

JONATHAN D. SARNA

Two Traditions
of Seminary
Scholarship

Tradition Renewed

A HISTORY OF THE
JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

VOLUME II

Beyond the Academy



AND THE BUSH והסנה
WAS NOT איננו
CONSUMED אכל

Edited by Jack Wertheimer

1997



From left: Alexander Marx, Louis Finkelstein, and Saul Lieberman, ca. 1950.
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JONATHAN D. SARNA

Two Traditions of Seminary Scholarship

THE 1902 CHARTER that incorporated the reorganized Jewish Theological Seminary listed “the advancement of Jewish scholarship” as the fourth of the institution’s six aims.¹ This marked a significant change from the original charter of 1886 which had made no mention of Jewish scholarship at all.² But it also hinted at some disagreement with Solomon Schechter, who believed that the advancement of scholarship should be the Seminary’s foremost priority. His goal, expressed in a letter to Mayer Sulzberger back in 1900, was to see the Seminary transformed into “a centre of Jewish *Wissenschaft* pure and simple.”³

Schechter’s audacious vision reflected the growing appreciation for Jewish scholarship that developed in the United States late in the 19th century. What Cyrus Adler described as a “Jewish Renaissance” seemed to be underway, and writing in 1894, Adler ticked off some of its achievements, including “the establishment of Oriental and Hebrew professorships in all of our large universities”; the growth of Hebrew Union College’s library in Cincinnati, the establishment of the Jewish Theological Seminary (1886), the Jewish Publication Society (1888), and the American Jewish Historical Society (1892); the scholarly achievements of such men as Alexander Kohut, Marcus Jastrow, Moses Mielziner, Richard Gottheil, Morris Jastrow, Charles Gross, and Charles Waldstein [Walston]; and “the turning toward literary and scientific pursuits of a considerable number of Russian immigrants.” “Is it possible,” Adler wondered, “that the intellectual activity of the Jew in relation to Jewish learning is shifting to the English speaking world?” “I think,” he answered tentatively, “it is.”⁴

To strengthen the spirit of Jewish learning in the United States, Adler, in a follow-up article, proposed the establishment of a “Jewish Academy of America,” akin to many a learned society founded in his day, charged with responsibility to “collect a library,” “publish scientific researches,” “provide facilities for students,”

convene scholars together, and "have connected with it a staff of men who would themselves be constantly engaged in advancing Jewish science."⁵ The idea was wildly premature in 1894 and nothing came of it, but the fact that it received a hearing at all offers some indication of the elevated status that Jewish scholarship was beginning to enjoy in some circles of the American Jewish community. Just half a dozen years later, Henrietta Szold (who mixed in these same circles), writing in the *American Jewish Year Book* of 1900, found "striking evidence that the desire for Jewish scholarship is real and widespread." Impressed by the ongoing effort to produce the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, by far the most ambitious scholarly project undertaken by American Jews to that time, she predicted "that in the not too distant future the United States will become a centre of Jewish scholarship."⁶

Actually, those eager to transform America into a center of Jewish scholarship faced substantial obstacles. Many other pressing problems (including the material needs of Jewish immigrants) competed for community attention. Besides, Jewish scholarship seemed to some lay leaders to be far too highbrow for American Jews. They sought to encourage elementary works and writings that appealed to "the popular taste." Recognizing that scholarship is expensive and often restricted to a "few choice spirits," even some of the trustees of the Jewish Theological Seminary thought to move cautiously. Rather than creating a great Jewish library, for example, they advocated a more modest one, kept within the bounds of an ordinary college library.⁷

Solomon Schechter, however, would have none of this. "The crown and climax of all learning is research," he announced in his 1902 inaugural address as Seminary president. "It is," he continued, "these fresh contributions and the opening of new sources, with the new currents they create, that keep the intellectual and the spiritual atmosphere in motion and impart to it life and vigor."⁸ Judge Mayer Sulzberger heartily agreed, and early in 1904 he completed the gift of his own library to the Seminary with the "hope . . . that the Seminary may become the center for original work in the science of Judaism, to which end the acquisition of a great library is indispensable."⁹

Sulzberger had long cherished the goal of seeing his adopted land become a center of Jewish cultural life. This in large part accounts for his decision to collect rare Jewish books and manuscripts in the first place: "It was his idea. . . that the time was approaching when the need of such a library would be felt."¹⁰ Now, with Solomon Schechter at the Seminary's helm and a promising group of young European-trained research scholars recruited to the faculty, he thought that time had arrived.

New York in the early years of the 20th century was home to the largest Jewish community in the world. In the United States as a whole, the Jewish population exceeded that of Germany, France, and the British Empire combined; only the Jewish communities in Russia and Austria-Hungary were larger. Europeans concerned

with the fate of world Jewry increasingly looked to America as the wave of the future. It was the major bright spot (along with Zion) in a world where anti-Semitism was growing and Russian Jewry lay imperiled.¹¹ So now it was up to Schechter to mold a seminary worthy of this great new American Jewish population center. The future of Jewish scholarship in the United States seemed to rest on his shoulders.

In committing the Seminary to *Wissenschaft*, Schechter drew on German canons of scholarship that had already made a substantial impact on American higher education. Columbia, Harvard, Michigan, and Wisconsin, as well as new universities such as Johns Hopkins (where Cyrus Adler had received his Ph.D.), Clark, and Chicago—all had come to emulate the German universities with their focus on rigorous scholarship as the ultimate gauge of academic excellence. *Wissenschaft*, the German word that characterized this rigorous scholarly methodology, literally means “science”; in this case it implied a commitment to accuracy, neutrality, and truth. As Peter Novick explains, the term also “signified a dedicated, sanctified pursuit . . . not just knowledge, but self-fulfillment; not practical knowledge, but knowledge of ultimate meanings.”¹²

The pioneering German-Jewish scholar Leopold Zunz first applied these ideas to Judaism, and he is credited with coining the term *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in 1822. This set off a revolution in Jewish studies that transformed both its methodology and its scope. Traditionally, much of Jewish learning had been Judeocentric, “divorced from the rest of the world,” “tied dogmatically to belief in an inviolable tradition and the authority of its representatives,” and dialectical in method. *Wissenschaft*, by contrast, “recognized the interrelationship of all intellectual forces,” “attempted to explore and explain the connections between Jewish and non-Jewish phenomena,” considered itself independent, subject to free and unbiased critical analysis, and “demanded concreteness and a sense of actuality.” Where traditional Jewish learning was a pious vocation, “a part of Jewish religiosity,” *Wissenschaft* was a scholarly vocation, a field of knowledge.¹³

Ismar Schorsch has recently argued that “*Wissenschaft* furnished the tools to restore or remake a Judaism cut loose from its moorings by unimagined new knowledge, enemies and alternatives.” *Wissenschaft*, he contends, was “a collective act of translation, a sustained effort to cast the history, literature and institutions of Judaism in Western categories.” There was widespread hope, he observes, that Jewish scholarship would have profound social consequences: “Research would lead to respect and finally acceptance, setting Jews free.”¹⁴

These goals were shared by the great rabbinical seminaries of Europe, including the Seminary’s namesake, the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau, Berlin’s Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, where Schechter himself had studied, and the (Hildesheimer) Rabbiner Seminar für das Orthodoxe Judentum

where both Israel Friedlaender and Alexander Marx had been pupils. As distinct from traditional *yeshivot*, these seminaries promised to train *modern* rabbis, equipping them with traditional Jewish learning, a thorough mastery of the vernacular, and facility in both secular and extra-talmudic Jewish subjects. Faculty members at these institutions boasted rabbinic learning, secular training, and earned doctorates from major secular universities. Their research was academically oriented: it employed scholarly methodologies, paid strict attention to history and philology, and was always staunchly committed to the pursuit of "truth."¹⁵

Such was the legacy to which Schechter and the newly reorganized Jewish Theological Seminary of America fell heir in 1902. In the decades that followed, the Seminary would itself become a major conduit for the transmission of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* to the United States and one of the world's foremost centers of Jewish studies. In the process, however, it developed two distinct traditions of Jewish scholarship. The first, an elite tradition that commanded the highest institutional esteem and won the primary allegiance of the majority of the Seminary faculty, focused on timeless *texts*—rabbinic texts, midrashic texts, *Genizah* texts, historical texts, and literary texts. Textual projects, including critical editions, translations, commentaries, and reference aids, chiefly occupied these scholars and resulted in the distinguished corpus of publications on which the Seminary's scholarly reputation primarily rests. The second, a more popularly oriented engaged tradition that commanded less institutional esteem and won the primary allegiance of only a minority among the faculty, focused on timely *issues*. It produced highly influential work aimed at the larger community, Jewish and non-Jewish, and sought to combat ignorance and to apply Jewish teachings to problems of general concern. As we shall see, the Seminary's two greatest leaders, Solomon Schechter and Louis Finkelstein, appreciated, embraced, and personally exemplified both traditions, recognizing the value (although certainly not the equality) of each. The rest of the faculty, however, tended to embrace one tradition only, viewing the other with distaste if not disdain.¹⁶

The great tradition of textual scholarship dominated the Seminary's research agenda in each era of its history. Within each generation, an exemplar, a widely respected and highly productive senior scholar—first, Solomon Schechter, then Levi Ginzberg, and then Saul Lieberman—set the scholarly tone which those seeking status within the institution tried to follow. Through publications and influence, these exemplars defined the character of the faculty's work and established models of elite scholarship that the majority of colleagues strove to emulate. Since each exemplar saw textual research as the *ne plus ultra* of scholarship, that became the institutional test of merit, the standard which those seeking recognition among the elite had to maintain.

