Urkunden . . . sie sind eine geradezu unergründliche Fundgrube für die Geschichte der spanischen Juden."

<sup>22</sup> Francisco de Bofarull y Sans, *Los Judios en el territorio de Barcelona (siglo X al XIII). Reinado de Jaime I, 1213-76*, Barcelona, 1911, based on a large collection of documents brought together by his father, who preceded him as archivist of the Crown of Aragon. A few similar articles have appeared in the publications of the Barcelona Academy of Belles-Lettres.

<sup>23</sup> Joaquin Miret y Sans et Moïse Schwab, *Documents sur les Juifs Catalans au XI<sup>e</sup>, XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* in *Revue des Études Juives*, 1914, vol. lxxviii, pp. 49-83, 174-98. *Nouveaux documents sur les Juifs Barcelonnais au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* and *Documents de Juifs Barcelonnais au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Madrid, 1916, both reprinted from the *Boletin de la Real Academia de la Historia*; some other texts he printed in Spanish publications.

<sup>24</sup> Mostly in the *Boletin* of the Madrid Academy and reprinted in the eight volumes of his *Estudios Historicos*, Madrid, 1882-7 and *La España Hebrea, ibid.*, 1890-98, 2 vols. For the sake of completeness the earlier important contributions of José Amador de los Rios and Francisco Fernandez y Gonzalez must be noted. In this connection the contributions of Mendes dos Remedios for the history of the Portuguese Jews have to be mentioned: *Os Judeus em Portugal*, Coimbra, 1895; his reprint of Usque's extremely rare *Consolaçam à tribulaçoens de Israel, ibid.*, 1906, etc.

of our Society and whose work in this field merits the highest praise. The appointment of Dr. Abraham S. Yahuda as Professor at the University of Madrid, will greatly contribute to further these studies and will make it easier for foreign scholars to get the information they may need. The important publications of Spanish historians are scattered over a great many periodicals which are devoted to various local historical researches, and are not always accessible abroad, and unless they happen to be excerpted in the *Revue des Études Juives* they remain unknown to the majority of Jewish scholars. The same remark applies to some extent to Italy where lately the interest of the people in the history of their past seems to have greatly increased. Umberto Cassuto's valuable bibliography of Jewish studies in Italy for the last fifty years<sup>25</sup> records a very large number of historical monographs printed in all kinds of inaccessible and obscure local periodicals, many of which became first known to us through his list. This, by the way, is a good example of the urgent need for a comprehensive bibliography of all publications, books and articles, dealing with Jewish historical subjects.<sup>26</sup>

Closely related to these documents to be gleaned from the archives are the references that may be gathered by a systematic examination from the legalistic Hebrew literature of the various

<sup>25</sup> Umberto Cassuto, *Gli studi Giudaici in Italia negli ultimi cinquant'anni (1861-1911)*, I *Bibliografia*, Rome, 1913, reprinted from the *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, vol. v. Much valuable material is found in the ten volumes of the *Rivista Israelitica* of Florence.

<sup>26</sup> It is very much to be regretted that the second volume of Steinschneider's *Geschichtsliteratur* (see note 14, *supra*) has not been published; even if not quite complete it would offer invaluable help to the student. [Freidus], "List of works relating to the history and condition of the Jews in various countries," New York 1914, limited though it is in its scope as a catalogue of the respective divisions of the New York Public Library, is a very useful beginning.



countries, especially the *Responsa*. That these occasionally yield new facts of a purely historical character was pointed out long ago.<sup>27</sup> How much we can learn from them for the economic history was shown a few years ago in a thorough treatise on the money-transactions of the German Jews prior to 1350,<sup>28</sup> and it is greatly to be regretted that the otherwise excellent recent economic history of the Jews by Caro<sup>29</sup> did not draw upon these rich sources of undoubted authenticity.

Tumular inscriptions<sup>30</sup> and similar monuments cannot become so important a source for Jewish history as they are for many other branches of general history, since a very large number of them was destroyed during the persecutions and very often the stones were used as building material.<sup>31</sup> Still those

<sup>27</sup> M. Wiener, *Ueber den Gewinn, den die Geschichtswissenschaft aus dem Studium des religionsgesetzlichen (halachischen) Theils der neuhebräischen Literatur des Mittelalters zu erwarten hat*, in *Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. xix, pp. 507-21; Isaak Unna in Wohlgemuth's *Jeschurun*, Berlin, 1914, vol. 1, pp. 397-402, 426-34; see also Neuman in *Publications, supra*, No. 22, pp. 61-70; I. Elfenbein, in *Students' Annual*, New York, 1915, vol. ii, pp. 102-21.

