

Converging Cognates: the Intersection of Jewish and Islamic Studies in Nineteenth Century Germany

BY ISMAR SCHORSCH

To no other field of study in nineteenth-century Germany did Jews, baptised or unbaptised, contribute more significantly than to the study of Islam. Their embrace of a preference for Sephardic as opposed to their own Ashkenazic Judaism in the first half of the century had predisposed them to take up the study of Jews under Islam in the second half of the century when a trove of new Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic sources surfaced from public archives and private collections across Europe, nourishing their pride and vindicating their predilection. By the end of the century with the appearance of manuscripts from Yemen and untold treasures from the Cairo Geniza, the study of Jews under Islam dominated the field of Jewish studies.¹

This remarkable role was not solely the consequence of internal Jewish factors. Rather the simultaneous emergence in Germany of Islamic studies engendered a somewhat symmetrical discourse between Jewish and Christian scholars of Islam. It was this rare instance of reciprocity that reinforced Jewish interest in Islam and created one islet in the German academic archipelago in which German scholars related to the practitioners of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* with a degree of mutual respect and a spirit of collaboration. New archival research suggests that this interaction was the singular achievement of Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer, Germany's premier Arabist for more than four decades at mid-century. By founding Germany's first and leading Oriental society, *Die Deutsche-Morgenländische Gesellschaft* (hereafter DMG) in 1845, Fleischer institutionalized without loss of vigour or clarity his vision of an interdisciplinary partnership for the advancement of the study of Islam. In the pages of its journal *Die Zeitschrift der Deutschen-Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (henceforth ZDMG), Jewish scholars found a receptive academic forum, unmatched in openness by any other learned German periodical.

Three foci constitute the organization and progression of this essay: first, a sketch of just how parallel the developments of Jewish and Islamic studies in Germany

¹ Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context. The Turn to History in Modern Judaism*, Hanover/London 1994, pp. 71–92; Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, (eds.), *Orientalism and the Jews*, Hanover/London 2005; Noah Gerber, *The Cultural Discovery of Yemenite Jewry: Between Ethnography and Philology* (Hebrew), Ph.D. thesis, Hebrew University 2009.

were; second, a profile of Fleischer as a bridge builder by virtue of his close ties to Jewish students and scholars; and third, the ethos of Fleischer as embodied and perpetuated in the practice of the DMG. In the end, I hope the fact that this study was done by an outsider, a student of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and not an Islamicist, will not detract from the discovery of an unappreciated dialectic in the history of modern Oriental studies.²

1

The process by which Judaism and Islam were historicized, that is reconceptualized as historical phenomena, in the nineteenth century is strikingly similar for the two fields. Both subjects were encumbered with a formidable legacy of explosively negative images. A long history of conflict with Judaism and Islam, often violent, always ideologically fraught, had inoculated Christian Europe with deep-seated feelings of suspicion, trepidation and contempt for each. Although in the Middle Ages the mission to convert Jews and Muslims to Christianity had given rise to schools and chairs to teach Hebrew and Arabic, and in the early modern period the zeal of Christian humanists had increased the corpus of sacred texts of both religions available to Europeans, rarely did greater knowledge serve to alter the underlying adversarial relationship.³ By the end of the seventeenth century, the hostility on both fronts still bristled with undiminished intensity.

The threat to Europe from the East was real. In 1645, the feared Ottoman Turks had resumed their assault on the West. In 1669 they conquered Crete and in 1672 forced the Poles to cede Ukraine and Podolia. By the summer of 1683, they were again besieging Vienna, the seat of the German emperor. To be sure, they lost that battle and the town of Buda three years later, forcing them out of Hungary after a century of conquest; in the treaty of Carlowitz (1699) they had to submit for the first time to the will of a Christian sovereign.⁴ Yet long thereafter, Christians asked of God in their prayers to save them from the “terror of the Turk”.⁵

In contrast, the threat to Europe posed by its miniscule Jewish population was imagined, if no less charged. In the very years that the Turks alarmed a sorely divided Christendom, Johann Andreas Eisenmenger, a Protestant theologian, studied assiduously with Jewish teachers in Amsterdam and Frankfurt am Main to compile his venomous indictment of Judaism. Titled to allure and written in

² In the process, I hope that I have also refined our understanding of the disproportionate contribution of Jewish scholars to the study of Islam, a phenomenon that Sabine Mangold says awaits systematic treatment (*Die deutsche Orientalistik im 19. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 2004, p. 104 n.507) and that Suzanne L. Marchand touches on frequently (*German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, Washington/Cambridge 2009), pp. 113–123, 222–223, 321–322). As a tribute to Bernard Lewis’s early essay on the subject (‘Pro-Islamic Jews’, in *Judaism*, vol. 17, Fall 1968, pp. 391–404), Martin Kramer raised the topic afresh forcefully (*The Jewish Discovery of Islam*, Tel Aviv 1999).

³ Hartmut Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, Beirut 1995.

⁴ Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany, 1648–1840*, New York 1964, pp. 84–85; Paula Sutter Fichtner, *Terror and Toleration: The Hapsburg Empire Confronts Islam, 1526–1850*, London 2008, pp. 21–72.

⁵ Bernard Lewis, *From Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East*, Oxford 2004, p. 126.

German to be read, the two tomes of *Entdecktes Judentum* (Judaism Revealed) accused Jews wholesale of holding primitive theological views, blaspheming Christianity and its founder and living by an ethical double standard. While the charges were not new, the mountain of textual evidence drawn from nearly two hundred primary sources to back them was. Arranged thematically in forty-one chapters that sprawled over more than two thousand pages, the passages quoted in Hebrew or Aramaic and translated into German were unfailingly accurate. However, since Eisenmenger never bothered to contextualize them historically or in view of the Halakha (i.e. within the ongoing dialectic of Jewish law), he maliciously conveyed the impression that they were all still valid and obligatory. Each volume also came with its own carefully compiled index for easy referencing. Vienna's court Jews managed to delay the publication of Eisenmenger's work for a decade, though not his appointment to a professorship in Oriental languages at Heidelberg. The book finally appeared in 1711, some seven years after his death. Endlessly recycled, its defamatory contents would lend generations of German antisemites an inexhaustible arsenal of lethal firepower.⁶

The parallels in the coming of age of modern Jewish and Islamic studies continue to emboss the nineteenth century. Multi-volume, comprehensive histories of the Jews by Isaak Markus Jost in Berlin (1820–28) and of the Ottoman Turks by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall in Vienna (1827–35) began to challenge long-held biases and stereotypes. Though the latter was far more sympathetic to his subject matter and brought to it many more unpublished sources, both forged a new historical approach to their fields.⁷ Their most notable weakness was an absence of philological rigour, which set them apart from Leopold Zunz and Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer, who each delivered at about the same time a powerful fillip for the critical role of philology in the writing of creditable history. In his *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* of 1832, Zunz wielded the tools of philological analysis to endow the vast and disordered body of rabbinic exegetical and homiletical literature (*midrash*) with a sparkling semblance of coherence and development, whereas Fleischer in his *Samachschari's Goldene Halsbänder* of 1835 levelled a confrontational critique of Hammer-Purgstall's philological dilettantism.⁸

⁶Johann Andrea Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judentum*, 2 vols., Königsberg 1711; Heinrich Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. 10, 3rd edn., pp. 280–86; Jacob Katz, 'Eisenmenger's Method of Citing Proofs from Talmudic Sources' (Hebrew), in *Papers from the World Congress of Jewish Studies*, vol. 2, Jerusalem 1972, pp. 210–16.

⁷Isaak Markus Jost, *Geschichte der Israeliten*, 9 vols., Berlin 1820–28; Joseph von Hammer, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, 10 vols., Pest 1827–34.

⁸Leopold Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, Berlin 1832; Heinrich Fleischer, *Samachschari's Goldene Halsbänder*, Leipzig 1835. Regarding the harshness of his critique of Hammer-Purgstall, Fleischer confided to his close friend Konrad Dietrich Hassler as follows: "I hope to show the whole world clearly that even a man full of spirit and learning, as long as he holds grammar and logic to be unnecessary, will concoct the greatest nonsense, indeed must. The matter is both infuriating and laughable and I have struck out both notes in my booklet." (C.F. Seybold, (ed.), *Fleischers Briefe an Hassler aus den Jahren 1823–70*, Tübingen 1914, p. 64).

If philology was to reign supreme, however, in the domain of history, Hebrew and Arabic had first to be emancipated from their ancillary role as aids in the interpretation of Scripture. That dependency was signified by their location in the theology faculty, which educated the pastors for Protestant Germany (Catholic priests still being shielded and nurtured in seminaries), and wherein they were exposed to a smattering of Hebrew, Chaldaean, Aramaic and Arabic. A recent graduate of Leipzig's theology faculty, Fleischer described its curriculum in 1823 as an intellectual wasteland.⁹

In Paris from 1825 to 1828, Fleischer studied Arabic (classical and spoken), Persian and Turkish at the Ecole Special des Langues Orientales Vivantes and the Collège de France with Sylvestre de Sacy and Caussin de Perceval. De Sacy was not only the incomparable master of Arabic grammar and literature of his era, but also a magnetic personality and strong administrator, who took both schools to new heights.¹⁰ When Fleischer's long desired appointment to Leipzig finally came, it was to the philosophical faculty, where he immediately had to combat an internal effort to relocate his chair to theology. Though he frustrated this move, he still had to teach twenty percent of his course load in his first six years on books from the Hebrew Bible, of which he had a firm linguistic command, because as late as 1838, thirty percent of the students at Leipzig were still enrolled in theology.¹¹ But Fleischer begrudged the time wasted on theology students, whom he found ill-equipped and uninterested, much preferring the growing number of students who came to him to study Arabic and the Koran for their own sake. By 1842 their number enabled him to discontinue his service to theology.¹²

In short, the transfer of Arabic, if not Hebrew, to the philosophy faculty, where the practice of philology drove the research imperative, heralded a critical and non-theological approach to the unravelling of ancient texts. A shared methodology united the fields of Greco-Roman and Semitic studies in a single faculty now atop the academic pyramid. By 1830 half of Germany's universities had a competent Arabist in philosophy,¹³ and when Berlin University finally decided in 1860 to appoint one, they turned to Fleischer, although the Saxon Minister of Culture quickly matched the offer to enable him to stay happily in Leipzig.¹⁴

No institution in Germany was more immune to change than its universities.¹⁵ The failing forced the institutionalization of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* to occur

⁹ Mangold, pp. 52–64; Marchand, pp. 36, 53–101; Seybold, p. 3.

¹⁰ Johann Fück, *Die Arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig 1955, p. 148.

¹¹ For courses taught by Fleischer, see http://histvv.uni-leipzig.de/dozenten/fleischer_hl.html; Ulrich von Hehl, Uwe John, and Manfred Rudersdorf, (eds.), *Geschichte der Universität Leipzig 1409–2009*, vol. 4.1, Leipzig 2009, p. 57.

¹² See especially Fleischer's letter to his father dated 26 May 1839, also those dated 7 June 1838, 26 Feb. 1839, 19 Nov. 1839 in Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Sondersammlungen, 267.6.11 (Fleischer Nachlass) (hereafter UBL, FN).

¹³ Mangold, p. 132.

¹⁴ UBL, FN, 267.6.5.

¹⁵ Gordon A. Craig, *The Germans*, New York 1982, p. 170.

entirely outside its confines, leaving the field isolated and suspect. Nor was it an accident that when the Federal Republic created the first chair in Jewish studies in 1964, it would be at the new and less hidebound Free University of Berlin in Dahlem. Despite the rapid growth of Jewish students at German universities during the nineteenth century and the high calibre of the research of the best of the *Wissenschaft* scholars and the periodic requests submitted by them for a chair in their field, before 1964 German universities never freed biblical Hebrew and history from their ancillary status nor deemed post-biblical Hebrew and Jewish history as worthy of inclusion in their academic discourse.¹⁶ It is a fact full of irony that Heinrich Fleischer, whose promotion of value-free scholarship was such a striking exception and hence the focus of this essay, taught at a confessional university – by statute appointing only Lutherans to its professoriate.¹⁷

By 1880 *Wissenschaft des Judentums* had taken refuge in five rabbinical seminaries in Breslau (1854), Vienna (1862), Berlin (1872, 1873) and Budapest (1877). Their differences in religious ideology and practice notwithstanding, they all embraced the research imperative and critical scholarship of a philosophy faculty. For admission, they required of their students a Gymnasium diploma (the *Abitur*) or its equivalent and encouraged them to pursue a doctorate while in residence. From their faculty, they expected a field of expertise, a conversancy with all aspects of Judaica and especially a level of scholarship governed by the canons of the university – that is based, if possible, on unpublished texts subjected to philological scrutiny and contextual interpretation. Excluded from the academic fraternity, *Wissenschaft des Judentums* transformed the rabbinical seminaries into extensions of the university, whose brightest students often stayed to teach or went abroad to staff the emerging rabbinical schools of Britain and the United States.¹⁸

Thus by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Germany stood indisputably at the forefront of the fields of Jewish and Islamic studies. In a single generation, France had lost its pre-eminence in the latter, primarily due to the stature of Fleischer.¹⁹ De Sacy had sensed his promise from the start and treated him solicitously. When Fleischer began to copy the lengthy manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Al-Baydawi, the thirteenth-century Sunni compiler of a commentary to the Koran, whose text he would eventually bring out in two volumes in 1846 and 1848, de Sacy borrowed it from the library in his own name for the winter of 1826–27 to give to Fleischer to take home, sparing him from having to sit in its unheated reading room.²⁰ Before Fleischer left Paris in 1828, de

¹⁶ Peter Schäfer, 'Judaistik-jüdische Wissenschaft in Deutschland heute. Historische Identität und Nationalität', in *Spaeculum*, vol. 42 (1991), pp. 199–216.

