

# Editors' Introduction: The Genesis of *Die hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters*

The June 3, 1893, issue of the Berlin *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* carried the following announcement:

In the upcoming days a rather large work is to appear under the auspices of the Commission of the Bibliographical Bureau (*Kommission des Bibliographischen Bureaus*). The table of contents covers two large quarto sides of an offprint that may be obtained *gratis*. The book itself will not be sent for reviewing, as only three hundred copies (retail price, thirty marks) have been produced. Its author may be allowed to say something about the origin and the nature of the work.

The work contains the German version of a French essay that was submitted to the 1884 Prize Competition of the Académie française for the best work on the Hebrew translations in the Middle Ages in their broadest dimensions, namely, including also the commentaries, compendia, etc., of the translations. The essay won the prize. The entire work in two volumes (over 1100 narrowly printed pages) is divided into a general or introductory part (encyclopedias, divisions of the sciences, introductions and guides for study), followed by five sections, namely philosophy, mathematics, medicine, miscellaneous, and “the Jews as transmitters.” Each section is divided into four chapters according to authors of the original works: Greeks, Arabs, Jews, Christians. The individual authors are arranged alphabetically. The research extends also to the original authors and the works that were translated, based on data culled from the best and newest sources. But the central endeavor is to attest and discuss the Hebrew translations, of which only an insignificant fraction is available in print, so that the work is mainly concerned with manuscripts, most of which have been examined directly or via communications from experts. The last of eight indices lists these manuscripts according to library.

The work is preceded by General Remarks, from which only the following point may be highlighted: among the translations there are as many original works of Christian origin as those of all the aforementioned three rubrics [i.e., Greek, Arab, and Jewish authors] combined. The title designates the work, not unfittingly, as a contribution to the literary history of the Middle Ages.

Berlin

Moritz Steinschneider<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Pp. 695–6. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by the present authors.

The eighty-seven-year-old Moritz (Moshe) Steinschneider had good reasons to wish to present his new book to the public in advance of its appearance. For one thing, he had published the volume privately at his own expense and under the auspices of a society headed by his son, Julius. The colossal size of a book on such a recondite topic would no doubt deter sales, especially if its value for fields other than Jewish literature was not recognized. For another, the size of the book seemed disproportionate to its topic, a judgment with which even Steinschneider would have agreed, had he intended to write a book solely, or even principally, about Jewish translators. The author's comments notwithstanding, the book published in 1893 under the somewhat misleading title, *Die hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher* (*The Hebrew Translations of the Middle Ages and the Jews as Interpreters*, henceforth: *HUe*) was not merely about the Jewish translators, but rather about the corpus of medieval Hebrew philosophical, scientific, and even belletristic works, what Steinschneider called in the French *Mémoire* that preceded *HUe*, the “international” literature of the Jews.<sup>2</sup>

This essay deals with the genesis of *HUe*, a work that Steinschneider contemplated writing for many years, but that, over time, outgrew its initial conception. The work that emerged was not so much the book that Steinschneider had initially intended to write—a monograph on the Jewish translators, with reference to the Hebrew translations and commentaries of foreign originals—but rather a massive reference work for the history of “profane literature” in medieval Hebrew, indeed, a detailed and documented witness of that history, the like of which had never been seen before or was seen since.

## The Early Conception of *HUe*: 1845–1860

Steinschneider refers in several places in his writings to a prospectus that he had submitted in 1845 to the Berlin Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden for a work, or works, that would include an essay on Jewish translators. These references are not entirely consistent: they speak either of a single work on the literature of the Middle Ages that was to include sections on the Arabic literature of the Jews, Jewish translators, and Jewish and Muslim polemical literature; or of a trilogy of three works covering the same subjects; or of two works, one on the Arabic literature of the Jews and the other on the Jewish translators.<sup>3</sup> But whatever form the study of Jewish translators was intended to take, the focus was to be mainly, though not exclusively, on the Hebrew translations of Arabic texts. Steinschneider's initial aim in this part of his project appears to have been twofold: to demonstrate the impact of

<sup>2</sup>Steinschneider 1884 (henceforth: *Mémoire*). The *Avant-Propos* was published in Bourel 1987.

<sup>3</sup>Manekin 2000, esp. 144–7.

Arabic literature on Hebrew literature, especially in the fields of philosophy, science, mathematics, and medicine, and to call attention to the existence of Arabic works extant in Hebrew translations. Achieving this aim would present a more accurate picture not only of medieval Jewish literary culture but also of the impact of Hellenistic culture on both medieval Arabic and Jewish cultures. Steinschneider's university education in Vienna, Leipzig, and Berlin (1836–41) had focused on classical and oriental languages and philology, a focus that was reflected in his scholarly writings of this early period, such as his collaboration with Franz Delitzsch on *Etz Hayyim* by Aaron ben Elijah of Nicomedia (1841), his uncompleted Hebrew translation of the Qur'an, his article on circumcision among the Arabs and Muslims (1846), his review of Salomon Munk's *Notice sur Joseph b. Jehouda* (written in Prague, 1844), his articles on Arabic subjects for Pierer's *Universal-Lexikon* (1839–43), among others. Little was known at the time of the extent of Hebrew translations from languages besides Arabic, or for that matter, the extent of Hebrew translations from any languages.

Steinschneider's earliest published references to the proposed study of Jewish translators are found in two footnotes to the comprehensive article on “*Jüdische Literatur*” that he wrote for the Ersch and Gruber encyclopedia in 1845–47. The first speaks of the appearance, “hopefully soon,” of “a comprehensive work about the entire Arabic literature of the Jews, and that [literature of the Jews] which is translated from Arabic”<sup>4</sup>; the second refers to an appreciation of the “character and significance of the translation literature” in the *introduction* to his *Bibliotheca judaica-arabica*, i.e., the work on the Arabic literature of the Jews.<sup>5</sup> Here Steinschneider does not speak of a separate work on Jewish translators, but rather a treatment of the translation literature as part of his work on the Arabic literature of the Jews. This is confirmed by a description of that work in 1857 as “a monograph on Jewish literature in the Arabic language, and the translations from that and other languages in the Middle Ages.”<sup>6</sup> Given that Steinschneider said that his model for his *Bibliotheca judaica-arabica* was Wüstenfeld's *Geschichte der arabischen Ärzte* (1840), one may assume that his work would have been arranged like Wüstenfeld's: a general introduction, which would have discussed, in addition to Arabic Jewish literature, the importance and character of its Jewish translators; a list of authors with biographical information, followed by their principal works, in turn followed by the Hebrew translations. When Steinschneider finally published a much-expanded *Bibliotheca judaica-arabica* over a half-century later as *Die Arabische Literatur der Juden* (1903), this was more or less the form that it took. However, there was no longer a need to devote a section to the Jewish translators or to the Hebrew translations, since these subjects had been covered several years earlier in *HUe*.

<sup>4</sup>Steinschneider 1850, 384a, n.3.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 397b, n. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Steinschneider 1857, 267.

How did a proposed section on Jewish translators in a modestly-sized work on the relation of Arab-Jewish literatures expand exponentially, over the course of several decades, to become a gigantic work mainly on the philosophical and scientific literature of medieval Jews? Certainly, in 1845–47, when Steinschneider's knowledge of Jewish literature was based on out-of-date, incomplete, and often inaccurate catalogues of manuscript collections, limited exposure to primary sources in print, and a meager amount of reliable scholarship, he did not envision that subsequent research would lead him and others to discover so much new material. But in the decade following the publication of the encyclopedic entry *Jüdische Literatur*, Steinschneider catalogued the printed Judaica books of the Bodleian Library (1860), composed a conspectus of its manuscript collection (1857), and catalogued the Hebrew manuscripts of the Leiden library (1858). These catalogues offer detailed accounts of both works and authors. Steinschneider also had visited the British Museum's library and had prepared the catalogues of the private Michael and Saraval collections (the former ended up in Oxford; the latter at the Breslau seminary). The fruits of this decade-long research, and its implications for the study of Jewish translators and translations, are found already in the expanded English version of *Jüdische Literatur* which appeared in 1857 as *Jewish Literature from the Eighth to the Eighteenth Century*.

Here are a few examples of material on translations that were added in the English version of the original encyclopedia article (*italics in the original*):

*Manfred* is said to have translated a pseudo-Aristotelian work, as it seems from the Hebrew. The intellectual intercourse between Jews and Christians, in the countries where the language of literature (Latin) was more accessible to the Jews, from its affinity with the vernacular, was far greater than the deficient state of inquiry into that very interesting subject might lead us to suppose...<sup>7</sup>

Besides their own literature of translations, &c., we are also indebted to the Jews for the preservation of various works in *foreign languages* written in Hebrew characters, amongst which the Arabic, from its affinity, takes of course the first place. The neglect of several valuable contributions to the general history of literature has arisen only from ignorance of the letters in which they were written; through this they have been misinterpreted, and foreign authors have been converted by bibliographers into Jews. Many works of the celebrated *Averroes* (§ 12) in the genuine Arabic are preserved only in Hebrew MSS.; an Arabic lexicon in Hebrew characters, and older than the year 1380, is extant in the Escorial; but no one, as far as we know, even noticed it, at a period when every corner of the libraries was thoroughly examined by Arabic scholars. A *Polish* translation of the Psalms, written as early as 1510, is to be found at Parma; and at a later period even a Turkish work on Muhammedan sects was written in Hebrew characters, and has been recently discovered at Leyden by the author of the present treatise.<sup>8</sup>

Steinschneider also added to the original list of Christian Scholastics whose works were translated into Hebrew the names of Michael Scotus, Vincent of Beauvais, Petrus Hispanus, ("whose compendium of logic has been translated several times"), Thomas Bricot, Augustine, Piccolomini, "and others."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 66–67.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 95. Steinschneider found two of those translations among the Bodleian manuscripts.

