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Mirjam Thulin ^{1,*}

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*Correspondence: thulin@ieg-mainz.de

¹ Institute of European History (IEG) in Mainz, Germany

Wissenschaft and correspondence: Solomon Schechter between Europe and America*

MIRJAM THULIN

Institute of European History, Germany*

In 1905, the managing editor of the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Isidore Singer (1859–1939), published an article in the journal *Ost und West* from a “bird’s eye perspective on the development of American Jewry in the last 250 years.” In this historical overview, Singer eventually attested that Jewish scholarship in America had an “absolute dependency on the European motherland.”¹ This judgment was based on his disapproving view of the two American rabbinical seminaries that existed at that time. According to Singer, there were still no scholars at the Hebrew Union College (HUC) in Cincinnati of the “already American[-born] generation of Israel.”² In fact, Singer’s observation was appropriate because it applied to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTSA) in New York as much as to the HUC.³ Despite the history of Jewish settlement in America, around 1900

1 Isidore Singer, “Eine Vogelschau über die Entwicklung der amerikanischen Judentum in den letzten 250 Jahren I”, *Ost und West* 10–11 (1905): col. 671. Following Singer and general usage, “America” in this article refers to the United States only. Translations from German are mine unless otherwise specified.

2 *Ibid.*, col. 672.

3 In 1901, after the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) gained a new legal status in the state of New York, the institute was renamed the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTSA). I therefore refer here either to the JTS until 1901, or the JTSA from 1902. On the history of the seminary see Jack Wertheimer, ed., *Tradition Renewed: A History of the Jewish Theological Seminary*, 2 vols. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1997). The most recent accounts are Michael Panitz, “Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS)”, in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, vol. 11 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2007), 328–31; Arthur Kiron, “Heralds of Duty: The Sephardic

* This essay is part of a larger project on the history of the Conservative rabbinical seminaries in Europe and North America. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to everybody at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and the fellows of the academic year 2014/15 for their interest in and support of my *Wissenschaft* research.

there was still no native Jewish scholarship in America. The scene was dominated by scholars educated in Europe, who often came with broken English and a strict academic sense of mission. In 1903, Kaufmann Kohler (1843–1926), born in Bavaria and trained at German universities, was chosen as the president of HUC. And a year earlier, Solomon Schechter (1847–1915) had been called to the JTSA in New York as its new president.

Nevertheless, when Schechter came to the United States in 1902, he was an interesting choice by the JTSA search committee. He had never run a seminary or any other educational institution, but he was apparently qualified for this position because he had studied and worked at different institutions in Eastern and Central Europe as well as at first-rate English universities. Moreover, he had a good command of English. Schechter had experience as a teacher, tutor, and lecturer. His attitude towards Judaism and Jewish law was not driven by a rigid reform impetus, nor did he condemn religious reform *per se*. He was highly regarded as an erudite textual scholar: his *Aboth de-Rabbi Nathan* (1887) is still considered the best critical edition of this rabbinic text. Finally, Schechter had been itinerant throughout his life. He did not fear the hardships of travel, and although he was already in his mid-fifties, he agreed to relocate to New York.

In American Jewish history, Schechter stands to this day for two major legacies: the active and systematic establishment of modern Jewish scholarship in America, and the creation of Conservative Judaism.⁴ Research in recent years has shown that Schechter was indeed a preeminent religious

Italian Jewish Theological Seminary of Sabato Morais”, *Jewish Quarterly Review* 105, no. 2 (2015): 206–49. I wish to thank Arthur Kiron for our inspiring discussions on that and other *Wissenschaft* subjects.

4 This perception was advocated by several historians in the 1950s and 60s: see Moshe Davis, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism: The Historical School in 19th Century America* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1963); Abraham J. Karp, “Solomon Schechter comes to America”, *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (Sept. 1963): 44–62; Karp, “Conservative Judaism: The Legacy of Solomon Schechter”, typescript in the archive of the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia [1964?]; Karp, “A Century of Conservative Judaism in the United States”, *American Jewish Year Book* 86 (1986): 3–61; Karp, “The Conservative Rabbi: ‘Dissatisfied But Not Unhappy’”, in *The American Rabbinate: A Century of Continuity and Change, 1883–1983*, ed. Jacob Rader Marcus and Abraham J. Peck (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing, 1985), 98–172, esp. 113–21. In contrast, the works of Marshall Sklare take a sociological approach, tracing the origins of the Conservative movement to the American context and the corresponding expectations of rank and file post-immigration Jews; e.g. Marshall Sklare, *Conservative Judaism: An American Religious Movement* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press [1955]).

figure for what would become Conservative Judaism. However, it has also shown that Conservative Judaism was more a product of his disciples and following generations of the JTSA.⁵ In contrast, Schechter's significance for Jewish scholarship in America is undisputed, particularly when the metrics of Jewish scholarship comes into play. Since Jewish studies had as yet found no place in the universities in Europe and North America, the personal and professional connections between the scholars formed, in a sense, the real institution of Jewish scholarship.⁶ Exchange among scholars required constant communication, a lively correspondence, and permanent mobility. Numerous Jewish scholars accepted these requirements and joined the exchange. Networks of correspondence and travel embodied the academic organization and coordination of modern Jewish scholarship, mostly in the shape of the dominant German-speaking *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (the term has long and imperfectly been translated as "Science of Judaism". However, it refers to a unique German academic context and cannot be adequately translated; therefore I leave the original).⁷ Rabbinical seminaries, academic journals, learned societies, and also the personal networks of scholars like Schechter, formed the interfaces of these networks. Ultimately, his active participation in, and shaping of, Jewish intellectual networks, of *Wissenschaft* and correspondence, served to make Schechter one of the towering figures of Conservative Judaism and Jewish scholarship in America.

In addition to his published writings, Schechter's letters in the estates and personal collections of archives and libraries are the main sources for the reconstruction of his life, contacts, and legacy. In this essay I shall

5 This is the argument of Michael R. Cohen, *The Birth of Conservative Judaism: Solomon Schechter's Disciples and the Creation of an American Religious Movement* (New York, Columbia University Press: 2012). See also Jack Wertheimer, "JTS and the Conservative Movement", in Wertheimer, *Tradition Renewed*, vol. 2, 403–42; David Golinkin, "The Influence of the Seminary Professors on Halakha in the Conservative Movement: 1902–1968", in *ibid.*, 443–82.

6 On scholarly networks since the early modern era see esp. Ludwig Hammermayer, "Akademiebewegung und Wissenschaftsorganisation: Formen, Tendenzen und Wandel in Europa während der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts", in *Wissenschaftspolitik in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, ed. Erik Amburger et al. (Berlin: Camen, 1976), 1–84; Steven J. Harris, "Networks of Travel, Correspondence, and Exchange", in *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol. 3: *Early Modern Science*, ed. Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 341–62.

7 For an overview, also on this matter, see Kerstin von der Krone and Mirjam Thulin, "Wissenschaft in Context: A Research Essay on the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*", *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 58 (2013): 249–80.

take a closer look at Schechter's correspondence with European scholars of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Besides the relatively few editions of letters, Schechter and his contemporaries' unedited correspondence form the basis for this article. Since the list of Schechter's correspondents is long, I shall focus on his age cohort, with whom he was in close contact. Moreover, his previously unknown letters to David Kaufmann (1852–1899), purchased in 2013 by the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP) in Jerusalem, are reason to concentrate on Jewish scholars from Budapest, including Wilhelm Bacher (1850–1913) and the orientalist Ignác Goldziher (1850–1921), as well as scholars from Breslau, Warsaw, and Berlin, such as the historian and teacher Markus Brann (1849–1920), Samuel Poznański (1864–1921), and Abraham Berliner (1833–1915).⁸

My essay is divided into three parts. After introducing the existing biographies on Solomon Schechter, I offer a brief overview of his life and encounters in order to identify and retrace his correspondents in his American years between 1902 and 1915, and, in the case of Kaufmann, earlier. In the second part, I analyse his correspondence over that period with the third generation of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars from Budapest, Breslau, and Berlin. What were the main topics of their exchange? In what languages did Schechter communicate? How did Schechter manage his vast correspondence? What do his personal and institutional connections reveal about his role in *Wissenschaft*? In the final part, I focus on Schechter's reforms at the seminary in New York and his network-building in the new environment. I conclude by reconsidering Schechter's legacy in the light of his correspondence and based on his understanding of modern Jewish scholarship.

Building the network: Schechter in Europe

The accounts of Schechter's life written by his colleagues and students form a treasure trove for learning about his biography and personal relationships. A year after Schechter's death in 1915, the American Jewish scholar and religious leader Cyrus Adler (1863–1940) compiled the first concise biography, enriched with personal memories.⁹ He had first met

⁸ I am deeply grateful to the director of the CAHJP, Dr Yochai Ben-Ghedalia, for allowing me to study the Schechter–Kaufmann letters. Since an inventory of them is in preparation, they are not yet part of the David Kaufmann Collection (P 181) there.

⁹ Cyrus Adler, *Solomon Schechter: A Biographical Sketch* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1916).