¹⁷ Katharina Vogel, 'Der Orientalist Julius Fürst (1805–1873): Wissenschaftler, Publizist und engagierter Bürger', in Stephan Wendehorst (ed.), *Bausteine einer jüdischen Geschichte der Universität Leipzig*, Leipzig 2006, pp. 44–49.

¹⁸ Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse. Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany*, Leiden/Boston 2005, pp. 81–99.

¹⁹ Mangold, p. 95.

²⁰ Seybold, p. 40. A letter from 16 March 1827 by Fleischer to his former Leipzig roommate Diaconus Jacob shortly after he had resumed his formal studies in Paris spotlights the passion with which he

Sacy tried to secure a job for him as an Orientalist in St. Petersburg.²¹ Back in Germany marking time as a Gymnasium professor, he wrote to his father on Easter 1833 about an uplifting letter that he had just received from his revered teacher. Fleischer had suggested a number of corrections to an Arabic book that de Sacy was editing; after indicating his pleasure with the suggested alterations, he went on to say that “he regards it as one of his greatest services to the field of Oriental literature to have educated students like me, of whom admittedly there were not many [. . .] [and that] he permits me to make whatever use I wish of his letter.”²²

Whereas in the first third of the nineteenth century the talents of de Sacy had made Paris a Mecca for students of the key languages of Islam from all over Europe and the Middle East, including nearly all the young Germans who would soon become the leading Arabists at home, Fleischer single-handedly redirected the flow. As early as November 1843, he informed his widowed father, to whom he wrote faithfully, that he had his first student from Paris, a young man of good stock who came with a letter of recommendation from the librarian of the royal library, who was none other than the son of his teacher de Sacy.²³ A year-and-a-half later, he related with evident glee,

that last week I received a letter from Professor [Joseph] Reinaud from Paris [de Sacy’s student and successor at the *Ecole special des langues orientales vivantes*] in which he informed me that since last November [1844] in the very same school of Oriental languages, where 20 years before I first became acquainted with my author [Al-Baydawi, whom Fleischer like to call his Muslim Church Father], he was using my edition [Reinaud had evidently got advanced quires from Fleischer as they came off the press]. How elated would Father de Sacy have been had he lived to witness this [he had died in 1838]!²⁴

By the time that Ignaz Goldziher arrived in Leipzig from Hungary in 1869, the twelve students in Fleischer’s Arabic colloquium were from six different countries.²⁵ Not for naught did his students endearingly dub him “the Sheikh of Sheikhs.”²⁶

Proof positive of Germany’s preeminence in Islamic studies at the turn of the twentieth century is also manifest in its lead role in the production of

pursued them: “Now, my dear brother, am I not a true martyr for Oriental orthodoxy? Indeed, what I have once come to love, I love steadfastly. My enthusiasm for my studies is a flame that feeds itself, that nothing will stifle or extinguish. Remember how often in Leipzig late at night I would enthusiastically pore over my Koran or with iron will copy my thick Golius. I give you my word that were you to come into my room now you would still see me reading my Arabic and Persian poets with the same enthusiasm or working with the same tenacity on my lexicographic collection.” (Fleischer was contemplating doing an Arabic dictionary.) UBL, FN, 267.1.4.4; H.O. Fleischer, Beidawi. *Commentarius in Coranum*, 2 vols., Leipzig 1846, 1848.

²¹ Seybold, p. 48.

²² UBL, FN, 267.6.11.

²³ UBL, FN, 267.6.11, letter dated 30 Nov. 1843.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, letter dated 10 March 1845. The designation of Al-Baydawi as his Muslim Church Father is in a letter to his father dated 12 Dec. 1843 (*ibid.*).

²⁵ Ignaz Goldziher, ‘Fleischer: Heinrich Leberecht’, in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 48, Leipzig 1904, p. 591.

²⁶ Siegfried Wagner, *Franz Delitzsch. Leben und Werk*, Munich 1978, p. 33, n. 37.

the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, whose first massive volume appeared just before the war in German (1914), French (1913) and English (1913). Often delayed, dauntingly complicated and consistently underfunded, the encyclopaedia was a triumph of international collaboration inspired at first by Robertson Smith of Cambridge and then after his death by Goldziher. Its nine-man executive committee headed at the outset by Leiden's Michael Jan de Goeje and thereafter by Christian Snouck Hurgronje included four members who published largely in German and three who had still studied with Fleischer. In his capacity as the committee's editorial supervisor, Goldziher estimated that four-fifths of the entries would be written in German.²⁷ Indeed in their correspondence, Goldziher and Theodor Nöldeke lamented the stagnation that had overtaken Islamic studies in Paris.²⁸

2

If, then, the emergence of Jewish and Islamic studies displayed similar trajectories, their common chronological, disciplinary and institutional features did not automatically signify either proximity or interaction. The convergence of the fields in Germany was brought about primarily by the enlightened leadership of Heinrich Fleischer. After his death in 1888, Goldziher caught the quintessence of his teacher and dear friend, whose 52-year tenure had catapulted Leipzig to the forefront of Islamic studies: "He was one of the few learned men of our time whose academic influence was inseparable from the moral beauty that adorns a man's character."²⁹

This rare combination of expertise and humanity is what attracted students, sustained his enrolment and gave him lifelong disciples. His lodestar was to serve scholarship by advancing the work of others, often at the expense of his own, and his vast correspondence is testimony to the generosity with which he shared his knowledge and critical acumen with scholars irrespective of whether they had once studied with him or not.³⁰

At his funeral Franz Delitzsch, Germany's greatest Christian Hebraist and one of his very first students and much later close colleague for two decades on the Leipzig faculty, waxed poetic in his eulogy in celebrating the magnanimity of the man toward his students:

²⁷ Mangold, pp. 286–89; *Orientalistische Literatur-Zeitung*, 1914, cols. 182–5; Ignaz Goldziher, 'Real-Encyklopädie des Islam', in *idem, Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 4, Hildesheim 1970, pp. 129–132.

²⁸ Robert Simon, *Ignaz Goldziher*, Budapest & Leiden 1986, pp. 249, 258. Whereas the letters by Goldziher and Nöldeke date from 1904, Hungronje expressed that same dismissive opinion in a letter to Goldziher as early as 1886 (P. Sj. Koningsveld, (ed.), *Scholarship and Friendship in early Islamwissenschaft: The letters of C. Snouck Hurgronje to I. Goldziher*, Leiden 1985, p. 62).

²⁹ Simon, p. 37 (slightly revised).

³⁰ Jewish Theological Seminary Library (hereafter JTSL) ARC 108, Fleischer file, letter to Moritz Steinschneider dated 2 March 1852.

His untiring work in the service of scholarship bore within it a touch of the eternal, and this element was love, pure love, which is the polar opposite of selfishness. Love is life and absorption [*Aufgehen*] with another. He was a teacher who lived entirely for and was absorbed with his students. Whoever had the good fortune to be primarily his student would be gently led and lifted by his love. He would help him over his troubles, worry about his future as his own. Like a father he watched over him, and cared for him like a mother. Never taking his eye off him, he shielded him beneath his wing.³¹

Notwithstanding the poetic licence, it is evident that Fleischer, who had once considered becoming a missionary, taught his students with a sense of vocation.³²

What made him a nexus between the fields was the fact that he did not exclude Jewish students from his pedagogic embrace. The late Professor Holger Preissler of Leipzig University, himself an Arabist, already pointed out the large number of Jewish students who gravitated to Leipzig to study with him, many of whom would go on to distinguish themselves in both fields. Preissler's meticulous and suggestive research, for example, uncovered that of the 131 doctoral candidates on whose work he rendered a written opinion from 1866 to 1886, 52 (that is nearly 40 percent) came from Jewish homes.³³ Not all had actually sat at his feet, because Leipzig, like other German universities, permitted external candidates to seek Ph.D.s on the basis of work done elsewhere. Still the number is staggering and lends credence to the acerbic comment of 1869 by Moritz Steinschneider, himself an Arabist and Hebraist of renown, that classes in "Semitic literature would be practically empty" without their Jewish students.³⁴

A deeper look into Fleischer's unpublished correspondence, research that Preissler had initiated, yields qualitative insight into his inclusive stance.³⁵ Tellingly, his first student and assistant (*Famulus*), Carl Caspari, was a Jew from Dessau, who as a rabbi-to-be in 1836 wanted to concentrate on the Hebrew Bible and the Koran.³⁶ Within two years he had undergone a conversion experience, perhaps influenced by Delitzsch, his close friend and fellow student, who at the time had already embarked on his mission of bringing the Gospel to Jews. Fleischer attended the baptism in a village church outside of Leipzig and described the event to his father at some length. Though not mentioned by name, Delitzsch seems to have been one of the two witnesses. The pastor noticeably moved Caspari with his words. Absent, however, from Fleischer's letter is any note of triumphalism or snide comment about Judaism. To be sure, he deemed the ceremony worth recounting, but in a strictly matter-of-fact way.³⁷

³¹ UBL, FN, 2677.5.

³² Heinrich Thorbecke, *ZDMG*, vol. 42 (1888), p. 696.

³³ Holger Preissler, 'Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer. Ein Leipziger Orientalist, sein jüdische Studenten, Promovenden und Kollegen', in Stephan Wendehorst (ed.), *Bausteine einer jüdischen Geschichte der Universität Leipzig*, Leipzig 2006, p. 266.

³⁴ *Hebräische Bibliographie*, vol. 9 (1869), p. 77 (hereafter *HB*).

³⁵ Preissler, p. 251 n. 21.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ UBL, FN, 2676.11, letter dated 7 June 1838.

Fortunately, Fleischer's letters abound with evidence of a more overt and conclusive nature, allowing us to glimpse him through the lens of his Jewish correspondents. On the seventieth birthday of Shlomo Yehuda Rapoport, then chief rabbi of Prague, Fleischer paid him a glowing tribute that gave voice to the ethical core of his own scholarly ethos. With his dense biographical essays of the 1820s, Rapoport had dramatically implanted the practice of critical history in the backwater of Galicia. Fleischer's letter not only betrays familiarity with Rapoport's Hebrew oeuvre, but documents his command of post-biblical Hebrew:

Since the days when I [first] got to know you from your work and then later to my great pleasure personally, I have always felt myself sympathetically drawn to you, perhaps because you [exhibit] so fully a combination of the deepest and most earnest scholarship with the most gentle humanity, as I saw united in my blessed teacher de Sacy, who hence became my ideal. May the example you project in both cases, for many already a lodestar, remain so for years to come. May not only the great but also the good Rapoport inspire young scholars to emulate him, and thereby banish selfishness, arrogance, presumptuousness, envy and the impulse to belittle from the pure temple wherein research [rests] on truth [*Wahrheitsforschung*].³⁸

Most important, Fleischer's letter of tribute was unsolicited, an unalloyed expression of esteem for a Jewish scholar whose character matched his learning. Fleischer's own revered mentor had displayed the same nobility.

The high regard for Rapoport as a kindred spirit was not restricted to Fleischer. In the institutional extension of his ethos, the *ZDMG* (of which more below), Richard Gosche, formerly the curator of Oriental manuscripts at the Royal Library in Berlin and now professor of Oriental languages at Halle, penned an obituary taking direct aim at the discriminatory culture of the German university system that denied access to Jewish scholars of stature:

If our academies and universities would only be based on the principle of scholarship and have designated a Jewish faculty alongside their Evangelical and Catholic faculties, then Rapoport, not to speak of the living, would have played an extraordinary role in the renown of any such institution in Europe. Instead, to appropriate Steinschneider's mordant and telling comment: "The Prague rabbinate needed 27 years to consume a rare genius."³⁹

By implication, the multiple pressures of the pulpit were better suited to apologetics. The exclusion of Rapoport cost both German and Jewish scholarship dearly, even as it called into question the integrity of the academic enterprise.