<sup>28</sup> M. Hoffmann, *Der Geldhandel der deutschen Juden während des Mittelalters bis zum Jahre 1350*, Leipzig, 1910.

<sup>29</sup> *Social- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Juden im Mittelalter und der Neuzeit*, Leipzig, 1908, vol. 1.

<sup>30</sup> See the bibliography of Steinschneider in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. xvi, pp. 373-80, vol. xvii, pp. 564-70, which might be considerably enlarged.

<sup>31</sup> In April, 1345, the citizens of Liegnitz, and in September of the same year those of Breslau received permission to utilize the tombstones of the Jewish cemeteries as building materials (M. Brann, *Geschichte der Juden in Schlesien*, pp. 47-48); in 1438, after the expulsion of the Jews from Mayence the same happened there (Salfeld, *Zeitschrift für Hebräische Bibliographie*, vol. vi, p. 17). For many more examples see Zunz, *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*, Berlin, 1845, pp. 395-401. Of the *circa* 100 tombstones used for the fortifications of Erfurt in 1845, of which Zunz speaks, p. iv, some came to light again in 1881; see Kroner, *Die Erfurter hebräischen*



which have come down to us frequently prove of great assistance in fixing dates, etc. But only those of France and Spain were collected and that by the indefatigable Moïse Schwab<sup>32</sup> with the support of the French government.

Besides these distinctly Jewish sources references to Jews in mediaeval chronicles and other works are a most important and indispensable source of information. They have to be collected and discussed with a critical estimate of the trustworthiness of the respective authors. If carried through, *e. g.*, with respect to the Church fathers, Byzantine and Arabic authors, such an undertaking will furnish fresh material of the utmost value.

The laws enacted concerning—mostly, against—the Jews should likewise be gathered and carefully examined in the light of the general legislation of the particular country and period in order to get a true estimate of their significance. In this connection a comparative study must be made of the legislation of the various countries and constant attention must be paid to the Church legislation. The frequent differences between the policies of the Popes which find expression in their *bullae* and *brevia* on the one hand and the enactments of the Church Councils on the other must be carefully considered.<sup>33</sup> Up till now only a small beginning has been made in the collection of

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*Grabschriften*, in *Monatsschrift*, vol. xxxiii (1884), p. 351. In May, 1914, thirty-three inscriptions were found in Rothenburg a. d. Tauber; see *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*, January 14, 1916, pp. 19-20.

<sup>32</sup> *Rapport sur les Inscriptions Hébraïques de la France*, Paris, 1904; *Rapport sur les Inscriptions Hébraïques de l'Espagne*, *ibid.*, 1907, both reprinted from the *Nouvelles Archives des Missions Scientifiques*, vols. xii, xiv.

<sup>33</sup> L. Erler's treatment of the subject in *Archiv für Katholisches Kirchenrecht*, vols. xlviii, l-iii, is outspokenly anti-Semitic in its tendency. A careful monograph on a special period is Max Simonsohn, *Die kirchliche Judengesetzgebung im Zeitalter der Reformationskonzilien von Konstanz und Basel*, Breslau, 1912.

Papal documents<sup>34</sup> concerning the Jews and very little has been done in investigating the details of Church legislation. The Roman law which was one of the basic elements of all later legislation relating to the Jews has been dealt with exhaustively in Juster's book<sup>35</sup> on the conditions of the Jews under the Roman empire in their legal, economic and social aspects, one of the most important contributions in our field in recent years. The principles underlying the mediaeval legislation concerning the Jews were briefly discussed in the introduction to Scherer's monumental work<sup>36</sup> on the legal status of the Jews in the Austrian states, which has remained incomplete owing to the author's death. For the study of the legal status of the German Jews in the Middle Ages Stobbe's classic book<sup>37</sup> marked a great advance, as its author started out from the history of mediaeval German constitutional law and was attracted to our subject by the rich sources he met in his studies. But the material that has come to light since, makes a new comprehensive treatment of the subject most desirable.