As always, Steinschneider deemed knowledge of the translation literature important for an accurate picture of the works in the original language. To hammer home this point, he adds the following comment:

We will here mention only two examples. The errors about Michael Scotus' translation of the *Liber Animalium*, committed by Buhle and Schneider, might easily have been avoided if the Hebrew translation in the Oppenheim Collection had been known. Supposing the Hebrew title to be correct, this MS contains the Commentary of Averroes; to which neither Jourdain, nor Renan in his great work on Averroes, makes any allusion. Another Hebrew MS., now at Oxford, contains a work by Robert of Lincoln, *De Anima* (unknown to Tanner), in which Albertus Magnus is quoted. A complete answer to those who imagine all Jews in the Middle Ages, except the Arabians, to have been trades-people and privileged usurers is found in the prefatory remarks of Judah ben Moses of Rome (beginning of the fourteenth century); who professes to have translated various short dissertations by several celebrated Christian authors in order to show his brethren that "the Christian nation is not destitute of all true science" as some of them believed. The Jews have never been entirely excluded from the scientific pursuits of their contemporaries, except by force; the general ignorance respecting that part of the literature of the Middle Ages is shown by the fact that a Hebrew translation of a work by Thomas Aquinas has been recently introduced to the public as a great curiosity, and ascribed to a special motive of no value.<sup>10</sup>

Characteristically, Steinschneider begins the comment by emphasizing the significance of the Hebrew translations for historians of Arabic and Scholastic philosophy, yet ends with noting their importance for historians of Jewish culture. He was not one to overemphasize or to exaggerate the Jewish concern with philosophy and science; rather, his main task was to describe, as accurately and objectively as he could, the nature and extent of this concern. This was perhaps one of the reasons why he postponed his study of the Jewish translators. The longer he waited, the more material he and others were discovering.

Another reason for the expansion of the work on Jewish translators was Steinschneider's decision to include not only translations, but also writings related to translations. The term that Steinschneider liked to use was "*Bearbeitung*," which he rendered in French as "adaptation" and in English as "edition" or "version."<sup>11</sup> "*Bearbeitungen*" encompassed for him translations, explications, commentaries, supercommentaries, etc., of a given text. In this expansion he claimed to follow the examples of Wenrich and Flügel, and others.<sup>12</sup> In 1842 Johann Wenrich published his *De auctorum Graecorum versionibus et commentariis Syriacis, Arabicis, Armeniacis Persisque commentatio*, one year after Gustav Flügel had published his *Dissertatio de arabicis scriptorum graecorum interpretibus*. Both essays answered the call of the Königlische Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen in 1830 to produce a collection "of the references to Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, and Persian translations of Greek authors, an accurate account of which we are lacking to this day"; both expanded the survey beyond translations—Flügel spoke of *interpretes*;

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 96. The reference is to Jellinek 1853; cf. Steinschneider's notice on Shalom 1859 in Steinschneider 1859a.

<sup>11</sup>He actually mentions the word, among others, as one not easily rendered in English. See Steinschneider 1857, vi.

<sup>12</sup>Steinschneider 1884, 13.

Wenrich of *versiones* and *commentarii*, and the latter added an introduction about the background of the translation movement from Greek into Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, and Persian. Missing from both works was any reference to Hebrew translations. Three to four years after Wenrich and Flügel had published their essays, and five years after Wüstenfeld had published his *Geschichte der arabischen Ärzte*, Steinschneider submitted his prospectus for his *Bibliotheca judaica-arabica*. The three earlier works played a part not only in his conception of *HUe*, but also, perhaps, in his decision to write it.

Like Wenrich and Flügel, Steinschneider devoted much of his work on translators to the Greek heritage. This may seem strange, since the Jewish translators lacked direct knowledge of Greek texts. In the thirteenth century, for example, Zerachiah b. Isaac translated part of Aristotle's *De anima* into Hebrew, but from Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's Arabic translation of his father's Syriac translation; and another part from the translation of 'Isa b. Iṣḥāq (=Ibn Zur'ah). This appears to have been the only complete Hebrew translation of the *De anima* in the Middle Ages, and had Steinschneider limited himself to translations in the strict sense, he would have concluded his section on the *De anima* there. But in fact, he goes on to consider in the section on "Greek Authors" also the Hebrew versions of Averroes' commentaries, and the Jewish commentaries on these commentaries. None of Aristotle's logical writings was translated into Hebrew in the Middle Ages, either directly from the Greek or indirectly from the Arabic or Latin translations. And yet Steinschneider devotes over sixty pages to Jewish writings on logic in the section on "Aristotle" because these writings are either in the form of commentaries on Averroes' paraphrases of Aristotle, or independent works, commentaries, and paraphrases inspired by Averroes' paraphrases of Aristotle. The Hebrew translations and commentaries of Averroes' *Logical Questions* appear under Aristotle's logic, whereas the Hebrew translations and commentaries of Averroes' *Physical Questions* appear in a section devoted to *Quaestiones* (but still under the philosophy of the Greeks, rather than of the Arabs). Yet this classification does make some sense, for medieval Jewish authors generally viewed Averroes' commentaries on Aristotle, especially the paraphrastic Middle Commentaries, as essentially the works of Aristotle, and their references to Aristotle are usually via the versions of Averroes.

The inclusion of *Bearbeitungen* within the scope of a work about Jewish translators still does not account for the massive difference in size between Steinschneider's essay on the Hebrew translations and his predecessors' essays on the Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, and Persian translations—especially since the latter translations include many more works. Wenrich's and Flügel's essays are essentially lists of authors and their works, based on the manuscript catalogues, the Renaissance editions of the Latin translations, and some Renaissance translations of Arab historians. The subsequent publication of the works of Arabic and Turkish historiographers and bio-bibliographers, as well as the editions of some original texts, added significantly to our knowledge of the Graeco-Arabic translation movement.<sup>13</sup> When Steinschneider wrote a series

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<sup>13</sup> See Gutas 1998. Cf. Rosenthal 1958.

of articles on the Arabic translations from Greek a half-century after Wenrich and Flügel, the picture of the translation movement in its general outlines was more or less complete. What was still often missing from that picture was knowledge based on the original texts. By contrast, Steinschneider based *HUE* on first-hand knowledge of the Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts, and on information about the manuscripts that he had solicited from a network of informants throughout the libraries and private collections of Europe. His mastery of all areas of Jewish literature and bibliography, and his decision to delay the publication of *HUE* until he had first published articles and books on aspects of Jewish science, filled the book with detailed knowledge and swelled it considerably beyond the initial plan for a book on the Jewish translators.

If Steinschneider expanded the scope of the work by including “*Bearbeitungen*” in addition to “*Übersetzungen*,” he limited it by excluding the Hebrew translations of Jewish legal, liturgical, and exegetical writings. These belonged to what he termed the “national or religious” literature of the Jews. In the *Avant-Propos* to the *Mémoire*, he gives two reasons for this exclusion: First, most of these translations were taken from Judeo-Arabic works, and these would be discussed in his book on the Arabic literature of the Jews. Second, the “international literature of the Jews,” i.e., the philosophical and scientific, had been hitherto neglected:

The scientific studies [of the Jews] were regarded somewhat like a necessary curiosity; and, as for the translations, there were vague ideas about those that are connected to Arabic literature. It is only in our own day that translations made from Latin originals have been dug up, and it had been surprising to learn that in medical science the Jews made use, at the same time and to the same degree, of Western sources as well as of Arabic ones.

The fact is, one can prohibit the Jews anything but science.<sup>14</sup>

Here, too, Steinschneider signals that the work is primarily interested in the “profane literature” and not in the phenomenon of translation alone. More accurately, Steinschneider wished not only to describe the translations but also their impact in transforming medieval Jewish culture. To do this he had first to catalogue and describe the various *Bearbeitungen*, to layout and characterize the data, as it were, and then to make general observations. This was what Steinschneider set out to do in his work on Jewish translators, and though the final work emerged merely a half-century after he had written his original prospectus, it is safe to say that the basic conception of the projected work was formulated much earlier.

Steinschneider discovered during his work on the Bodleian and Leiden Catalogues that the data was much more considerable than he had thought. Sometime during the 1860s, if not earlier, the mass of material that he had gathered required that he separate the planned work into two: one on the Arabic literature of the Jews, and the other on the Jewish translators. In 1869, he wrote:

For over twenty years I have been following the points of contact between Arabic and Jewish culture and literature with special attention, and I have been gathering, in particular, material for two partly interrelated works about the Arabic literature of the Jews and the

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<sup>14</sup> Steinschneider 1884, 6.



Jewish translators. A section of the latter will include information about Arabic authors who were in some way accessible or known to the Jews, and their significance; this will also constitute an enrichment of Arabic literary history based on Hebrew and other sources that are rarely used by orientalists, and will throw light on the influence of oriental literature on the occidental.<sup>15</sup>

In fact, the material on the Arab authors was utilized in two works: first *HUe*, and then *Die arabischen Übersetzungen aus dem Griechischen*. But we are getting ahead of our story.

### ***Collecting the Data for HUe: 1845–1880***

In the introduction to *HUe* (1893), Steinschneider provides his own explanation for the delay in the composition of the work:

With ever growing knowledge of the material, however, my hope to get a grasp on it sank. Having to direct the Jewish School for Girls (1869–90), to give lectures at the Veitel Heine Foundation (since 1859), to offer help at the Royal Library (since 1869), to edit the *Hebraeische Bibliographie* (1859–82) and a supplement to Ben Jacob's *Thesaurus* (since 1880, at present arriving at p. 460), and to see to the duties of a large family I had neither the time nor the vigor to digest the immense material. No prospect of publication was acting as an incentive.<sup>16</sup>

This description presents the picture of *HUe* as a work for which the material was collected over decades, a work waiting to be written, unlike the two other books that emerged out of the 1845 prospectus, the *Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache zwischen Muslimen, Christen und Juden* (1877) and *Die arabische Literatur der Juden* (1903). *HUe*, by contrast, was composed—in some ways, compiled—from Steinschneider's notes and essays from the period loosely following the completion of the Leiden and Bodleian catalogues, until he published it in 1893. Steinschneider was indeed busy with personal, professional, and intellectual pursuits during this period that were not immediately connected with his work on Jewish translators. But among the thousands of references found in *HUe*, a large number are due to Steinschneider's own scholarship during this period, most of which he published piecemeal in scholarly journals, and especially in the one he himself edited, *Hebraeische Bibliographie*.