³⁸ Royal Library Copenhagen, Ny kgl. Sam. 4o 2969 (hereafter RLC, Fleischer papers), Rapoport file, draft dated 9 June 1860.

³⁹ *ZDMG, Supplement zum 24. Bande, Wissenschaftlicher Jahresbericht für 1862 bis 1867*, Leipzig 1871, p. 37. In an earlier review, Gosche expressed dismay at the disparity in treatment meted out to Jews in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the Turks in the East and Christians in the West: "The Christians knew only how to make use of the Jews' purse, while the Mohammedans [used] their talents. Indeed, there is little in the books [just spoken of] that brings us credit." (*ZDMG, Supplement zum 20. Bande, Wissenschaftlicher Jahresbericht für 1859 bis 1861*, Leipzig 1868, p. 211.)

Salomon Munk left Germany in 1827 for Paris without a doctorate in hand precisely because he could not envision an academic career for himself as a Jew in his homeland. On the way he had spent one semester in Bonn studying with Georg Wilhelm Freytag, another German student of de Sacy, who had turned the new university, founded in 1818, into the German Centre for Arabic prior to Fleischer's ascendancy. In Paris under arduous circumstances, Munk would become the most important student of medieval Jewish philosophy of his generation and its finest Arabist. By 1835 he had embarked on the daunting project of publishing for the first time the Arabic original of Maimonides' classic *Guide of the Perplexed* and accompanying it with a French translation and notes, all of which came to fruition in the last decade of his life, long after he had gone blind. In December 1864 the French government rewarded him with an appointment to the chair in Hebrew at the Collège de France after controversy had forced Ernst Renan to vacate that position.⁴⁰

Fleischer met Munk in 1828 shortly after he arrived in classes taught by de Sacy. Munk's facility with Arabic and familiarity with Jewish philosophy impressed him sufficiently to mention him twice in letters to his Leipzig classmate and clergy friend Konrad Dietrich Hassler, each time stressing his promise. More relevant is Fleischer's perception of Munk's Jewishness: "His Judaism is a kind of Philonism [*Philonianismus*], *gnosis mosaica*. One can no doubt expect something from him. However, he is not entirely free of Jewish pride and stubbornness."⁴¹ Whatever the first opaque sentence may mean, the last is surely an implicit generalization about an innate or acquired character flaw. My contention here is not that Fleischer held no conventional prejudices about Jews, though his corpus is remarkably free of them, but solely that he never allowed them to compromise his devotion to scholarship.

Fleischer's correspondence preserves two letters dictated by Munk from 1853 and 1857 that expressed his gratitude for Fleischer's high regard of his edition of Maimonides. In the first letter, Munk must have sent him some advanced quires of Volume one (either the Arabic or French or perhaps both) and in the second, the volume itself (two parts), which appeared in 1856 (volumes II and III, again each in two parts, came out in 1861 and 1866). Not clear is whether they had corresponded over the years or if Fleischer remembered him from 1828. What is evident, however, in Munk's words is that Fleischer was no less concerned about his well being than his work. His 1853 letter conveys the degree of empathy and support that Fleischer voiced in each of his letters:

Your heartfelt words stirred me deeply, and I assure you that your warm concern for my present condition truly comforted me. If anything is able to strengthen my resolve to persevere in my arduous efforts, it is the encouragement offered by men like you. [Moreover], your favourable opinion of my work is of supreme importance to me.

⁴⁰ Moïse Schwab, *Salomon Munk. Sa vie et ses oeuvres*, Paris 1900, pp. 17–18, 67–68, 165.

⁴¹ Seybold, p. 49. The second mention of Munk occurred three months later (p. 52). Together the passages suggest that the exchange between the two aspiring Orientalists was more than casual.

Given how much stock I put in your judgment, I have reason to hope that my edition and translation of the Guide will not be unworthy of the attention of Orientalists, theologians and philosophers.⁴²

Again the *ZDMG* in 1860 amplified and publicized Fleischer's enthusiasm for Munk's achievement with an eighteen-page review by Abraham Geiger of volume one as well as of Munk's electrifying publication of some extracts from and French translation of Solomon Ibn Gabirol's *Meqor Hayyim (Fons Vitae)*, long held to be the work of an alleged Muslim philosopher named Avicbron.⁴³ Similarly, when Munk died in 1867, Gosche devoted three pages to his career in the same majestic overview of recent Oriental literature in the *ZDMG* in which he had memorialized Rapoport. Gosche did not hesitate to put him in Rapoport's class as one of the founders of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.⁴⁴

Geiger had rejoined the DMG in 1857, perhaps after finishing his monumental reconstruction of the emergence of rabbinic Judaism, *Urschrift und Uebersetzungen der Bibel*, which would forever challenge students of the subject.⁴⁵ His communal role as leader of the nascent Reform movement in Judaism and prominent pulpit rabbi never seemed to impede a scholarly career of tremendous range and productivity. As a young student of Freytag, in 1833 he had already authored a prize-winning book on Judaism's influence on the Koran (*Was hat Muhammed aus dem Judentume aufgenommen?*) without belittling the figure of the Prophet.⁴⁶ The audaciousness of his question and the import of his research quickly induced other young Jews like Lion Ullmann in 1840 and Gustav Weil in 1845 to follow suit.⁴⁷ Though engaged

⁴² RLC, Fleischer papers, Munk file, letter of 17 Aug. 1853; see also Munk's letter of 25 Aug. 1857.

⁴³ *ZDMG*, vol. 14 (1860), pp. 722–740. On Munk's significance, see Alfred L. Ivry, 'Salomon Munk and the Science of Judaism Meet Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*, in Görgo K. Hasselhoff and Otfried Fraisse (eds.), *Moses Maimonides (1138–1204). His Religious, Scientific and Philosophical Wirkungsgeschichte in Different Cultural Contexts*, Würzburg 2004, pp. 479–489.

⁴⁴ Gosche, *ZDMG, Supplement zum 24. Bande*, pp. 42–44. During the last 26 years of his life, Gosche taught at Halle, where he was a staunch supporter of Jewish doctoral candidates *in absentia* (mostly rabbi or rabbinical students) and an ardent advocate of Jewish scholarship (see Carsten Wilke, 'Rabbinerpromotionen an der philosophischen Facultät der Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 1845–1895', in *Minima Judaica*, vol. 7, Berlin 2009, pp. 279–295).

⁴⁵ *DMG 1845–1895. Ein Ueberblick*, Leipzig 1895, p. 63; Abraham Geiger, *Urschrift und Uebersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der inneren Entwicklung des Judentums*, Breslau 1857. On that work's enduring significance, see Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus*, Chicago 1998.

⁴⁶ Bonn 1833; see Susannah Heschel, 'Abraham Geiger and the Emergence of Jewish Philoislamism', in Dirk Hartwig, et al. (eds.), *Im vollen Licht der Geschichte*, Würzburg 2008, pp. 65–86.

⁴⁷ Lion Ullmann, *Der Koran*, Crefeld 1840. Whereas Ullmann, a pulpit rabbi, dedicated his translation to Freytag "his esteemed teacher", Geiger's perspective pervaded his notes: "The advantage of this translation over others is the careful attention to and demonstration of everything that Muhammad borrowed from Judaism. Since I assume that what Dr. Geiger has brought forth in this regard in his learned work [...] is well known, I will only allude to it in my notes". (*Einleitung*. By way of example, see notes on pp. 7, 30, 47 and 306). Simultaneously, Ullmann was at work on a book contextualizing the founder of Islam, which his premature death in 1843 left unfinished. By 1857 his translation had gone through four editions, to the chagrin of Gosche (*ZDMG*, vol. 17 [1863], p. 167). Gustav Weil, *Biblische Legenden der Muselmänner*, Frankfurt a. M. 1845. In an 1866 lecture on Islamic lore, Fleischer acknowledged Weil's thesis of indebtedness to Jewish sources (Bibliothek der DMG, Halle, Nachlass Fleischer, 2.5).

thereafter primarily in rabbinics, Geiger retained an abiding interest in Jewish creativity under Islam.

Fleischer did more than offer a passing comment on Geiger's book in the literary supplement of Julius Fürst's *Orient*. An unpaid adjunct in Hebrew at Leipzig, Fürst had probably solicited the review. Its hefty length paid tribute to the importance of the book, which Fleischer deemed to be a work of true scholarship. Nevertheless, he found that Geiger's command of Arabic and its literature did not match his knowledge of Hebrew and its literature. Doubting that one scholar could actually master both fields sufficiently, Fleischer corrected a host of his translations and etymologies. The subtext of his review may well have been Fleischer's Bonn competitor Freytag, who failed to flag Geiger's mistakes in the first place. Regardless, the review displayed Fleischer's fierce commitment to sound philology, of which many a purported Arabist would run afoul. At the same time, it should not go unmentioned that Fleischer did not express a single reservation about Geiger's central thesis of the Koran's indebtedness to Judaism. He seemed entirely unfazed by the proposition and gave no hint of suspecting Geiger of having an apologetic intent.⁴⁸

Nor did the critique estrange the two. At the academic conference of 1844, at which the decision was made to found the DMG, Geiger spoke second on the language of the Mishnah, an honour that would never have been accorded him without Fleischer's initiative or approval.⁴⁹ Even so, Geiger ended his membership in 1848 because, as he wrote to Fleischer, he feared that the society's agenda and his own were diverging and he did not relish being reduced to a passive bystander.⁵⁰ Yet in 1857 he chose to rejoin and in the next eighteen years, till his death in 1874, he contributed some forty essays, reviews and notes of wide ranging scope to the *Zeitschrift*. He often seemed to have been the reviewer of choice for books on Jewish subjects, as was the case with Munk. The surviving correspondence with Fleischer is full of substance, friendship and mutual respect. Geiger turned to him often for textual assistance or help in getting his *Urschrift* reviewed, which Fleischer extended, or to explain his departure from Breslau to Frankfurt am Main, or to speak of visiting him. Thus when Geiger's son Ludwig was about to leave home to study at Leipzig, Geiger felt close enough to Fleischer to ask him to open his home to him.⁵¹

In contrast to Munk, Rapoport and Geiger, Steinschneider actually studied with Fleischer, though only briefly for three months in the summer of 1839.⁵² A native of Moravia, he had come as an advanced student after nearly six years of study in

⁴⁸ *Literaturblatt des Orients*, 1841, nos. 5, 6, 8, 10, 12.

⁴⁹ *Verhandlungen der ersten Versammlung deutscher und ausländischer Orientalisten in Dresden, 1844*, Leipzig 1845, p. 78.

⁵⁰ *DMG 1845–1895. Ein Ueberblick*, p. 63; RLC, Fleischer papers, Geiger file, letter dated 23 April 1850.

⁵¹ Ewald Wagner, (ed.), *Generalindex zur ZDMG, Band 1–100*, Wiesbaden 1955, pp. 31–32; RLC, Fleischer papers, Geiger file, letter dated 15 April 1865.

⁵² JTSL, ARC 108, box 15, "Ueber meine Vorbereitung für das Schulfach".

Prague and Vienna. But a clouded career path soon prompted him to move on to Berlin, where he quickly won the esteem, guidance and friendship of Zunz, as he had that of Fleischer in Leipzig. When Steinschneider finally decided to settle permanently in Berlin in 1845, after yet another three-year stint of teaching in a Jewish school in Prague, Fleischer breathed a sigh of relief: “Your future appears to me in a more auspicious light now that I know you are with Zunz. There are people in whom I have an instinctive and unshakable confidence, without having been able to take their measure. Zunz is one of them and the two of you belong together.”⁵³

A year before Fleischer had honoured Steinschneider with an invitation to deliver the closing lecture at the founding conference of the DMG in Dresden. Though the only speaker without a doctorate, he obliged his mentor with a dazzling philological brief for Hebrew as a vital repository of linguistic remnants from the many languages in whose cultural orbit Jews had once lived, hence of value to students of those cultures. When published in 1845 as a monograph, Steinschneider dedicated it to his two mentors, Zunz and Fleischer, “my highly respected teachers and friends”. In addressing the latter, he thanked him especially for his steadfast friendship.⁵⁴

A few years later that friendship and its underlying esteem would extricate Steinschneider from an embarrassing predicament. In 1848 Oxford’s Bodleian Library had offered him the chance to catalogue its substantial collection of Hebrew books printed before 1732. Not only was Fleischer overjoyed by the break, but he wrote letters of introduction for him to five of England’s prominent Orientalists. On 7 March 1851, after his first visit the previous summer, Steinschneider informed him from Berlin that he was in desperate need of a doctorate. The Bodleian staff assumed all along that he had one and he feared jeopardizing his job by disabusing them of the idea. By 14 April, Fleischer had arranged for Leipzig to award Steinschneider a doctorate *in absentia* on the basis of his extensive publications to date, in particular for his stunning book-length survey of Jewish literature, which had just appeared in the latest volume of the highly touted *Allgemeine Encyclopaedie der Wissenschaft und Künste* (General Encyclopedia of Science and the Arts, widely known then as Ersch and Gruber after its founding editors).⁵⁵ Fleischer could render an authoritative opinion for the faculty

⁵³ *Ibid.* Fleischer file, letter dated March 10, 1845. On the relationship between Zunz and Steinschneider, see Alexander Marx, ‘Zunz’s Letters to Steinschneider’, in *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, vol. 5 (1933–34), pp. 95–153. In a biographical vein, *idem*, ‘Moritz Steinschneider’, in *Essays in Jewish Biography*, Philadelphia 1947, pp. 112–184 and my essay ‘Moritz Steinschneider: The Vision Beyond the Man’, forthcoming.