Schechter in November 1890 in London, and had thus known him for some twenty-five years.¹⁰ In 1928, another colleague of Schechter's at the JTSA, Louis Ginzberg (1873–1953), wrote a short appreciation of the man who brought him to the seminary.¹¹ It is interesting, and probably not surprising due to the First World War, that no obituary on Schechter ever appeared in the *Breslau Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* (*Monatsschrift*), then the leading journal of modern Jewish scholarship. However, besides American colleagues, European scholars of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* such as Ismar Elbogen and Berta Badt-Strauss (1885–1970) wrote biographical sketches.¹² In 1938, Norman Bentwich (1883–1971) published the classic and often quoted biography of Schechter. Bentwich was Attorney General of Mandatory Palestine and professor for international relations at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, but also a brother-in-law of Schechter's colleague at the JTSA, Israel Friedlaender (1876–1920).¹³ In his book, Bentwich emphasized Schechter's idea of a “Catholic Judaism” and described him as being “naturally Zionist”.¹⁴ These two attributions have dominated the image of Schechter to this day.¹⁵ In 1947, Alexander Marx (1878–1953), whom Schechter had also hired for the JTSA, expanded our knowledge about Schechter's life and work with another biographical essay.¹⁶ In the 1960s, the leading historian of Conservative Judaism, Abraham Karp (1921–2003), composed a typescript (never published) that shows Schechter's original legacy for the Conservative movement.¹⁷ In 1965, a fairly popular biography by Azriel Eisenberg (1903–1985) was published.¹⁸

10 *Ibid.*, 5.

11 Louis Ginzberg, “Solomon Schechter”, in Ginzberg, *Students, Scholars and Saints* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1928), 241–51.

12 Ismar Elbogen, “Salomon Schechter”, *Ost und West* 16, no. 1 (1916): cols. 19–22; Berta Badt-Strauss, “Solomon Schechter: Forscher und Führer”, *Der Morgen* 9, no. 4 (1933): 274–6.

13 Norman Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter: A Biography* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1938), repr. five times to 1959.

14 *Ibid.*, 308; on “Catholic Judaism” see 281–308; on Zionism see 308–31; on Schechter's legacy see 332–49.

15 In 1966, Bentwich added a double biography to his Schechter hagiography: Norman Bentwich, *Claude Montefiore and his Tutor in Rabbinics: Founders of Liberal and Conservative Judaism* (Southampton University Press, 1966).

16 Alexander Marx, “Solomon Schechter”, in Marx, *Essays in Jewish Biography* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947), 229–50.

17 Karp, “Conservative Judaism”.

18 Azriel Louis Eisenberg, *Fill a Blank Page: A Biography of Solomon Schechter* (New York: United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education, 1965).

Over time, however, interest in Schechter declined. It was only in the 1990s, when the history of the JTSA became a research subject of its own in the context of its centennial in 1997, that Schechter was rediscovered.¹⁹ A year later, Jacob Sussman composed a lucid essay on Schechter's scholarship.²⁰ In 2003, David B. Starr submitted his biographical appreciation as a doctoral dissertation in New York. Starr emphasized Schechter's strong vision of a general Judaism and – following Bentwich – focused on Schechter's concept of a "Catholic Israel". As a central idea in Schechter's thinking, "Catholic Israel" advocated Jewish religious inclusiveness and openness towards the Reform and Orthodox camps.²¹ Starr's unpublished thesis paved the way for Michael Cohen's argument about Schechter's religious legacy. In that book, published in 2012, Cohen claims that Schechter himself did not create Conservative Judaism in America. Instead, Cohen argues that Conservative Judaism developed as a more or less clear-cut ideology only in the mid-1950s among Schechter's students and disciples.²²

The existing biographies hint in different ways at Schechter's connections and relationships, which are important in identifying his network and in evaluating his position in modern Jewish scholarship. Schechter's origins, however, gave no indication that he would become an avant-garde scholar and head of an important American Jewish educational institution. With a twin brother, he was born in the town of Focșani in Western Moldavia, in the then still young state of Romania. As with others of that time, Schechter's precise birth date is not known, but most biographies give 7 December 1847.²³ As is usual in Hasidic families, his father was his first teacher. Young Solomon was then sent to the *yeshivot* of Piatra and Lviv. In order to continue his studies, he apparently decided by himself to go to the imperial city of Vienna where he would stay until 1879. By that time or a little earlier, Schechter had married the daughter of a scholar from his home region. It was a marriage arranged by his father

19 Wertheimer, *Tradition Renewed*. See also Herman Dicker, *Of Learning and Libraries: The Seminary Library at One Hundred* (New York: JTSA, 1988).

20 Jacob Sussman, "Schechter the Scholar", *Jewish Studies* 38 (Hebrew; 1998): 213–30.

21 David B. Starr, "Catholic Israel: Solomon Schechter. A Study of Unity and Fragmentation in Modern Jewish History" (diss., Columbia University, 2003).

22 Cohen, *Birth of Conservative Judaism*.

23 On Schechter's earliest years, see Howard N. Lupovitch, "Searching for 'Catholic Israel' in Focșani: Solomon Schechter's Childhood in Romania", in *The Jews of Eastern Europe*, ed. Leonard Greenspoon, Ronald A. Simkins, and Brian Horowitz (Omaha, Neb: Creighton University Press, 2005), 313–28.

and turned out to be a rather meaningless relationship. Schechter did not talk about this first marriage, which remained childless.

In Vienna, Schechter enrolled in the university but also in the local Bet Midrash that had existed for a decade and was the predecessor of the rabbinical seminary that opened in 1893.²⁴ There Schechter was trained by Rabbi Adolf Jellinek (1821–1893), who had initiated the Bet Midrash.²⁵ Jellinek had served as a preacher in Leipzig and since the mid-1850s he had acted as a preacher and rabbi in Vienna. Schechter also studied with Rabbi Isaac Hirsch Weiss (1815–1905),²⁶ an expert in Halakhah and rabbinic thought, and Meir Friedman (1831–1908), who specialized in the study of the Aggadic and homiletic tradition as well as in *midrashim*.²⁷ These teachers made a lasting impression on the *yeshivah bachur* (“yeshivah fellow”, as Schechter later called himself) from the East and influenced Schechter’s research interests.²⁸ From them Schechter learnt for the first time a modern, systematic approach to Jewish history and culture. He was introduced to a contextual understanding of the Jewish tradition and to higher criticism. At the university, he attended lectures in philosophy and history. To support himself, Schechter taught and worked for his teachers. He instructed the children of Meir Friedman in Hebrew and created the catalogue of Jellinek’s Hebrew books.

Schechter made other long-lasting acquaintances in Vienna. He met the editor of the Hebrew periodical *Ha-Shahar* (The Dawn), Peretz Smolenskin (1842–1885), who promoted Jewish nationalism and the rebirth of the Hebrew language. Schechter came into close contact with the merchant and book collector Salomon Halberstam (1832–1900) from Bielsko (German, Teschen) in Silesia, as well as with Richard Gottheil (1862–1936),

24 To this day the only description of the Bet Midrash (in its German transliteration, Bet Ha-Midrash Wien) is Peter Landesmann, *Rabbiner aus Wien: Ihre Ausbildung, ihre religiösen und nationalen Konflikte* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1997), 35–122; Landesmann, “Die Geschichte der Ausbildung von Rabbinern in Wien bis zur Gründung der Israelitisch-Theologischen Lehranstalt (ITLA)”, in *Wien und die jüdische Erfahrung 1900–1938: Akkulturation–Antisemitismus–Zionismus*, ed. Frank Stern und Barbara Eichinger (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009), 143–53.

25 On Jellinek’s influence see Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 198. On the Jellinek family see Klaus Kempster, *Die Jellineks 1820–1955: Eine familienbiographische Studie zum deutschjüdischen Bildungsbürgertum* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998).

26 Isaac Hirsch Weiss, *Meine Lehrjahre: Aus den hebräischen Erinnerungen des Verfassers*, Ger. trans. Moritz Zobel (Berlin: Schocken, 1936).

27 On Friedman see Solomon Schechter, “Meir Friedman”, *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 June 1901, p. 17.

28 Schechter to Kaufmann, 16 April 1897, in CAHJP Jerusalem, P 181 David Kaufmann Collection, Supplementary material.

a British-American scholar of Semitics who became his student in the Berlin years, and later professor of rabbinic literature in New York. Another important acquaintance was Pinkus Friedrich Frankl (1848–1887) who served as secretary of the Viennese Israelite Alliance.²⁹ Frankl became Schechter's first academic connection to the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau because he served as an editor of *Monatsschrift*, along with the great historian Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891), who taught at the seminary. In 1876, Frankl succeeded the eminent reform rabbi Abraham Geiger (1810–1874) in the rabbinate in Berlin. Schechter followed him and relocated to Berlin. Shortly before his departure, Isaac Hirsch Weiss and Pinkus Frankl ordained him.³⁰ However, Schechter always avoided serving as a rabbi.³¹

Between 1879 and 1882, Schechter studied in Berlin, first at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums (Academy for the Wissenschaft des Judentums). He also enrolled in the University of Berlin and attended lectures in philosophy and history by the historian Gustav Droysen (1838–1908) and by Moritz Lazarus (1824–1903), the creator of national and comparative psychology (*Völkerpsychologie*). Although Schechter later compiled a biography of Leopold Zunz (1794–1886), it seems that during his Berlin years he never studied with the doyen of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.³² Instead, he was close to the bibliographer Moritz Steinschneider (1816–1907), an associate and close friend of Zunz. In contrast to the somewhat moderately reform-oriented, East European-shaped, and thus mostly Hebrew-speaking Beit Midrash environment he had experienced in the Habsburg metropolis, Schechter encountered in Berlin the outward-oriented, German-speaking, fairly liberal, and tradition-criticizing elite of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, who set the tone for Jewish academic research at that time. One can imagine the electrifying intellectual worlds that opened up to Schechter under the influence of the outstanding scholars in Vienna and Berlin.