At other rabbinical seminaries, textual scholarship played a less substantial role.

The most significant work of the senior scholars at the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau, for example, was synthetic in character. Zacharias Frankel worked on the methodology of the *Mishna* and the Talmud, and Heinrich Graetz researched his magisterial history of the Jews. At Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, the American Reform counterpart to the JTS, the most influential scholars focused on history, theology, and Bible. As for textual scholarship, there appeared, during the Cincinnati school's entire first century, exactly one "scientific publication of an entire major volume of rabbinic literature by an HUC faculty member"—Jacob Z. Lauterbach's *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*.¹⁷

The Seminary, from Schechter's day onward, was different. Schechter established the primacy of textual research at the Seminary, influenced in this by his beloved teacher, Meir Friedmann (Ish Shalom), whom he revered as "the pioneer in the art of critical editions of Rabbinic texts."¹⁸ Schechter's own first book, back in England, had been a text, the *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan*, "edited from two Recensions and with the collation of all the manuscripts," and he continued to publish significant texts, particularly *Genizah* texts, throughout his life. He told his biographer that the proper study of Jews "necessitates the collation and accurate edition of the original sources and documents."¹⁹ He also believed, according to his longtime friend and later colleague at the Seminary, Joseph Jacobs, "that the real training of a scholar was never complete and could not be completely tested until he had done something in the way of editing a MS., for this involved utilizing one's own resources as a scholar and not depending upon the scholarship of others."²⁰ This became a cardinal principle of Seminary pedagogy in later years. As a final test of scholarly worthiness, many a Seminary graduate was expected to demonstrate his prowess at editing a manuscript text.

For all of his allegiance to textual scholarship, however, Schechter also devoted a great deal of his talent to popular studies aimed at elucidating Judaism in terms that Jews and non-Jews alike could understand. Claude Montefiore, who brought Schechter to England as his tutor, was the major inspiration here. "I can't bear the idea of your devoting . . . your time to the publication of texts," he lectured his "Lieber Freund" Schechter. "You must train yourself to write & you must write not merely for the learned world."²¹ Montefiore personally solicited many of Schechter's popular essays, later collected in his hugely popular *Studies in Judaism*, and was also the driving force behind Schechter's *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, a work consciously written with non-Jewish readers in mind. To be sure, Schechter never devoted as much time to such efforts as Montefiore wanted; in the final analysis he respected his teacher Friedmann more than the man who called him "Lieber Freund." Still, he learned from Montefiore to respect the art of writing for a general audience and ultimately did more than any other Jewish scholar of his generation to interpret Judaism to the English-speaking world.²² This ability to reach beyond the

academy served him well as the Seminary's president. Later, it also legitimated the tradition of engaged scholarship that lived on at the Seminary, albeit with greatly diminished status, during the terms of his successors.

When it came to making faculty appointments at the Seminary, however, Schechter looked primarily to scholars in the Friedmann tradition, men who shared his passion for textual research. Alexander Marx, whom Schechter had first met in Europe while Marx was researching his innovative doctorate on the text of the *Seder Olam* (based on manuscripts and early printed editions), for example, believed even as a young man that the production of "correct texts" was the central task of Jewish studies. "Facts, facts, facts, are paramount with him," his student Solomon Goldman later recalled, and for this reason in his position as the Seminary's librarian and professor of history he both sought to acquire rare books and manuscripts for the Seminary library and insisted that "texts be made the startingpoint for Jewish historiography."²³ Louis Ginzberg and Israel Davidson followed this lead, each producing significant textual studies after they joined the Seminary's faculty. Beginning in Ginzberg's case with his *Geonica* and in Davidson's with his edition of Joseph ibn Zabara's *Sefer Sha'ashu'im*, both men, for the remainder of their lives, pursued textual research with enthusiasm and ardor.²⁴ Israel Friedlaender, when he came to the Seminary, was already working on a textual project: a translation and commentary based on a manuscript by the Muslim historian Ali b. Ahmad ibn Hazm. Much to his colleagues' distress, however, his textual work went no further. Instead, he far exceeded Schechter in his involvement in community affairs, applying the fruits of his considerable learning to issues of the day and setting a model of popular engaged scholarship that Mordecai Kaplan later followed. After Schechter's death, he did undertake to produce a volume of Judeo-Arabic documents from the *Genizah*, but before that project got off the ground, he was murdered in the Ukraine.²⁵ Mordecai Kaplan, who personified the tradition of engaged popular scholarship within the Seminary for more than half a century, also sought initially to prove his mettle through textual scholarship. At Schechter's encouragement, he began work on a critical edition of *Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah*, hoping in this way to gain the Seminary president's attention and approbation. The work was never completed, but Kaplan did eventually publish the other textual assignment he received from Schechter: an edition of Moses Hayim Luzzatto's 18th-century ethical text, *Mesillat Yesharim: The Path of the Upright*, commissioned by the Jewish Publication Society as part of what would become its Schiff Library of Jewish Classics.²⁶

In preparing editions of texts, Seminary scholars felt that they were helping to build the field of Jewish Studies as a whole. Texts, they believed, were the "tools" and "building blocks" that scholars required, "the basis of every historical and literary investigation."²⁷ Marx spoke for many of them when he complained that "very little in comparison with other literatures has been done for producing

correct texts of our standard works."²⁸ The great task that he and his like-minded colleagues set for themselves was to produce and elucidate these "correct texts" for the benefit of future generations of scholars.

Placed in a larger context, this quest for "correct texts" formed part of the legacy of both German historicism and the European Jewish enlightenment. A whole series of ambitious projects to produce scholarly editions of texts, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, developed on both sides of the Atlantic. As early as 1862, a modest program to publish "correct texts" had been established by European Jewish Hebraists. The society they founded bore the evocative name *Mekizei Nirdamim* ("Rousers of the Slumbering"), and significantly, it attracted support from traditional rabbis as well as from modern scholars. Its aim—to publish scholarly editions of medieval Hebrew manuscripts and rare books—was simultaneously both pious and academic.²⁹ In America, the most successful textual project undertaken by scholars (perhaps the one that Marx himself had in mind) was the Loeb Classical Library, established in 1910 to publish standard scholarly editions of the great works of Greek and Latin authors. The Loeb Classics also formed the model, if not the inspiration, for the Schiff Classics—Schiff was Loeb's brother-in-law.³⁰

The Schiff Classics, although not itself a Seminary project, demonstrates the sharp imprint that the Seminary's textual focus made upon American Jewish scholarship as a whole. Previously, the Jewish Publication Society, the publisher of the series, had largely concentrated on history and Scripture and had excluded "works of a distinctively scientific character" from its publishing ambit. The bold project announced in 1915 to produce twenty-five volumes of carefully edited post-biblical Jewish classics with texts, translations, and scholarly notes represented an abrupt departure from this policy. Schechter, as chair of the JPS "Classics Committee," clearly played a central role in bringing this policy shift about. One of his last official acts was to address letters inviting Seminary colleagues and other scholars to contribute to the series. After his death, the Seminary continued for some time to dominate the project: eight of the scholars proposed as editors of different works came from the ranks of its faculty and alumni, twice as many as came from Hebrew Union College or from Dropsie College. Although on paper the steering committee overseeing the project was always carefully balanced, representing the full spectrum of Jewish religious life and the presidents of three different scholarly institutions, the plan itself bore the Seminary's unmistakable imprint. In effect, it represented a widening of the Seminary's research agenda to embrace the Anglo-American Jewish scholarly community as a whole.³¹

Apart from the Schiff Classics, the kind of textual scholarship that the Seminary considered the acme of learning won little public support and proved difficult to sustain. As early as 1909, for example, Louis Ginzberg wrote a formal letter to Solomon Schechter (intended, probably, for the eyes of the trustees) setting forth

the heavy financial burdens that he had incurred "in the interests of Jewish scholarship," including hundreds of dollars to cover travel, research, and the publication of his *Genizah* studies. "I scarcely think it is creditable to the position of Jewish scholarship in America that I should be placed in this position," he wrote, pointing out that European Jewish seminaries defrayed these kinds of costs.³² The money in this case was found, and later (sometimes happily, sometimes not) Seminary trustees and friends would finance the publication of other textual studies undertaken by the faculty. The Stroock brothers, for example, subvented a variety of scholarly publications as a memorial to their uncle, the Orthodox scholar Abraham Berliner, who had himself been a distinguished student of Jewish texts.³³ Later, the American Academy for Jewish Research (founded in 1919 under Ginzberg's leadership) and nonprofit foundations devoted to Jewish scholarship also assisted Seminary authors in publishing their books. Still, the nagging question persisted: for whom did the textually minded faculty toil?