⁵⁴ *Verhandlungen der ersten Versammlung*, p. 78; Moritz Steinschneider, *Die fremdsprachlichen Elemente im Neuhebräischen und ihre Benutzung für die Linguistik*, Prague 1845.

⁵⁵ RLC, Fleischer papers, Steinschneider file, letter dated 7 March 1851; JTSL, ARC, Fleischer file, letter dated 11 March 1851; Moritz Steinschneider, ‘Jüdische Literatur’, in *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*, zweite Section, vol. 27, Leipzig 1850, pp. 357–471.

committee because Steinschneider had consistently sent him copies of his work, often asking him to review his Arabic texts and philology prior to publication:

If I had to single out [a shortcoming] alongside the originality of his reach [*Geistesfrische*] and the acuity of his grasp [*Verstandesschärfe*], the evident breadth of his reading and the unusual fund of his linguistic and literary knowledge, it would most likely be too much of a good thing, [that is] an oppressive excess of interspersed asides, notes and quotations. Regarding his essay on Jewish literature in Ersch and Gruber, I am convinced that among the living Jewish scholars only Zunz and Rapoport, maybe also Geiger and Fürst, could have single handedly written such a survey.⁵⁶

With his focus on Jews in the Islamic world, Steinschneider pursued a dual career as Arabist and Hebraist. His perch at the Bodleian afforded him the chance to also scour its rich collection of Hebrew manuscripts. In truth, his 1860 encyclopaedic Latin catalogue of its printed Hebrew books, with its 9559 entries, not only set the gold standard for Hebrew bibliography, but wherever possible referenced related unpublished Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts in the Bodleiana and elsewhere awaiting their redeemer. By mining these deposits in the decades to come, Steinschneider vastly increased what was known about the literary output of Jews under Islam. In the process, he demonstrated beyond dispute their cultural ahomeness in the era of Islam's ascendancy.⁵⁷

In conjunction with this, Steinschneider became a frequent contributor to the *ZDMG*. Of the 43 volumes which came out between 1849–92, products of his research appeared in 25 of them, on occasion more than one in the same year. In 1877 the society also published his pioneering bibliography of Arabic texts and treatises engendered by religious controversy among Muslims, Christians and Jews. Indeed, no Jewish scholar of the *Wissenschaft* coterie channelled as much of his work into non-Jewish journals as did Steinschneider.⁵⁸

And yet his status was nowhere commensurate with his stature. A heartrending letter by Steinschneider to Fleischer dated 7 July 1863 reveals the wide gap between the fields of Jewish and Islamic studies in their paths toward institutionalization. Despite his efforts to enter the prevailing academic discourse, Steinschneider felt utterly estranged from its university venue. He was surviving precariously on a pittance from the Veitel – Heine – Ephraimsche Lehranstalt, a free-standing, non-degree granting Jewish academy, where he lectured to Jewish and non-Jewish students registered elsewhere, and from administering the offensive *more judaico* to Jewish witnesses about to testify in court, which repulsed

⁵⁶Universitätsarchiv Leipzig, philosophische Facultät Promovieren, 251 (hereafter UAL, phil. Fac. Prom.).

⁵⁷Moritz Steinschneider, *Catalogus librorum hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, 4 vols., Berlin 1852–60.

⁵⁸Wagner, (ed.), *Generalindex zur ZDMG*, pp. 101–102; also George Alexander Kohut, 'Bibliography of the Writings of Prof. Dr. M. Steinschneider,' in *Festschrift zum achtzigsten Geburtstage Moritz Steinschneider*, Leipzig 1896, pp. v–xxxix.

him but paid him much more money. That he could humble himself before Fleischer reflected both his dire straits and the nature of their relationship:

I am without vacation [from my judicial post] for I am “irreplaceable,” my official surrogate being busier than I am. I can’t leave for two days without being summoned. As a result, my family is quite restricted, because I don’t want to leave them alone. Besides, I am not in a position to forgo even 20 talers of income. Should my job end – and that is something I half wish and advocate for the sake of progress – then I would be reduced with my five children to a yearly income of 300 talers, which I get for my lectures at the Veitel Institute. Yet my 50th year is bearing down on me – I have passed 47 – and then will be hard to start something new, even harder to get a job. I admit to you honestly that I had thought for a moment to apply for Gosche’s job at the library (he had left recently for Halle), which brought him at the time 800 talers and then to give up the court [job]. But because I am a Jew, I had neither much prospect nor courage.⁵⁹

It took Fleischer eight months to respond to Steinschneider’s *cri de coeur*, and when he did, on 24 March 1864, he seemed more concerned about the half-printed catalogue of Arabic manuscripts at the Royal Library that Gosche left behind, and Emil Rödiger’s snail’s pace cataloguing of Persian manuscripts in Halle. “It is truly a miserable situation: accumulating hordes of Oriental manuscripts and not a single librarian with the indispensable knowledge of the languages and subject matter to deal with them.” Admittedly, the first name to cross Fleischer’s mind was that of the young Theodor Nöldeke, who sorely needed a *Brotwissenschaft* (a paying job) till he received the professorship in Oriental languages at Kiel. Only then did Fleischer come around to Steinschneider. Were he ready to apply and were there even a remote chance for success, Fleischer would weigh in, although he acknowledged that his influence was minimal.⁶⁰

What Fleischer omitted to say was that his rejection of the professorship in Berlin in 1860 had probably burned his bridges. Leipzig had immediately matched Berlin’s offer of a salary of 2000 talers, along with a larger apartment at a reduced rent, a level of prestige, remuneration and security far beyond Steinschneider’s reach as a “gentleman scholar.”⁶¹

Still, Fleischer’s offer of assistance is noteworthy, for it clearly implied that he considered Steinschneider to be a first-rate Arabist and qualified successor to Gosche in charge of the Oriental manuscripts at the Royal Library. While Fleischer surely facilitated Steinschneider’s advance in the field and the *Gesellschaft* and on a larger scale (as we shall see) modified the practice of scholarship in Oriental studies, he did not tilt at windmills. His ultimate advice to Steinschneider in 1875 was to find his place in a Jewish institution of higher learning. On principle, Steinschneider had adamantly refused any involvement with the recently opened

⁵⁹ RLC, Fleischer papers, Steinschneider file, letter dated 7 July 1863. The *more judaico* (“according to Jewish custom”) was a lengthy, humiliating oath, of medieval origin, imposed on Jews testifying in non-Jewish courts because their testimony was otherwise deemed untrustworthy. In Prussia, the state ended the degradation with the completion of legal emancipation in 1869 (for a sample from 1392, see Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World*, New York 1978, p. 50).

⁶⁰ JTSL, ARC 108, Fleischer file, letter dated 24 March 1864.

⁶¹ UBL, FN, 267.6.5.

Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, which was not intended to be a Reform rabbinical school. “It is high time”, he wrote to Fleischer, “that true scholarship rise above theological divisions [...] [the so-called Hochschule] will again be a Jewish theological seminary”.⁶² Fleischer, who wished the school well, chided him gently for his inflexibility: “I respect the grounds you have to reject any connection with it, but tell me please: If men like you avoid any involvement, do you then still have the right to complain should it fail? Why not seize the moment in the belief that in this way the better will prevail?”⁶³

Like Steinschneider, Daniel Chwolson was not a native German. Born in Vilna in 1819, he came to Breslau in the 1840s sorely lacking in money, secular education and knowledge of German. In the foreword to his foundational two-volume work on the Sabians, which was published by the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg in 1856, he touchingly recalled his indebtedness to Abraham Geiger: “I might have rotted intellectually [*geistig*] and physically, if that noble man had not adopted, sheltered and nurtured me. [...] It is to him primarily that I owe the scholarly rank that I have attained and exercise.”⁶⁴

But not entirely. Fleischer too had a generous hand in his dramatic rise to associate professor of Hebrew in the newly organized Oriental Faculty at the University of St. Petersburg, even though he never studied in Leipzig.⁶⁵ Perhaps at the urging of Geiger and having finished his work at the University of Breslau, he approached Fleischer on 8 February 1850 to ask if his research on the identity of the non-Muslim Sabians, often discussed by Muslim authors as well as Maimonides, would not merit a doctorate *in absentia*. With evident excitement, Chwolson referred to the large array of primary sources, many from unpublished manuscripts, dealing with the Sabians, which he had assembled and analyzed, drawing a plethora of startling conclusions. At this stage, Chwolson dared to burden Fleischer only with the introductory section of his study, withholding the documentary evidence till later. But it sufficed to persuade the faculty committee of its originality, and by 20 February Chwolson, to his amazement, had his doctorate. Fleischer had seen enough to tell his colleagues, regarding the erudite author of this solid and multifaceted manuscript, that “if God gives him health and he continues to work [he] [...] will soon rank among the top scholars of his nation (by which I understand Russians and not Jews)”.⁶⁶

Beyond that, Fleischer helped Chwolson make a book of his manuscript. He came to Leipzig at the end of March with the entire manuscript and for the first time showed Fleischer the full extent of his research. Fleischer must have been utterly taken by its import, because unbeknownst to Chwolson he proceeded to edit it,

⁶² RLC, Fleischer papers, Steinschneider file, letter dated 23 Feb. 1875; see also Alexander Marx, ‘Steinschneideriana II’, in S.W. Baron and Alexander Marx (eds.), *Jewish Studies in Memory of George A. Kohut*, New York 1935, pp. 518–520.

⁶³ JTSL, ARC 108, Fleischer file, letter dated 1 July 1875.

⁶⁴ Daniel Chwolsohn, *Die Sabier und der Sabismus*, vol. 1, St. Petersburg 1856, p. xxi.

⁶⁵ *ZDMG*, vol. 10 (1856), p. 520.

⁶⁶ Preissler, p. 25; RLC, Fleischer papers, Chwolson file.

largely correcting his German and reining in his proclivity to long-windedness. The absence of corrections to his Arabic transcriptions and translations suggests the high level of his work and the basic reason for Fleischer's investment. In addition, he offered to write a forward for the book and wrote to the influential German Orientalist in St. Petersburg, Bernard Dorn, who had also studied with de Sacy, recommending that it be published by the academy.⁶⁷ While Chwolson certainly gave Fleischer his due in the book's forward, his outpouring of emotion upon receiving the edited manuscript more fully depicts the largesse of the man:

I want to assure you that the manner in which you have treated me, which exceeded all my expectations, has instilled in me the firm resolve to relate to others exactly like you and to dispense as much blessing and joy as you do to those whom I will come in contact with. No one could be more solicitous and giving than you. I could never have imagined that you would revise my work with such care. You cannot possibly be more scrupulous with your own. The revision must have robbed you of so very, very much time.⁶⁸

Fleischer thus taught his students to emulate him in more than mastering the languages of Islam and the philological method. A gifted student or original piece of research always triggered his nobler instincts. Chwolson's success in disentangling the different uses of the term Sabians was such a breakthrough and would serve as a point of departure for all future research.