The need of systematic collections of the sources of Jewish history naturally has been felt by many and at various times Jewish societies have made efforts in this direction, but in every case they stopped before accomplishing the task they had

<sup>34</sup> Moritz Stern, *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Stellung der Päpste zu den Juden*, Kiel, 1893, vol. i; *ibid.*, 1895, vol. ii, 1. *Päpstliche Bullen gegen die Blutbeschuldigung*, Berlin, 1893. Konrad Eubel, *Zu dem Verhalten der Päpste zu den Juden*, in *Römische Quartalschrift*, Rome, 1899, vol. xiii, pp. 29-42 (*regesta* for the years 1379-1450).

<sup>35</sup> *Les Juifs dans l'empire Romain, leur condition juridique, économique et sociale*, Paris, 1914, 2 vols.

<sup>36</sup> *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Judenrechtes im Mittelalter, I, Die Rechtsverhältnisse der Juden in den deutsch-österreichischen Ländern. Mit einer Einleitung über die Principien der Judengesetzgebung in Europa während des Mittelalters*, Leipzig, 1901.

<sup>37</sup> *Die Juden in Deutschland während des Mittelalters in politischer, sozialer und rechtlicher Beziehung*, Braunschweig, 1866.



set out for. The *Fontes rerum Judaicarum of the Société des Études Juives* did not extend beyond the first volume, Théodore Reinach's valuable collection of texts of Greek and Roman writers relating to Judaism, which appeared over twenty years ago.<sup>32</sup> The Latin and Greek inscriptions<sup>33</sup> and the legal texts which were to form the succeeding volumes never appeared. Important as are the contributions we owe to the Historical Commission for the History of German Jews, we are waiting in vain for the historical poems and the *responsa* material included in its plan and, what is worse, the *Regesten*<sup>34</sup> which are an indispensable help to the student have never been continued beyond the year 1273. For a Jewish geography, towards which the maps in "The Jewish Encyclopedia" are a useful contribution, we have Gross's *Gallia Judaica*<sup>35</sup> which, however, includes only places mentioned in Hebrew literature, omitting those places in which Jews are mentioned as living in Latin and French documents. A similar work on a more comprehensive scale dealing with Germany was announced as ready to appear at the outbreak of the war.

The "Plan for coöperative work in collecting material for encyclopaedic studies in Jewish history and literature" outlined by Prof. Gotthard Deutsch ten years ago<sup>36</sup> provides particularly for the gathering of sources for modern history and could easily be made to include full supplements to a

<sup>32</sup> *Textes d' auteurs grecs et romains relatifs au Judaïsme*, Paris, 1895.

<sup>33</sup> See Seymour de Ricci, in "The Jewish Encyclopedia," vol. ix, pp. 471-5; Johann Oehler, *Epigraphische Beiträge zur Geschichte des Judentums*, in *Monatsschrift*, vol. llii (1909) pp. 292-302, 443-52, 525-38.

<sup>34</sup> Julius Aronius, *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden im fränkischen und deutschen Reiche bis zum Jahre 1273*, Berlin, 1887-1902.

<sup>35</sup> Paris, 1897.

<sup>36</sup> "Yearbook, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1906, vol. xvi, pp. 241-50; 1907, vol. xvii, pp. 259-70.



bibliography of Jewish history, should such a bibliography be compiled in the future.

Thus far I have emphasized those tasks which can be carried out in a fully satisfactory manner only by the coöperation of bodies of scholars: collection of chronicles, letters, deeds and documents, inscriptions as well as references in non-Jewish literature and in legislation; further a Jewish geography of the various countries incorporating all the information about the spread of Jewry and giving the dates of all Jewish settlements. On the basis of all this material *Regesta* ought to be arranged, after a critical examination of all the accounts so as to form the foundation for the exhaustive histories of the Jews in the different countries and for the future general history of the Jews. These ideal plans, as I said before, could only be carried out expeditiously under the supervision of an academy which we do not have and for the creation of which there is hardly any prospect. This work will, therefore, have to be undertaken gradually and on a much more modest scale. It will finally, I think, have to be executed somewhat along these lines and, therefore the formulation of these plans may perhaps not be entirely superfluous. I may add that a periodical devoted to Jewish history exclusively, which would make it its function to present a summary of all contributions in its field in whatever language they appear, would give a powerful impetus to historical studies. By this means the articles in Russian, Polish, Hungarian, Roumanian, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, etc., would become generally accessible.