Steinschneider's short comments and longer reviews in *Hebraeische Bibliographie* have already been mined by historians for their insight into the development of his views<sup>17</sup>; they are especially important for his evaluation of the impact of his research on the historiography of Arabic and Latin philosophy and science. As each new monograph in those fields appeared, Steinschneider would check to

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<sup>15</sup> Steinschneider 1869a, vii.

<sup>16</sup> *HUe*, x.

<sup>17</sup> See Baron 1950.



see whether the author had taken into account his work on the Hebrew translation tradition. In the early years of *Hebraeische Bibliographie*, the journal had a section devoted to “General Literature” that listed scholarly books which Steinschneider thought had some Jewish connection. This gave the editor the opportunity to comment upon works like Adolf Helfferich’s *Raymund Lull und die Anfänge der catalonischen Literatur* (1858), Richard Gosche’s *Ghazzali’s Leben und Werke* (1859), and Daniel Bonifacius v. Haneberg’s essay on the *Theology of Aristotle* (1862). Steinschneider informs us with pleasure that *Raymund Lull* is the first general work to benefit from progress made in Jewish academic scholarship (he notes each reference to his *Jüdische Literatur*), but that its author exaggerates when he claims that hundreds of Latin Scholastic works were translated into Hebrew: “May the history of Jewish translations remain free of such casual hypotheses and exaggerations!”<sup>18</sup> His notice of Gosche’s *Ghazzali* is less complimentary because the author only occasionally refers to the scholarship on Hebrew tradition, with which he is familiar primarily through Munk; he is ignorant of the entry on Ghazzali in Steinschneider’s *Bodleian Catalogue* (p. 1000), not to mention the enormous amount of material in manuscript.<sup>19</sup> And in his review of Haneberg he bemoans the fact that even when authors wish to avail themselves of scholarship pertaining to the Hebrew tradition, they have difficulty finding the journals, “since Jewish Science is still not organically connected with universities and academies, and virtually nothing of it is represented in the libraries.”<sup>20</sup>

Steinschneider could have the satisfaction that some of his research into the Hebrew translators was being utilized by orientalists and historians of scholastic philosophy. In the second edition of *Averroès et l’Averroïsme* (1866), Ernest Renan made use of his Leiden Catalogue, as well as the yet unpublished entry on Averroes from the Bodleian Catalogue, provided to him by the Oxford orientalist Max Müller.<sup>21</sup> On the whole, however, the Jewish translation movement was still widely unknown, and the larger phenomenon of translation and cultural transmission was little studied. Steinschneider’s duties as the editor of *Hebraeische Bibliographie* during the first years of that journal left him little time to publish much else, certainly not a monograph on Jewish translators. At the end of 1865 he announced that the bimonthly bibliographical journal would cease publication, hoping that others would continue, perhaps on an annual basis. That hope proved fruitless, and three years later, *Hebraeische Bibliographie* resumed publication, with Steinschneider as editor, and with a slightly different format. Yet the

<sup>18</sup> Steinschneider 1859c, 18: “Möchte doch die Geschichte, namentlich die jüdische, von solchen hingeworfenen Hypothesen und Übertreibungen frei bleiben!”

<sup>19</sup> Steinschneider 1859b, 87: “In unsrer, seit 15 Jahren gesammelten jüdisch–arabischen Bibliothek ist Gazzali ein grösseres Capitel gewidmet.”

<sup>20</sup> Steinschneider 1863, 107: “weil die jüdische Wissenschaft noch in keinem organischen Zusammenhang mit Universitäten und Akademien steht, und in den Bibliotheken fast nirgends vertreten ist.”

<sup>21</sup> Renan 1866, i; cf. *ibid.*, 67, where Steinschneider’s Latin style is pronounced “si obscur” that Renan is not sure whether he understands him.

three-year hiatus had been beneficial for the author, and for his work on the translation project. Between 1866 and 1869, his ongoing inspection of Hebrew manuscript collections provided him with the materials for articles on Jewish and Arab physicians, scientists, and philosophers,<sup>22</sup> culminating in his monograph, *Al-Farabi (Alpharabius), des arabischen Philosophen Leben und Schriften mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Geschichte der griechischen Wissenschaft unter den Arabern; nebst Anhängen: Joh. Philoponus bei den Arabern, Darstellung der Philosophie Plato's, Leben und Testament des Aristoteles von Ptolemaeus; grösstenteils nach handschriftlichen Quellen* (Alfarabi, the Life and Works of the Arab Philosopher, With Special Consideration of the History of Greek Science Among the Arabs, and with the Following Appendices: John Philoponus Among the Arabs, A Depiction of Plato's Philosophy, and the Life and Testament of Aristotle by Ptolemy, Mostly Based on Manuscript Sources). Steinschneider's discovery of a Hebrew translation of a work whose author he determined to be Alfarabi led him to attempt to reconstruct the life and works of Alfarabi on the basis of a mosaic of Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin sources. In these publications Steinschneider established the importance of the translation literature not only for orientalists, but for classicists as well; Ptolemy's list of the works of Aristotle, reconstructed from the writings of Arab historiographers on the basis of manuscripts, and translated into Latin by Steinschneider, appeared in volume five of the Prussian Academy's edition of the Works of Aristotle in 1870.<sup>23</sup>

In 1870, Steinschneider published in the library science journal *Serapeum* an article on translators from Arabic sources in the Christian West, the first of a promised series of articles. The article was said to be a by-product of his twenty-five years of research into the medieval Jewish translators, their sources, and their subsequent influence. As part of that research the scholar would frequently be led to investigate whether individual writings of the Arabs reached the Christian West through Jewish intermediaries or not. Though not pertaining to his main theme of the Jewish translations, these ancillary investigations raised questions whose resolution was desirable, and he had already demonstrated the fruits of his labor in articles on the earliest adapter of Arabic works, Constantine the African, and on the Jewish physician, Shabbetai Donnolo. As for the main project, he writes, "and if I am now considering the publication of a monograph on the Jewish translators only with great trepidation, then my discouragement is due to the mass of unquestionably important material, and the hardly favorable time for publishing a voluminous bibliographical work." In the meantime Steinschneider would offer the *Serapeum* readers a series of articles that would serve as "stimulations for an investigation into manuscripts and printed works inaccessible to me."<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately for Steinschneider's project,

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., Steinschneider 1867a and Steinschneider 1867b.

<sup>23</sup> In Aristotle 1870, 1469–73.

<sup>24</sup> Steinschneider 1870. 291: "und wenn ich jetzt nur sehr zaghaft an die Herausgabe einer Monographie über die jüdischen Übersetzer denke; so liegt die Entmuthigung in der Masse des allerdings wichtigen Stoffes, und in der für ein umfangreiches bibliographisches Werk minder günstigen Zeit"; *ibid.*, 292: "Anregungen zur Untersuchung von mir unzugänglichen Handschriften und Drucken."

*Serapeum* ceased publication at the end of the year, and so the projected series did not materialize.

Despite his efforts to demonstrate the significance of the translation movements for the literary and cultural history of the medievals, Steinschneider's specialized articles failed to win for them widespread recognition. Particularly galling to him was a short note published in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* by the Austrian orientalist Aloys Sprenger entitled, "Lateinische Uebersetzungen aus dem Arabischen in der Berner Stadtbibliothek."<sup>25</sup> Sprenger recommended as one of the tasks for Oriental Studies the investigation of the influence of Muslim Science on the West, by which he meant the Christian West. Several months later Steinschneider replied to Sprenger's article with his own, entitled, pointedly, "Occidentalische Uebersetzungen aus dem Arabischen im Mittelalter." After somewhat petulantly noting that "Herr Prof. Sprenger has recommended in this volume of the *Zeitschrift*, p. 154, a task for Oriental Studies for which I have been collecting materials for 30 years, and which I have announced in many journals, including the present one,"<sup>26</sup> Steinschneider emphasized yet again the importance of the Latin translation literature for orientalists, supporting his point with many examples from his own investigations. But then he argued for the necessity of broadening the research on the European translation movements beyond the sphere of Latin to include Spanish, Greek and Hebrew texts. The latter would be especially desirable for him, since he had collected biographical and bibliographical material concerning approximately 120 named translators and commentators of Arabic works, in addition to anonymous writers, for a monograph about Jewish translators (and interpreters),<sup>27</sup> especially from the Arabic. The projected monograph was based on hundreds of manuscripts personally inspected and, in part, on his Bodleian Catalogue. Yet because of the sheer mass of material, and because few of the manuscripts had been described accurately, Steinschneider could not expect that the *ZDMG* would publish more than an occasional article based on his work. And so he was left with a real problem: "The material has grown so large for me that at present I do not see how to publish my comprehensive work; nevertheless, I continue to work for a rather dubious future."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Sprenger 1874, 154–5.

<sup>26</sup> Steinschneider 1874, 453: "Hr. Prof. Sprenger hat in diesem Bande d. Zeitschrift S. 154 eine Aufgabe der Orientalistik empfohlen, für welche ich seit 30 Jahren Materialien sammle und in verschiedenen Schriften, u.A. auch in dieser Zeitschrift (1) bekannt gemacht habe." In the note (1) Steinschneider provides references to five volumes of the *ZDMG* and to the *Serapeum* article cited above.

<sup>27</sup> Steinschneider distinguishes between translators (*Übersetzer*) and interpreters (or transmitters) (*Dolmetscher*); the former translate in writing from one language to another; the latter translate orally, often via the vernacular and in collaboration with non-Jews.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 456: "Der Stoff ist mir selbst so angewachsen, dass ich für die materiellen Mittel zu einer Veröffentlichung meiner weitausgreifenden Arbeit vorläufig keinen Rath weiss, dennoch für eine sehr zweifelhafte Zukunft fortarbeite."