29 On the Israelite Alliance (Israelitische Allianz zu Wien, IAzW) see Björn Siegel, *Österreichisches Judentum zwischen Ost und West: Die Israelitische Allianz zu Wien 1938–1873* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2010).

30 Schechter to Joseph Blumenthal, 5 Nov. 1899, in New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, Department of Special Collections, Solomon Schechter Papers, Arc. 101, Box 2, Folder 27; Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter*, 41.

31 Starr, "Catholic Israel", 139–40. This is unlike other rabbis at the JTSA; see Golinkin, "Influence of the Seminary Professors".

32 On the relationship between Schechter and Zunz, based mainly on Schechter's essay on Zunz, see Starr, "Catholic Israel", 140–50. On Zunz see Ismar Schorsch, *Leopold Zunz: Creativity in Adversity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

In Berlin, Schechter had another momentous encounter that would cause another relocation. At the Hochschule he met Claude Montefiore (1858–1838), the great-nephew of Sir Moses Montefiore (1784–1885). Schechter and Montefiore began to rely on each other. While Schechter instructed Montefiore in Jewish knowledge, Montefiore became Schechter’s lifelong friend and benefactor.³³ He may also have been an indirect informant about the JTSA in New York given that, during the 1880s, he corresponded in Italian with Sabato Morais (1823–1897), rabbi of the “Mikveh Israel” congregation in Philadelphia and the principal of the then Sephardi dominated seminary.³⁴ Apparently, Schechter was still in need of additional sources of income. For traditionally trained scholars from Eastern Europe like him, teaching was often not only a way to support themselves and their families, but also to become independent and build enduring friendships.³⁵

When his family called Montefiore back to London in 1882 or 1883, Schechter followed him as his personal tutor. Moreover, Schechter was excited to study the Hebrew manuscript collections at the British Museum in London and the Bodleian Library in Oxford. It was at that time that he began work on his critical edition of *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan*.³⁶ In the company of Montefiore, Schechter became acquainted with the Jewish high society and the English Victorian culture. He met Israel Abrahams (1958–1925),³⁷ along with Montefiore the co-founder and editor of the *Jewish Quarterly Review* (JQR). At the British Museum, Schechter encountered Emanuel Deutsch (1829–1873), who became the model for a character in George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* (1876). Moreover, Schechter became acquainted with Michael Friedlaender (1833–1910), the principal of the Jews’ College in London, and whose son-in-law, the Sephardic Chief Rabbi (Hakham) Moses Gaster (1856–1939); with the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of the United

33 See esp. Bentwich, *Claude Montefiore and his Tutor*; Joshua B. Stein, ed., *Lieber Freund: The Letters of Claude Goldsmid Montefiore to Solomon Schechter, 1885–1902* (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1988); Daniel R. Langton, *Claude Montefiore: His Life and Thought* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2002).

34 Kiron, “Heralds of Duty”. On Morais see the letters at the Herbert D. Katz Center, Arc. Ms. 8, Sabato Morais Papers, esp. Box 5, FF 1: Correspondence 1889.

35 On the lessons East European students gave in Breslau, see Mirjam Thulin, *Kaufmanns Nachrichtendienst: Ein jüdisches Gelehrtennetzwerk im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2012), 42.

36 Solomon Schechter, *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* (Hebrew; Vienna: Mordechai Knapel-macher, 1887; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1979), on which see Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 129–31.

37 On Schechter and Abrahams see Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 235–42.

Kingdom, Herman Adler (1839–1911), and whose half-brother Elkan Nathan Adler (1861–1946); the folklorist Joseph Jacobs (1854–1916); the journalist Asher Isaac Myers (1848–1902), who served as the editor of the *London Jewish Chronicle*; and with Israel Zangwill (1864–1926), the writer and editor of the *Orthodox Jewish Standard*. In London, Schechter met again Rabbi Simeon Singer (1846–1906) with whom he had studied at the Beit Midrash in Vienna. These connections to Jewish communal and cultural life and his contacts with editors and journalists gave Schechter the opportunity to write for several Anglo-Jewish journals. He also gave lectures at the Jews' College and the Jews' College and Literary Debating Society.

Appropriately, Schechter met his second wife, Mathilde Roth Schechter (1857–1924), in the library of Jews' College. In 1885, Mathilde Roth was visiting Michael Friedlaender's family in London, and the rabbinical seminary was on her route.³⁸ However, when Solomon and Mathilde discovered their mutual affection, he was still married. Schechter filed for divorce and married Mathilde Roth in June 1887 in London. Heinrich Graetz, Moses Gaster, and other noted scholars and rabbis were present at the wedding. In the following years in England, the Schechters became known for their hospitality, and this also continued in their later homes. Two of their children were born in England.

In 1890, at the age of forty-two, Schechter left London for Cambridge to become lecturer and reader in talmudics at the university. Separated from the grand London Jewish society, Schechter, as can be seen in his letters, felt isolated and experienced the oddities of an old English university. For example, he received his own key to the Hebrew section of the Cambridge library only in 1897; for seven years, the University librarian Francis Jenkinson had to let him in to his place of work.³⁹ Nevertheless, the time in Cambridge became the period of his greatest scholarly activity. When he began to explore the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic manuscripts of the Cairo Genizah in the late 1890s, it became his academic breakthrough.⁴⁰ In December 1896, Schechter's friend and

38 See Mel Scult, "The Baale Boste Reconsidered: The Life of Mathilde Roth Schechter", *Modern Judaism* 7, no. 1 (1987): 3.

39 See Stefan C. Reif, "Jenkinson and Schechter at Cambridge: An Expanded and Updated Assessment", *Jewish Historical Studies: Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 32 (1990–92): 270–316; Reif, *A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 54–9; Starr, "Catholic Israel", 163, 165–6.

40 On the Genizah see Reif, *Jewish Archive from Old Cairo*; Adina Hoffmann and Peter Cole, *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Genizah* (New York: Nextbook, 2011;

benefactor, Charles Taylor (1840–1908), the master of St. John’s College, Cambridge, financed his journey to Cairo.⁴¹ Of the more than 250,000 Genizah manuscripts, Schechter sent about 150,000 back to Cambridge where he and Taylor later presented them to the University Library. Although by this time the European scholarly public was aware of the old synagogue in Cairo, it was Schechter who was most keenly convinced of the Genizah’s unique historical significance and who demonstrated that significance by making numerous manuscripts from the Genizah, as well as the collection as a whole, widely known through his research and publications.⁴² Schechter published several articles in which he presented material from the Genizah.⁴³ The manuscript research also had an impact on his network. It produced new friendships, alliances, and cooperations, and it accelerated Schechter’s correspondence with other scholars. In his letters, Schechter tried to convince orientalist and Arabic philologists among the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars to come to Cambridge and to help him identify Judeo-Arabic fragments.⁴⁴

Invitations for talks and lectures, including from the United States, quickly followed. In 1895, Schechter travelled to Philadelphia and Baltimore and delivered what later became the Gratz College lecture series “Some Aspects of Rabbinical Theology”.⁴⁵ During his journey, he met Sabato Morais in Philadelphia, who became his predecessor as first principal of the JTS in New York.⁴⁶

Mark Glickman, *Sacred Treasure, the Cairo Genizah: The Amazing Discoveries of Forgotten Jewish History in an Egyptian Synagogue Attic* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2011).

41 Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 208–11.

42 Schechter to Wilhelm Bacher, Cambridge, 14 Jan. 1902, in Alexander Scheiber, “Letters of Solomon Schechter to William Bacher and Ignace Goldziher”, *Hebrew Union College Annual* 33 (1962): 266. See also Ben Outhwaite’s contribution in this issue.

43 E.g., Schechter published first a series of articles in *JQR* about the writings of Saadia Gaon, later compiled in his *Saadyana: Geniza Fragments of Writings of R. Saadya Gaon and Others* (Cambridge: Deighton and Bell, 1903). See Samuel Poznański, *Schechter’s Saadyana* (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1904), with annotations, corrections, and additional references.

44 Bacher, e.g., translated one document; Schechter to Bacher, 14 Jan. and 4 March 1902, in Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*, 266–8; Bacher to Schechter, 19 Jan. 1902, in New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, Department of Special Collections, Solomon Schechter Papers, Arc. 101, Box 2, Folder 1. Schechter expressed his gratitude to Bacher in “Saadyana”, *JQR* 14, no. 3 (April 1902): 504–05.