First, as we have seen, the faculty toiled for the nascent field of Jewish Studies. By the early 20th century, an international community of *Wissenschaft* Jewish scholars existed, linked by a web of scholarly publications and personal communications. Jewish scholars on both sides of the Atlantic considered themselves part of a single Jewish scholarly fraternity. They pledged allegiance to the field as a whole.³⁴

Second, as Ginzberg implied with his reference to the "position of Jewish scholarship in America," the faculty felt that it was helping to raise the cultural level and prestige of the American Jewish community. Scholarship and learning had long served as determinants of status in Jewish history: they brought a community to the notice of the Jewish world and did much to establish its long-term reputation. Schechter and his cohort of young promising scholars, along with their enthusiastic supporters (like Mayer Sulzberger), hoped that the Seminary's labors would have a similar effect. Scholarship produced within its portals, they believed, would lead American Jewry from the wilderness of insignificance into the promised land of Jewish cultural renown.

Even before he arrived in America, Schechter had begun to lay the groundwork for this effort. "I am now keeping back the best things for America as I think that such publication will give the Seminary a certain prestige," he wrote Mayer Sulzberger in 1901.³⁵ Having given up on Jewish cultural life in England, he now withheld his best scholarship with the intention of publishing it from his new perch in New York. For similar reasons, Schechter and the rest of the Seminary faculty took pains, in their first years, to issue the choicest fruits of their scholarship in English, rather than German. "Jewish learning in this country . . . will be American in language, in scope, in method, and yet be distinctively Jewish in essence," Israel Friedlaender predicted in 1914.³⁶ Refusing to pay obeisance to German centrality in the field of Jewish studies, the scholars of the new Seminary sought to place the

distinctive stamp of their new American homeland on the Jewish scholarly map. Third, the faculty saw its work as a contribution to the American Jewish quest for acceptance and respectability. This is most easily shown in the case of the Schiff Classics, for Schechter, in a private letter, frankly admitted that the undertaking "should, above all, result in raising the respect of Jew and Gentile for Jewish literature and the thoughts treasured up therein. . . [and] have besides all other results, also that of contributing to *kiddush hashem* [sanctification of the Divine name] and to the glory of Israel." Jewish classics that did not fulfill these criteria were, as a result, left out of the series.³⁷ The same desire to win non-Jewish respect for "Jewish contributions to Civilization" was reflected earlier in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, and it underlay such popular volumes written by Seminary faculty members as Schechter's *Studies in Judaism* and *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, Louis Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews*, and Joseph Jacobs's *Jewish Contributions to Civilization: An Estimate*. Jacobs, like Friedlaender a Seminary faculty member who wrote for a broad public and spoke out on contemporary issues, baldly stated what many a Jewish scholar of his day apparently assumed: "If it can be shown that Jews throughout the ages have contributed their share to the world's higher life and have, by their experiences, acquired specific capacities to continue to do so, they have a right to say to the world: 'Stand aside; let us to our appointed work.'" The honorary degrees that Schechter and Ginzberg both eventually won from Harvard University proved all the more meaningful in that they indicated that "the world"—at least the scholarly world—had paid some attention.³⁸

Finally, the faculty aimed to broaden the canvas of Jewish studies, to demonstrate that post-biblical Judaism was culturally richer and religiously more varied than generally recognized. This challenged at one and the same time the cherished assumptions of traditional Jews, who looked upon "the sea of the Talmud" as the major source of Jewish creativity, and the cherished assumptions of learned Christians, who questioned whether post-biblical Jews displayed any creativity at all. The treasure trove of documents that Schechter recovered from the Cairo *Genizah* gave great impetus to these scholarly efforts. Schechter himself delighted in the fragments that he characterized as "my Heretic's Gallery," the writings of Jews who rebelled against the rabbinic mainstream. The publication of these documents, he predicted (not inaccurately, as it turned out) "will surprise the world."³⁹ Ginzberg prefaced his *Legends*—"the first attempt to gather from the original sources all Jewish legends, in so far as they refer to Biblical personages and events"—with an attack on [non-Jewish] scholars and their "poetic phantasmagoria, frequently the vaporings of morbid visionaries." His work, a conscious refutation of Christian understandings of Judaism, demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt that "the fancy of the [Jewish] people did not die out in the post-Biblical time."⁴⁰ His very methodology served to buttress his case: where Christian scholars

had so often rummaged Jewish sources to shed light on the origins of Christianity, he now did the same with Christian sources, prowling for lost Jewish legends. Israel Davidson's *Thesaurus of Mediaeval Hebrew Poetry*, a work no less massive in its dimensions, demonstrated that the poetic muse (religious and secular) did not die out from Israel either, notwithstanding the fact that, as Davidson lamented, neither Jews nor Christians properly appreciated this literature.⁴¹ Saul Lieberman later followed in the footsteps of these early Seminary scholars with his studies of Greek and Hellenism in Jewish Palestine and his incomparable erudition that demonstrated how a thorough knowledge of antiquity could illuminate obscurities in rabbinic literature.⁴²

Where faculty members divided, and the elite and popular traditions of Jewish scholarship at the Seminary parted company, was in their approach to modernity. The textual scholars, even as they extended the canvas of Jewish Studies and sought to rescue Judaism from those who misinterpreted its past, looked upon modernity as the strict chronological limit beyond which they refused to pass. With few exceptions, they restricted their scholarship to the premodern period. Davidson, for example, limited his listing of secular (but not religious) poetry to "those composed prior to the Haskalah [Jewish enlightenment]." He even excluded the religious poetry of Maskilic writers on the grounds that their prayers had not won popular acceptance and were imitative. As for the poems of Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, he explained that they "were deliberately excluded, because he is generally regarded, justly or unjustly, as the Father of the Haskalah Movement."⁴³ Earlier, in his doctoral dissertation, Davidson *had* paid attention to modern literature and the subject continued to interest him personally. At the Seminary, however, his scholarship was confined to the premodern era, in conformity with the elite institutional tradition to which he now subscribed. When once, as a diversion, he wrote a charming review of Sadie Rose Weilerstein's children's book, *The Adventures of K'tonton*, he carefully did so under a pseudonym.⁴⁴

The Schiff Classics, overseen by Schechter and then Cyrus Adler, similarly eschewed modernity. Though Luzzatto was not in this instance excluded, other "modern" writers were. Classics, as defined by the series, had to be "sufficiently remote to be removed from present day controversies." The same disinclination to study modernity characterized the work of Alexander Marx (reputedly, he considered anything after 1789 to be "journalism") and later generations of textual scholars, through the Finkelstein years, as well.

By contrast, those scholars who wrote for more popular audiences, including Schechter, Friedlaender, and especially Mordecai Kaplan, focused sharply on modernity. Schechter used his wide-ranging learning to counter contemporary trends that he found antithetical to Judaism and to plead for a return to traditional observance. Friedlaender sought in his volume of essays entitled, significantly, *Past*

and Present, "to interpret the events of the past in the light of the present and the problems of the present in the light of the past." Kaplan began his *Judaism as a Civilization* with a chapter entitled "The Present Crisis in Judaism." As engaged scholars writing for a concerned public, these men believed that their knowledge of the past contributed to their understanding of the present; they employed their learning to offer critical perspectives on contemporary developments. Friedlaender thus announced (perhaps with a hint of criticism for his colleagues) that he wrote "neither as an archeologist, with his eye riveted on the past, nor as a journalist, with his horizon limited to the present, but rather as an historian." He defended this approach as "imperative," since for Jews, "the past and the present are inextricably bound up with one another."⁴⁵

Friedlaender's declaration serves as a reminder that Seminary faculty members, whatever their disagreements and sometimes in spite of themselves, reenacted and validated basic premises of the Conservative movement as a whole. They were traditional at their core and modern in their forms. They drew sustenance from texts and were expansive in defining and interpreting those texts. They sought legitimacy from the past and felt ambivalent toward changes demanded by the present. And, in very different ways, they optimistically believed (as Schechter, Friedlaender, Ginzberg, Marx, and Davidson all did) that tradition and modernity could safely be reconciled.