By 1874 the raw material for Steinschneider's work on the Jewish translators had grown so vast that he was beginning to question whether it could ever be published. How could funding be obtained for such an enormous book on a recondite topic of interest to only a few? His previous books had consisted mainly of catalogues of books and manuscripts, funded by the collection owners. His *Alfarabi* was published in a series under the auspices of the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences, and his *Jewish Literature from the Eighth to the Eighteenth Century* had long been out of print. Under these circumstances, and because of the many professional and familial demands pressing upon him, he decided to turn to another part of his 1845 program for the study of the literary and cultural relations between Jews and others: the theological polemical literature. The resulting work, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache zwischen Muslimen, Christen, und Juden* (1877) was close to 500 pages, by far the largest work he had published since the Bodleian Catalogue nearly 20 years before. But, as Steinschneider explains in the book's Preface, much of the work had been composed years earlier. The first draft of Part One (Arabic Works) and Part Two (Authors) had been completed in 1845 and delivered for comments in 1863 to Prof. Hermann Brockhaus, the editor of the *ZDMG*, and to Steinschneider's teacher in Leipzig, Prof. Heinrich Fleischer, at which time the author finished the first five appendices. As the publication was delayed, Steinschneider published in the *ZDMG* the second appendix in 1865 and the fourth appendix in 1874. It is probable that the work was accepted for publication by the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft already in the early 1860s. For all its breadth, the work is essentially an extremely learned catalogue of works and authors, more a prolegomenon to a work on Jewish-Muslim polemic than a mature study. This appears to have been Steinschneider's own judgment, for three years later, upon publishing a text and translation of Simeon Duran's anti-Muslim polemic *Qeshet u-magen*, he noted that the earlier monograph had grown out of the notes on sources that he had collected for an introduction to Duran's work.<sup>29</sup> The orientalist Ignaz Goldziher, in a long essay in the *ZDMG* occasioned by the appearance of Steinschneider's monograph, supplied what was missing in that work—an analysis of the main topics of the Muslim polemic against Christians and Jews with illustrative examples.<sup>30</sup> Still, Steinschneider did include substantive scholarly analyses in the appendices, especially in the last and longest concerning Jewish polemics against Islam.

In any event, completion of the "polemical" part of the 1845 prospectus in 1877 enabled Steinschneider to direct some of his energies to writing the work on Jewish translators. So daunting was that task that when he refers to his book on Jewish translators in 1880—by now the work had grown to include around 200 Jewish translators, adapters, and commentators of non-Jewish writings—he remarks ironically, "Maybe I will decide to make multiple copies using a duplicating machine."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Steinschneider 1880a.

<sup>30</sup> Goldziher 1878.

<sup>31</sup> "Islam und Judenthum," 2.

## ***Attempts to Secure Funding, the Schleiden Pamphlet, and the French Mémoire (1877–84)***

According to Steinschneider's own "official" account of the genesis of *HUe* cited above, the material for the publication lay undigested as late as 1880 because "no prospect of publication was acting as an incentive." He continues:

Then came the incentive from Paris. The Académie française presented, in 1880, the subject for a prize competition to compile a complete bibliography of the medieval Hebrew translations. This I undertook, in 1884, in a French *Mémoire*, treating sections I–III, with a brief survey on section IV; similarly, in 1886, I undertook another bibliography, on the Arabic translations from Greek, on the basis of the *Fihrist*. However, one writes exactly the way one thinks only in one's mother tongue, and therefore I decided to produce a German version of sections I–III, albeit on the basis of a literal translation that may excuse a number of awkward passages, perhaps also some small errors. Studies of the sources for section IV I made only immediately before the printing.<sup>32</sup>

Steinschneider implies that he made no efforts to secure funding for the book, or write up the material, before the unexpected announcement from Paris: it was in response to that announcement that he wrote a *Mémoire* of the book in French, presented it to the Académie, and then, having won the prize in 1884, set out to publish it in German and complete it, since "one writes exactly the way one thinks only in one's mother tongue."

Yet a somewhat different account can be reconstructed from private letters to Steinschneider during these years. This reconstruction should be considered preliminary because his correspondence has not been completely examined, and tentative because very few of his own letters from this period are available. Whatever conclusions we wish to draw from the correspondence concerning Steinschneider's thoughts and actions during this period must be done mainly through the prism of his interlocutors.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, a letter to Steinschneider in late 1878 from his former student, the historian and folklorist, Joseph Jacobs, shows that Steinschneider had asked Jacobs to explore the possibility of helping him procure financial support for the publication of the work on translations. Jacob's response was that he could personally guarantee the purchase of fifty copies of the "Übersetzungen Literature" (sic) at not more than £1 per copy, but that he could not do more than this.<sup>34</sup> Around the same time Steinschneider floated the idea to Jacobs of publishing a new edition of his *Jewish Literature from the Eighth to the Eighteenth Century*. At first, Jacobs reacted enthusiastically, but his enthusiasm waned after he made inquiries with the publisher Trübner & Co., which published, among other things, orientalist literature (and was

<sup>32</sup> *HUe*, x.

<sup>33</sup> Much of the correspondence to Steinschneider is found at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in the Steinschneider Archives, Arc. 108. Most of it has been microfilmed. We would like to thank Ms. Ellen Kastel, the JTSA Archivist, for her guidance through the collection.

<sup>34</sup> Jacobs to Steinschneider, received Oct. 10, 1878. Jacobs writes to Steinschneider in English.

about to publish Michael Friedländer's translation of Maimonides's *Guide of the Perplexed*):

With regard to a possible second edition of your *Jewish Literature* I fear that it is impossible in the present depressed state of commerce to get the guarantee (£150 = Reichsmark 3000) which Trübner requires before he would bring it out. Besides, if Cassel's *Lehrbuch* is to be translated into English, the need of the more scholarly work is not so great, as [the] English requires elementary manuals rather than great works of scholarship which could only be appreciated in Germany. Besides, the tone in which you spoke of a second edition led me to think that you prefer bringing out your *Übersetzungsliteratur*. I can still hold to my promise to procure you 50 subscribers in England for it.<sup>35</sup>

As we shall see below, Steinschneider also tried to have a French version of *Jewish Literature* published at this time by the Alliance Israélite. Perhaps he thought that a new edition of his famous book, long out of print, would help raise money for the translation book. During the years 1878 and 1879 he was active in "marketing" his own books, pamphlets, and even offprints by advertising them in his *Hebraeische Bibliographie*; these advertisements ceased in 1880, after the French prize had been announced.

But there may have been another, less pecuniary, reason for Steinschneider to wish to publish a new edition of *Jewish Literature*, one that also bears on the themes stressed in *HUE*, and especially on the oft-cited passage of Steinschneider's introduction, in which he emphatically disavowed any apologetic motives for writing the book.<sup>36</sup>

It will be recalled that *Jewish Literature* included a brief treatment of the scientific-scholarly literature of the Jews during the Middle Ages. In fact, it was the only reliable treatment on that topic, and by 1877 the book was no longer available. But in 1876 an article appeared in Westermann's *Jahrbuch der Illustrierten Deutschen Monatshefte* on "The Significance of the Jews for the Preservation and Revival of the Sciences in the Middle Ages."<sup>37</sup> Its author, the distinguished botanist Matthias Schleiden relates that he had been led by his study of the history of his field to discover, much to his surprise, that the Jews, throughout their history, had been active in various areas of intellectual pursuit. Schleiden was motivated to write his short survey of the Jewish contribution to human knowledge "to make some atonement for a part of the unspeakable wrongs perpetrated by Christians upon the Jews." He declares his intention of following his essay with a historical survey of the "Romance of Martyrdom among the Jews." For some of his information concerning the Jewish contribution to "Wissenschaften" Schleiden relied on communications from Heinrich Graetz and David Rosin of the Breslau rabbinical seminary, whom he thanks in the introduction.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Jacobs to Steinschneider, Sept. 12, 1879.

<sup>36</sup> See *HUE*, xxiv. See below, 38.

<sup>37</sup> Schleiden 1876.

<sup>38</sup> See Schleiden 1877, 4–5, the third unaltered edition. See also Charpa 2003, 231.

The timing of the publication of Schleiden's article could hardly have been coincidental. In the late 1870s Germany had witnessed the rise of anti-Semitism, the growth of anti-Semitic political parties, and, from 1877 on, the Berlin *Antisemitismusstreit*. Schleiden's philo-Semitic case for the Jewish contribution to civilization was immediately reprinted by the Deutsch-Israelitischer Gemeindebund in 1877 and went through four separate editions in the space of three years.<sup>39</sup> In 1877, an authorized French translation was published by the Alliance Israélite Universelle, whose secretary, Isidore Loeb (1839–1892), was to play a major role in bringing into existence the French *Mémoire*, the predecessor of *HUe*, as we shall see below. In 1883, an unauthorized English translation of the fourth German edition appeared in Baltimore, which elicited notices and reviews in the general, Jewish, and Christian press, from the New York *Herald Tribune* to the Arkansas *Democrat* in Little Rock.<sup>40</sup> And Schleiden's work did not go unnoticed among the actual practitioners of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*: David Kaufmann (1852–1899), while acknowledging the pamphlet's weaknesses and errors, still argued that its publication was important for furthering the cause of Jewish scholarship, because it brought some of its results to a larger audience.<sup>41</sup>

Steinschneider disagreed with Kaufmann. In a blistering notice in his *Hebraeische Bibliographie* he lists some of Schleiden's more bizarre claims on behalf of Jewish scientific achievements (e.g., Rabbi Gamaliel's use of a telescope, Abu Sahl's discovery of refraction, Johannes Hispalensis's decimal computations, etc.), as well as some of his equally absurd characterizations of medieval Jewish thought (Ḥiwi al-Balkhi was an atheistic-rationalist critic of Scripture; the Zohar ranked freedom of thought higher than dogma and scripture, etc.). Steinschneider lambasts Schleiden's Jewish consultants, Rosin and Graetz, for not directing the well-meaning author to studies where he could have found information about the *true* significance of Jews in the profane sciences (i.e., studies by Steinschneider). What seems to have galled Steinschneider most was Schleiden's self-professed motive for undertaking the research: his desire to make atonement for Christian wrongs perpetrated against the Jews. On this Steinschneider writes:

The greatest injustice of the Christians consisted and consists in that they have studied and study Judaism not for its own sake, but rather only on account of its relations to Christianity. Herr Schleiden defends Judaism, without having studied it at all. Jews do not need apologetic writings. [...] They suffered deeply for centuries on account of their convictions, until religious bickering was pushed into the background by the general progress of humanity. Now prejudice is garbed in racial schematism, whose vapidness will soon have been uncovered by serious science. The martyrdom of the science and the history of Judaism will last a long time because it counts both Jews and their ill-advised friends among its tormentors.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> See Schorsch 1972, 43–4.