45 Solomon Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (London: A. and C. Black, 1901, repr. New York 1909 and 1936). He had given the same lectures at University College London in 1894. On the lectures see Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 184–90.

46 Schechter to Blumenthal, 5 Nov. 1899, in New York, Jewish Theological Seminary

After Morais's death two years later, not only the position of the principal but also the very future of the seminary was the subject of discussion on the JTS board.⁴⁷ Among others, this was the reason why the seminary gained a new legal status in 1901. Furthermore, the philanthropist Jacob Schiff (1847–1920) and his friends decided to move the location from Lexington Avenue and 58th Street, opposite Bloomingdales, to a new site in Morningside Heights. In parallel to this development, it was evident early on that many board members were in favour of Schechter as Morais's successor. Schiff in particular argued for Schechter's appointment. The members of the board of trustees and the JTS Association, among them Cyrus Adler, Solomon Solis-Cohen (1858–1948), Alexander Kohut (1842–1894), Mayer Sulzberger (1843–1923), and Joseph Blumenthal started negotiations with Schechter.⁴⁸ At the end of 1899, the board offered Schechter the position of President of the Faculty at the Jewish Theological Seminary and Morais Professor of Theology.⁴⁹ During the negotiations, Schechter became increasingly inclined to move to America, not least because his American admirers offered him a substantial salary. Financial matters such as the education costs for his children, but also the fact that he felt isolated in Cambridge, may have bolstered his decision for New York. Robert Liberles explored the reasons why Cambridge University did not make Schechter a better offer but, rather, let him go.⁵⁰ Following Liberles, one could argue that an additional motivation for Schechter's departure was the fact that England never developed a strong *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement as Schechter (and others) had hoped.⁵¹ Moreover, the religious landscape was

Library, Department of Special Collections, Solomon Schechter Papers, Arc. 101, Box 2, Folder 27.

47 On the history of the institution see Wertheimer, *Tradition Renewed*; Panitz, *Jewish Theological Seminary*; Kiron, "Heralds of Duty".

48 Blumenthal's dates could not reliably be established. On the negotiations with Schechter see Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter*, 164–231; Karp, "Conservative Judaism", 32–44; Robert Liberles, "'Wissenschaft des Judentums' Comes to America: A Chapter in Migration History, 1890–1935", in Wertheimer, *Tradition Renewed*, vol. 1, 330–33; on Sulzberger's role see David G. Dalin, "Patron Par Excellence: Mayer Sulzberger and the Early Seminary", in *ibid.*, 655–76.

49 Blumenthal to Schechter, 19 Oct. 1899, in New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, Department of Special Collections, Solomon Schechter Papers, Arc. 101, Box 2, Folder 27.

50 Liberles, "'Wissenschaft des Judentums' Comes to America", 338–9; David B. Starr, "The Importance of Being Frank: Solomon Schechter's Departure from Cambridge", *JQR* 94, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 16–18, follows and underlines Liberles's argument.

51 See Daniel Langton's recent essay on Jewish studies in England, "Wandering Jews in England's Green and Pleasant Land: *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in an Anglo-Jewish

not as various and lively as in continental Europe and North America. In the spring of 1902, Schechter, by then 55 years old, and his family moved to New York where he should remain until his death in 1915.⁵²

Friends and colleagues were certain that besides scholarly achievements, writings, and discoveries, the most important and powerful aspect of Schechter the scholar and the man was the “core of his being,” meaning his “personality”, as Ismar Elbogen put it in 1916.⁵³ Like many others, Elbogen emphasized Schechter’s deep faith in the unique meaning and continuous power of Judaism through revelation. Such concepts were close to the ideas and teachings of the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau, and “contravened American Reform Judaism especially”.⁵⁴ In contrast to the widespread praise for Schechter’s academic skills, Ginzberg stated that Schechter “didn’t have the patience necessary for a scholar. He had an intuition but not the essential knowledge . . . [and] in our time one must have both”.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Schechter’s appearance usually made an unforgettable impression. For example, when he visited Budapest in 1913, Goldziher described him as the “greatest Jewish scholar of the time.” To Goldziher, he was a figure who embodied “much erudition” in a “greasy box”; he found Schechter’s appearance “poor”, and noted “stains on his clothing”.⁵⁶ A similarly strong impression can be found in an article of 1933 by Badt-Strauss, who observed that “[w]ho ever saw this man, will never forget him: the grey brush of his woolly hair, the wide-brimmed hat, the flying coat, the rugged countenance, and the steely blue of his fervid eyes.”⁵⁷

Wissenschaft and correspondence

Besides the biographies, Schechter’s correspondence is crucial for retracing his scholarly network. It gives a vivid impression of his personality, his passions, and emotions.⁵⁸ The inventory in the Solomon

Context”, in *Wissenschaft des Judentums in Europe: Comparative and Transnational Perspectives*, ed. Christian Wiese and Mirjam Thulin (Berlin: de Gruyter, forthcoming).

52 See Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 243–89.

53 Elbogen, “Salomon Schechter”, col. 20.

54 *Ibid.*, col. 22.

55 Louis Ginzberg quoted in Shuly Rubin Schwartz, “The Schechter Faculty: The Seminary and Wissenschaft des Judentums in America”, in Wertheimer, *Tradition Renewed*, vol. 1, 298.

56 Ignác Goldziher, diary entry, 20 Aug. 1920, in Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, ed. Alexander Scheiber (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 279.

57 Badt-Strauss, “Solomon Schechter”, 274.

58 On the centrality of Schechter’s correspondence see Starr, “Importance of Being Frank”, 15.

Schechter Collection at the archive of the JTSA in New York consists of 399 individuals and is divided into seven boxes. Additional correspondents in the Schechter Collection are sorted under “organizational correspondence”.⁵⁹ Moreover, as noted earlier, there are other letters in personal collections and in various archives. Of this entire body of correspondence preserved in several places, only a small part has been edited.⁶⁰

The records of Schechter’s contacts with European *Wissenschaft* scholars during his American years between 1902 and 1915 show an uneven picture. While there are many prominent writers on the list, none of the correspondence is preserved completely, as is also the case for Schechter’s correspondence with Claude Montefiore, even though the period 1885–1902 was of great relevance in their lives.⁶¹

To this day previously unknown letters turn up in archives: as noted earlier, the CAHJP recently purchased a bundle of letters written by David Kaufmann from Budapest (yet Bentwich did not refer to Schechter’s friendship with Kaufmann).⁶² Along with Kaufmann’s letters and postcards in the Schechter Collection at the JTSA, we have now a more or less complete correspondence between the two scholars in the 1880s and 90s. The correspondence ended in 1899 when Kaufmann suddenly died, and thus falls entirely within the European period of Schechter’s life. Their exchange contains broad discussions and explanations of Hebrew and Arabic words and phrases. They also deal with research questions, mainly from Kaufmann’s side, asking Schechter about the Gomperz and Wertheimer families, and when preparing the first edition of Glikl (Glückel) of Hameln’s memoirs.⁶³ Moreover, Kaufmann’s younger

59 New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, Department of Special Collections, Solomon Schechter Papers, Arc. 101, Boxes 1–9.

60 Meir Ben-Horin, e.g., edited 91 letters of Schechter to Sulzberger in the 1960s. Sulzberger’s answers are kept in *ibid.*, Arc. 101; Meir Ben-Horin, “Solomon Schechter to Judge Mayer Sulzberger: Part I. Letters from the Pre-Seminary Period (1895–1901)”, *Jewish Social Studies* 25, no. 4 (1963): 249–86; Ben-Horin, “Solomon Schechter to Judge Mayer Sulzberger: Letters from the Seminary Period (1902–1915)”, 27, no. 2 (1965): 75–102; Ben-Horin, “Solomon Schechter to Judge Mayer Sulzberger: Supplement to Parts I and II (Notes, Letters, and Corrections)”, 30, no. 4 (1968): 262–71.

61 Neither their unedited nor edited correspondence is complete; see Stein, *Lieber Freund*.

62 CAHJP Jerusalem, P 181 David Kaufmann Collection, Supplementary material.

63 David Kaufmann, *Samson Wertheimer, der Oberhofferactor und Landesrabbiner (1658–1724) und seine Kinder* (Vienna: F. Beck, 1888); Kaufmann and Max Freudenthal, *Die Familie Gomperz* (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1907; David Kaufmann, ed., *Die Memoiren der Glückel von Hameln 1645–1719* (Yiddish; Pressburg: Alkalai, 1896).

brother, Ignatz, translated works by Schechter into German.⁶⁴ For his part, Schechter sought help with his biography of Zunz⁶⁵ and offered to arrange reviews of *Wissenschaft* books in English journals. When Schechter travelled to Cairo, the analysis of the Genizah manuscripts became a prevailing topic in his exchange with Kaufmann, who on his side intended to purchase them.⁶⁶ In this context, Schechter also told Kaufmann in 1898 about his health problems caused by the “Genizah dirt” (*Genizaschmutz*), particularly eye problems.⁶⁷

The Schechter–Kaufmann correspondence also documents judgments about colleagues, vacancies in Jewish educational institutions and universities, the recruitment policy in *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, establishing collaborations, and, at an institutional level, constitutes an exchange between the rabbinical seminary in Budapest and the universities in London and Cambridge. The last became particularly important when Schechter applied for the position of lecturer in rabbinic literature at Cambridge University after the death of Professor Solomon Marcus (Shlomo ben Me’ir) Schiller-Szinessy (1820–1890). In order to support his candidacy, Kaufmann and Bacher from the seminary in Budapest wrote letters of recommendation.⁶⁸

Wilhelm Bacher himself also became a lifelong friend of Schechter.⁶⁹ Alexander Scheiber edited seventeen letters from Schechter to Bacher

64 E.g. Salomon Schechter, *Rabbi Eliah Wilna Gaon*, trans. Ignatz Kaufmann (Vienna: Österreichische Wochenschrift, 1891). Ignatz also translated smaller pieces, published in *Österreichische Wochenschrift* (Vienna) and *Jüdisches Literaturblatt* (Magdeburg).