Of course, this nexus between the Seminary's scholarly agenda and the Conservative movement's religious agenda was never publicly articulated, least of all by those who felt that they were dispassionately establishing "correct texts." To have done otherwise would have undermined the very assumptions upon which *Wissenschaft* ideology was based. As a result, neither the students nor the supporters of the Seminary generally understood the relationship between the textual scholarship that the faculty pursued and the "vital issues" that the Conservative movement and the American Jewish community as a whole engaged. As Mel Scult and Baila Shargel demonstrate in their essays elsewhere in these volumes, student dissatisfaction at the Seminary was particularly acute. Alumnus Meyer Waxman spoke for many when in a thinly veiled critique published in 1941 he lamented both "the isolation of scholarship from life" among Jewish scholars in the United States and "the predominance of a general spirit of dryness."⁴⁶

Mordecai Kaplan, by then, represented the antithesis of this critique. The exemplar, in his day, of scholarly engagement, he was neither isolated nor arid. Like Schechter and especially Friedlaender, both of whom he revered, he sought to mediate between the scholarly and popular worlds. His books and articles, written for the general public, ably demonstrated how old wisdom could shed light on contemporary issues, and they articulated an understanding of Judaism that proved powerfully influential.⁴⁷

Textual scholarship at the Seminary, however, *had* become isolated and dry, and for understandable reasons. After an initial burst of enthusiasm, American Jewry lost interest in the Seminary and its work. Communal problems that some hoped it would resolve continued to fester, and the rarified scholarship that most of the faculty produced could not be appreciated. Worst of all, Schechter's death, in 1915, robbed the Seminary of its most colorful personality as well as its most effective advocate. Cyrus Adler, appointed to succeed Schechter, was not himself a significant scholar and failed to win the faculty's respect. It viewed his appointment as evidence of the Seminary board's "limited understanding of, and sympathy for, Jewish scholarship."⁴⁸ Since Adler simultaneously presided over Dropsie College in Philadelphia, he was not even full time at the Seminary and never moved to New York. Meanwhile, the board focused on the Seminary's burgeoning financial crisis, one that it faced in common with many another American Jewish cultural and religious institution in the 1920s and 1930s.⁴⁹ Economy soon became the watchword, funds to support scholarship grew scarce, and faculty morale plummeted. The dramatic opening in 1925 of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, which now bid to make that city the center of Jewish studies, only underscored how much had changed from the heady days when Schechter had commanded the Seminary's ship and the faculty held themselves out as the American Jewish community's scholarly redeemers.

In response to these changes, much of the faculty turned inward. The elite textual scholars, taking their cue from Louis Ginzberg, focused on their own research and sought solace in the company of other scholars. Indeed, the very language of their discourse changed. Where earlier, as we have seen, their scholarship was patriotically "American in language," now, as if to symbolize their disaffection, they turned more and more to Hebrew. Davidson, for example, reissued his edition of *Sefer Sha'ashu'im* with a Hebrew introduction in 1925 and pointedly published the notes to his volume of *Genizah Studies in Memory of Dr. Solomon Schechter (Ginzei Schechter)* in Hebrew as well, although, he reports in the introduction, he had initially planned to write them in English.⁵⁰ Most of what he subsequently published was likewise in Hebrew, including the scholarly notes to his *Thesaurus*. Ginzberg too published his *Genizah Studies* in Hebrew—this despite the fact that Schechter, in whose memory the books appeared, was committed to publishing Jewish scholarship in English. He also published his commentary on the *Yerushalmi* in Hebrew and even found it necessary to explain why the long English introduction appeared in addition to the introduction in Hebrew—as if vernacular writing was now something for which a Seminary professor needed to apologize.⁵¹ Later, of course, Saul Lieberman—once he succeeded Ginzberg as the exemplar of scholarship at the Seminary—also published the bulk of his scholarly writings in Hebrew. In his *Tosefia*, he did not even supply an English language preface and introduction, as

Davidson and Ginzberg generally had done. Instead, the work was explicitly geared to *b'nai Torah* (those well familiar with rabbinic literature) who could read the text in the original.⁵²

Zionism and the ideology of Hebraism partly explain this transition to Hebrew. By writing in the "holy tongue," Seminary faculty members were consciously aligning themselves with the movements to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine and to revive Hebrew as a living language. Davidson and Ginzberg were also very much influenced by their experiences teaching at the Hebrew University, Davidson in 1926 and Ginzberg in 1928-29.⁵³ Other foreign-born faculty members wrote in Hebrew as a matter of expedience: they found it easier than English. Whatever the reasons, the fact that more and more Seminary scholarship appeared in Hebrew represented a dramatic shift. Where once Schechter and his colleagues had sought to shape a distinctively American center of Jewish scholarship that would translate classical Judaism into the English language, now the leading textual scholars at the Seminary turned away from America and wrote, in Hebrew, for like-minded Jewish scholars in Eretz Israel and around the world. This made the fruits of the Seminary's most highly prized elite scholarship even less accessible than before to the trustees and to most Conservative Jews.

The turn to Hebrew also markedly distinguished the Seminary's faculty from their contemporaries who produced Jewish scholarship at American colleges and universities and at the seminaries of the American Reform movement. Harry Wolfson at Harvard, Salo Baron at Columbia, Jacob Mann and Jacob Lauterbach at Hebrew Union College, Henry Malter and Solomon Zeitlin at Dropsie College, and most (but not all) of the faculty of the Jewish Institute of Religion—though conversant in Hebrew—published their most important scholarship in English.⁵⁴

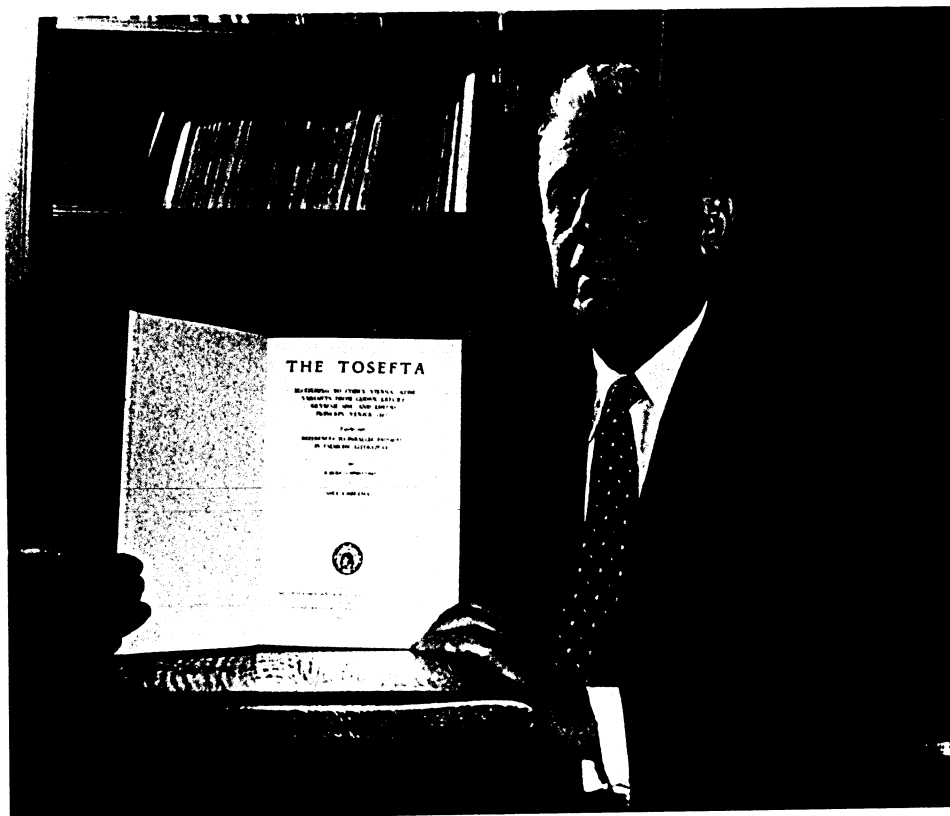
Within the Seminary itself, language now became yet another line of demarcation between the elite textual scholars who stood at the center of the institution and the engaged popular ones who found themselves more and more on the periphery. Mordecai Kaplan, unsurprisingly, wrote almost entirely in English. Later, Abraham Joshua Heschel, who like Kaplan reached out to the broader public, was deeply engaged with the events of his day, and never enjoyed the influence inside the Seminary that he won outside of it, likewise wrote most of his books in English. For other reasons, connected with the nature of their field, the Bible faculty (H.L. Ginsberg, Robert Gordis, Alexander Sperber, and later Nahum Sarna) also generally published in English, although the Canadian-born Ginsberg published two of his most significant books in Hebrew.⁵⁵ Most of the rest of the faculty wrote in Hebrew as a matter of choice. An analysis of the contributors to the dual-language *Festschriften* prepared for Louis Ginzberg (1946) and Alexander Marx (1950), for example, reveals that about two-thirds of the Seminary faculty who contributed wrote in the Hebrew section. By contrast, almost 80 percent of the other American-

based contributors to these works composed their articles in English.⁵⁶ Well into the Finkelstein years, the choicest fruits of Seminary scholarship were reserved for other Hebrew-speaking Jewish scholars who could fully appreciate the momentous contributions that these textual studies represented. The publications brought the Seminary faculty surpassing stature with their colleagues in Israel and Europe. But they did so at a price, for by writing in Hebrew the faculty smartly turned its back on the English-speaking scholarly world, as well as on the vast majority of American Jews—among them, the lay leaders who supported the Seminary and most of the Conservative rabbis whom it trained.