This is, of course only one of the many tasks of the Jewish historian, although perhaps for the moment the most important one. But it is evident that all this work, after all, would only have a preliminary character and would certainly not attract larger circles to take an interest in Jewish history if carried on purely with an eye to producing such source collections. No one will find it desirable that in the study of Jewish history we should resign all creative activity for a long time in

order to enable a later generation to harvest the seed we are sowing. Furthermore, such collections if carried on mechanically can never be fully satisfactory. Even if we make up our minds that preparation of the material is our most urgent need, the investigation of historical problems will have to go on as before. If I may use a practical illustration: Since the question of calling a synod is coming up so frequently, a thorough treatise on the synods which convened in Talmudic and mediæval times would be extremely timely and welcome, just as was the important paper of Max J. Kohler and Simon Wolf on the Jewish question before the Berlin Congress, which forms No. 24 of our *Publications*. We need monographs on numberless subjects before we can do justice to the larger tasks; and it is of the greatest importance that from time to time the history of a period or a country be written summing up the results reached after a certain amount of research on that subject. Although it may be incomplete and tentative, it is necessary in order to prevent us from losing sight of the large aspects and to prepare the proper setting for the details which we have to investigate so often and which are very apt to assume undue importance in our eyes, a danger to which the local historians so often succumb. The labors of Albert M. Friedenberg, our industrious and enthusiastic corresponding secretary, who is engaged in sifting the material accumulated in the twenty-five volumes of our *Publications* and on the basis of this material is preparing a history of the Jews of America, now appearing in serial parts in *The American Hebrew*, cannot be commended too highly.<sup>43</sup> It is to be hoped that we will get this history soon in book form with the indispensable references to the sources.

Owing to lack of time I may perhaps have given the impression that the progress of Jewish historiography since

<sup>43</sup> Beginning January 5, 1917, *et seq.*

Graetz has not in many respects been very great. This is far from my mind. I need only point to comprehensive books like Schürer's history<sup>44</sup> or the two works on the history of the Jews in Rome<sup>45</sup> to show how false such an impression would be and how vast an amount has been accomplished. The monographs on the history of cities and sometimes provinces of France, Germany, Poland and other countries are very numerous, and many of these contain much new material. Some important contributions to family histories have appeared, biographies of scholars and statesmen have been undertaken, in short all branches of history have found interested contributors. But most of the efforts are sporadic and we lack coherence in our work and as a rule encouragement is conspicuous by its absence; otherwise an important contribution like Stern's collection of the Papal documents could not have stopped after the issue of two parts. What we owe to private initiative is often very considerable; one only has to think, *e. g.*, of the collection of Sicilian documents by the brothers Lagumina,<sup>46</sup> of which three bulky volumes have appeared, or the sources for the history of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia by Bondy and Dvorsky<sup>47</sup> and Joseph Jacobs' "Jews of Angevin

<sup>44</sup> *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, 4th edition, Leipzig, 1901-11, 3 vols. Graetz, in the later editions of volume iii, made use of the first edition of Schürer, which had appeared in 1874 in one volume.

<sup>45</sup> A. Berliner, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom von der ältesten Zeit bis zur Gegenwart*, Frankfurt, a. M., 1893, 2 vols.; H. Vogelstein and Paul Rieger, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom*, Berlin, 1895-6, 2 vols.

<sup>46</sup> *Codice diplomatico dei Giudei di Sicilia raccolto e pubblicato dai fratelli sacerdoti Bartolomeo e Giuseppe Lagumina*, Palermo, 1884-1909, 3 vols. so far published.

<sup>47</sup> *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien von 906-1620*, Prag, 1906.



England.”<sup>48</sup> Still the work before us is enormous and the number of trained collaborators is limited. This labor is of vital interest, however, and it is to be hoped that there will be a growing recognition of its importance as times goes on. Our Society ought to play a prominent part in realizing these great aspirations.

<sup>48</sup> See above, note 18.

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