<sup>40</sup> Schleiden 1883. The "Opinions of the Press" were contained in the copy belonging to Harry Friedenwald of Baltimore, now in the Edelstein History of Science Collection at the National Library of Israel, Jerusalem.

<sup>41</sup> Kaufmann 1890, repr. in Kaufmann 1908–15. Cf. Schorsch 1972.

<sup>42</sup> Steinschneider 1877, 35.



Fifteen years later Steinschneider continued his criticism when a similar pamphlet on Jews and science, based partly on Schleiden's essay, was printed in New York. Schleiden, writes Steinschneider, had composed a panegyric that was worthless for the knowledgeable and dangerous for the indiscriminating public, which feels satisfied by the pamphlet's positive view, and leaves the unimportant "details" to the "pedants." What Schleiden did not realize was that unless general claims flow from a more accurate awareness of the details, they become falsifications of history that are better condemned than praised.<sup>43</sup>

How the dizzying public success of Schleiden's pamphlet affected Steinschneider's own publication plans, if at all, is difficult to say. At the beginning of 1880, Steinschneider wrote to Isidore Loeb about the possibility of issuing a French translation of *Jewish Literature*. Did he write to Loeb because the Alliance had earlier sponsored Schleiden's work? Loeb had sent Steinschneider a copy of the French version of Schleiden three years earlier, with an apology for the author's mistakes, yet with the hope that it would do some good.<sup>44</sup> In any event, Loeb's verdict on a French version of *Jewish Literature* was not encouraging. The book seemed to him too dry and "*algebraisch*" for the French reader, who was not well-informed on the subject. The soon-to-be established *Société des Études Juives* would not publish a French version of *Jewish Literature* since, according to Loeb, it would not be willing to sponsor translations.<sup>45</sup> Steinschneider apparently dropped the plan, although he had not given up the idea of a second, enlarged edition.<sup>46</sup>

Three weeks later Steinschneider received a letter from David Kaufmann that included the following somewhat cryptic lines:

Concerning the "Translators"—I have written immediately to Löb in *my* own name. We need bones; let others take care of the soup. A Schleiden may, and can, come only after you.<sup>47</sup>

Unfortunately, the correspondence immediately preceding this letter is apparently not extant. Perhaps Steinschneider had confided in Kaufmann his difficulties in raising the funds for the work, and his unsuccessful attempts in having *Jewish Literature* republished or translated into French. Or perhaps he had simply had told Kaufmann of the new French society that would sponsor original and not translated works. In any event, both Schleiden and Loeb had been a topic of their correspondence, with Kaufmann encouraging Steinschneider to focus his energies on the

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<sup>43</sup> Steinschneider 1893.

<sup>44</sup> Loeb to Steinschneider, received August 17, 1877. The Loeb file contains typewritten transcriptions of letters, probably prepared for publication by Alexander Marx. Unfortunately, some of the originals are missing, as in this case.

<sup>45</sup> Loeb to Steinschneider, February 22, 1880.

<sup>46</sup> According to Kohut 1896, a second revised and enlarged edition was in preparation (in 1893). Malter's Hebrew translation of *Jewish Literature* follows the earlier versions.

<sup>47</sup> Kaufmann to Steinschneider, March 12, 1880 (rec. March 14).

translations project and not concern himself with popularizations, a task better left for others like Schleiden.

Three days later Steinschneider heard from Loeb:

Herr Kaufmann of Pest wrote me today about your work: the Jewish translators. Would you most kindly say what sort of work it is, i.e., how you will discuss this subject, how extensive the work is, or would be, when printed, how high would the printing expenses be? Perhaps we may be of some assistance.<sup>48</sup>

The “we” refers to the Comité of the Alliance Israélite, which had previously sponsored the translation of Schleiden’s pamphlet. A month later, on April 17, 1880, the Comité voted to allot 500 francs immediately toward Steinschneider’s translation book. Loeb, realizing that this was insufficient, told Steinschneider that it was a “beginning” and that he would write to Kaufmann to see if the latter could find additional funding in Pest. Steinschneider then wrote Loeb to determine whether the “beginning” referred to the beginning of assistance from the Alliance. To this Loeb replied that the 500 francs were intended as “une marque de sympathie et de déférence,” but that would be all.<sup>49</sup> Since Steinschneider does not acknowledge the Alliance’s support anywhere in the *HUe*, it is unlikely that he received the subvention because of subsequent events.

But Loeb’s assistance did not end there. A week after writing Steinschneider, he informed Adolf Neubauer (1831/2–1907) of Steinschneider’s intentions to write a work on Jewish translations. A bibliographer and orientalist, Neubauer was on good terms with Steinschneider, at least since 1877, when the two had become reconciled after a long literary feud. He was also a close friend of and collaborator with the orientalist Ernest Renan (1823–1892), a prominent member of the French Academy. Neubauer immediately took up Steinschneider’s cause, writing him a postscript under the heading “très confidentiel”:

P. S. Yesterday I received a letter from M. Loeb in which he writes me that you will publish a book about translators; this work is highly important, and I place at your disposal all my documents concerning Arabic texts as well as translations that are available only in manuscript. Will you permit me to request a subvention from Günzburg and Rothschild in Paris when I am there in September? If you could decide to compose the work in French or Latin, the former being more practical for sales, I could perhaps arrange, through Renan and others, that the Ac[adémie] des Inscriptions designate this work as the Prize Question of this summer, to be delivered at the end of 1881. [...] I am certain that you would receive the prize. Let me know the plan of your work so that I can clearly write to Renan how the prize [question] should be formulated. This is urgent, for the Commission on the prize meets already on May 15, and he needs time to discuss the matter with the colleagues.<sup>50</sup>

Neubauer was quite familiar with the Académie’s procedure, having himself won in 1867 the Prix Bordin, which had initially been proposed in 1863 by

<sup>48</sup> Loeb to Steinschneider, March 15, 1880 (rec. March 17).

<sup>49</sup> Loeb to Steinschneider, April 18, 1880 and July 4, 1880.

<sup>50</sup> Neubauer to Steinschneider, 24 April 1880 (rec. April 27; mislabeled 1878).

Salomon Munk, Neubauer's scholarly patron from his time of residence in Paris after 1856, and by Renan, whom Neubauer probably met through Munk.<sup>51</sup> Currently, Neubauer was laboring to submit his own essay for another prize: on October 19, 1877, a committee made up of Regnier, Renan, Defrémy, and Bréal had proposed the following topic for the Prix Ordinaire in Oriental Studies for 1880: "Classer et identifier, autant qu'il est possible, les noms géographiques de l'occident de l'Europe qu'on trouve dans les ouvrages rabbiniques depuis le X<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'à la fin du XV<sup>e</sup>. Dresser une carte de l'Europe occidentale où tous ces noms soient placés, avec des signes de doute s'il y a lieu."<sup>52</sup> The competition was prolonged twice until Neubauer won it in April 1884.<sup>53</sup> So it was natural that Neubauer would think of an academy prize as a way of obtaining money to subsidize the cost of publication of Steinschneider's work, as well as to promote sales. Neubauer contacted Renan straightaway and forwarded Renan's favorable response a month later to Steinschneider: "The Prize Question is underway as you can see from R. [Renan]'s letter [to me]. Please return it to me at your opportunity. I will write as soon as I hear anything."<sup>54</sup> From this point on Neubauer became Steinschneider's "eyes and ears" in Paris, relaying him information that he gleaned from Renan and from the orientalist Joseph Derenbourg, who, like Renan, was a member of the Académie, and who was in scholarly correspondence with Steinschneider.

In the summer months of 1880 it was not a foregone conclusion that the year's Prix Ordinaire would be designated for an essay on Hebrew translations. Derenbourg and Renan, as influential as they may have been, were only two votes; in theory, there could have been an extension of the previous question for another term. On October 10, Neubauer recommended that Steinschneider continue work on the project, for if this year's prize essay were not on the Hebrew translations, he [Neubauer] had been assured that that topic would be proposed after the following summer.<sup>55</sup> In fact, five days later, at the meeting of the Académie, a committee composed of Adolph Regnier, Ernest Renan, Charles Defrémy and Joseph Derenbourg was formed to determine the Prix du Budget for the 1883 award; on October 29, the President of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, Edmond Le Blant, announced at a closed meeting of Académie members that the assignment for the annual Prix du Budget was to write a preliminary *Mémoire* enumerating completely and systematically the

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<sup>51</sup> The work was published in 1868 as *La Géographie du Talmud*, and subjected to a devastating critique in Morgenstern 1870. The speculation that Neubauer met Renan through Munk is offered by Neubauer's nephew, Adolf Büchler, whose unpublished biographical sketch is found in the Neubauer Archives at the National Library of Israel, JNUL Arc. 4<sup>o</sup> 1595. The committee that decided the prize in favor of Neubauer (there was one other submission) was composed of Renaud, de Saulcy, Renan and Munk (See *Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 1867* 3 (1868): 6.

<sup>52</sup> *Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 1877* 5 (1878): 312.

<sup>53</sup> *Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 1884* 12 (1884): 186. The committee was composed of Derenbourg, Renan, Barbier de Meynard, and Oppert (p. 6); his was the only submission (p. 4).

<sup>54</sup> Neubauer to Steinschneider, May 22, 1880 (rec. May 26).