Louis Finkelstein, who succeeded Adler as the Seminary's president in 1940 (renamed chancellor in 1951), sought to broaden the Seminary's sphere of influence. Having spent the bulk of his adult life at the Seminary, he appreciated each of the scholarly traditions that the institution perpetuated, and he understood that they appealed to different audiences. Like Schechter (with whom he had studied), and unlike most of the senior faculty of his own day, he himself sought to appeal to both audiences. His scholarly and educational efforts, as a result, moved in two directions. On the one hand, he devoted much of his own creative scholarship to textual studies of the *Sifre* and the *Sifra* that he published in Hebrew. On the other hand, he focused on "wider problems of Jewish life" and sought, invoking Schechter as his model, to reach "Christians, and Jews who know as little about Judaism as Christians."⁵⁷ He thus cast his lot with both traditions of Seminary scholarship and was able to draw upon both for his own purposes. Without directly challenging the Seminary's institutional culture, he worked to narrow the chasm that divided the faculty from the surrounding Jewish and non-Jewish communities and moved to place the fruits of faculty research at the service of American Jewry and the world.

Finkelstein accomplished this in three ways. First, he employed the tools of public relations to explain (and exalt) the faculty's highly specialized work in terms that ordinary lay people could appreciate. Second, he fostered scholarship that crossed the boundary into the modern period to confront, with others, the great ethical and spiritual dilemmas affecting the nation and the world. Third and most important, he promoted textbook syntheses that made the fruits of Jewish scholarship accessible, in English, to Jews and non-Jews alike.

Finkelstein's deft use of public relations, his first innovation, did much to break down the "ivory tower" image of elite Seminary scholarship that had developed under Adler. In 1944, for example, the Seminary published under his editorship a modest volume of essays entitled *Rab Saadia Gaon* drawn from lectures delivered at the Seminary and the University of Chicago in 1942 commemorating the thousandth anniversary of that great Jewish scholar and communal leader's death. Jewish and Christian scholars contributed to the volume—itsself something of a new

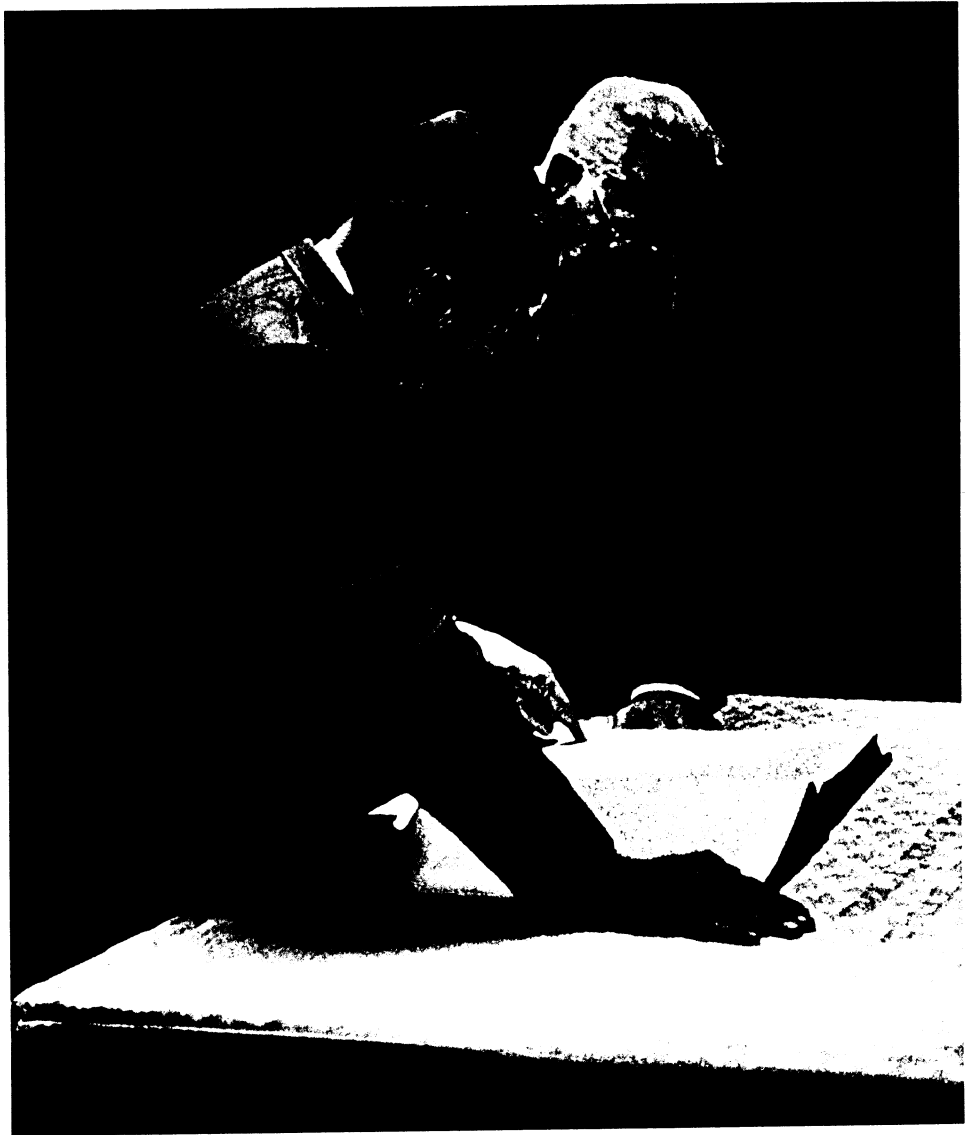


Saul Lieberman
with *The Tosefta*,
1955. Ratner Center,
JTS.

departure for a Seminary publication. Beyond the focus on scholarship, however, the volume was also promoted by the Seminary as a timely contribution to wartime discourse. Finkelstein's introductory essay set the stage by describing Saadia as an "architect of peace." A canned review, distributed to newspapers, began with a reference to Adolf Hitler and pointed out that "despite periodic threats of extermination, Judaism survives as a living and vital force, as an immutable reminder to mankind of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man." It went on to assure readers that "much of permanent value" could be found in Saadia's writings and quoted approvingly Robert Gordis's call that "new Saadias" be produced by the Seminary in order to meet contemporary challenges.⁵⁸

The appearance of the first three volumes of Saul Lieberman's *Tosefta* in 1955 set off something of a public relations frenzy. Finkelstein, in a letter to the American ambassador in Israel, Edward Lawson, described the publication of this halakhic compendium as "a most important event in the history of American Judaism and indeed, in the history of World Judaism." He asked the ambassador to present the work in a public ceremony to the president of the State of Israel as part of what he described as a "Spiritual Point Four program, by which America may contribute to older civilizations new insights into their own cultural products." Under the headline "U.S. Gives Israel New Study of Jewish Code," the subsequent ceremony

*The Jewish
Theological
Seminary
of America*



Louis Finkelstein (left) and Chief Justice Earl Warren look over a page of Talmud during Warren's visit to the Seminary in 1957.
Photo by Guy Gillette. Ratner Center, JTS.

received prominent coverage in the *New York Times*, where it was portrayed as a symbol of the close ties between the people of the United States and Israel. The Seminary's public relations office followed this up with an illustrated brochure (reprinted from *Seminary Progress*) entitled "The Tosefta: Its Meaning In Your Life." Most Seminary supporters, of course, could not read let alone appreciate what Lieberman had accomplished and had never heard of the *Tosefta*—but that made no difference. Thanks to Finkelstein, they could at least bask in the reflected glory of this incomparable work of scholarship knowing that in supporting the Seminary they were contributing to Israel, Judaism, American patriotism, and human betterment. Through the magic of public relations, Finkelstein had managed to make the esoteric popular and the aloof scholar seem engaged.⁵⁹

Beyond public relations, Finkelstein also innovated in encouraging, as none of his predecessors ever had, serious scholarship devoted to modern and contemporary issues of Jewish concern. "More is known about the Jews of ancient Sura and Pumbedita than about those of modern New York," he publicly complained in an open letter to Judge Joseph M. Proskauer of the American Jewish Committee.⁶⁰ To rectify this problem, he, among many other projects, commissioned a wide range of scholarly essays on modern and contemporary Jewish life for his *The Jews* (see below); published under the Seminary's imprint Moshe Davis's important Hebrew volume on "The Shaping of American Judaism"⁶¹; initiated, at Davis's instance, an American Jewish History Center ("to find a way to interpret the impact of America on Jewish life and to indicate the significance of the American Jewish experience for the world Jewish community")⁶²; and established under his own direction the Institute for Religious and Social Studies that sponsored regular lectures, conferences, and publications, and ultimately issued some fifty volumes devoted to contemporary social, ethical, and religious questions.⁶³

Faculty members devoted to the elite textual tradition of Seminary scholarship and influential rabbis who sympathized with them challenged several of these initiatives, particularly the Institute which they considered ephemeral and a diversion from a rabbinical seminary's central mission. Yet, whatever their limitations, these forays into modern and contemporary studies did respond to the demands of the other Seminary tradition, which advocated such programs of outreach, and underscored the Seminary's deepening scholarly engagement with the central issues affecting Americans of the day. As a public relations letter put it on the occasion of a 1957 visit to the campus by Chief Justice Earl Warren and former President Harry Truman, "What better way to dramatize for the American public the values inherent in Judaism?" Regular interactions with non-Jewish scholars and notables offered the Seminary's supporters "increased pride in our ancient tradition, and increased respect for the Seminary's role in demonstrating the contemporary relevance of that tradition to the total American community."⁶⁴

Similar objectives underlay Finkelstein's third initiative in the area of scholarship: his pioneering effort to produce readable syntheses that could bring the fruits of Jewish scholarship to a larger public. The most successful of these by far—billed as "an authoritative work on Judaism in its various phases" and "the most comprehensive discussion of the subject yet undertaken"⁶⁵—was *The Jews*, first published under Finkelstein's editorship in 1949 and then revised through four different editions.

