

The Jewish Discovery of Islam

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The European exploration, study, and representation of Islam are beginning to find their historians. The "Orientalism" debate, begun in earnest twenty years ago, provided a stimulus for research in all these areas—a research that has gradually edged beyond polemics. The work of European explorers, travellers, and writers from the Renaissance onward is under reexamination. Orientalist art is receiving its due. So too is the history of modern scholarship—the role of individuals and institutions in the great centers of European academe. And at some point, this question will have to be answered: Did Jews make a distinct contribution to the Western discovery of Islam?

Bernard Lewis first posed the question thirty years ago, in an article entitled "The Pro-Islamic Jews."

In the development of Islamic studies in European and, later, American universities, Jews, and in particular Jews of Orthodox background and education, play an altogether disproportionate role.... The role of these scholars in the development of every aspect of Islamic studies has been immense—not only in the advancement of scholarship but also in the enrichment of the Western view of Oriental religion, literature, and history, by the substitution of knowledge and understanding for prejudice and ignorance.¹

Elsewhere Lewis writes more explicitly about the nature of this contribution:

A major accession of strength resulted from the emancipation of Jews in central and western Europe and their consequent entry into the universities. Jewish scholars brought up in the Jewish religion and trained in the Hebrew language found Islam and Arabic far easier to understand than did their Christian colleagues, and were, moreover, even less affected by nostalgia for the Crusades, preoccupation with imperial policy, or the desire to convert the

“heathen.” Jewish scholars like Gustav Weil, Ignaz Goldziher, and others played a key role in the development of an objective, nonpolemical, and positive evaluation of Islamic civilization.²

Elsewhere Lewis goes still further: “Jewish scholars were among the first who attempted to present Islam to European readers as Muslims themselves see it and to stress, to recognize, and indeed sometimes to romanticize the merits and achievements of Muslim civilization in its great days.”³

No other general survey of the development of the Western understanding of Islam makes a similar statement. Edward Said, in *Orientalism*, made no reference at all to the emergence or role of Jewish scholars.⁴ Maxime Rodinson, in his essay on “Western Views of the Muslim World,” omitted any reference to a contribution by Jews as such, and made no mention at all of the most important Jewish interpreter of Islam, Ignaz Goldziher.⁵ Albert Hourani, in his articles “Islam and the Philosophers of History” and “Islam in European Thought,” wrote nothing specific about the role of Jews in Islamic studies, although he stressed the supreme importance of Goldziher on both occasions, and recognized the link between his Jewish formation and his understanding of Islam.⁶ Lewis thus stands alone in his explicit assessment of the crucial role of Jews in the emergence of a detached, even sympathetic understanding of Islam in Europe.

This book seeks to pose the questions once again, in a more insistent way. Was there a Jewish discovery of Islam, distinct from Europe’s? Did the culture of central and western European Jewry provide the foundations for a more accurate and sometimes more favorable assessment of Islam than the general culture of Europe? Is there any common feature in the approach of these persons of Jewish background (who included practicing Jews, lapsed Jews, and even a few converts to Christianity and Islam)?

A comprehensive list of Jewish travelers, writers and scholars who contributed to Europe’s understanding of Islam and the Middle East would fill pages. (Such lists appear in the articles “Travelers” and “Orientalists” in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, which also has entries on all the major figures.) An integrated assessment of their influence at all levels would make for a complex book—a combination of European, Jewish, and Islamic history, and the history of every scholarly discipline and creative genre as it encountered Islam and Muslims. This collected volume is more selective and less integrated, focusing on figures who may be said to represent larger trends in exploration, literature, and scholarship.

Yet even these disparate studies suggest some possible answers. Jews found themselves in a Europe constructed upon a series of evolving dichotomies: Christendom and Islam, Europe and Asia, West and East, Aryan and Semite. The Jews posed a challenge to these dichotomies on practically every level. At first, their role was passive, as others debated

their proper classification. By the nineteenth century, Jews had entered the debate, questioning not just their classification but the very validity of the dichotomies. Such dichotomies were regarded as obstacles to assimilation, which remained the dominant project of central and western European Jewry from the French Revolution to the Holocaust.