65 [Solomon] Schechter, “Leopold Zunz”, in Schechter, *Studies in Judaism III* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1924), 84–142, 279–91.

66 On the Genizah fragments Kaufmann purchased see Alexander Scheiber, “The Kaufmann-Genizah: Its Importance for the World of Scholarship”, in *Jubilee Volume of the Oriental Collection 1951–1976: Papers presented on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Oriental Collection of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*, ed. Éva Apor (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtár, 1978), 175–88.

67 Schechter to Kaufmann, 17 Feb. 1898, in CAHJP Jerusalem, P 181 David Kaufmann Collection, Supplementary material.

68 Schechter to Bacher, 10 April and 6 July 1890, in Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*, 260–61; the letter of recommendation is Bacher to University of Cambridge, 14 April 1890, in New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, Department of Special Collections, Solomon Schechter Papers, Arc. 101, Box 2, Folder 1. For Kaufmann’s recommendation see Schechter to Kaufmann, 10 April and 5 July 1890, both in CAHJP Jerusalem, P 181 David Kaufmann Collection, Supplementary material.

69 Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter*, 150, 236; Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*, 255; Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 168.

covering the period 1888–1911.⁷⁰ There are four more letters from Bacher to Schechter, among them Bacher’s letter in support of Schechter’s application to Cambridge and a congratulatory letter on Schechter’s new position as “leader and teacher of a Rabbinical educational institution” in New York.⁷¹ As with Kaufmann, Schechter and Bacher shared research interests, mainly in the field of midrashic and rabbinic literature. When Schechter worked on his *Midrash ha-gadol*, a book that was published in Cambridge in 1902, the year he moved to New York, he needed all the dictionaries and comprehensive reference books available at the time.⁷² Bacher was a renowned authority and his books were standard works even then (as they still are until today).⁷³ Schechter and Bacher also helped each other by correcting and commentating on each other’s works before publication. Once the books had appeared, they quoted each other, and organized book reviews for each other’s works in local or national academic journals. Schechter generally supported Bacher and Kaufmann with publishing articles in English academic journals and magazines.⁷⁴ After Kaufmann’s death, Bacher assisted Schechter in deciphering Arabic manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah. Schechter made copies of the fragments and manuscripts and had them sent to Bacher in Budapest for identification.⁷⁵ Besides Schechter’s and Bacher’s personal connection, their relationship was also valuable for institutional matters, for example when students wanted to change from one seminary to another.⁷⁶

70 Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*. Scheiber’s editing included improving Schechter’s German and Hebrew, but only once does he mention Schechter’s grammatical mistakes, at 264 n. 27.

71 Bacher’s letter of recommendation to Cambridge University, 14 April 1890 (probably copy made for Schechter), in New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, Department of Special Collections, Solomon Schechter Papers, Arc. 101, Box 2, Folder 1; Bacher’s congratulations in Bacher to Schechter, 19 Jan. 1902, *ibid*.

72 Solomon Schechter, *Midrash ha-gadol al hamishah Humshe Torah: Sefer Bereshit* (Hebrew; Cambridge: Bet Midrash ha-Chohmot, 1902).

73 Wilhelm Bacher, *Die Agada der babylonischen Amoräer: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Agada und zur Einleitung in den babylonischen Talmud* (Strasbourg: K. J. Trübner, 1878); Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, 2 vols. (Strasbourg: K. J. Trübner, 1884, 1890); Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer*, 3 vols. (Strasbourg: K. J. Trübner, 1892–99); Bacher, *Die exegetische Terminologie der jüdischen Traditionsliteratur*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1899, 1905).

74 E.g. on the publication of Bacher’s *The Sabbatarians of Hungary*, in *JQR* 2, no. 4 (1890), 465–93. See also Schechter to Bacher, 31 Oct. 1889, in Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*, 260.

75 Schechter to Bacher, 14 Jan. 1902, in Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*, 266–7.

76 E.g. in 1903, the rabbinical student Julius Gubner wanted to change from the semin-

The correspondence between Schechter and the famous Goldziher covers only the years between 1904 and 1908.⁷⁷ It is certain, however, that Goldziher knew about Schechter's Genizah findings from the very beginning, not least because Goldziher, too, travelled to Egypt and the Middle East.⁷⁸ Schechter also turned to Goldziher to decipher Arabic manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah. In 1904, Schechter eventually invited him to New York to speak on Jewish philosophy. The travel grant was supposed to be paid by the JTSA and Gratz College in Philadelphia, and Goldziher was to deliver his lectures in German.⁷⁹ However, he never undertook the journey.

In fact, invitations were also a way to build, renew, and deepen personal and professional relationships. It was not only Schechter who tried to bring famous scholars to his institutions. Schechter himself also received numerous invitations from his *Wissenschaft* colleagues and friends. In a letter of October 1910, Ismar Elbogen, then a lecturer at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, Schechter's alma mater, invited him to deliver a lecture series in Berlin. Elbogen tried to tempt him by noting that he should not fear Abraham Geiger's spirit in the Hochschule. By then, his spirit existed only in an academic sense, Elbogen asserted, and not with regard to the religious convictions of the institution, the teachers, and students.⁸⁰

Particularly in the American years, recommendations, questions about students, or lectures connected Schechter with the rabbinical seminary in Budapest and with the Hochschule in Berlin. When he was looking for new teaching staff for the JTSA, other individuals and institutions got involved. For example, Abraham Berliner, a lecturer at the Rabbiner-Seminar für das Orthodoxe Judentum (Rabbinical Seminary for Orthodox

ary in Budapest to the JTSA in New York; Schechter to Bacher, 13 Dec. 1903, in *ibid.*, 269.

77 Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*; Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, *passim*. Again, Bentwich does not refer to this exchange.

78 Goldziher's correspondence with Schechter is preserved in Budapest, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Oriental Collection, Goldziher Collection, Box 37.

79 Schechter to Goldziher, 21 Nov. 1904 and 21 June 1905, in Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*, 271–2 and 274–5. See also Goldziher's diary entry, 4 April 1905, in Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, 242.

80 Ismar Elbogen to Schechter, 5 Sept. 1910: "Den Geist Geigers fürchten Sie ja nicht, er herrscht auch nur in der wissenschaftlichen Richtung bei uns; in dem Gedenkbuch werden Sie die auffallende Tatsache konstatieren, dass alle Arbeiten an dem Kapitel: wissenschaftl. Leistungen nicht auf Geigers religiösem Standpunkt stehen. Aber einen guten Kopf und 'Kuck' hatte er!", New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, Department of Special Collections, Solomon Schechter Papers, Arc. 101, Box 2, Folder 67.

Judaism) in Berlin, who was acquainted with the Schechters, asked about the vacancies at the JTSA in a letter of October 1902. Berliner noted that he had been informed about the open positions during a vacation in Königstein where he met Philipp Schiff. In the same letter, he asked about the negotiations with Samuel Krauss (1866–1948) and Samuel Poznański (1864–1921) who, according to Schiff, had been invited to teach at the JTSA.⁸¹ At the same time, Markus Brann from the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau asked Schechter about the negotiations with Krauss and Poznański. Since both candidates hesitated, Brann pointed Schechter to another promising candidate, David Simonsen (1853–1932) from Copenhagen, a student of the Breslau seminary who later became the chief rabbi of Denmark.⁸² Poznański was also a student of the Hochschule in Berlin. Being almost twenty years younger than Schechter, he was a later student of Moritz Steinschneider's, who recommended him to Schechter. Although Poznański and Schechter did not know each other in person, a lively Hebrew correspondence evolved between them shortly before Schechter's departure for New York in January 1902, and it lasted until 1914.⁸³ Poznański finally decided to stay in his hometown of Warsaw to fulfill his obligations as the rabbi of the Great Synagogue. Krauss, the other candidate on Schechter's list and a student of Hungarian rabbinical seminary, also chose to stay in Budapest. In 1906, he became the principal of the rabbinical seminary in Vienna.

In general, Schechter loved to exchange views about *divrei torah vehokhmah* (Torah knowledge and wisdom, that is, *Wissenschaft des Judentums* matters), but he also enjoyed *lashon ha-ra'ah* (gossiping).⁸⁴ He disliked most of his English colleagues, particularly his predecessor Schiller-Szinessy, but also the Hebrew librarian at Oxford University, Adolph Neubauer (1832–1907). In contrast, he admired Zunz and Steinschneider as well as scholars of his generation such as the Hungarians. For example,

81 Abraham Berliner to Schechter, 8 Oct. 1902: "Ist Ihr Seminar bereits eröffnet? Wie mir Krauss in Budapest gesagt, sei er oder Poznanski für dasselbe in Aussicht genommen", *ibid.*, Folder 15.