Finkelstein traced the genesis of this project to the dark days of World War II. As news of the Holocaust became known, he held discussions with such notables as Joseph M. Proskauer, Lewis L. Strauss, Irving Lehman, and Sol M. Stroock, leading figures at both the American Jewish Committee and the Seminary, concerning a

book that would “serve as a living monument to the massacred.”⁶⁶ Finkelstein had actually spoken out even earlier, in 1938, concerning the need for the Seminary to fight Hitler through “the preservation of the spiritual treasures of our people and of the human race.” With remarkable prescience, he compared the Seminary’s task then to that of the prophet Jeremiah when the Temple faced destruction: “the task of saving the Ark of the Covenant.”⁶⁷

As time passed and the project developed, however, its focus broadened in keeping both with the universalism that had become Finkelstein’s trademark and with the postwar aims of the sponsor, the American Jewish Committee, which was simultaneously engaged in various efforts to promote interreligious harmony.⁶⁸ Finkelstein now promised to produce the first comprehensive scholarly treatment in English of “Judaism and the Jews,” one that would promote “understanding in the world” both about Judaism as a religion and “about the nature of Jews as a group.” His overall model was the prestigious Cambridge History series, where each part of a work was assigned to a different specialist in the field. But one significant difference distinguished the two projects. His, he felt, “should be important as a spiritual influence no less than for its learning.” Multiple aims—scholarly, didactic, hortatory, and spiritual—thus underlay the whole enterprise from the beginning.⁶⁹

As finally published, in 1949, *The Jews* filled two large volumes (four volumes in the Jewish Publication Society edition) and more than 1450 pages. Its thirty-five chapters, nine by members of the Seminary’s faculty, divided unequally (and most revealingly) into four sections: “The History of Judaism and the Jews” (eight chapters); “The Role of Judaism in Civilization” (twenty-one chapters); “The Sociology and Demography of the Jews” (five chapters); and “The Jewish Religion” (one chapter, by Finkelstein himself). The disproportionate focus on Judaism’s role in civilization evidenced a return to apologetic themes stressed back in Schechter’s day and carried the same tacit assumptions. As Mordecai Kaplan explained, without specifically referring to *The Jews*:

It was expected that such knowledge would open the eyes of non-Jews to the fact that the Jews, throughout their historical career, had been creators of significant cultural values. . . . It was assumed that non-Jews would change their attitude toward Jews as a result of this new knowledge concerning them. Thus not only would Jews gain the goodwill of their Gentile neighbors, but they themselves would also arrive at a better understanding of their own People and its past.⁷⁰

Toward the same ends, and following the suggestion of Harry Wolfson, Finkelstein also wrote to several hundred educators and scholars “asking them to suggest the questions about Judaism and the Jews which they believed their acquaintances

would most like to see answered." The answers ranged from the helpful to the bizarre (the most bizarre being a question concerning the reputed claim "that all Jews are born with tails and that Jewish doctors immediately remove them and . . . that circumcision is a cover-up for tail-removing") and probably formed the first piece of social research ever undertaken under the Seminary's auspices. In an appendix to *The Jews*, Finkelstein listed the most frequently asked of these questions and told where in the book to find appropriate answers—further evidence of the volume's apologetic intent. His conclusion was sobering: "Judaism [is] the unknown religion of our time."⁷¹

What nevertheless distinguished *The Jews* from the many other attempts to combat anti-Semitism through education was the solid scholarship that underlay the volume. Many of the book's articles were authored by the world's leading experts on their subject (including Seminary faculty members) and represented significant syntheses of their lives' work, in several cases the only such available in English. Finkelstein, to his "delight," found that certain chapters even included "original research of enduring value, some destined to change the whole course of study in their fields." Once again, as had earlier been the case with the *Jewish Encyclopedia* and much of *Wissenschaft* scholarship, apologetic motivations did not preclude the achievement of solid scholarly results. Thanks to Judah Goldin's careful stylistic editing, the chapters were even quite readable. Inevitably, some disappointed the editor, others (including the chapter on Jewish cultural life in Eastern Europe) never materialized, and still others (including the chapter on the Jews of Palestine/Israel) were too weak to publish.⁷² Subsequent editions attempted to correct these and other shortcomings, and in the process expanded *The Jews* by more than four hundred additional pages. Even the first edition, however, was in terms of its ambitiousness, its synthetic quality, its attention to modern and contemporary developments, and its intended audiences unlike anything published by a Seminary faculty member before. Drawing upon both traditions of Seminary scholarship, it managed to be popular and scholarly at once. It reached beyond the normal confines of the Seminary, beyond the confines of the Conservative movement, and beyond even the boundaries of the Jewish people in an attempt to dispel ignorance, promote Judaism, and (in a reprise of Schechter's aim in the Schiff Classics) bring about *kid-dush ha-shem*.⁷³

Finkelstein attempted to follow up on the success of *The Jews* by editing a multi-volume "cooperative" Jewish history on a similar basis. "Dr. [William F.] Albright is going to write a Biblical history; Professor [Elias] Bickerman is half through the Hellenistic history; [and] Moshe Davis is going to get up, at last, a history of the Jews in America," he informed Cecil Roth, hoping that he too would contribute to the effort. Salo Baron, however, refused to participate, both because he wanted to devote maximum attention to his own history and because he found Finkelstein's

plan, with its aim of reaching both a scholarly and a popular audience, fatally flawed. The project died on the drawing board.⁷⁴

In yet another fruitless effort to “achieve . . . two goals, rarely combined in the same literary work,” Finkelstein in the late 1960s proposed the creation of a quarterly devoted to ethics. “It should be so written that it can be read with pleasure by the comparatively uneducated; and so profound that it can be studied with profit by scholars and in study groups,” he wrote in his magniloquent statement of purpose. As so often before, he sought scholarship that would both bridge Seminary traditions and be all things to all people: at once timely and timeless, educational and inspirational, representing “the approach to life of Conservative Judaism” and beneficial to all humanity—in short, an extension of his vision for the Seminary as a whole.⁷⁵

Many Seminary faculty members never fully subscribed to this vision. Saul Lieberman served as their scholarly role model, and as we have seen, he firmly perpetuated the more exclusive traditions of the Seminary’s past. Textual scholarship, much of it in Hebrew, thus continued to dominate the institution through the 1960s, winning its practitioners singular esteem in the world of Jewish academics. The broader agenda represented by Finkelstein, Heschel, Kaplan, and younger scholars found a following as well.

Gerson Cohen, who succeeded Finkelstein as chancellor in 1972, identified for a time with both camps. He had trained at the Seminary, had written a textually-based doctoral dissertation in Jewish history inspired by Alexander Marx (though completed at Columbia University), had published his first major scholarly article in Hebrew in the *Mordecai M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume*, and was also vitally interested in contemporary issues. The study of Jewish history, his writings suggested, could help to span the abyss between textual scholarship and issues of concern to the contemporary Jew.⁷⁶ But as subsequent events demonstrated, the two traditions were not so easily reconciled. The polarizing debate over women’s ordination revealed, among many other things, that the two types of scholarship—one rarified and exclusive, the other popular and inclusive—reflected profoundly different conceptions of the Seminary, its objectives, its obligations to the Conservative movement, and its mission to the world at large.