Nevertheless, Chwolson's prospects for teaching in Czarist Russia were even slimmer than Steinschneider's in Germany. He had asked of Fleischer forthrightly that when he wrote to Dorn, he should tell him that Chwolson was a Jew: "It is not a disgrace, says Heine, to be a Jew, just a misfortune, at least in Russia."⁶⁹ Several years later, Chwolson, in desperate straits, decided to rectify his misfortune, as he related to Fleischer:

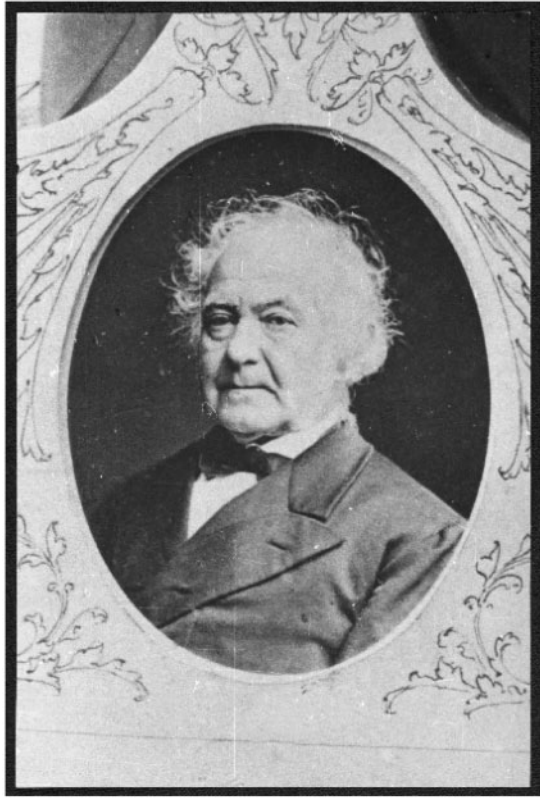
A few days after receiving your precious letter of 5 November 1854, I began collating [the pages of my book], which took me until New Year's eve to finish. But what a chasm in between! I began the work as a Jew and finished as a Christian [. . .]! As my first child lay dying from his circumcision, I made the initial decision to convert to Christianity, and after two years of vacillating the decision had ripened sufficiently to carry out. The pale face of my poor, wretched and sickly child admonished me constantly and thus fourteen days ago, I, my wife and my two small children (the second is only ten weeks old and not circumcised) converted to Christianity. We would have preferred to become Protestants. . . but a variety of circumstances, which I cannot spell out here, prompted me to convert to the Greek [Orthodox] Church. This step is judged differently by different people, though God alone knows what was in my heart.

By October 1855, Chwolson had his wish, an academic appointment from the Czar as an associate professor of Hebrew language and literature in St. Petersburg's

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, letters dated 9 May 1850, 8 June 1850 and 20 June 1850. On Dorn, see Preissler, 'Die Anfänge der DMG', in *ZDMG*, vol. 145, no. 2 (1995), p. 285.

⁶⁸ RLC, Fleischer papers, Chwolson file, letter dated 8 June 1850.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, letter dated 19 April 1850.



Undated photograph of Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer, courtesy of Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig (Foto Slg. 14 Nr. 18).

newly founded Oriental faculty, where he would educate the next generation of Russian Orientalists, as Fleischer had more or less predicted.⁷⁰

Fleischer's knowledge of Hebrew was extensive. By the time he had graduated from the Gymnasium, he had worked his way through the Hebrew Bible in the original. At Leipzig he belonged to its Hebrew society for three years and passed his *Magister* exam in Hebrew in 1833 with noteworthy ease.⁷¹ Among the biblical books that he taught in his first years back were the Pentateuch, Joshua through Kings, the Minor Prophets, Proverbs, and selected passages of biblical Aramaic.⁷²

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, letter dated 29 Jan. 1855. As for the creation of the Oriental faculty at the University of St. Petersburg, see *ZDMG*, vol. 10 (1856), pp. 518–520. Chwolson's initial appointment was as an *ausserordentlicher Professor der hebräische Sprache* (p. 520). In 1851 Fleischer had the *Zeitschrift* announce that the Academy of Science in St. Petersburg was going to publish Chwolson's work. The occasion gave Fleischer the chance to draw the public's attention to the importance of his research (*ZDMG*, vol. 5 [1851], p. 392).

⁷¹ UBL, FN, 267.6.11, letter dated Easter 1833.

⁷² *Veranstaltungen*, <http://histvv.uni-leipzig.de/dozenten/fleischer.hl.html>.

In 1842 he cancelled his classes to attend the funeral of Wilhelm Gesenius of nearby Halle, paying his respects to the scholar who had laid the foundation for the grammatical and lexicographical study of biblical Hebrew.⁷³ To the ninth edition of Gesenius's classical *Handwörterbuch über das alte Testament*, Fleischer had supplied invaluable notes on Arabic cognates and derivations and corrected the many errors that had crept into the material adduced from Arabic in the course of constant reediting.⁷⁴ His impressive command of Hebrew, in short, made Fleischer one of the few Arabists who could read Judeo-Arabic, that is Arabic in Hebrew characters with an admixture of Hebrew words thrown in, which was the language of the vast majority of texts written by Jews under Islam.⁷⁵ Without that knowledge, the traffic between the fields of Jewish and Islamic studies went only one way.

Over the last twenty-five years of his life, Fleischer was involved in a collaborative project with Jacob Levy in Breslau that was surely the capstone of his ethos and vision. Like Chwolson, Levy was a rich blend of the old and the new. Born in 1819 in the still intact traditional world of Posen, he received his rabbinic ordination from Rabbi Akiva Eger, the pre-eminent traditional Talmudist of his time in Germany. After finishing his studies at the University of Breslau, he acquired his doctorate from Halle in 1845. In 1850 he returned to Breslau essentially as a *Privatgelehrter* to pursue his scholarship, settling for a modest salary from its Jewish community for fulfilling certain judicial functions and later from the city for administering its *more judaico*.⁷⁶

The trade-off yielded two monumental dictionaries of rabbinic (i.e. post-biblical) Hebrew, with careful attention to the grammatical and etymological derivation of each word, along with sample passages quoted in the original and translated into German to illustrate usage. To each Fleischer added philological addenda bringing to bear his incomparable knowledge of Arabic and Persian. The sum total bespoke the depth of his commitment to the project. He contributed twenty-eight pages to the two-volume *Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim* (the ancient Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible), which came out in 1867–68, and 127 pages and to the four-volume *Neuhebräisches und chaldäisches Wörterbuch über Talmudim und Midraschim*, published from 1876 to 1889; the latter contribution covered every letter of the Hebrew alphabet except the last, which death kept him from completing.⁷⁷

The surviving correspondence shows poignantly how Levy and Fleischer bonded through their shared linguistic passion. In 1869 and again in 1873 Fleischer wrote letters to the board of the Jewish community on Levy's behalf seeking a raise in

⁷³ UBL, FN, 267.6.1.

⁷⁴ *Wilhelm Gesenius' hebräisches und chaldäisches Handwörterbuch*, (ed.) F. Mührlau and W. Volck, Leipzig 1883,

p. v.

⁷⁵ H.L. Fleischer, *Kleinere Schriften*, vol. 3, Osnabrück 1968 (new printing of 1888 edition), pp. 167–186, 425–439.

⁷⁶ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 10, Berlin 1934, cols. 904–905.

⁷⁷ Jacob Levy, *Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim und einen grossen Teil des rabbinischen Schrifttums*, 2 vols., Leipzig 1867–68; *idem.*, *Neuhebräisches und chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim*, 4 vols., Leipzig 1876–89.

salary. In 1872 he served as intermediary in getting the prestigious Leipzig firm of F.A. Brockhaus to publish Levy's second dictionary. In 1875 he sought and secured for Levy an honorary title of professor from the German Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Education. A year later he was approached by the renowned Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz to lend his name to a fundraising letter seeking some 6000 marks so that Levy could give his daughter a dowry, without which she would not be able to marry. And in 1887 Fleischer again granted Graetz permission to use his name on a letter raising funds to celebrate Levy's seventieth birthday, a cause to which he gave a personal gift of 150 marks.⁷⁸

Rarely has philology come wrapped in such humanity. Nor should it be overlooked that Fleischer calmly and courageously dedicated his expertise to the study of rabbinic Hebrew at the very time that German Protestant scholarship on the intertestamental period was reasserting, ever more bluntly and crudely, its negative critique of rabbinic Judaism with its unsubtle supersessionist thrust.⁷⁹

3

The DMG was Fleischer's offspring and the institutional embodiment of his ethos. The idea to create it was born in conversation with a few colleagues in his home in September 1843, and without his tireless efforts it would never have come to fruition in Darmstadt in October 1845.⁸⁰ He may well have harboured the idea since his days in Paris. Upon his arrival in 1824, he attended a meeting of the Société Asiatique where he first heard de Sacy and his arch rival Abel Remusat speak (he was impressed by neither), and published his first two essays as a fledgling Orientalist in its *Journal Asiatique* in 1827 and 1829.⁸¹ In 1831, still without an academic appointment but having resumed his editing of Baydawi, Fleischer wrote his friend Hassler of the need to found a German equivalent of the Société Asiatique. With the Dresden conference fast approaching in 1844, Fleischer spelled out more fully for Hassler the ethical impulse that drove him: "What we still lack is a common spirit that places a supreme value on the participation of every individual in the development of our discipline, shrinks the needs of our ego [*Persönlichkeit*] to insignificance and bans from criticism all cheap

⁷⁸ RLC, Fleischer papers, Levy file and Graetz file. In a letter dated 31 Dec. 1869, Levy belatedly introduced Ignaz Goldziher to Fleischer. Goldziher had been in correspondence with Levy and the previous summer had come to Breslau to study with Levy. By the time he got round to writing, Goldziher was already studying with Fleischer (RLC, Fleischer papers, Levy file).

⁷⁹ Wiese, *passim*.

⁸⁰ Preissler, 'Die Anfänge der DMG', pp. 245–253; UBL, FN, 2676.11, a Fleischer letter to his father dated 29 Oct. 1845.

⁸¹ Seybold, p. 11; Wolfgang Reuschel, 'Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (1801–1888). Der Begründer der Leipziger Schule der Arabistik', in Ernst Engelberg (ed.), *Karl-Marx Universität Leipzig 1409–1959*, vol. 1, Leipzig 1959, p. 423.

self-aggrandizement. It is precisely this [kind of spirit] that we hope to awaken and nurture through our gathering.”⁸²

An early indicator of that spirit was the first nation-wide gathering of German Orientalists in Dresden in 1844, at which the decision was taken to proceed to Darmstadt. The prominence of Jews was conspicuous. They represented some twenty percent of the forty-nine scholars who attended, and they delivered three of the fifteen learned papers. Indeed, with Geiger and Zacharias Frankel, Dresden’s scholarly rabbi, opening the first session and Steinschneider closing the last, they served as the programme’s bookends. All these talks were heavily philological and together encompassed the full range of layers of the Hebrew language.⁸³ The stress on philology accentuated the desire to emancipate Oriental studies from theology, as did the society’s formal affiliation with the German society of philologists and educators founded in 1837 in Göttingen.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the generation of founders was still largely trained in Protestant theological faculties and not all were pleased with the disproportionate presence of Jews.⁸⁵

At Darmstadt the conference acknowledged the leadership of Leipzig and Halle in the creation of the DMG by placing the running of the organization in the hands of a small executive committee of four, consisting of two faculty members from each university, one being Fleischer. As president, however, the conference elected Andreas August Ernst Schleiermacher, an Orientalist and museum director who had likewise studied in Paris but was currently serving as the secretary of the Grand Duchy of Hesse’s privy council.⁸⁶ With humanity and humility, in his inaugural address he set forth the spirit that would animate and set apart Germany’s Oriental Society. The focus was to be solely on the past. Contemporary issues of a divisive nature such as politics, religion and theology would be rigorously excluded. Nor would the Society harbour any intent to affect public policy or popular behaviour:

Our studies have taught us not to look down arrogantly on the adherents of other religions or the members of other political systems. We gladly acknowledge all that is good that we espy in the religions and constitutions of the Muslims, Parsees, Hindus, Buddhists and ancient Chinese. With joy would we admit them into our ranks, if the opportunity presented itself. [...] We, whose ancestors in matters of faith caused rivers of blood to flow, cannot condemn the peoples of Asia for their [bloodletting]. They have had their religious fights, bloody religious wars and court intrigues over religion. The Occident can boast of having retained its purity of faith through inquisitions and witch trials; the Orient, the purity of its blood through its eunuchs. We find delusions and superstitions the world over, the same virtues, irrespective of external circumstances. In the parameters of our research we will take up the religions,

⁸² Seybold, pp. 60, 68 (the quotation).

⁸³ *Verhandlungen der ersten Versammlung*, pp. 76 (list of attendees) and 78 (list of papers).

⁸⁴ Mangold, p. 85; Preissler, ‘Die Anfänge der DMG’, p. 266. According to Paula Sutter Fichtner, when Hammer-Purgstall in Vienna in the 1850s tried to create an Oriental society, he too advocated reaching out to Jews [p. 139].