<sup>55</sup> Neubauer to Steinschneider, Oct. 10, 1880 (rec. Oct. 12).

medieval Hebrew translations of works of philosophy and science in Greek, Arabic, and even Latin.<sup>56</sup> Two days later, Loeb wrote Steinschneider in a postscript: “You probably know of Derenbourg’s intentions for your translators?”<sup>57</sup> The official announcement of the prize came at the Académie’s public meeting on November 12, 1880.

Unfortunately, there is no record of the correspondence between Steinschneider and Derenbourg for the years 1877–1881; it may be that Steinschneider either destroyed or returned to their author sensitive communications that might have constituted for Derenbourg a proof of a breach of confidentiality. From Loeb’s comment, and from his occasional service as an intermediary between Steinschneider and Derenbourg, it seems that Loeb had discussed the matter of the *Uebersetzer* with Derenbourg, around the same time that Neubauer had discussed it with Renan. However one divides the credit, Loeb, Neubauer, Renan and Derenbourg were all instrumental in getting the French Académie to choose a topic that was tailor-made for Steinschneider’s project; even the words “[ouvrages] même latins” in the Prize Question reflects Steinschneider’s oft-repeated point about the number of Hebrew translations of Christian authors. The announcement of the competition appeared in the *Revue Critique d’histoire et de littérature* of that year<sup>58</sup> and the *Journal des savants*.<sup>59</sup> Several months later Steinschneider himself drew attention to the competition in *Hebraeische Bibliographie*.<sup>60</sup>

The deadline for submitting the Hebrew translations essay was December 31, 1882. Steinschneider’s scholarly output for the years 1881 and 1882 shows a slight tapering off as he began to prepare the *Mémoire*. The most significant casualty of his old-new project was the abrupt cessation, without explanation, of *Hebraeische Bibliographie*. Toward the end of its run, the interval between the date on the journal and its actual publication date had progressively increased; Steinschneider, who blamed the delays on the publisher Julius Benzian, had once before closed down the journal, but this time the closure was permanent. Steinschneider would continue to write notices and book reviews, but henceforth for the journals of others, including *Das Archiv* of his son, Julius.

The *Mémoire* was, of course, to be composed in French, a language that Steinschneider certainly knew—as a young man working on the Bodleian catalogue, he initially preferred to correspond with the head librarian Bulkeley Bandinel in French rather than in English<sup>61</sup>—but in which he had rarely published. Apparently as a “trial run” he began to publish in late 1880 a series of French articles on medieval astronomy in Prince Baldassare Boncompagni’s Italian journal devoted to the history of science, the *Buletino di Bibliografia e di Storia delle scienze matematiche e fisiche*, although he had published several Italian articles previously in the same

<sup>56</sup> *Comptes rendus des séances de l’année 1880* 8 (1881): 305, 308–9.

<sup>57</sup> Loeb to Steinschneider, October 31, 1880 (rec. Nov. 2).

<sup>58</sup> *Revue Critique* 10 (1880): 410.

<sup>59</sup> *Journal des Savants* (1880): 716.

<sup>60</sup> Steinschneider 1880b, 137. (This appeared in early 1881.)

<sup>61</sup> See Paucker 1966, 244.

journal.<sup>62</sup> When Steinschneider sent Loeb an offprint of one of these articles, the latter pronounced the French “très clair.”<sup>63</sup> Reassured, Steinschneider submitted several months later an article in French on Paul de Bonnefoy to Loeb’s newly-founded journal, the *Revue des études juives*. Once again, Loeb’s initial reaction was encouraging: “Votre article est une très jolie chose que je suis très heureux d’avoir pour la *Revue*. Le français est bon. Je le repasserai avant de le donner à l’impression. Je vous enverrai l’épreuve.”<sup>64</sup> But before the article could be published, Loeb had to send an additional set of proofs to Steinschneider for further revision: he now considered Steinschneider’s French to be too Germanic, cautioning that it had to be adapted for the French reader.<sup>65</sup>

One of the sections included by Steinschneider in the *Mémoire* was also intended, initially, to appear as an article in the *Revue*. Shortly before the prize question was publicly announced, Loeb suggested that he prepare a bio-bibliographical investigation of Levi b. Gershom, namely, a chronological arrangement of his work, a chronological table of his astronomical observations and something about his instrument, the Jacob Staff. Steinschneider submitted the article in German, and Loeb himself took responsibility for the translation, sending the author the beginning of the French article during the summer of 1882. The article was supposed to appear in the *Revue des études juives* in 1883. Loeb took the liberty of expanding Steinschneider’s terse German, explaining to him that French required more words than German to be comprehensible; pronouns needed to be expanded into nouns; where an article would be sufficient in German, an adjective or complement was required in French. If one removed the addition that he (Loeb) had been compelled to make, the result would not be French.<sup>66</sup> Work on the translation of the article ceased abruptly when Loeb learned from Derenbourg and Neubauer that the premature publication of a part of the *Mémoire* would jeopardize Steinschneider’s chances of winning the prize<sup>67</sup>; if the translation was not to appear in the *Revue*, then provisionally it could not be continued, since there was no money to pay the translator.<sup>68</sup> Steinschneider, disappointed, inquired whether Derenbourg thought that it could appear anonymously. Loeb’s response was that in any event the journal had decided to accept fewer foreign articles; the mode of expression was so different that the journal’s readers

<sup>62</sup>For bibliographical details see Kohut 1896. Italian was one of the first languages that Steinschneider learned, and as a young man he tutored students in Italian. See Marx 1947, 114.

<sup>63</sup>Loeb to Steinschneider, September 30, 1881 (received Oct. 2).

<sup>64</sup>Loeb to Steinschneider, January 31, 1882 (rec. Feb. 2). Cf. Loeb’s editorial comments accompanying the revisions on Steinschneider’s next French article for the *Revue* (Steinschneider 1882): “Les questions des nos 3, 4, 5, ont principalement pour objet d’obtenir une rédaction qu’on puisse comprendre sans être obligé de recourir aux livres cités, chose très désagréable au lecteur français.” Loeb to Steinschneider, August 10, 1882 (rec. Aug. 12).

<sup>65</sup>Loeb to Steinschneider, August 14, 1882 (rec. Aug. 16).

<sup>66</sup>Loeb to Steinschneider, June 26, 1882 (rec. June 28).

<sup>67</sup>Loeb to Steinschneider, October 23, 1882; based on Marx’s typescript of the correspondence, rather than the actual letter, which does not appear in the microfilm (see above, n. 51).

<sup>68</sup>Loeb to Steinschneider, October 30, 1882 (rec. June 28).

found such articles incomprehensible; even the translators could not understand them.<sup>69</sup> All was not lost, since Steinschneider incorporated Loeb's translation almost verbatim in the French *Mémoire*, and a German translation (perhaps, the German original) appeared on pages 65–73 of *HUe*.<sup>70</sup>

Neubauer was happy to provide Steinschneider with the more practical information and advice on the Prize Essay. When the December 1882 deadline loomed for its submission, Neubauer assured him that the deadline was customarily extended for *Mémoires* undertaken by specialists. Neubauer would submit his own *Mémoire* in 1884 after two extensions, alongside of his friend, Steinschneider. After the 1882 deadline passed, Neubauer informed Steinschneider that he would have to wait until the end of 1884 to submit the *Mémoire*. But this created an unexpected problem—and opportunity—for Steinschneider. In October 1882, the Académie proposed another prize, the Prix Brunet, for a work on the Arabic translations from the Greek based on Ibn al-Nadim's *Fihrist*, which had recently been edited.<sup>71</sup> It was Neubauer, then at Oxford, working on the Index to his Bodleian Catalogue, and checking manuscripts for Steinschneider, who informed Steinschneider not only of the Prix Brunet, but also that the question had been designed with Steinschneider in mind:

You would do best to correspond with me, if you want to know anything about Paris. I draw your attention to the Prix Brunet (3000 Fr.) for 1884, which you could easily handle with your *Mémoire*. It has been deliberately designed for you (in confidence). You only cannot refer from one *Mémoire* to the other, for both will have to be submitted at the same time. You will find the Program in the *Journal des Savants* and later in the *Comptes Rendus* of the Académie des Inscriptions.<sup>72</sup>

One month later, Neubauer wrote Steinschneider that the Prix Brunet would be about “the Arabic translations from the Greek according to the *Fihrist*; that cannot give you much labor with the work you have in hand.”<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Loeb to Steinschneider, March 13, 1883 (rec. March 15).

<sup>70</sup> Loeb's translation, set in type for the *REJ*, appears in the Loeb correspondence in the Steinschneider Archives with the following title: “Les Commentaires de Lévi b. Gerson sur Averroës traduit de l'Allemand.” On the title page is written, “Erste Revision eines nicht erschienenen Artikels für die R.É.J. aus dem Jahre 1883 I–III = H. Ueb. 65–73.” The first three parts deal with Levi's commentaries on Averroes's commentaries on logic; the fourth part, on Levi's commentaries on two of Averroes's logical questions. This probably was meant to be the first installment of a series of articles on Gersonides' philosophical supercommentaries before Loeb abandoned it. The material was ultimately incorporated in *HUe*. An appendix, from the Latin translation of the *Book of the Correct Syllogism*, appeared in Steinschneider 1892, among the *Endnoten* to *HUe* that were not incorporated within the book.

<sup>71</sup> The edition by Flügel was published posthumously in 1877, with the assistance of Rödiger and Müller.

<sup>72</sup> Neubauer to Steinschneider, January 13, 1883 (rec. Feb. 13), JTSA Arc. 108–8. See *Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 1885* 13 (1868): 9: “L'Académie adopte en outre, comme sujet du prix Brunet à décerner en 1885 la question suivante: ‘Relever sur le grand catalogue de bibliographie arabe intitulé *Fihrist* toutes les traductions d'ouvrages grecs en arabe. Critiquer ces données bibliographiques d'après les documents imprimés et manuscrits.’ Les mémoires devront être déposés au secrétariat de l'Institut le 31 décembre 1884.”

<sup>73</sup> Neubauer to Steinschneider, February 9, 1883 (rec. Feb. 12), JTSA Arc. 108–8.