82 Markus Brann to Schechter, 25 Sept. 1902, *ibid.*, Folder 29.

83 Samuel Poznański to Moritz Steinschneider, 21 July 1902, in New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, Department of Special Collections, Moritz Steinschneider Collection, Arc. 108, 75/Reel 10/Corr. Luncz–P. For the Schechter and Poznański letters see *Iggrot Shneur Zalman Schechter ve Shmuel Poznański*, ed. Abraham Yaari (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Bamberger and Wahrman, 1943).

84 Schechter to Brann, 5 Sept. 1913 (postmark date), in Hebrew, in NLI Jerusalem, Arc. Ms. Var. 308/ 1112 Markus Brann Collection. On Schechter's correspondence see also Starr, "Catholic Isarel", 237.

Schechter had Goldziher's photograph in his office, together with other "great men of Israel", as he stated in a letter to Goldziher.⁸⁵

Schechter conducted his correspondence mainly in English, German, and Hebrew. Although he was perceived as a polyglot, he was not a perfectionist and had only limited command of some of these languages.⁸⁶ This becomes clear when we examine his German letters. Until the mid-twentieth century, German was widely accepted as an international language and used in general as well as in Jewish academia. It was possible then to submit letters of recommendation in German to all academic institutions, even in England.⁸⁷ However, from his letters it becomes clear that German was not Schechter's strongest language. This might be why his wife Mathilde took over much of his correspondence with the European *Wissenschaft* scholars. Not only did she know the scholars and their wives personally, but her German and her English were also much better than her husband's. She was a trained teacher and translated Heinrich Heine into English and Zangwill into German. When Schechter sent German letters, it is almost certain that Mathilde had composed and sometimes even written them.⁸⁸ A letter from Schechter to Kaufmann in 1897 documents Schechter's awareness of his language style: "I find my letter is a mixture of bad German and miserable English. I apologize. . . . I would write a new letter; but it would probably turn out to be even more stupid. Excuse [*sic*]. You should not count on an Ex-Bachur."⁸⁹ Schechter also apologized for his handwriting in his letters.⁹⁰ Moreover, Mathilde

85 Schechter to Goldziher, 21 Nov. 1904, in Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*, 271.

86 On 20 Aug. 1913 Goldziher describes Schechter's capability as "poor speech in every language"; Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, 279.

87 See Schechter's instructions for the recommendations in Schechter to Bacher, 10 April 1890 and 28 Aug. 1892, in Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*, 260–63; Schechter to Kaufmann, 10 April 1890, in CAHJP Jerusalem, P 181 David Kaufmann Collection, Supplementary material.

88 Scult and Jonathan Sarna indicate that Mathilde was advancing and editing her husband's letters, speeches, and other works; Scult, "Baale Boste Reconsidered", 1 and 10; Jonathan D. Sarna, *JPS: The Americanization of Jewish Culture, 1888–1988. A Centennial History of the Jewish Publication Society* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 54.

89 Schechter to Kaufmann, 16 April 1897: "Ich finde, dass mein Brief ein Gemisch von . . . schlechtem Deutsch und miserable English ist. Ich bitte Sie um Entschuldigung. [Ich] würde . . . einen neuen Brief schreiben; der wahrscheinlich noch dümmer wäre. Excuse. Mit einem Ex-'Bachur' rechnet man nicht viel", in CAHJP Jerusalem, P 181 David Kaufmann Collection, Supplementary material.

90 See e.g. the P.S. in Schechter to Goldziher, 21 Nov. 1904, in Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*, 272.

Schechter's handwriting was neater. She made fun of her occupation as her husband's assistant, finishing one letter: "Best regards! The secretary, Mathilde S. Schechter".⁹¹ When Schechter settled in America, he wrote his letters mostly in English and Hebrew with German insertions.⁹² In his Hebrew letters, Schechter imitated a midrashic and rabbinic style, inserting biblical quotations and phrases, as was usual at that time for scholars in this field.

Solomon Schechter's connections and networks also become visible when we look at the scholars mentioned in the letters. Apart from his contacts with scholars of the Jewish institutions of higher learning in Budapest and Berlin, there is a strong orientation towards the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau. The vast – and largely neglected – correspondence of Heinrich Graetz's successor at the seminary, Markus Brann, shows that the exchange between the seminaries was frequent.⁹³ Schechter and Brann also discussed the mutual recognition of institutions' curricula and students applying to the respective other institution.⁹⁴ After Schechter became the head of the seminary in New York, the exchange with the seminaries in Budapest, Berlin, Vienna, and London became more regular and steady.

In addition to professional closeness, Brann indicated in a letter to Schechter that there was a circle of Breslau "local friends".⁹⁵ The reason for the strong ties was that Mathilde had grown up in Breslau and her older brother Siegismund Simon Roth (1856–1910) still lived there.⁹⁶ Consequently, Breslau was always on the travel schedule, even after the Schechters had moved to America.

Frequent travels to Europe became another essential instrument to build, maintain, and widen Schechter's networks. From his letters and other correspondence, we know about his private and professional

91 Schechter to Kaufmann, 10 Feb. 1890: "Besten Gruß! Der Sekretär, Mathilde S. Schechter", in CAHJP Jerusalem, P 181 David Kaufmann Collection, Supplementary material.

92 See his edited letters to Goldziher in Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*, 271–5.

93 Again, Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter*, does not refer to Schechter's relationship with Brann.

94 E.g. see Brann to Schechter, 7 Nov. 1915, in NLI Jerusalem, Arc. Ms. Var. 308/ 1112 Markus Brann Collection.

95 Ibid. See also Mathilde Schechter to Brann, [n.d., probably before July 1914], *ibid.*; Brann to Schechter, 1 July 1912, *ibid.*

96 Scult, "Baale Boste Reconsidered", 2.

journeys. Unlike other scholars, who preferred to go to the Bohemian and Moravian spas, the private destinations of the Schechter family were, besides Breslau, Bad Kissingen (summer 1886),⁹⁷ Paris (spring 1897),⁹⁸ Budapest (August 1908),⁹⁹ South Africa (1910–11),¹⁰⁰ Bad Nauheim and Frankfurt am Main just before the First World War (July 1914),¹⁰¹ where he met the librarian and bibliographer Aron Freimann (1871–1948).¹⁰² Like his contemporaries, Schechter travelled in order to explore libraries and private collections, and to discuss ideas, texts, planned publications, and joint projects. In 1893, he visited the oriental collections in Italian libraries; in 1895 he went to America to deliver his lecture series;¹⁰³ in 1896 he went to Cairo and Jerusalem; and for the late summer of 1899 the Schechters planned to go to Budapest to meet Kaufmann and his wife, Irma.¹⁰⁴ The Schechter couple undertook the journey again in August 1913,¹⁰⁵ followed by a stopover in Breslau in September.¹⁰⁶ Having just arrived overseas, Schechter travelled back to England and continental Europe in the summer of 1903 in search of a new faculty; and eight years later, in March and April 1911, the Schechter family visited Berlin, Munich, and Italy.¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, Elbogen noted that there was several times a “season of the Americans” in Berlin.¹⁰⁸

97 Starr, “Catholic Israel,” 110.

98 After his journey to Egypt, Solomon met Mathilde in Paris, where they spent two weeks; Scult, “Baale Boste Reconsidered”, 9.

99 Schechter went to Budapest to visit Bacher and Goldziher; Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*, 257.

100 Schechter took a sabbatical and visited his first daughter, Ruth; Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 325.

101 Schechter to Brann, 17 July 1914, in NLI Jerusalem, Arc. Ms. Var. 308/ 1112 Markus Brann Collection; Mathilde Schechter to Brann, [n.d., probably before July 1914], *ibid.*

102 Berliner to Schechter, 8 Oct. 1902, in New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, Department of Special Collections, Solomon Schechter Papers, Arc. 101, Box 2, Folder 15.

103 Stein, *Lieber Freund*, xi.

104 Kaufmann to Schechter, 17 June 1899, in New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, Department of Special Collections, Solomon Schechter Papers, Arc. 101, Box 4, Folder 47. However, Kaufmann died suddenly on 6 July 1899 in Karlsbad, so the travel probably did not happen.

105 See Goldziher, diary entry, 20 Aug. 1920, in Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, 279.

106 Schechter to Brann, 5 Sept. 1913 (postmark date), in NLI Jerusalem, Arc. Ms. Var. 308/ 1112 Markus Brann Collection.

107 Schechter to Bacher, 1 March 1911, in Scheiber, *Letters of Schechter to Bacher and Goldziher*, 270.

108 On the summer of 1910 see Elbogen to Schechter, 5 Sept. 1910, J TSA New York, Arc. 101 Solomon Schechter Collection, Box 2, Folder 67.