⁸⁵ Preissler, ‘Die Anfänge der DMG’, pp. 276 n. 112 and 285.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

languages, customs, laws and forms of government from the perspective of a world citizen, one who does not hold the opinion that his homeland should be the standard for all that is foreign or that the institutions of his fatherland could benefit distant realms, which just might be entirely comfortable with what they have.⁸⁷

Schleiermacher's lofty sentiments amounted to a ringing affirmation of independence. A universal perspective would guard the Society from parochial interests, ulterior motives and an unwarranted sense of superiority. The objective was to understand the cultures of the Orient solely on their own terms, while the exclusion of domestic rifts would enable the widely dispersed Orientalists of Germany to generate a common discourse. Not only did Fleischer wholly identify with this ethos, he would soon be called upon to uphold it.⁸⁸

Between Dresden and Darmstadt, Fleischer had carried the workload almost alone.⁸⁹ Now with a semblance of order in place, it was nominally shared. Still by 1847, as he reported to the third annual gathering of the DMG in Basel, he had to forgo editing the journal that had made its debut the year before. His multiple duties, which also included handling much of the correspondence and administration of the Society plus preparing the annual review of new literature in a field that stretched from Portugal to Japan and Africa to Russia, were simply too onerous.⁹⁰ By 1852 the DMG had grown to well over 300 members, Hermann Brockhaus, who in 1841 had become Leipzig's Sanskritist, had brought stability to the editorship of the journal, and Heinrich Ewald of Göttingen had been elected president at the annual meeting that fall in Göttingen. Perhaps because of that election or again from overwork, Fleischer resigned from the executive committee at the same gathering.⁹¹

It took but a moment for Ewald to provoke discord. In many ways his prodigious scholarly range personified the scope of the sub-fields of the DMG. However, brilliance had its price: a volatile and dogmatic personality of unbounded contentiousness.⁹² The Leipzig-Halle cabal that had created the DMG allotted him but a minor role. The presidency accorded him a belated tribute and a much desired platform.

His first presidential address in Göttingen induced him to stray advertently into the present. True, he contended, the public respected the canons of authentic scholarship, but it also wanted clarity and guidance on the nature of Islam in an age when Christians in its domain, with the connivance of the Christian powers in

⁸⁷ *Jahresbericht der DMG für das Jahr 1845*, Leipzig 1846, pp. 12–13.

⁸⁸ Mangold, pp. 108–115.

⁸⁹ UBL, FN, 267.6.11, Fleischer's letter to his father was dated 29 Oct. 1845.

⁹⁰ Bibliothek der DMG, Halle, DMG Acten 1847.

⁹¹ On membership size, see *DMG, 1845–1895. Ein Ueberblick*, p. 57. On Fleischer's resignation, see UBL, FN, 267.6.1, a letter by Fleischer to his father from 8 Oct. 1852; on his state of mind, see JTSL, ARC 108, Fleischer file, letters to Steinschneider dated 2 March 1852 and 29 Oct. 1852. In the second letter, Fleischer reported to Steinschneider on the bad blood between Göttingen and Leipzig, Ewald and himself. The two men were polar opposites.

⁹² For an introduction to Ewald, see Lothar Perliitt, 'Heinrich Ewald: Der Gelehrte in der Politik', in Bernd Moeller (ed.), *Theologie in Göttingen*, Göttingen 1987, pp. 156–212.

Europe, were still being forced to convert. Moreover, Ewald evinced no patience for those members who might dispute this responsibility:

To be ever more certain in such general questions [Ewald had also posed others] and bodies of knowledge and to bring the public to ever more correct opinions – that is what in the final analysis people can rightly and minimally expect of us, though to do it productively is actually not so easy. Or should we instead advance Islam by our efforts and exertions? Or spur on still further the repeated and harmful conceits of the new Jews? Or should we silence or conceal the truth and avoid the knowledge of what is correct, so that we will not give offence and risk harming the sale of our books or ambition or timidity or material comfort?⁹³

The reason for this gratuitous and unguarded slur of Jewish scholars may well have lain elsewhere. Ewald probably came to the conference seething from a vituperative exchange with Frankel. Frankel had been working for more than a decade on a careful study of the Septuagint meant to prove that the Jews of Palestine and Alexandria in the Hellenistic period shared a common exegetical tradition regarding the Hebrew Bible. When Frankel's second book on the subject appeared in 1851, Ewald pounced on it with a hasty, imperious and scurrilous review in the journal he edited. Without deigning to even look at the earlier study of 1841, he scornfully rejected Frankel's argument, vilifying him as nothing more than a Talmudic Jew who wrote on the Septuagint, the Samaritan Bible and every other related non-rabbinic topic solely from the perspective of the masoretic tradition.⁹⁴ Frankel fired back a forthright rejoinder in his own journal, accusing Ewald of being abysmally ignorant of both the text of the Septuagint and the scholarship on it. Nor was Frankel the first Jew to fall victim to Ewald's wrath. A year before, he reminded his readers, Ewald had crudely lashed out at Munk for what he deemed to be a piece of specious scholarship.⁹⁵

In short, Ewald came to the podium in Göttingen vexed by Frankel's defiance. By choosing the occasion to slap down the purported uppityness of all Jewish scholars, he violated the commitment of the DMG to skirt the contaminating issues of the day. Had Zunz not intervened, the offence might have gone unnoticed or unchallenged. But when he saw the address in the next issue of the journal a few months later, he exploded in fury. His anger forged an eloquent letter to Fleischer on 25 February 1853 bearing testimony to their close ties and Zunz's fearlessness:

When nine years ago you and Rödiger urged me to join the Oriental society, I did not suspect that the arrogant, exclusionary spirit of times long buried and hours long wasted away would ever take over the seat of the presidency, and raise a hue and cry over Jews in an outburst of barely disguised phrases bereft of any content. So that is the

⁹³ Heinrich Ewald, 'Eröffnungsrede der Göttinger Generalversammlung', in *ZDMG*, vol. 7 (1853), pp. 6–7.

⁹⁴ *Jahrbücher der Biblischen Wissenschaft*, (ed.), Heinrich Ewald, vol. 4 (1851–52), pp. 16–17. The book in question was Frankel's *Ueber den Einfluss der Palästinischen Exegese auf die Alexandrinische Hermeneutik*, Leipzig 1851.

⁹⁵ *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* (hereafter *MGWJ*), vol. 1 (1851–52), pp. 597–598.

science of sciences, the lofty goal of uniting scholars, the recommended ideal for university studies!⁹⁶

And, Zunz continued, how were people to understand what Ewald meant by “the new Jews” and their “conceits?” Surely, the *ZDMG* did not support them. It barely reported on developments in the field of Jewish studies. The names of Krochmal and Rapaport, Munk and Zunz, Geiger and Sachs did not grace its pages. Or perhaps Ewald had been offended elsewhere by an insolent Jew and summoned the entire *DMG* to his defence. But did Goliath really need to fear David? Having vented his hurt, Zunz closed by asking Fleischer for a public rebuke:

Hence I await a word in the next issue [of the *Zeitschrift*], indeed a word that is public. As the founder of the society, you are called upon to keep such vulgarities from its midst. Should nothing happen then I have all too long been a member of a society in which barrack’s arrogance and Jew-hatred instead of science and Germanness [*Deutschtum*] threaten to imbed themselves. I do not know of a more noble voice of true humanity and free scholarship than yours, and thus I am so bold as to turn directly to you.⁹⁷

Fleischer responded almost immediately with a four-page epistle, whose very length bespoke his respect for Zunz and the gravity of his concern. The executive committee itself, he related, was very apprehensive about Ewald’s address. Every Orientalist knew that he was slightly unhinged, the tragicomic figure of the field. And yet a presidential speech was a matter of record that had to be printed as delivered. The executive decided in advance to edit only misinformation that might embarrass the Society or hinder its operations. All else would be Ewald’s responsibility. Fleischer went on to say that if anyone had the right to be offended by Ewald’s performance, it should have been he, for what Ewald and his minions had to say about him was reprehensible. But he was unfazed, brushed off the mud and moved on.

Notwithstanding his equanimity, Fleischer remonstrated that Zunz had put a pistol to his head; though he did not appreciate being threatened, he would honour his request. And then as if to show that their relationship had not been frayed, he reiterated an earlier request that Zunz send him an essay for the journal.⁹⁸

To comply, Fleischer had to negotiate delicately between Ewald’s ego and Zunz’s ultimatum. An adroit political sensibility helped him wield a strategy that satisfied the latter without humiliating the former. Later that same year in the journal, he published the French statutes of an Oriental society in formation in Constantinople, celebrating the opening of a venue for European scholarship on the doorstep of the Porte. The second paragraph affirmed the exclusion from its deliberations of any reference to the religious and political issues of the day. To this

⁹⁶ RLC, Fleischer papers, Zunz file.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Jewish National and University Library (hereafter JNUL), Jerusalem, ARC 4° 792, G 12.

paragraph, Fleischer saw fit to append a pregnant footnote again avowing unequivocally that this had been and would continue to be the DMG's stance:

Even without a specific statute of this sort, the DMG has until recently kept its halls free of any unfriendly mention of religious differences. Let us elevate what has until now been simply good practice to the level of principle. Let us not forgo the beautiful privilege, at least not here in the open lodge of cosmopolitan scholarship [*in der offenen Loge weltbürgerlicher Wissenschaft*], to have all kinds of religious polemic, as no more than a subject of dispassionate historical consideration before us, in every other regard though behind and beneath us. When in 1844 German Orientalists of different persuasions laid the foundation for the [DMG], it was stated, not prompted by anything specific, yet apparently acknowledged by all, that the loftiest purpose and greatest blessing of our convening would be achieved and won when the hearts of those united "would open themselves to the social virtues, which alone render even the relationships of the scholarly world truly noble and beneficial". One year later, [Schleiermacher's] opening address at the start of our society put forth, in the same vein, still more lofty and general considerations. These demands should be valid for all and forever – and to recall them now is again timely.⁹⁹

Fleischer's file contains no further letters from Zunz that expressed his appreciation. What did come in, however, was the essay for which Fleischer had pleaded, an erudite and visionary call for the production of a comprehensive dictionary of the Hebrew language, the foundation of which Zunz had laid in the philological studies to his just completed *Die synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters*. The daunting scope of such a project, however, delayed its actualization until 1910, when Eliezer Ben Yehuda published the first volume of his monumental dictionary of the Hebrew language, destined only to be finished in 1959, and then by other hands. Fittingly, Ben Yehuda quoted from Zunz's essay to vindicate his life's work.¹⁰⁰ Fleischer's defence of value free scholarship, in retrospect, could not have been more richly rewarded.

Fleischer's note of 1853 thus reiterated what he had signalled through his line-up of presenters in 1844 in Dresden – Jewish studies constituted an integral sub-field of the work of the DMG. The pages of the journal implemented that policy in three distinct ways: by the attention paid to Jewish scholars and scholarship in its annual surveys of new books in Oriental studies; by the number of Jewish works reviewed by the journal; and by the number of essays published on Jewish subjects. As more scholars entered the field and more Judeo-Arabic manuscripts of medieval Jewish classics preserved only in Hebrew translation were published, the cumulative effect of these three forms of coverage was to make Islamic studies in Germany truly interdisciplinary. Indeed, the *ZDMG* had cast its net so broadly that on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the DMG on 30 September 1921, Carl Brockelmann, the dean of Orientalists of his era, regretted that the

⁹⁹ *ZDMG*, vol. 7 (1853), p. 275. Mangold took the title for her book from this footnote.

¹⁰⁰ Leopold Zunz, 'Wünsche für ein Wörterbuch der hebräischen Sprache', in *ZDMG*, vol. 10 (1856), pp. 501–12; Eliezer Ben Yehuda, *A Complete Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Hebrew* (Hebrew), vol. 1, Jerusalem/New York 1959, p. 19. That the essay is the grand culmination of Zunz's book (Berlin 1855) is suggested by its stunning philological supplements.

journal had strayed from its original intent, which had been to include only philological studies pertaining to the Hebrew Bible and Jewish literature.¹⁰¹

The comment in his retrospective survey of the society's history was an allusion to the annual survey Fleischer presented to the organization at its meeting in 1849. Mandated by its statutes, annual surveys of this sort, mainly bibliographical, were meant to lend a semblance of unity, coherence and hence legitimacy to a sprawling and unwieldy field. Precisely for this reason they were meant to be authored by a single scholar. But Fleischer, not a synthesizer or surveyor by nature, tended to restrict his purview to linguistic developments in each sub-field. In particular, he referenced only a few Jewish studies of a grammatical, philological and exegetical nature, though to his great credit, he anticipated Zunz in envisioning a comprehensive dictionary of Hebrew following the necessary spadework.¹⁰² He also felt obliged to reassure the Jewish literary press that the journal would not crowd it out by treading on the domain of rabbinics or medieval Jewish history and literature. Yet elsewhere in the context of his survey of Arabic studies, he hailed the evidence amassed by Jacob Goldenthal in Vienna regarding the influence of Islamic culture on medieval works in Jewish philosophy and Hebrew grammar and encouraged Jewish scholars to develop that line of research.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, the overall amount of space devoted to Jewish studies was minimal.