In pursuit of this project, Jews tended to differ from other Europeans in their response to Islam, and the ways in which they represented it. In the Middle Ages, Islam excited only fear and loathing in Europe, fed by Muslim conquests on both ends of the continent. With the retreat of Muslim power and European imperial expansion into the lands of Islam, fear yielded to contempt. But the spirit of the Enlightenment and the rise of romanticism introduced much more variety in Europe's responses to Islam. These began to include curiosity, fascination, admiration, and scholarly study. European thinkers came to differ widely in their understanding of Islam, as a religious system and a social order.

Europe's Jews stood almost entirely on one side of this debate. To be sure, Jews also differed in their attitudes to Islam, as this volume demonstrates. But in the aggregate, their approaches rested upon a heightened empathy and sympathy for Islam, conveyed to the rest of Europe through literature, exploration, and scholarship. And the common rationale, reduced to a sentence, was this: a Europe respectful of Islam and Muslims was more likely to show respect for Judaism and Jews.

This introduction follows some of the main lines in the Jewish discovery of Islam, as it unfolded in Europe from the early nineteenth century through the middle of the twentieth. It does not pretend to be an exhaustive catalogue of all those involved in this discovery. Individuals and their work are mentioned as points of ready reference, in a process of discovery which involved hundreds of individuals and thousands of creative works, from books to plays, from travelogues to catalogues. From the 1920s, part of this work of discovery was transferred from Europe to Palestine, and the earliest stages of this transfer are also considered. The Holocaust and the creation of Israel closed one phase and opened another, and they form the outer boundary of this introduction. To maintain that boundary, no one born after 1920 is mentioned, and there is no discussion of the role of Jews in America as interpreters of Islam.

The Romantic Impulse

Romanticism toward the Muslim world, which swayed the poets of Europe in the first third of the nineteenth century, found an echo among Europe's Jews. In myriad ways, they sought to emphasize Islam's splendor, as a strategy to remind Europe of the multiple origins of its own civilization, and its debt to Islam and Judaism. This meant a deliberate effort to associate Jews with those periods, places, and elements in Islamic civilization most admired by Europe. The message was straightforward: Jews had helped to bring the civilization of medieval Islam to its apex. Given the chance, they could do the same for the

civilization of modern Europe. This interpretation of Islam, emphasizing its achievements and tolerance, had nothing in common with “Orientalism” as ideology. Its purpose was to facilitate Europe’s assimilation of Jews.

The romantic enthusiasm for high Islam at its apex was strongest among the German-speaking Jews of central Europe. It manifested itself most famously in the work of the poet and essayist Heinrich Heine (1797-1856).⁷ Heine, like Victor Hugo, never set foot in the East, but like Hugo he found it ideal space for his imagination. As a university student in Bonn and Göttingen, he read widely in the then-available translations of Arabic and Persian classics.⁸ His tragedy *Almansor* (published in 1823, later supplemented by a poem of the same name) is set in a dilapidated Alhambra, and deals with the adjustment of Muslims to the Christianization of Spain in the sixteenth century. Nearly every literary analysis of the play and the poem has read them as allegories to the predicament of nineteenth-century German Jewry.

But *Almansor* also displays a profound empathy for the Muslims themselves, about whom Heine troubled to learn a great deal. Its blunt jabs at proselytizing Christianity led audiences (especially in the Catholic Rhineland) to understand the play as an anti-Christian diatribe, and it caused a scandal. (A typical passage: “On the tower where the muezzin called to prayer there is now the melancholy tolling of church bells. On the steps where the faithful sang the words of the Prophet, tonsured monks are acting out their lugubrious charades.”)⁹ The play, incidentally, includes one of Heine’s most cited lines, in an exchange between the eponymous hero Almansor and the servant Hassan:

ALMANSOR: We heard that Ximenes the Terrible in Granada, in the middle of the market-place — my tongue refuses to say it!—cast the Koran into the flames of a burning pyre!