In fact, Steinschneider was nervous about the first competition, since no announcement of the extension had appeared in the *Comptes Rendus* by March 1883. (Neubauer assured him that the decision would indeed be postponed.) And as the December 1884 deadline loomed for both *Mémoires*, Steinschneider was faced with a dilemma: to submit the first *Mémoire* and hope for an extension on the second, or to submit them both together, and hope that the Académie would not take that amiss. After seeking advice from Derenbourg, and hearing nothing in return, he wrote to Neubauer, who responded on 27 November as follows:

Dear Friend, It is fatal to correspond with Dernb; he places postcards and letters in his nightgown, or in a book, and forgets about them. I now wish to write only concerning business matters, since it seems that D. didn't write you about it, as we had agreed....

1. After making an inquiry in the *Institut* I can tell you that the prix Brunet (*Fihrist*) can be postponed; indeed, my and your friends told me that it would in fact be better if both *Mémoires* are not submitted at the same time. The atmosphere against Germans is still not the best, and it is feared that chauvinism will win out and [its proponents] will rely exclusively on matter of form. The *Übersetzer* for this year, then, and the *Fihrist* for the next. What do you think about this? In any event, it would be good if you were to write to D. about it; please don't fail to do this. You can dictate this to your son, if writing is difficult for you; it is absolutely necessary.

2. It would be better if you send the thing [i.e. the *Mémoire*] to Löb, and that he deliver the *Mémoire* to the Secrétariat; add an accompanying letter with [your] name and a motto inside, and on the outside the motto only [illegible] *Mémoire*. Follow my advice [illegible] so that this or the *Mémoire* is in Löb's hands by the 28<sup>th</sup> [December].<sup>74</sup>

Derenbourg finally responded to Steinschneider on December 13, but he could not answer Steinschneider's questions whether another essay had been submitted for the prix Brunet (he did not know), or whether it would be problematic to submit two *Mémoires* at once (in principle, he said, it was allowed). He counseled him to send both his works (*Arbeiten*) to Loeb, who would submit them at the proper time. No doubt by this late date Steinschneider had already determined to submit only the first *Mémoire* by the end of 1883 and to wait to take his chances with the second.

In the early months of 1885, Neubauer continued to leak confidential news to Steinschneider on the fate of both prizes. Thus, on March 23, six months before the decision concerning the first *Mémoire* was scheduled to be announced, Neubauer wrote Steinschneider that Renan had expressed regret that Steinschneider hadn't sent at least the Preface to a Frenchman for stylistic revision; the form was inadequate and the text occasionally difficult to comprehend, but the content was worthy of the prize. From this Neubauer inferred that Steinschneider could count on the prize, but said so "in confidence—do not speak yet of it."<sup>75</sup> And five days later he wrote:

Dear Friend, just a word in confidence. The entire Commission favors giving the prize to you, I now believe the matter is certain. Concerning the *Fihrist*, D. tells me that he will make a report saying that the [submitted] *Mémoire* is worth nothing, and that the Prize will not be given. You can continue to work, but the thing [i.e. *Mémoire*] must then be revised, and

<sup>74</sup> Neubauer to Steinschneider, November 23, 1884 (rec. Nov. 27).

<sup>75</sup> Neubauer to Steinschneider, March 23, 1885 (rec. March 25).



transcribed by another hand than that of your first *Mémoire*. The members of the Commission marvel at the scholarship of your *Mémoire* (naturally without knowing your name, except for D. and Renan), but gripe about the 1,500 pages to be read... I beg you to destroy all letters and cards that refer to the prizes because a תקלה for you will be בחיינו or....<sup>76</sup>

Several months later Derenbourg advised Steinschneider that the prize had not yet been won, that he should submit his “*Fihrist*” *Mémoire* to experts in French for stylistic revisions, and that it should be around 300 pages, since the members of the Committee had almost fainted when they saw the length of the first *Mémoire*.<sup>77</sup>

With the first *Mémoire* deposited at the end of 1884, Steinschneider continued to work on the “*Fihrist*” *Mémoire*, which he deposited at the end of 1886. Here, in addition to serving as Steinschneider’s informant,<sup>78</sup> Neubauer played an active role in the shaping of the *Mémoire*’s form and content. He suggested to Steinschneider how the work should be arranged, pleaded with him to reduce the number of references, offered suggestions on the French style, and reviewed all parts of the manuscript. As the second *Mémoire* grew, and as parts of it were sent by Steinschneider to colleagues in the history of science for review, Neubauer urged him to condense the manuscript and leave the expanded material for the published work. “For reading it should be at maximum 300 pages, mostly results without much discussion.... Imagine, in view of the many prizes, if people always get 1500 pages to read?”<sup>79</sup>

At one point Neubauer recommended that the “*Fihrist*” *Mémoire* be also sent to Loeb for French revision, which Steinschneider did. The formal announcement that he won the prize was made on 18 November 1887 by the president of the Académie.<sup>80</sup>

When the German version of the “*Fihrist*” *Mémoire* was finally published as *Die Arabischen Uebersetzungen aus dem Griechischen*, it did not appear as a single coherent work, like *HUe*, but rather as a series of articles in different scholarly journals. The reason, according to George Kohut, was the high cost of publication.<sup>81</sup> But there is evidence that Steinschneider had already decided that he would be unable to publish the second *Mémoire* as a single book even *before* he submitted it. In that same year, he published in German a long subsection on “Euclid among the Arabs,” originally intended for the *Mémoire*, but which he had omitted at Neubauer’s suggestion; it is unlikely that he would have done this had he planned to publish a single book. Part of the problem of publishing the second *Mémoire* as a separate monograph may have been that the formulation of the Prize question tied the *Mémoire* to the *Fihrist*, a requirement that Steinschneider apparently found constraining for a general work on the Arabic translations from the Greek. Although the

<sup>76</sup> Neubauer to Steinschneider, March 28, 1885 (rec. March 30). Steinschneider underlined “*alle Briefe und Karten*”—but, fortunately for the historian, he did not heed Neubauer’s advice.

<sup>77</sup> Derenbourg to Neubauer, June 21, 1885 (rec. June 23), JTSA, ARC 108–8.

<sup>78</sup> E.g., “The decision concerning the rejected Question [i.e. the *mémoire* submitted by the French orientalist Gustave Dugat] is not yet in the *Comptes-rendus*; it will apparently be in the next volume, if a decision is made.” Neubauer to Steinschneider, February 10, 1886 (rec. Feb. 12).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> See Freudenthal 2011, 206–211, for a chronology of the events.

<sup>81</sup> Kohut 1896, xi.

section on philosophy published later in German by Steinschneider closely follows the *Fihrist*, the sections on mathematics and medicine are independent bibliographical essays that use the *Fihrist* as one source among many. Then there was the issue of Steinschneider's advanced age, weakening eyesight, and familiarity with the manuscript material.

In any event, publication of *Die Arabischen Übersetzungen* in specialist journals had two benefits for *HUe*: Steinschneider's use of the articles to advertise the publication of *HUe*, and the 3,000 francs that he won for the Prix Brunet to help offset the printing costs for *HUe*. When the *HUe* finally appeared in 1893, Joseph Derenbourg reported to the Académie, erroneously, that the work was a German translation of *both Mémoires*.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, Steinschneider had decided to include in *HUe* much information about the Arabic translations from the Greek of works that were subsequently translated into Hebrew.<sup>83</sup>

## From *Les Traductions hébraïques* to *Die Hebraeischen Uebersetzungen*

The *Mémoire* that Steinschneider, via Isidore Loeb, submitted to the Secrétariat of the Académie in December 1884 numbered exactly 1599 pages. After an *Avant-Propos*, table of contents, list of translators and commentators, and a preliminary section on general works (encyclopedias, works on divisions of sciences, and general manuals), the main body of the work is divided into three sections (philosophy, mathematics, and medicine), followed by a five-page *Résumé* of the fourth section that begins on p. 1594: "Several unforeseen circumstances prevented the author from elaborating the considerable material that should have formed the fourth section. The principal subjects are poetry, Hebrew language, and superstition." The manuscript ends abruptly on the last line of p. 1599; there is no internal indication that this is where the *Mémoire* ends, but it could not have continued much further, since the résumé is the last item in the *Table des Matières*. The *Mémoire* has the appearance of a rush job; there are spaces left blank to be filled with the appropriate Hebrew or Arabic, and only a specimen of the footnotes are included, perhaps because Steinschneider ran out of time.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, the table of contents has more expansive descriptions than its highly condensed and abbreviated counterpart in *HUe*.

<sup>82</sup> Joseph Derenbourg's report to the Académie (February 5, 1884), printed in Kohut 1929, 119.

<sup>83</sup> In a letter to Steinschneider (received 4.3.87), Neubauer asks whether Steinschneider intended to wait on the publication of *HUe* until he had heard of the result of the *Fihrist* competition. "Could you then combine the two? Arabic and Hebrew translations?"

<sup>84</sup> It seems that Steinschneider intended to include all the footnotes but ran out of time, or was advised to give only a specimen; the entire text has superscripts indicating references, but the sixty pages of notes (the term "specimen" is writ large, and may be a later addition) reaches only to note 293 of the 297 notes that appear in the section on general works.

Steinschneider's *Avant-Propos* to the *Mémoire* reflects the author's intentions and goals at this stage of the work's composition. The medieval Hebrew translations are important, he writes, because they (a) preserve works no longer extant in the original, or—when the originals have survived—attest to early manuscripts; (b) provide information about the amount and nature of scientific knowledge among medieval Jews; (c) serve as a source for technical scientific terms in medieval Hebrew and in various vernaculars. Steinschneider initially intended to include a separate section for the original works and their authors, but the extent of the material had led him to disperse it throughout the book. (Of course, such a section would have made the second *Mémoire* redundant.) He does not tell us why he chose to arrange the material topically, but he had an important antecedent for a model: the *Fihrist* itself, which arranges its own “international literature” (Chapters Seven and Eight) into philosophy, mathematics (including astronomy), medicine, and belles-lettres.