In the years that followed the restraint lessened, but only gradually. Emil Rödiger, Gesenius's successor at Halle and one of the coterie in Fleischer's home to launch the initiative for a German Oriental society, took responsibility for four of the next five surveys. The designated coverage remained modest, though by the last, which treated the new publications appearing in 1854–55, it had expanded to nearly eight pages. More indicative of things to come, Rödiger moved beyond the original parameters to single out works by Rapaport, Frankel, Geiger, Jellinek, Graetz and Steinschneider that were either rabbinic or medieval in focus. Even the contents of Frankel's new journal, the *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, destined to appear uninterruptedly from 1851 to 1939, merited individual mention.¹⁰⁴

The scope of Jewish coverage peaked under Richard Gosche, who threw caution to the winds in authoring the next four surveys, which ended with the new publications of 1867. He was clearly more comfortable with the medium, and as custodian of Oriental manuscripts at the Royal Library in Berlin until he moved to Halle in 1862, he had access to books. His initial survey for 1856 set the tone by allotting some 20 pages to Jewish studies out of a total of 150.¹⁰⁵ Nor were his

¹⁰¹ Carl Brockelmann, 'Die morgenländischen Studien in Deutschland', in *ZDMG*, vol. 76 (1922), p. 13.

¹⁰² *ZDMG*, vol. 4 (1850), p. 486.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 497. In regard to Goldenthal's 1848 Vienna lecture on the influence of Arabic culture on Judaism, Fleischer opined: "Though this irrefutable truth will surely discomfot some, it should not intimidate the enterprising scholar from striving to gain due recognition for it." (p. 497).

¹⁰⁴ *ZDMG*, vol. 5 (1850), pp. 417–466, *Judaica and Hebraica*, pp. 433–435; vol. 8 (1853), pp. 637–719, *Judaica and Hebraica*, pp. 706–11; vol. 9 (1854), pp. 321–356, *Judaica and Hebraica*, pp. 348–349; vol. 10 (1856), pp. 691–799, *Judaica and Hebraica*, pp. 771–779.

¹⁰⁵ *ZDMG*, vol. 11 (1857), pp. 597–616 for *Judaica and Hebraica*.

references merely bibliographical. His discussion suggests actual perusal, even of works in Hebrew, while his praise of individual scholars is often effusive. Munk's Arabic edition of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* finds him grasping for superlatives: "Munk's contribution, including his translation and notes, is so far beyond praising that I would be guilty of immodesty if I tried to find the right words rather than just saying it is self-evident."¹⁰⁶

Despite Gosche's unprecedented coverage, which even extended to new festival prayerbooks (*mahzorim*) by Michael Sachs and Meir Letteris,¹⁰⁷ he lamented the lacunae that remained, which were not altogether his own fault:

I regret that the majority of Hebrew publications eludes the attention of Christian scholars. Indeed, even those located in specifically Jewish circles obtain information about the literary activity of their people only with great difficulty. This literature is still hidden from us inside a ghetto. It is this exclusivity which caused the great gaps in my presentation and not any principled opposition, engendered by a misguided humanistic standpoint that has at last been fully overcome by the religious and literary ethos of our century.¹⁰⁸

Reciprocity required accessibility. To do justice to the burgeoning field of critical Jewish scholarship called for new vehicles of communication. The ghetto had to be lifted from inside as well as from outside. Because Gosche's stinging criticism erupted from frustrated sympathy, it did not fall on deaf ears. Exactly one year later, Steinschneider, whose Bodleian catalogue had come in for kudos in Gosche's review,¹⁰⁹ launched his invaluable bimonthly *Hebräische Bibliographie*, which he would single-handedly edit until 1881, with only one four-year hiatus. Working closely with the Berlin book-dealer and publisher Abraham Asher, who had recommended him for the Bodleian assignment, Steinschneider facilitated the dissemination of information about new texts and studies in all languages.¹¹⁰ He demanded only a single copy of works authors wished to have listed, described and possibly reviewed. Quickly and meticulously, then, he crafted the kind of exchange that Gosche may have had in mind and on which he would noticeably rely in preparing the surveys to come.¹¹¹

Munk has already offered us an example of the second type of coverage the journal extended to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, reviews of individual books by Jewish scholars. Just how pro-active the journal could sometimes be in soliciting reviews comes out in respect to two works on Cabbala by Adolph Jellinek, who like Steinschneider came from Moravia. In 1842 when Jellinek relocated to Leipzig to study with Fleischer, Steinschneider made the introduction, stressing Jellinek's

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 614.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 612.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 613.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 611.

¹¹⁰ Shimeon Brisman, *A History and Guide to Judaic Bibliography*, vol. 1, Cincinnati/New York 1977, pp. 39–43. On Asher, see Marx, 'Moritz Steinschneider', p. 133.

¹¹¹ *HB*, vol. 1 (1858), pp. 1–3. For a sample of Gosche's subsequent reliance on the *HB*, see the footnotes in *ZDMG, Supplement zum 20. Bande*, pp. 208–213.

extensive knowledge of Hebrew and rabbinic literature (an expertise that Fleischer valued, as we shall see).¹¹² Jellinek drew close to Fleischer, taking some twenty-four of his courses during his six-year stay at the university. Years later after Fleischer's death, Jellinek would write of the influence of his example on him: "If I may have advanced the study of Jewish literature a bit by stimulating others, then I owe that to the example of my departed teacher. [. . .] As a scholarly Croesus, he dispensed his literary estate with both hands."¹¹³ From 1845 to 1856, Jellinek served as the rabbi of Leipzig's nascent Jewish community and as an early and active member of the DMG. In 1852 when Rudolf Anger, a professor of theology at Leipzig, resigned as editor of the *Zeitschrift*, the executive committee, which wanted to retain the journal in Leipzig, briefly even considered Jellinek for the position before persuading Brockhaus, who had the triple advantage of being neither Jewish nor a theologian nor a non-academic.¹¹⁴

During those years Jellinek did pioneering work in the study of Cabbala. In December 1851 Anger wrote hastily to Steinschneider asking if within the span of four days he might provide him with a short review of Jellinek's most recent publications, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala* and *Moses ben Schemtob und sein Verhältniss zum Zohar*. If the notice was too short, Anger would be ready to accept it at a later date. To increase the pressure, Anger allowed Jellinek to append a postscript reiterating the request. Steinschneider complied, though his loathing of Cabbala prompted him to throw in a nasty swipe at Adolphe Franck.¹¹⁵ A few years earlier Jellinek had prepared and enhanced a German translation of his far-reaching history of *La Kabbale*, with its slightly presumptuous subtitle *La philosophie religieuse des Hebreux*.¹¹⁶ In his review Steinschneider chided his friend for having wasted his time. Unhappily, Anger was compelled to tell Steinschneider that journal policy prevented him from printing such an unsubstantiated slight. Anger also found the review too judgmental for the format of a notice of publication meant to inform the public of a book's contents rather than criticize.¹¹⁷

Caught between friendship and integrity, Steinschneider accommodated Anger only partially. The denigration of Franck disappeared as did one of the volumes to be reviewed. Steinschneider ended up reviewing *Moses ben Schemtob* alone, and that work quite critically. He regarded the purported author of the Zohar as little more than a charlatan and counselled Jellinek to shift his focus from its provenance to a thorough study of its contents for "it seems to us that with a composite

¹¹² RLC, Fleischer papers, Steinschneider file, letter dated Oct. 9, 1842.

¹¹³ Moses Rosenmann, *Dr. Adolf Jellinek. Sein Leben und Schaffen*, Vienna 1931, pp. 33–36.

¹¹⁴ Bibliothek der DMG, Halle, DMG Acten 1852, letter from Brockhaus to Arnold dated Nov. 19, 1852: "Now since in Halle, as I was told, you decisively turned down taking over the editorship, and since Anger and Tüch because of illness and Fleischer because of excessive work are unable to, the choice came down to me or Jellinek. I thought it not quite appropriate that he should take it over, for reasons that do not have to be spelled out, and so I decided to do it."

¹¹⁵ JTSL, ARC 108, box 1, letter dated 17 Dec. 1851.

¹¹⁶ Adolphe Frank, *Die Kabbala oder die Religions-philosophie der Hebräer*, übersetzt, verbessert und vermehrt von Adolph Jellinek, Leipzig 1844.

¹¹⁷ JTSL, ARC 108, box 1, letter dated 17 Dec. 1851.

and reworked text as the Zohar manifestly is, it is better to start with the parts and thereby reach some solid conclusions regarding each one".¹¹⁸ Granted the episode was minor, it was nonetheless not isolated; it vividly attests to the length to which the journal would go to incorporate reviews of Jewish scholarship into its Orient-centred discourse.

The journal's third and final mode of incorporation, the sharp increase in essays contributed by Jewish scholars, was initiated by Brockhaus after becoming editor in 1852, when he immediately reached out to Steinschneider with an invitation to submit the results of his research to the journal in any format he liked. Brockhaus knew the frontier nature of his work better than anyone except perhaps Fleischer, because he was the publisher of Ersch and Gruber, to which Steinschneider was a major contributor of synthetic and biographical entries (one of the former has been mentioned above). Aside from its expression of appreciation of Steinschneider's stature, the letter of invitation marked the admission of students of Judaica to the German republic of Orientalists, seeing Steinschneider's help in effecting this policy:

The undersigned has the honour to inform you that he has assumed the editorship of the *Zeitschrift der DMG*. Since I have the strong wish to from now on make this journal the true centre of German scholarship in the field of Orientalism, I turn to you, dear sir, with the urgent request to support me vigorously in the attainment of this goal. In whatever form and length you wish to give us your contributions, I leave to you. Be they large essays or small notes or précis of new books, all will be welcome by me and find quick acceptance.¹¹⁹

In consequence, as already often noted, during the first quarter century of the *Zeitschrift* its pages were frequently punctuated by essays by Steinschneider, Geiger, Zunz, Fürst and Moritz Abraham Levy, who constituted the first cohort of Jewish practitioners of Jewish *Wissenschaft*. The essays by Steinschneider and Levy in fact often dealt with topics that touched Jews only tangentially. By the second quarter century, the journal hosted a still larger and equally talented cohort of scholars, many of whom had studied with Fleischer in his waning years. The likes of Ignaz Goldziher, Alexander Kohut, Wilhelm Bacher, David Kaufmann, Samuel Landauer, Jacob Barth, Eduard Baneth, Martin Schreiner and Immanuel Löw, all first-rate Arabists, transformed the journal into a unique forum for exploring the multifaceted interaction between Islam and Judaism. The upsurge in contributions also mirrored the upsurge of new manuscripts and knowledge that came to light in the latter half of the nineteenth century in both Jewish and Islamic studies. Thus Goldziher reviewed, at length and appreciatively, the 1880 publication by Landauer of the Arabic original of Saadia Gaon's *Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, and far more critically the 1887 publication by Hartwig Hirschfeld of the Arabic

¹¹⁸ *ZDMG*, vol. 6 (1852), pp. 298–9.

¹¹⁹ JTSL, ARC 108, box 2, letter dated 23 Dec. 1852.

original of Yehuda Halevi's *Kusari*.¹²⁰ Similarly, the publication of the Arabic original of Jonah Ibn Janah's biblical dictionary by Adolf Neubauer in 1875 and Ibn Janah's grammatical introduction to his dictionary by Joseph Derenbourg in 1886 prompted Bacher a few years later to compose his elegant history of the early stages of Hebrew grammar, extending from the rabbinic period to Saadia, which ran to well over 100 pages in the *Zeitschrift*.¹²¹

Overall, the essays were growing in number, length and scope. Most illuminating of the degree to which Jewish studies now belonged to a single universe of Orientalist discourse was an essay by Landauer that did not concern itself solely with Jews under Islam. A grateful student of Markus Müller in Munich and Theodor Nöldeke in Strasbourg, Landauer was struggling in 1880 as an instructor at the University of Strasbourg, where he would eventually become the librarian. In 1879 he had enriched the pages of the journal with the Arabic text and translation of a manuscript on psychology by the seminal tenth-century Islamic philosopher Ibn Sina. In his notes he related some of Ibn Sina's ideas, images and terminology to Jewish parallels without positing borrowing, even as he underlined his influence on Halevi's *Kusari*.¹²² That same year he published the journal's first annual review of new Oriental scholarship devoted solely to the subject of "Rabbinics and Judaica". The 24-page essay was by no means a history of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, but merely a well ordered catalogue raisonné of its expansion and diversification over the previous few decades. Jewish Studies was now generating sub-fields and taking root in other countries, with recent studies of Talmudic and rabbinic literature coming in for extensive attention.¹²³ Most likely initiated by the editorial staff, since the yearly reports were surely their domain, this remarkable review signalled unequivocally that the totality of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, and not merely its Judeo-Arabic segment, was regarded as an integral component of Oriental studies. Not only had Jewish Studies come of age, but it had located an unofficial corner of the German academic establishment where it was welcome.