Connecting and keeping in touch: Schechter in America

The greatest transformation and reorientation in Schechter's network took place when he moved to New York. In the first five years, until 1907, he joined American Jewish networks, establishing new connections and expanding them with the help of his own resources, networks, and ideas.¹⁰⁹

Outside the JTSA, he took a great step into American Jewish scholarship when he joined the committee of the first academic reference work for Jewish history, religion, and culture, the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, which was published between 1901 and 1906 in twelve volumes. In succession to the Philadelphian rabbi and scholar Markus Jastrow (1829–1903), Schechter became the editor of the Talmud section in this project. Like Jastrow, Schechter's appointment was intended to balance the predominantly Reform editors.¹¹⁰ The encyclopedia eventually became a vehicle for the construction of original American Jewish scholarship, and Schechter was a vital part of this process.¹¹¹ In the same vein, Schechter became part of the Bible translation and commentary committee of the Jewish Publication Society (JPS).¹¹² He worked closely, though not always peacefully, with scholars including Max Leopold Margolis (1866–1932), Cyrus Adler, Kaufmann Kohler, Mayer Sulzberger, and Samuel Schulman (1865–1955).

Another scholarly project that Schechter joined was the editorship of the *JQR*.¹¹³ After Claude Montefiore and his successor in Cambridge, Israel Abrahams, had established the journal in London in 1889, the publication of the periodical lasted until 1908. Schechter and Adler revived it in 1910 in

109 Mel Scult, "Schechter's Seminary", in Wertheimer, *Tradition Renewed*, vol. 1, 43–102; Jonathan D. Sarna, "Two Traditions of Seminary Scholarship", in *ibid.*, vol. 2, 53–80, esp. 55–62; Shuly Rubin Schwartz, "The Schechters' Seminary", in *Text and Context: Essays in Modern Jewish History and Historiography in Honor of Ismar Schorsch*, ed. Eli Lederhendler and Jack Wertheimer (New York: JTSA, 2005), 487–503; Liberles, "'Wissenschaft des Judentums' Comes to America". This also fits with Starr, who separated Schechter's time in America into two phases. According to Starr, Schechter was more positive in the first years. From 1907, money and (Jewish) nationalism/Zionism issues, as well as confrontations with the Reform and Orthodox movement, grew and darkened Schechter's mood; Starr, "Catholic Israel", 243–332. For a concise description of Schechter's reception in America see Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 187–93.

110 Sarna, *JPS: Americanization*, 55.

111 Shuly Rubin Schwartz, *The Emergence of Jewish Scholarship in America: The Publication of the Jewish Encyclopedia* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1991).

112 Sarna, *JPS: Americanization*, 97–130.

113 On the transfer of the *JQR* to America see Starr, "Importance of Being Frank".

Philadelphia. The journal became the main organ of the JTSA, just like the *Monatsschrift* was for the European *Wissenschaft* community.¹¹⁴

Besides these activities, Schechter remained active in giving talks and lectures that were collected and published in the year of his death.¹¹⁵ His network became most relevant, however, when he began to hire new faculty members for the JTSA and reorganized their training programmes. In order to catch up with the influential *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Europe, Schechter was determined to increase the academic standards of the JTSA.¹¹⁶ When he arrived New York, the JTSA faculty had included Cyrus Adler, Joseph Mayor Asher,¹¹⁷ Bernhard Drachman (1861–1945), Joshua A. Joffe (1862–1935), and Henry Pereira Mendes (1852–1937). Most of these men had come to America trained as rabbis but not as academics or lecturers at a rabbinical seminary. Therefore, Schechter proposed to replace the personnel gradually, and hire academically trained, professional scholars. At that time, the recommendation of candidates by European Jewish scholars and publications in the established journals of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* set the tone. Schechter reached out to his contacts in Europe during his travels to England, Germany, Italy, and France, and in his sabbatical in 1910–11, much of which he spent in Europe. Although his initial negotiations with Poznański and Krauss failed, the JTSA for the first time became appealing to European scholars, mostly due to Schechter's reputation.

In the end, the scholars Schechter appointed did not arrive from Europe directly. However, they were all academically trained, mainly at prestigious European institutions. Most of them shared Schechter's own research interests. For example, Ginzberg had already contributed several articles to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*. Schechter hired him as Talmud professor in 1902 from HUC, and Ginzberg would teach for more than five decades at the JTSA. Besides Ginzberg, Schechter was able to hire Israel Friedlaender (1876–1920) as Sabato Morais Professor of Biblical Literature and Exegesis in 1903.¹¹⁸ Although Schechter at first feared

114 After Schechter's death, Cyrus Adler edited *JQR* by himself, just as Brann continued to edit *Monatsschrift* alone after Kaufmann's untimely death in 1899.

115 Solomon Schechter, *Seminary Addresses and Other Papers* (Cincinnati: Ark Publishing, 1915).

116 Solomon Schechter, "The Charter of the Seminary", in *ibid.*, 9–33. See also Sarna, "Two Traditions of Seminary Scholarship", esp. 55–62.

117 The life dates of Joseph Mayor Asher could not reliably be established.

118 Letters of Schechter and Friedlaender in 1908–12, in New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, Department of Special Collections, Solomon Schechter Papers, Arc. 101, Box 8, Folder 35.

that Friedlaender was a supporter of “higher criticism”, he soon realized that Friedlaender’s main field was Arabic. Alexander Marx became the professor of Jewish history and literature as well as the head of the library. In 1905, Schechter successfully appointed Israel Davidson (1870–1939), an expert on the life and works of Saadia Gaon, and a master of Hebrew poetry. Mordecai M. Kaplan (1881–1983) was himself a graduate of the JTS and Columbia University. In 1909, he became the organizer of the Teachers’ Institute. Schechter’s last appointment was Moses Hyamson (1862–1949), a scholar of Jewish and Roman law, who joined the faculty in the year of Schechter’s death.

For Schechter, the academization of Jewish scholarship also meant improving the curriculum.¹¹⁹ Following the European model of modern, academically trained rabbis (Doktor-Rabbiner), he raised and adjusted the educational standards to the high principles of the rabbinical seminaries in Europe.¹²⁰ For rabbinical training in particular, Schechter created new requirements and courses. Rabbinical students were expected to have good moral character and basic knowledge of Hebrew and Biblical Aramaic. They had to prove that they were well-versed in the Pentateuch, in the second Mishnah order, Seder Moed (“Appointed Time”), and in the first part of tractate Berakhot (“Benedictions”). Moreover, a general acquaintance with the contents of the prayer book, and a general knowledge of Jewish history were requirements to enter rabbinical training.¹²¹ As in some of the European institutions, rabbinical students had to have at least a bachelor’s or equivalent degree to enter the seminary. Unlike most European seminaries, however, but also unlike the HUC, the JTS did not offer a high school or college course.

These higher academic standards provoked massive protest, mainly from Orthodox rabbis. As early as July 1902, they began to organize an

119 See David Ellenson and Lee Bycel, “A Seminary of Sacred Learning: The JTS Rabbinical Curriculum in Historical Perspective”, in Wertheimer, *Tradition Renewed*, vol. 2, 525–91; David Ellenson, “The Curriculum of the Jewish Theological Seminary in Historical and Comparative Perspective: A Prism on the Emergence of American Jewish Religious Denominationalism”, in Ellenson, *After Emancipation: Jewish Religious Responses to Modernity* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2004), 280–319; Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 247–90.
120 On Doktor-Rabbiner see Ismar Schorsch, “Emancipation and the Crisis of Religious Authority: The Emergence of the Modern Rabbinate”, in Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1994), 9–50.

121 See the booklet, “The Jewish Theological Seminary of America: Preliminary Announcement, New York 1902”, in New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, Department of Special Collections, Solomon Schechter Papers, Arc. 101, Box 8, Folder 5, pp. 7–10.

Aggudat ha-Rabbanim (“Union of Orthodox Rabbis”), whose members finally rejected the JTSA. Moreover, Schechter provoked Orthodox opposition to the seminary when he made binding decisions regarding the language issues. He not only forbade Yiddish in the classroom but also insisted that all communication at JTSA should be in English.¹²² Although most of the Orthodox rabbis, like Schechter, came from an East European background, the confrontation also resulted from the fact that Schechter was not willing to integrate works of traditional Judaism into the curriculum, such as the *Shulkhan Arukh* (“Set Table”).¹²³

Conclusion

In principle, the academic study of Judaism did not find acceptance in general educational institutions and universities in Europe and North America before the 1950s. Hence, scholars organized themselves outside the universities in broad networks of correspondence and by constant travel across Europe and North America. They developed a solid reference system for modern Jewish scholarship, mainly in the shape of the dominant German-speaking *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, consisting of professional scholarly journals, learned societies, and rabbinical seminaries in university cities. Characteristically, individual scholars established their connections early in their career when they began their education at *yeshivot*, rabbinical seminaries, and universities. Fellow students and teachers became the first colleagues with whom to engage, and the relationship to them was not least the basis for future personal and collaborative networks.¹²⁴ Later stages in their careers added to their existing network more colleagues, friends, and alliance partners.