Neubauer, in his review of *HUe* for the *Jewish Quarterly Review* gave his own explanation why Steinschneider had arranged the work according to subjects, rather than according to translator. Certainly the latter arrangement would have proved “more convenient for those who look for biographies of authors, for literary history or for encyclopedic works.” But the arrangement according to subject was necessary because Steinschneider did not limit himself to Hebrew translations, but gave a minute description of the originals from which the translations were made, complete with biographical and bibliographical data, and including not only translations but also commentaries, supercommentaries, and glosses—and all these could only be made handy by the division into articles.”<sup>85</sup>

From the *Avant-Propos* we also learn of plans not carried out and intentions left unfulfilled not only in the *Mémoire* but also in *HUe*. Thus, in the *Mémoire* the author promises to publish his principal sources, e.g., the prefaces of the translators, some epigraphs, and specimens of translations, with the original text, in a series of appendices. That idea was apparently abandoned, because no such appendices appear in *HUe*. Some of the relevant material is contained in the body of the text or relegated to the footnotes and endnotes; others were published separately. Other material, especially in the prefaces, was printed in Renan and Neubauer's, *Les écrivains juifs français du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, which appeared in the same year as *HUe*. Steinschneider also notes that before the *Mémoire* is printed, it would need to undergo “une révision stylistique”<sup>86</sup>; he clearly refers to the French version, but had obviously abandoned his intention to publish it. After depositing the second *Mémoire* late in 1886, and after hearing numerous criticisms of his French from Derenbourg, Renan, Loeb, and Neubauer, Steinschneider's six-year “affair” with the French language ended; never again would he write a scholarly work in French.

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<sup>85</sup> Neubauer 1894.

<sup>86</sup> *Mémoire*, 20.

In the *Avant-Propos* Steinschneider also expresses the hope that the prize, if he wins it, will enable him to study personally the manuscript collections of several libraries. In fact, Steinschneider did not travel further to manuscript collections during this period, but depended instead upon other scholars' answers to his queries.

Of the latter he relied most upon Neubauer, who now became his "eyes" in some of Europe's Hebrew manuscript collections. During the second half of the decade Neubauer was working on much of the same material as Steinschneider for *Les écrivains juifs français*, but, unlike him, the bachelor librarian from Oxford traveled extensively. From 1886 onward, Neubauer's letters to Steinschneider read like the travelogue of an industrious research assistant who not only aids his supervisor in response to queries, but also takes his own initiative. A few examples:

If I have a little time I will certainly see in the British Museum if there is anything new concerning translations; perhaps I can do this around the time of Pentecost in Cambridge.<sup>87</sup>

I ought to travel to Italy at the end of February or the beginning of March... Perhaps you have completed a list of שאלות for Italy? You ought to give up the school and concentrate היום קצר.<sup>88</sup>

So to be sufficiently early, I'm sending you a portion of the answers, in between your closely-spaced lines and on the accompanying page... Tomorrow I head for Turin; I don't know whether I can examine everything for you, since people won't be as accommodating there as they are here [in Paris], and I have a mass of MSS to examine for myself... Write me at Parma, [but] I ask you to send sheets only to Oxford.<sup>89</sup>

You presumably received from Parma my letters in which [are answered] your קושיות from Paris and Turin; enclosed is your sheet of paper for Florence and the beginning and end of the ס' הנפש of Aquinas from the Casatense manuscript.<sup>90</sup>

Enclosed are the answers to your שאלות. I thought that your first volume would end with philosophy, and the second would begin with mathematics? ... It remains for me to send the translations of Gordon, Arnold, etc., and I will take these with me; in order to make things easier for me, I asked you to provide me with a list of the Hebrew manuscripts which contain translations.<sup>91</sup>

Neubauer sent similar letters to Steinschneider up to the time of the publication of *HUe*, which, as mentioned above, appeared in the same year as *Les écrivains juifs français du XIVe siècle*.<sup>92</sup> For this outstanding and unstinting assistance, Steinschneider rendered his deepest thanks and acknowledgement to Neubauer in

<sup>87</sup> Neubauer to Steinschneider, rec. March 4, 1887.

<sup>88</sup> Neubauer to Steinschneider, July 25, 1888 (rec. Jul. 27): The following year Steinschneider tendered his resignation as principal of the Berlin Jüdische Mädchen-Schule to devote his time to writing and research. See Marx 1935.

<sup>89</sup> Neubauer to Steinschneider, November 23, 1888 (rec. Nov. 25).

<sup>90</sup> Neubauer to Steinschneider, January 4, 1889 (rec. Jan. 7).

<sup>91</sup> Neubauer to Steinschneider, August 21, 1889 (rec. Aug. 24).

<sup>92</sup> Neubauer wrote, "Unsere גאולה kommt, Sie mit Übers., ich mit Rabbins Fr." (At this time, Neubauer referred to the book as the second volume of *Les rabbins français*. It would eventually be called, *Les écrivains juifs français du XIVe siècle*, etc.)

the foreword of *HUe*.<sup>93</sup> Neubauer, for his part, could not refrain from referring obliquely to his own contribution in his review of *HUe*.<sup>94</sup>

Despite Steinschneider's intentions to revise significantly the *Mémoire* for publication, roughly 80 % of *HUe* is a literal translation of the *Mémoire*, plus notes. The other 20 % include the fourth and fifth sections, the endnotes, and the indices.<sup>95</sup> The work was published by the Kommissionsverlag des Bibliographischen Bureaus in Berlin in 1893, and printed by H. Itzkowski in 300 copies. Steinschneider's own copy, which contains many marginal glosses and emendations, is now in the Steinschneider Collection of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.<sup>96</sup>

The work garnered a handful of reviews in learned journals by A. Neubauer, I. Lévi,<sup>97</sup> and M. Gaster,<sup>98</sup> but none appeared in Germany. Steinschneider emphasized repeatedly the importance of the Hebrew translation literature for understanding classical and medieval literature in general; the subtitle of *HUe* called it "a contribution to the literary history of the Middle Ages." Yet the work has pretty much remained to this day the possession of a few specialists in the field of the history of Hebrew science and philosophy. The first run of copies was also the last; no further printing was made until 1956, when a photo-offset reproduction by the Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, Graz, appeared.

It is often said that one of Steinschneider's goals in writing *HUe* was to emphasize the contribution of the Jews to Western civilization. Derenbourg, in his aforementioned report to the Académie, implies that Steinschneider's work on the Hebrew translations was born of a desire to demonstrate to the scholarly world the importance of the role of the Jews in transmitting knowledge from the East to the

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<sup>93</sup> See *HUe*, xi. "Dr. Ad. Neubauer has contributed to my work more than all those mentioned above: his are the accounts on a great number of Paris mss. which have been described here more correctly and accurately than in the catalogue which is partly insufficient. To him I also owe information on mss. of Baron von Güzburg, on some material in Italian libraries, and from mss. in the Bodleian library, where my own older excerpts presented lacunae or raised doubts, or where new acquisitions were concerned. He also forwarded a number of kind communications, concerning Latin mss., of M. Omont at the Bibliothèque Nationale and of the Rev. Macray in Oxford."

<sup>94</sup> See Neubauer 1894, 147: "Happily, some friends who visit libraries of various countries from time to time, as well as owners of private collections, willingly assisted our painstaking and deserving author."

<sup>95</sup> Steinschneider's completion dates for the various sections of *HUe* are as follows. Section One (Philosophy, preceded by Encyclopedias, Classifications of the Sciences, and Primers): Greeks: January 1889, Arabs, Jews and Christians: July 1889; Section Two (Mathematics): January 1890; Section Three (Medicine): July 1891; Sections Four and Five (Miscellaneous and Jewish Translators): October 1892; Preface: November 1892; Additions and Corrigenda: May 1893; Endnotes and (nine) Indices: May 1893.

<sup>96</sup> Inspected in microfilm at the Institute for Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts of the National Library of Israel, F 24421. See Berman 1975.

<sup>97</sup> Lévi 1894. Lévi's lavish praise was tempered by the following acute reservations: "il serait loisible de critiquer l'abus des points d'exclamation ironiques motivés par des vétilles, l'âpreté de la censure et le manque de légèreté dans la distribution des reproches, l'excès des références oiseuses, qui révèlent le travers du bibliographe vidant ses cartes de fiches...."

<sup>98</sup> Gaster 1894.

West. Solomon Schechter even referred to *Die Mathematik bei den Juden* by the title “The Contribution of the Jews to Mathematics”!<sup>99</sup> Yet, while there is no doubt that Steinschneider wanted to correct, or rather, to establish accurately the historical record, and while it is also true that scholarly ignorance of Jewish literature, as well as anti-Jewish prejudice, irritated him greatly, he certainly had no apologetic motives in writing *HUe*. Steinschneider, an ordained rabbi and a committed Jew, detested any nationalist or religious considerations in scholarship. He dismissed the idea that *HUe* could be placed in the service of the struggle for Jewish emancipation and equal rights, and he upheld the cause of objective scholarship with the memorable phrase, “Ich schreibe über Juden, aber nicht für sie, nicht *pro domo*.”<sup>100</sup> Although the Jewish contribution to Western civilization interested Steinschneider the scholar, the contribution of Western civilization to the Jews and Judaism, or, to recall his more precise formulation, the influence of foreign literatures on Jewish literature, interested him more. In pointing to the fact that more Christian than Muslim (Arab) authors were translated into Hebrew he remarked, “Für den Geist giebt es kein Ghetto!”<sup>101</sup> The growing impact of Scholastic philosophy, science, and medicine on Jews in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—at a time when Christian persecution and discrimination against Jews in Spain and in Italy had increased—is but one example of the aptness of Steinschneider’s remark.

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<sup>99</sup> Schechter 1915.

<sup>100</sup> *HUe*, xxiv. He is not, however, above making statements reflecting Jewish pride, as this one, on xxiii: “Ein hoher Ritter durfte sich rühmen, nicht lesen und schreiben zu können: der jüdische Illiterat gehörte zum Pöbel (עם הארץ).”

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, xxii.

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