*HASSAN: That was only a prelude; where they burn books they will, in the end, burn human beings too.*¹⁰

Heine bought what he called his *entrée billet* to Europe in 1825, with his baptism. But he could well have subscribed to the words he put in the mouth of Almansor: “For all my hat and coat I have remained a Muslim: I wear my turban here, in my heart.”¹¹

As the nineteenth century progressed, German-speaking Jews actively sought to be associated with the legacy of Islam, and to bask in its reflected glory. In doing so, they showed an acute awareness of the favored place occupied by Islam in the German collective consciousness. The Tunisian historian Hichem Djaït writes of how “the German-

speaking world, badly fragmented, lacking a concerted diplomacy...did not experience the continual trafficking, the struggles, and the permanent contacts that France, Spain, Italy, and England had with Islam in the Mediterranean basin or Asia.” As a result, Islam for Germans evoked “neither intimacy nor hostility but a positive inclination, a favorable prejudice.”¹²

The tangible evidence for the Jewish appreciation of this favorable prejudice may be seen in mid-nineteenth-century urban synagogue architecture in the “Moorish” style. Minarets and domes rose above the skylines of Leipzig, Frankfurt, Berlin, and Cologne. The style spread eastward to Budapest and St. Petersburg, southward to Florence, and westward to New York, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati.¹³ In some of these synagogues, opined one contemporary Jewish critic, “the crescent alone is wanting at the summit.”¹⁴ Certainly one factor in this choice was a desire to avoid explicitly Christian styles; another was the Moorish style’s freedom from figural ornamentation. But the splendor of Islamic architecture deployed in a synagogue sent a subliminal message. Jews had shared in the genius of Islamic civilization, and they could provide cultural leaven for a new and open Euro-American civilization, based upon a shared aesthetic and transcending of religious differences.¹⁵

In France, the work of associating the Jews with the romantic Orient did not have to be done by Jews themselves; it was done for them by the orientalist painters. The great nineteenth-century painters included no Jews, but in Morocco and Algeria, which the artists much favored, they often chose local Jews as subjects, especially for domestic scenes and whenever Muslims were unapproachable. In the words of one art historian: “In North Africa, as [Eugène] Delacroix [1798-1863], [Théodore] Chassériau [1819-56], and [Alfred] Dehondencq [1822-82] had found, it was only in Jewish houses that artists could get an idea of Oriental life. The same was true of the Levant.”¹⁶ The romantic representations of Jews in the work of the French orientalist painters were almost wholly sympathetic and admiring.¹⁷ The exhibition of such works, at the Salon in Paris and elsewhere, reminded Europeans of the placement of Jews in Islamic civilization, and the role of Mediterranean Jews as mediators between Europe and Islam.

In English letters, Jewish orientalism manifested itself in the literary works of Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81), the subject of an essay by Minna Rozen in this volume. Disraeli was born to Jewish parents, but his father had him baptized at the age of thirteen. His conversion opened doors that otherwise would have been closed to the ambitious young man. But his physical appearance proclaimed him a foreigner, in an England preoccupied with pedigree. Painfully aware of the ways his Jewish origins could be used against him, he sought to turn them to advantage by associating the Jews with the noble Arabs of the desert and the refined Arabs of Spain—both the focus of a burgeoning English romanticism.¹⁸ Disraeli worked to achieve this purpose through his novels. In *Tancred* (1847), the reader learned

that the Arabs of the desert were “Jews upon horseback,” and that Jews were “Mosaic Arabs,” bound by ties of race to “Mohammedan Arabs.” In *Coningsby* (1844), the reader learned that in the “unrivalled civilization” of Muslim Spain,

*the children of Ishmael rewarded the children of Israel with equal rights and privileges with themselves. During these halcyon centuries, it is difficult to distinguish the followers of Moses from the votary of Mahomet. Both alike built palaces, gardens, and fountains; filled equally the highest offices of the state, competed in an extensive and enlightened commerce, and rivalled each other in renowned universities.*¹⁹

By linking himself with that East most romanticized by the English, Disraeli sought to appear as heir to its store of wisdom, which he would put at the service of England’s new power.