1. The charter is reprinted in Cyrus Adler, ed., *The Jewish Theological Seminary of America Semi-Centennial Volume* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1939), pp. 178-80. The first objective listed is "the perpetuation of the tenets of the Jewish religion." The last is "the education and training of Jewish rabbis and teachers."
2. *American Jewish Year Book* 1 (1899): pp. 58-59; Robert E. Fierstien, *A Different Spirit: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1886-1902* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1990), p. 54.
3. Solomon Schechter to Mayer Sulzberger, 5 March 1900, in Meir Ben Horin, "Solomon Schechter to Judge Mayer Sulzberger: Part 1. Letters from the Pre-Seminary Period (1895-1901)," *Jewish Social Studies* 25 (October 1963): p. 276. In his 1902 inaugural address, Schechter restated the Seminary's mission in terms more to his liking: "The ideals at which the Directors of this institution aim are the promotion of Jewish learning and the training for the Jewish ministry." Solomon Schechter, *Seminary Addresses and Other Papers* (New York: Burning Bush Press, 1959), pp. 13-14.
4. Cyrus Adler, "A Jewish Renaissance," *American Hebrew* 56 (1894): p. 25. Some of these ideas had earlier been expressed when the Jewish Publication Society was established; see its "Announcement" reprinted in Jonathan D. Sarna, *JPS: The Americanization of Jewish Culture, 1888-1988* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989) pp. 355-59. For further background, see Jonathan D. Sarna, "Cyrus Adler and the Development of American Jewish Culture: The 'Scholar-Doer' as a Jewish Communal Leader," *American Jewish History* 78 (March 1989): pp. 382-94; Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Making of an American Jewish Culture," in *When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America*, ed. Murray Friedman (Philadelphia: Balch Institute, 1993), pp. 145-55; and Jonathan D. Sarna, "A Great Awakening: The Transformation that Shaped Twentieth Century American Judaism & Its Implications for Today," *Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education Essay Series* (New York: Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education, 1995).
5. *American Hebrew* 56 (1894), p. 181. The letter is reprinted in Cyrus Adler, *Selected Letters*, ed. Ira Robinson (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985), vol. I, p. 70, where "not witnessing a revival" should be corrected to "now witnessing a revival." For parallel development in other American circles of learning, see Joseph C. Kiger, *American Learned Societies* (Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1963); and Alexandra Oleson and John Voss, eds., *The Organization of Knowledge in Modern America, 1860-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).
6. Henrietta Szold, "The Year 5660," *American Jewish Year Book* 2 (1900-1901), pp. 35-36. On the *Jewish Encyclopedia* and its significance, see Shuly Rubin Schwartz, *The Emergence of Jewish Scholarship in America: The Publication of the Jewish Encyclopedia* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1991), esp. pp. 1-16.
7. Sarna, *JPS*, p. 36; Alexander Marx, "The Library," *Jewish Theological Seminary Semi-Centennial Volume*, p. 92.
8. Schechter, *Seminary Addresses and Other Papers*, pp. 16, 18.
9. Quoted in Marx, "The Library," p. 90. In his 10 December 1901 letter to Sulzberger finalizing his arrangements with the Seminary, Schechter also acknowledges the Judge's "generous intentions" concerning his library; see Ben-Horin, "Solomon Schechter to Judge Mayer Sulzberger," p. 286, and Herman Dicker, *Of Learning and Libraries: The Seminary Library at One Hundred* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1988), p. 17.
10. Alexander Marx, "Some Jewish Book Collectors," in Marx, *Studies in Jewish History and Booklore* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1944), p. 234.
11. Sarna, *JPS*, pp. 37, 67; Guido Kisch, "The Founders of 'Wissenschaft des Judentums' and America," *Essays in American Jewish History* (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1958), p. 160.

12. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 24; see also Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 209-10.
13. Adapted from Ismar Elbogen, "A Century of Wissenschaft des Judentums," in *Studies in Jewish Thought: An Anthology of German Jewish Scholarship*, ed. Alfred Jospe, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981), pp. 26-27.
14. Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Hanover, N.H.: Brandeis University Press, 1994), pp. 4, 154, 164.
15. "Rabbinical Seminaries," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 13 (1972): 1463-65.
16. For summaries and evaluations of the scholarship undertaken by the Seminary's leading scholars into the Finkelstein years, see especially Meyer Waxman, *A History of Jewish Literature*, 2d ed. (Cranbury, N.J.: Thomas Yoseloff, 1960), vols. 4, 5; Joshua Trachtenberg, "American Jewish Scholarship," *The Jewish People Past and Present* (New York: Jewish Encyclopedic Handbook, 1955), vol. 4, pp. 411-55; Ismar Elbogen, "American Jewish Scholarship: A Survey," *American Jewish Year Book* 45 (1943-44): pp. 47-65; and Samuel Rosenblatt, "American Jewish Scholarship and the Jewish Theological Seminary," *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly* 5 (1933): pp. 372-87. Here my aim is neither to chronicle nor to evaluate the scholarship produced by Seminary faculty members, but rather to explore two traditions of Seminary faculty research and their implications.
17. Guido Kisch, ed., *Das Breslauer Seminar* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1963), esp. pp. 167-77, 187-203, 270-93; Samuel E. Karff, ed., *Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion at One Hundred Years* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1976), pp. 287-476, esp. p. 320.
18. Solomon Schechter, "Lector Meir Friedmann," *Seminary Addresses and Other Papers*, p. 137.
19. Norman Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter: A Biography* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1948), p. 259.
20. Joseph Jacobs, "Some Aspects of Schechter," *Jewish Theological Seminary Students Annual* 3 (1916): pp. 104-05.
21. Claude G. Montefiore to Solomon Schechter, 31 December 1885, in *Lieber Freund: The Letters of Claude Goldsmid Montefiore to Solomon Schechter 1885-1902*, ed. Joshua B. Stein (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1988), p. 3. The version of this letter found in Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter*, p. 266, illustrates the kind of liberties that Schechter's biographer took with primary sources.
22. Bentwich surveys Schechter's popular writings in *Solomon Schechter*, pp. 266-80.
23. Alexander Marx, "What Our Library Offers to Our Students," *Jewish Theological Seminary Students Annual* 1 (1914): p. 218; Solomon Goldman, "The Man of the Book," *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1950), pp. 13, 30; see also Menahem H. Schmelzer, "Alexander Marx (On the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of His Birth)," *Jewish Book Annual* 35 (1977-78): pp. 123-27.
24. Most, but not all, of Ginzberg's more popular writings, including his *Legends of the Jews*, were commissioned prior to his appointment to the Seminary. He did, however, publish a number of popular articles in the 1920s in the *United Synagogue Recorder*, and in 1928 he published a volume of popular essays with the Jewish Publication Society entitled *Students, Scholars and Saints*. See Boaz Cohen, "Bibliography of the Writings of Prof. Louis Ginzberg," English section of *Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume* (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1945), pp. 19-47.
25. Baila Round Shargel, *Practical Dreamer: Israel Friedlaender and the Shaping of American Judaism* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1985), pp. 14, 68-70; *The Jewish Theological Seminary Register 1917-1918* (New York: Seminary Register, 1917), p. 26; Ginzberg

- similarly lamented "that Friedlaender had largely squandered his very substantial talent." See Eli Ginzberg, *Keeper of the Law* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1966), p. 150; Eli Ginzberg, "The Seminary Family," in *Perspectives on Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of Wolfe Kelman*, ed. Arthur A. Chiel (New York: Rabbinical Assembly, 1978), p. 120.
26. Mel Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century: A Biography of Mordecai M. Kaplan* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), pp. 108, 388, n. 25; Sarna, *JPS*, pp. 157-58.
 27. See, for example, Marx, "What Our Library Offers to Our Students," p. 218; Israel Davidson, preface to *Thesaurus of Mediaeval Hebrew Poetry* (1924; reprint, New York: Ktav, 1970), vol. 1, pp. xxxviii, xlvi.
 28. Marx, "What Our Library Offers to Our Students," p. 218.
 29. Mendes-Flohr and Reinhartz, *Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 237-40.
 30. Sarna, *JPS*, pp. 120, 125-26.
 31. For the history and significance of the Schiff Library of Jewish Classics, see Sarna, *JPS*, pp. 120-30. JTS faculty and alumni recruited to produce volumes for the series include Israel Davidson, Louis Ginzberg, Moses Hyamson, Mordecai Kaplan, Alexander Marx, Louis M. Epstein, Jacob Minkin, and Meyer Waxman. Only the volumes by Davidson and Kaplan ultimately appeared in the series.
 32. Louis Ginzberg to Solomon Schechter, 22 January 1909, JTS Archives, R.G. 1CC-1-1, and reprinted in Ginzberg, *Keeper of the Law*, pp. 93-94. In 1909, Ginzberg published two volumes of his *Geonica* and one volume entitled *Yerushalmi Fragments from the Genizah* as the first three volumes in a new series entitled *Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*.
 33. See, for example, Louis Finkelstein, *Jewish Self-Government in the Middle Ages* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1924), pp. ix, xi. Louis Marshall and Felix Warburg funded the publication of *Genze Schechter*, studies of *Genizah* texts published in Schechter's memory, while Nathan and Linda Miller subsidized Davidson's *Thesaurus of Medieval Hebrew Poetry* (see Wechsler and Ritterband, *Jewish Learning in American Universities*, p. 152).
 34. Surviving correspondence and published *festschriften* demonstrate the existence of such a community of scholars. See also the international scope of the Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation as portrayed in Rebekah Kohut, *His Father's House: The Story of George Alexander Kohut* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), pp. 137-47.
 35. Schechter to Sulzberger, 5 November 1901, in Ben-Horin, "Solomon Schechter to Judge Mayer Sulzberger," p. 285; see Joseph Jacobs, "Solomon Schechter as Scholar and as Man," *Jewish Theological Seminary Students Annual* 3 (1916): p. 99 ("Almost all he published after his coming to America had already been prepared in Cambridge").
 36. Friedlaender, "Jewish Learning in America," *Past and Present*, p. 317.
 37. Solomon Schechter to Cyrus Adler, 19 March 1914, as quoted in Sarna, *JPS*, p. 122.
 38. Schwartz, *Emergence of Jewish Scholarship in America*, pp. 24-26 and passim; Solomon Schechter, *Studies in Judaism: First Series* (1896; reprint, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1915), pp. xi-xxv; Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1909), vol. 1, p. vii; Joseph Jacobs, *Jewish Contributions to Civilization: An Estimate* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1919), pp. 9, 44-46 (quoted); Ben-twich, *Solomon Schechter*, p. 272; Solomon Goldman, "The Portrait of a Teacher," *Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume* (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1946), p. 6.
 39. Schechter to Sulzberger, 5 November 1901, in Ben Horin, "Solomon Schechter to Judge Mayer Sulzberger," part 1, p. 285; the reference is to the material Schechter published in his *Documents of Jewish Sectaries*, 2 vols., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910).
 40. Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1909), pp. vii, x, xi.
 41. Davidson, *Thesaurus of Mediaeval Hebrew Poetry*, pp. xxxvii-li.