In sum, the DMG was Fleischer's enduring legacy, a monument to his humanity and vision of unadulterated scholarship. His openness was a direct function of his uncompromising devotion to advancing his field. The intrusion of extraneous sentiments would always come at the expense of progress. Fleischer did not encourage Jews per se to enter the field, but only those endowed with a knowledge

¹²⁰ On Landauer, see *ZDMG*, vol. 35 (1880), pp. 773–783; on Hirschfeld, see *ZDMG*, vol. 41 (1887), pp. 691–707.

¹²¹ Adolf Neubauer (ed.), *The Book of Hebrew Roots by Abu al-Walid Marwan Ibn Janah*, Oxford 1875; Joseph Derenbourg (ed.), *Le livre des parties fleuries grammaire hébraïque en arabe d'Abou 'l-Walid Merwan ibn Merwan ibn Djanah de Cordoue*, Paris 1886; Wilhelm Bacher, 'Die Anfänge der hebräischen Grammatik', in *ZDMG*, vol. 49 (1895), pp. 1–62, 335–392.

¹²² Samuel Landauer, 'Die Psychologie des Ibn Sina,' in *ZDMG*, vol. 29 (1879), pp. 335–418. See pp. 373, n. 1, 377 n. 5 and 380 n. 8. On Halevi's borrowing from Ibn Sina, see also pp. 384 n. 12, 386 n. 6 and 387 n. 2.

¹²³ S. Landauer, 'Rabbinica und Judaica,' in *Wissenschaftlicher Jahresbericht über die morgenländischen Studien, von Oct. 1876 bis Dec. 1877*, Leipzig 1879, pp. 71–95.

of Hebrew and Aramaic and their rich literary deposits. These students, and not their Hebraically illiterate co-religionists, had an advantage in the study of Arabic, a cognate language, over Protestant students, who admittedly often overshadowed them in their mastery of Latin and Greek. On occasion, Fleischer would even utter this sentiment publicly.

In 1844 he reviewed an edition by Ernst Bertheau of Göttingen of a Syriac (i.e. eastern Aramaic) grammar by one Bar Hebraeus, a thirteenth-century monk, written in poetic form to facilitate learning. Fleischer bemoaned that knowledge of Syriac was still rudimentary, restricted almost entirely to the Christian translation of the Bible into Syriac (known as the *Peshitta*) and bereft of all contact with the living language. Unfortunately, neither Bar Hebraeus's grammar nor Bertheau's flawed edition had done much to alter this deficit. But Fleischer, refusing to end on a negative note, solicited help from a disdained source:

...also Jewish scholars should apply their well honed Semitic feel for languages more than they have until now to Syriac. I am prompted to say this by a related book that has lain on my desk too long, a manuscript of *Etz Hayyim* co-edited by Mr. Steinschneider, a candidate for the rabbinate, in Prague. It contains notes to the text and its translation which often elegantly correct both, as well as a collection of synonyms for logical and grammatical terms from Bar Hebraeus, the rabbis and Arab writers. I thank him for some welcome instruction and urge him to devote his diligence and acuity especially to this last subject.¹²⁴

This conspicuous encomium, privileging a candidate for the rabbinate over a university professor, was surely intended to strengthen Steinschneider's resolve at a particularly stressful moment in his arduous career path. But it also singled him out as representative of a type: Jews from traditional backgrounds with a well stocked repertoire of sacred texts, fluency in their languages and a set of exegetical skills to read them, together with a hunger for enlightenment. Precisely that background equipped them with an affinity for the study of Islam and its languages, a body of knowledge for which Fleischer consistently showed respect and sympathy.

Nor did Fleischer's private comments deviate or detract from the largesse of his public remark. During the course of his long tenure at Leipzig, Fleischer was often called upon to render a written opinion on work submitted by Jewish doctoral candidates, both in residence and *in absentia*. His admiration for traditional Jewish learning was often evident. In the case of Immanuel Löw, who would follow his

¹²⁴ *Leipziger Repertorium der deutschen und ausländischen Literatur*, 20 Dec. 1844, p. 500. In a letter to Bernhard Beer in Dresden from 27 Jan. 1845, Steinschneider reported Fleischer's compliment: "In *Gesd. Repertorium*. . ., Fleischer made mention of me and Jewish learning in a highly favourable way" (JNUL, ARC, Var 236 # 46). The work of Steinschneider to which Fleischer made reference was his collaboration with Franz Delitzsch in editing Aaron ben Elijah's fourteenth-century Hebrew philosophic treatise *Etz Hayyim*, a Karaitic equivalent of Maimonides' *Moreh Nevukhim*. Delitzsch had discovered the manuscript while cataloguing the Oriental manuscripts of the Leipzig city library with his teacher Fleischer. Steinschneider's notes and addenda made the work accessible for comparative purposes (Franz Delitzsch, *Etz Hayyim. Ahron ben Elias aus Nikomedien des Karäers System der Religionsphilosophie*, Leipzig 1841).

illustrious father Leopold in the rabbinate at Szeged and who had written a brilliant dissertation for Fleischer on the Aramaic names for the flora of the Middle East, Fleischer thus observed that “to do this task [requires] no less than a thorough knowledge of Aramaic, old and new Hebrew [i.e. biblical, rabbinic and medieval] and Arabic plus an intimate familiarity with both Talmuds and later works of new Hebrew literature, which today is only to be found among learned Jews.”¹²⁵ To Fleischer’s joy, Bacher, who wrote his dissertation on the twelfth-century Persian poet Nizami, brought the same propaedeutic training to his task: “The present sample submitted for promotion [i.e. for a doctorate] is in its way a most delightful phenomenon, a young Israelite with a good head, spirit and taste and equipped with the usual linguistic knowledge of learned Israelites (*Gelehrten seines Namens*) [...]”¹²⁶

No less revealing are those instances where Fleischer saw that advantage go to waste, as it often did with candidates from Hungary, Poland Russia and Galicia. Here his criticism was suffused with regret and noticeably devoid of untoward cultural asides. In the case of Salom Schachna Simchowitz, born in Russia in 1851, but now (in 1880) in Vienna teaching at its Beit ha-Midrash, Fleischer served only as a second reader. Yet instead of merely concurring with the negative decision of the first reader, he took the trouble to read the submitted work in its entirety. While he too rejected Simchowitz’s candidacy for a doctorate *in absentia*, his opening gambit sounded a note of sadness:

It is regrettable to see how extensive knowledge of the Jewish theologians and philosophers of the Middle Ages as well as of the Talmud and *midrashim*, though utterly bereft of any philosophical and critical sense, helps Mr. Simchowitz to transform the Moses of the Old Testament, whom when stripped of his mythic garb we know only as an energetic leader, lawgiver and religious founder, into an ingenious scientist and the founder of “Positivism” (a worldview based on empiricism).¹²⁷

Without the leavening of university training, the autodidact was always at risk of running amok. Yet Fleischer’s ire was directed at Simchowitz and not Judaism.

His interest in Judaism, if not downright sympathy with it, even occasionally sparked disagreement with his colleagues. One of these was Isaak Mises, who in 1870 requested a doctorate from the Leipzig Philosophy faculty for a small tract of eighty pages (*Beitrag zur Würdigung der Wirren im Judentum*) he had written back in 1845. Born in Lemberg in 1810 but since 1864 a Prussian citizen, Mises was a lifelong autodidact in pursuit of secular as well as religious studies. Fleischer’s other colleagues found his anti-Reform, eudaemonistic treatment of Judaism unworthy

¹²⁵ Preissler, ‘Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer’, p. 263.

¹²⁶ UAL, phil. Fac. Prom. 1392.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 9094.

of promotion, largely on external grounds. Fleischer's eye, however, penetrated beneath the surface:

The further I read the more the content reconciled me to its defective form. Indisputably, there is in this small tract a thorough philosophic training in addition to a solid knowledge of the subject under discussion. The views of Mr. Mises on the distinctive essence of pure Mosaicism in contrast to paganism, Christianity and Islam are so unbiased and penetrating that I can hardly remember reading anything comparable by a Jewish author.

Fleischer was also impressed with the command and treatment of Cabbalistic literature that Mises displayed in two smaller pieces he had also submitted:

Mr. Mises handles his subject with love and devotion, yet soberly and objectively without getting lost therein. I must admit that I learned much from his presentation and hope that he will continue his work as promised, which can't fail to take an honourable place in the history of the theosophic systems of the Orient. Accordingly, I vote for promoting Rabbi Mises in absentia.¹²⁸

Fleischer's prescience in seeing the history of Judaism within the context of the Orient is what shaped his openness to its study. He sensed early on that behind the infinite diversity of the Orient lay a cultural continuum of great commonality. And it was that vision that gained institutional vitality in the discourse of the DMG.

In celebration of the fiftieth year since the conferral of Fleischer's own doctorate by Leipzig, in 1873 the DMG set out to establish an endowment of 3000 talers, the interest of which would fund annual stipends bearing Fleischer's name for worthy advanced students in Arabic studies, irrespective of nationality or religion. The absence of barriers did justice to the unbounded horizon of the man. Steinschneider announced the fellowships in his *Hebräische Bibliographie*, highlighting the significance of Jewish eligibility: "We wish merely to remind our readers that to advance in any which way the promotion of Semitic studies and the possibility of an academic career for Jewish scholars is meritorious."¹²⁹ What Steinschneider may not have known two years later when he informed his readership that the sum had been raised was that Fleischer had arranged for the first grant to be awarded to Goldziher, whose failure to garner an academic appointment in Budapest had thrown him into despair and great need.¹³⁰

At the same time, Steinschneider mounted his own initiative to advance Fleischer's vision of interdisciplinary studies. At Geiger's death in 1874, he persuaded the curatorium and academic council of the Zunz Foundation in Berlin to invite Fleischer to take Geiger's seat on the five-man council. The foundation had been set up in 1864 when Zunz turned 70 to provide him and his beloved wife Adelheid with the security of a pension. After their death, the interest would be used for the support of critical scholarship. The creation of the *Lehranstalt für die*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 9128.

¹²⁹ *HB*, vol. 13 (1873), here p. viii; vol. 15 (1875), p. 45.

¹³⁰ RLC, Fleischer papers, Goldziher file, letters dated 8 February 1875 and 5 March 1875.

Wissenschaft des Judentums in 1872 had provoked Steinschneider to register his protest against the retreat of Jewish scholarship into yet another ghetto. As he wrote to Fleischer, his invitation was meant to repudiate the surrender and bifurcation: "It was for that reason that I gave the impetus to elect a Christian to the Zunz Foundation and I am pleased that my suggestion had such a happy outcome."¹³¹

Steinschneider knew that the Zunz Foundation could not have chosen better to affirm its allegiance to a scholarly ethos that transcended religious divisions, for as Fleischer avowed in his acceptance letter, that ethos had always been the lodestar of his own life:

I accept with joy and gratitude my election to the seat on the council of the foundation formerly held by my departed friend Dr. Geiger, as stipulated in your letter to me of 18 May [1875]. For wherever names such as Zunz and Geiger come together, there hovers the spirit of authentic scholarship free of self-centeredness and prejudice. As you know, it is only here that I feel at home and therefore I am yours.¹³²

Fleischer was to stay until his death in 1888. That he was the last Christian scholar to be accorded that degree of esteem and trust, however, sadly attests to the embattled state of his vision, despite the beachhead he had secured for it in the DMG.¹³³

¹³¹ RLC, Fleischer papers, Steinschneider file, letter dated 23 May 1875.

¹³² JNUL, ARC 4° 792, Z9b, letter dated 24 May 1875.

¹³³ Replacing Fleischer in 1888 on the academic council was David Kaufmann, a former student of Fleischer's and now a professor at the seminary in Budapest (*ibid*).