Schechter focused his academic networking on the establishment of scholarly exchange in all aspects of the academic study of Judaism, as well as for his own research interests, which were mainly in the fields of rabbinic literature, medieval manuscripts, and Jewish history and culture. Schechter’s network of correspondence and travel illustrates not only the meaning of personal connections for an individual scholarly life, but also

122 Liberles, “‘Wissenschaft des Judentums’ Comes to America”, 345. English had been discussed intensely in regard to linguistic issues and for educational reasons; Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 248.

123 On Schechter’s position regarding the American Reform and Orthodox movement see Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 257–65.

124 See Lorraine Daston and H. Otto Sibum, “Introduction: Scientific Personae and Their Histories”, *Science in Context* 16, nos. 1–2 (2003): 1–8.

shows the scope of Jewish scholarly networks in the second half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries. His activities were rooted in his education at the Bet Midrash in Vienna, developed further in Berlin and England, and finally led to his leadership at the JTSA in New York.

Schechter's legacies with regard to *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as well as academic organization and networking can be divided into five essential aspects. Firstly, Schechter's academic achievements were mainly in the field of rabbinic literature and thought. Consequently, he dealt with a fairly traditional or classical Jewish knowledge.¹²⁵ Following modern academic self-understanding, Schechter applied historical and critical methods to the texts. From the beginning of his career, his approach to texts was respectful and careful. His intention was to stabilize Jewish texts by editing, collating, and annotating them. Based on his deep Jewish traditional knowledge, his editions and historical writings were profound and well-received in the scholarly community. Schechter's largest treasure trove for editions and related historical studies were his discoveries in the Cairo Genizah materials he had obtained, with Taylor's support, for Cambridge.

Secondly, since he dealt so respectfully with Jewish texts, historians have connected Schechter to positive-historical Judaism and the Breslau historical school. The founder of positive-historical Judaism, Zacharias Frankel (1801–1875), and the Breslau school understood modern Jewish scholarship as *Glaubenswissenschaft* (dogmatic scholarship).¹²⁶ This interpretation is close to Schechter's when we look at his ambivalence and reservation towards Bible studies. His admiration for Zunz was shaken when, in the context of his biographical studies on the father of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, he engaged with Zunz's Bible analyses.¹²⁷ Schechter could not treat the biblical text in the same way as medieval Jewish texts. His respect for biblical revelation and, at the same time, Zunz's radical historicization of the Bible provoked ambivalent feelings in

125 Starr, "Catholic Israel", 93–4, 136–7, 181–2, 195–6, 263.

126 See Andreas Brämer, *Rabbiner Zacharias Frankel: Wissenschaft des Judentums und konservative Reform im 19. Jahrhundert* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2000), 255–75; Brämer, "The Dilemmas of Moderate Reform: Some Reflections on the Development of Conservative Judaism in Germany 1840–1880", *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 10 (2003), 73–87. The strong connection between Schechter and the Breslau school is emphasized in the works of Moshe Davis and Abraham J. Karp, for which see n. 4 above.

127 David J. Fine, "Solomon Schechter and the Ambivalence of Jewish Wissenschaft", *Judaism* 46 (1997): 17–20.

him and caused him similar feelings as scholars of the Breslau school such as Kaufmann.¹²⁸ Like the Breslau school, Schechter accepted a “lower” Bible criticism. However, he was sensitive when applying higher criticism. He identified higher criticism as a threat from the dominant and mostly anti-Jewish Protestant theology, characterizing it memorably and bitterly, as “higher Anti-Semitism”.¹²⁹

Thirdly, and connected to the previous aspect, Schechter’s awareness of the antisemitic tensions in academia connected him with the Breslau and Orthodox *Wissenschaft* scholars who, unlike the Reform movement, also spoke out in public against antisemitism. Breslau and Orthodox scholars were also not willing to deny the national element in Judaism. The primacy of the tradition and the awareness of a national Jewish consciousness lead Schechter and members of his faculty to Zionism.¹³⁰ Contrary to the Zionist narrative, for which the course of Jewish history required an explanation, for Schechter the occupation with Jewish history was a more textual and thus “unideological” basis for Jewish nationalism.¹³¹ Schechter shared this argument with Heinrich Graetz from the Breslau seminary and most of whose students.¹³²

Fourthly, Schechter’s broad, open-minded and unifying view of Judaism as “Catholic Judaism”¹³³ or “Catholic Israel” showed another similarity to the understanding of modern Judaism in the Breslau school.¹³⁴ Therefore, he was not in favour of a distinct “American Judaism” or *Minhag America*, as promoted by reform thinkers such as Isaac M. Wise (1819–1900). For the sake of a broad definition of a “Catholic” – thus encompassing –

128 Thulin, *Kaufmanns Nachrichtendienst*, 301–04.

129 Solomon Schechter, “Higher Criticism – Higher Anti-Semitism”, in *Schechter, Seminary Addresses*, 35–40.

130 See Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 199–216; on Zionism in connection with Schechter’s concept of a “Catholic Israel”, 265–89.

131 *Ibid.*, 286.

132 On Graetz’s understanding of Jewish nationalism see Mirjam Thulin, “Vom Schreiben jüdischer Geschichte im Zeitalter des nationalen Denkens: Zum Begriff der Nation in Heinrich Graetz Geschichte der Juden”, *Transversal* 8, no. 2 (2007): 95–114; Thulin, “Zvi Heinrich Graetz on National Judaism and the Love for Zion, according to the Pre-Zionist Discourse of Moses Hess Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer”, in *Proceedings of the Colloquium Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Publication of Derishat Zion by Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer*, ed. Asaf Yedidya (Hebrew; Jerusalem 2014): 78–102.

133 Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter*, 281–308.

134 David J. Fine, “The Meaning of Catholic Israel”, *Conservative Judaism* 50, no. 4 (Summer 1998): 29–47; Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 254–7, who criticizes this notion as romantic and rooted in nineteenth-century thought and convictions.

Judaism that integrated traditional notions as well as a national Jewish consciousness, Schechter envisioned *Wissenschaft* as a way to understand the Jewish past and present, and to build a future for Judaism in the modern world, an understanding that was particularly promoted also by Graetz.¹³⁵ His view of the centrality of “Jewish Science” or *Wissenschaft* is documented in his first public talk in America in 1902.¹³⁶ He argued that *Wissenschaft* served to support the training of community leaders and commitment to tradition.¹³⁷

Schechter’s legacy is, fifthly, visible in the reorganization of the JTSA in New York that followed the standards of the rabbinical seminaries in Europe. Gradually, he was able to build a faculty that provided a solid basis for the academic and religious development.¹³⁸ The seminary building, the specialized library as well as the infrastructure of surrounding educational institutions became factors that played into Schechter’s hand. He was able to create an atmosphere that supported teaching and research by also giving the seminary staff time to pursue their own research. Unlike Kaufmann Kohler’s leadership at HUC, Schechter’s openness regarding dissenting opinions inside the faculty further improved the fruitful and forthright atmosphere. Naturally, to maintain the strong connection to the Breslau school was a conscious decision. In the end, however, Schechter hired scholars at the JTSA who had been mainly educated at Lithuanian *yeshivot* and at the Orthodox rabbinical seminary in Berlin.

In this essay I have focused on Schechter’s correspondence with Budapest-based scholars and associates of the Breslau school, yet his network was by no means restricted to contacts with these scholars. Schechter’s institutional contacts to the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau mainly resulted from his personal closeness to the faculty but also from the family background of his wife Mathilde.

As recent studies have shown, Schechter’s scholarly, professional, and academic impact took years to unfold. The effects attributed to Schechter

135 Solomon Schechter, “The Beginnings of Jewish *Wissenschaft*”, in Schechter, *Seminary Addresses*, 173–93. Compare Heinrich Graetz, “The Significance of Judaism for the Present and Future”, *Jewish Studies Quarterly Review* 1, no. 1 (1888): 4–13; Graetz, “The Significance of Judaism for the Present and Future, part II”, *Jewish Studies Quarterly Review* 2, no. 3 (1890): 257–69.

136 Solomon Schechter, “The Emancipation of Jewish Science”, in *ibid.*, 1–7.

137 Solomon Schechter, “The Test the Rabbi Should Apply”, in *ibid.*, 195–205. See Sarna, “Two Traditions of Seminary Scholarship”, 55–80; Starr, “Catholic Israel”, 250.

138 Liberles, “‘*Wissenschaft des Judentums*’ Comes to America”, 343f. See also Cohen, *Birth of Conservative Judaism*, esp. 15–43.

became visible mainly in the 1950s and 60s. Then, American-born Jewish scholars had developed a strong *esprit de corps* that connected them to the JTSA as their alma mater. It was then, in retrospect, that Schechter came to be regarded as the icon and leader of the Conservative movement in American Judaism.

***Note on contributor**

Mirjam Thulin is a research associate at the Institute of European History (IEG) in Mainz and teaches at Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main. Thulin studied History and Judaic Studies at the Free University Berlin and gained her doctorate at the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture at Leipzig University in 2011. Publications include *Kaufmanns Nachrichtendienst: Ein jüdisches Gelehrtennetzwerk im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2012), and “Wissenschaft in Context: A Research Essay on the Wissenschaft des Judentums”, *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 58 (2013), 249–80 (with Kerstin von der Krone).
thulin@ieg-mainz.de