Disraeli moved from literature to politics after the decline of romantic orientalism, and it became the turn of his opponents to associate him with the Orient, in a malevolent way. Lord Cromer (1841-1917)—his own claim to wisdom resting upon years of administration in India and Egypt—offered this retrospective on Disraeli: “No one who has lived much in the East can... fail to be struck with the fact that Disraeli was a thorough Oriental.” As evidence for this categorization, he cited Disraeli’s

*taste for tawdry finery, the habit of enveloping in mystery matters as to which there was nothing to conceal, the love of intrigue...the luxuriance of the imaginative faculties, the strong addiction to plausible generalities set forth in florid language... all these features, in a character which is perhaps not quite so complex as is often supposed, hail from the East.*²⁰

Any English reader would know that by “Oriental,” Cromer did not mean the noble desert Arabs or the cultivators of Andalusian gardens. He was making of Disraeli an Egyptian effendi or an Indian nawab—those dissembling Oriental gentlemen whom Cromer professed to know so well.

For Europe’s Jews, there seemed no reason to think twice about identification with the caliphate of Baghdad, the glories of Muslim Spain, and the landscapes of Morocco—all the subjects of admiration by Europe’s romantics. But the efforts of Jews to associate themselves with the Islamic Orient, even when successful, had mixed results, if only because that Islamic Orient evoked a very wide range of associations in Europe, including dismissive contempt. The fanatically nationalist Prussian state historiographer Heinrich von

Treitschke (1834-96) did not intend a compliment when he wrote in 1879, “There will always be Jews who are nothing but German-speaking Orientals.”²¹ As worldly romanticism gave way to racial nationalism in Europe, Jewish identification with the Orient became less of an asset, and played into the hands of growing numbers of anti-Semites.

The Jewish Explorers

Literary exploration was supplemented by geographic exploration. Travel to remote places was one of the great avenues of social mobility in the nineteenth century, and provided a high platform for self-expression. While Indian and Mediterranean Islam fell increasingly under the influence and direct control of Europe, other Muslim regions had yet to be “explored”—that is, visited and documented by Europeans. During the nineteenth century, several European Jewish travelers traversed the lesser-known lands of Islam.²² But two men gained particular fame for their accounts of travels across Arabia and Central Asia, both formidable frontiers of nineteenth-century exploration.

William Gifford Palgrave (1826-88), born in London, was not a Jew by any conventional definition. But he had a Jewish background. His father, Francis Ephraim Cohen, converted to Anglicanism before his church marriage, and emerged transformed as Sir Francis Palgrave (1788-1861), distinguished author of *The Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth* (1832) and founder of the Public Record Office. His second son, William Gifford, was left with the thinnest residue of Jewish identity, which apparently included a smattering of Hebrew. After studies at Oxford and a stint of service with the Indian army, “Giffy” not only became a Catholic, but joined the Society of Jesus, and was ordained a priest. He arrived in Lebanon in 1855, where he preached the gospel in Arabic—and, without explanation, reverted to the name Cohen. Palgrave had no interest in Judaism, but he increasingly harked back to his Jewish origins, as part of his growing preoccupation with race and nationality.

In 1862, Palgrave secured funding from Napoleon III (r. 1852-70) for a mission to the deepest parts of Wahhabi Arabia, with the purpose of exploring possibilities for a Franco-Arab alliance. He disguised himself as a Syrian Christian doctor (“Seleem Abou Mahmood-el-Eys”), and it is possible that he also pretended to be a Muslim on occasion in Najd. Nothing came of his political scheme, but Palgrave did write an account of his travels, his *Personal Narrative of a Year’s Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia, 1862-1863* (1865). This book had an immense influence, and not just as a (controversial) travelogue of Arabia. As Benjamin Braude shows in his essay for this volume, Palgrave contributed to the later British conviction that the Arabs were a noble people—“the Englishmen of the East”—entitled to independence from Ottoman rule. Yet it must be conceded that the relationship of Palgrave’s Jewish origins to his own ideas about the Arabs must remain a matter of speculation, since all his references to those origins are so oblique.