42. Saul Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1942); *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1950); for his contributions to Jewish scholarship, see the Hebrew volume published in his memory by the Israel Academy of Arts and Sciences, *LeZikhro Shel Shaul Liberman* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1983).
43. Davidson, *Thesaurus of Mediaeval Hebrew Poetry*, vol. 1, p. xlvii (translation mine); vol. 4, pp. xiv-xv. Davidson notes that several modern poems, including "Ha-Tikvah," did for various reasons find their way into the thesaurus.
44. Israel Davidson, *Parody in Jewish Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1907); Carrie Davidson, *Out of Endless Yearnings: A Memoir of Israel Davidson* (New York: Bloch, 1946), pp. 183-87.
45. Friedlaender, *Past and Present*, p. ix; see also Schechter's prefaces to his *Studies in Judaism* and *Seminary Addresses*; and Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization* (New York: Schocken, 1967), pp. xi-xiv, 3-15.
46. Waxman, *A History of Jewish Literature*, vol. 4, pp. 1085-86; Marshall Sklare, *Conservative Judaism: An American Religious Movement* (New York: Schocken, 1972), pp. 180-84; cf. Mel Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century: A Biography of Mordecai M. Kaplan* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), p. 223 (citing Neil Gilman): "The faculty was clearly devoted to teaching classical texts, and the religious message, if any, 'was left to the student to ferret out on his own.' Questions of a fundamentally religious nature were simply not dealt with directly. The text was the focus, not the religious experiences that lay behind it."
47. Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, esp. pp. 222-25.
48. Ginzberg, "The Seminary Family," p. 118. The fact that Ginzberg, Friedlaender, and Kaplan had all hoped to succeed Schechter only heightened their bitterness, which differences over Zionism then compounded. See Ginzberg, *Keeper of the Law*, pp. 132-33; Shargel, *Practical Dreamer*, pp. 15-16; Scult, *Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century*, pp. 108, 205-8; and more broadly, Ira Robinson, "Cyrus Adler and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America: Image and Reality," *American Jewish History* 78, no. 3 (March 1989): pp. 363-81.
49. Sarna, *JPS*, pp. 137-74, esp. 142; Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 296-309.
50. Israel Davidson, *Sefer Sha'ashuim* (Berlin: Eshkol, 1925); Israel Davidson, *Genizah Studies in Memory of Doctor Solomon Schechter*, vol. 3, *Liturgical and Secular Poetry* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1928), Hebrew section, p. v. See also Isadore Twersky's discussion in *Jewish Studies in American Universities, Study Circle on Diaspora Jewry in the Home of the President of Israel*, 4th series, (Jerusalem: Institute of Contemporary Jewry, 1970), p. 31.
51. "My friend, Professor Frederick Fassett, Jr. . . . insisted that many students of history, literature, and archaeology would be much interested in my Commentary, but . . . lack of knowledge of Hebrew would bar their acquaintance with it." Louis Ginzberg, *A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1941), vol. 1, p. viii. Ginzberg also published one of his books in German, *Eine Unbekannte Jüdische Sekte* (1922; reprint, New York: G Olms, 1972).
52. Saul Lieberman, *The Tosefta: The Order of Zera'im*, 2d ed. (Jerusalem: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), p. xiii.
53. Davidson, *Out of Endless Yearnings*, pp. 121-38; Ginzberg, *Keeper of the Law*, pp. 140-41, 202-6.
54. For a comprehensive survey of Jewish Studies on the university level, see Paul Ritterband and Harold S. Wechsler, *Jewish Learning in American Universities: The First Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

55. H. L. Ginsberg, *Kitve Ugarit* (Jerusalem: Mehkarim Leshoniyim, 1936); *Kohelet* (Tel Aviv: Nyuman, 1961).
56. *Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume*, 2 vols. (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1945); Saul Lieberman, ed., *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*, 2 vols., (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1950). The somewhat different list of Seminary faculty contributors to the *Mordecai M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1953) preferred English by a margin of nine (65 percent) to five (35 percent). Still, of the Diaspora scholars who published in the Hebrew volume, five were Seminary faculty and only two taught elsewhere.
57. Louis Finkelstein to Solomon Goldman, 20 September 1944, in Jacob J. Weinstein, *Solomon Goldman: A Rabbi's Rabbi* (New York: KTAV, 1973), pp. 259-64. For a related discussion of Finkelstein's aims, see Michael B. Greenbaum, "Mission Conflict in Religiously Affiliated Institutions of Higher Education: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America During the Presidency of Louis Finkelstein 1940-1955" (Ph.D. diss., Teachers College, Columbia University, 1994).
58. Louis Finkelstein, ed., *Rab Saadia Gaon: Studies in His Honor* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1944). The canned review by Sydney H. Zebel is preserved in the JTS Papers, R.G. 11C-12-1.
59. Louis Finkelstein to Edward Lawson, 13 July 1955; *New York Times*, 16 September 1955; "The Tosefta: Its Meaning In Your Life" [1955], all in JTS Papers, R.G. 11C-63-10. The Point Four Program, the last of four proposals to promote democracy outlined by Harry Truman in his 1949 inaugural address, aimed to make the benefits of American science and technology available to "under-developed" countries.
60. "Prefatory Letter (July 4, 1949)," in *The Jews*, 2 vols., ed. Louis Finkelstein (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. xv. Finkelstein attributed this observation to "a prominent Jewish scholar," but he subsequently made similar statements himself ("We understand Judaism in the first century better than we understand Judaism in the twentieth"). See Marshall Sklare, *The Jews* (New York: Free Press, 1958), p. v.
61. Moshe Davis, *Yahadut Amerika Be-Hitpathutah* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1951); Davis later produced a related volume in English, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1965).
62. Moshe Davis, preface to Louis J. Swichkow and Lloyd P. Gartner, *The History of the Jews of Milwaukee* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1963), p. xii.
63. See the list in *The Jewish Theological Seminary of America Register* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1970), pp. 155-58; this total includes the publications of the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, which the Institute administered.
64. Undated [1957] letter to Seminary friends, JTS Papers, R.G. 11C-63-10.
65. Memorandum, 7 January 1947, JTS Papers, R.G. 36-1-22.
66. Finkelstein, *The Jews*, p. xiii; *Newsweek*, 6 March 1950, p. 70.
67. "Address delivered at the first Women's Conference on Jewish Affairs. . . November 15, 1938," Ratner Center, Marjorie Wyler Papers, 4/38.
68. Naomi W. Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee 1906-1966* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1972), pp. 453-62.
69. "The Need for an Authoritative Comprehensive Book on Judaism" (n.d.), JTS Papers, R.G. 36-1-30.
70. Mordecai Kaplan, *The Greater Judaism in the Making* (New York: Reconstructionist Press, 1960), p. 357.
71. Finkelstein, *The Jews*, p. xvii, xxvi, 1391-97. Many of the original questionnaires, as well as those sent out in preparation for the second edition, are preserved in the JTS Papers, R.G. 36-6. For the bizarre question forwarded by Carleton S. Coon on the basis of a tale

*The Jewish
Theological
Seminary
of America*

- that he had actually heard, see Coon to Finkelstein (n.d., c. March-April 1946), Ratner Center Archive, R.G.36-6-15.
72. Finkelstein, *The Jews*, pp. xvi, xviii.
73. *Ibid.*, p. xxxiii.
74. Louis Finkelstein to Cecil Roth, 4 August 1950; Finkelstein to Salo Baron, 11 January 1951; Baron to Finkelstein, 1 February 1951—all in JTS Papers, Ratner Center, R.G.36-1-14. Hadassah initiated a similar project in 1952 that resulted in the publication of *Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People*, ed. Leo W. Schwartz (New York: Random House, 1956).
75. Louis Finkelstein, "Statement of Purpose Regarding the Proposed Quarterly," March 1965, JTS Papers, in R.G.35-2-7.
76. Gerson D. Cohen, ed., *Sefer Ha-Qabbalah: The Book of Tradition*, by Abraham Ibn Daud (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1967), pp. vii, 347; *idem*, "Translating Jewish History into Curriculum: From Scholarship to Paideia—A Case Study," in ed. *From the Scholar to the Classroom*, ed. Seymour Fox and Geraldine Rosenfield (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1977), pp. 31-58; *idem*, "The Shattered Tablets," *Moment* (October 1985): pp. 17-21; *idem*, *Studies in the Variety of Rabbinic Cultures* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), esp. pp. 320-23.