A clearer picture emerges in the case of an explorer with much firmer Jewish moorings: Arminius Vámbéry (1832-1913). Vámbéry was born into an impoverished Jewish family in Slovakia, then part of the Habsburg Empire. “Hershel” spent his first years in the traditional *heder*, where he acquired a command of the Hebrew Bible and Talmud. But he soon distanced himself from belief, and in his later studies (pursued intermittently in Christian denominational schools) he demonstrated a talent for languages. He became an itinerant tutor, and began to teach himself Arabic and Turkish, while dreaming of adventure in the East. In 1857 he left for Istanbul, where he worked as a tutor in better Turkish households, and where doors finally began to open. In 1863, disguised as a dervish (“Rashid Effendi”), he visited Khiva, Bukhara, Samarkand, and Herat. His account of this journey, *Travels and Adventures in Central Asia* (1864), made him internationally famous, especially in Britain where interest in Central Asia ran high. He then appeared to have converted to Protestantism, in order that he might teach Oriental languages at the University of Pest. One of his first students was the young Ignaz Goldziher. His subsequent career included philological research and political advocacy, marked by a combination of Russophobia and Anglophilia.

Vámbéry’s motives were always mixed. From poor and humble origins, he remained obsessed with money and station throughout life. He was not free of prejudice, and he often wrote sardonically about the customs and beliefs he encountered in the East. But he had a fundamental sympathy for Muslim peoples. “We alone, we think, have the right to be mighty and free, and the rest of humanity must be subject to us and never taste the golden fruits of liberty,” he wrote after the Young Turk revolution. But Europeans “tend to forget that constitutional government is by no means a new thing in Islam, for anything more democratic than the doctrine of the Arab Prophet it would be difficult to find in any other religion.”²³ As Jacob M. Landau suggests in his essay in this volume, Vámbéry’s Jewish origins may have been at the root of his sympathy for the oppressed—a sympathy he extended not just to Muslim peoples, but to the Jews themselves. It was Vámbéry who arranged the 1901 meeting between the Zionist leader Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) and the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909).

The First Scholars

Academe put up the most formidable barriers to Jewish participation—barriers that stood well into the nineteenth century. Before the emancipation of Europe’s Jews, learned Christians did not regard them as credible authorities in matters of faith—even the false faith of Islam. Such credibility was inseparable from an adherence to the true Christian faith, and information about Islam had to be embedded in an affirmation of Christianity’s truth and Islam’s falsehood. Even in the Enlightenment, Arabic studies remained a handmaiden of theology, and in most cases served as an adjunct to the Hebrew and biblical studies of Christian theologians. The theological connection formed an insurmountable barrier to the emergence of Jewish academic authorities on Islam in Europe.

Three developments combined to break down the barrier and afford Jews a role in the rapid expansion of the European scholarly exploration of Islam. The first was the Haskala, the Jewish Enlightenment: Jewish scholars began to take an interest in secular history, and the place of Jewish narratives within that history. The second development was the Jewish emancipation: Jews gradually won admission to secular academic institutions, as students and professors. The third development was Europe's secularization: Europeans increasingly sought an understanding of Islam and the Muslims freed from Christian theological dogma.

In the nineteenth century, the scope of Jewish scholarship expanded. No longer limited to traditional study of the law, it came to embrace the origins and history of the Jews, and of the peoples with which they had interacted. The new "science" of Jewish studies, emphasizing history and philology, focused also upon the history of Jews under Islam. Many European Jewish scholars first acquired Arabic and Judeo-Arabic as a basic tool for the study of medieval Jewish philosophy and history. Jewish cultural history could not be researched and written without this tool, and while Jews learned Arabic alongside non-Jews in universities, they usually did so with the different intent of studying Jewish sources. Two of the pioneers in this field were Solomon Munk (1805-67) and Moritz Steinschneider (1816-1907).²⁴

Only a minority applied these linguistic tools to the study of Islam, usually in the first instance to Jewish-Muslim relations and Jewish elements in Islam. The theme of Islam's debt to Judaism would be a recurrent one in the Jewish study of Islam, precisely because Jewish scholarship, following Hegel, had settled upon monotheism as the great contribution of the Jews to world civilization. In 1833, Abraham Geiger (1810-74), a brilliant young rabbi from Frankfurt, published a book entitled *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?*, analyzing the Prophet Muhammad's adaptations from Judaism. (The original Latin thesis was written for a competition at the University of Bonn, where it took the prize.) Geiger's adept handling of the sources and his careful analysis won him widespread praise among the handful of scholars then devoted to the academic study of Islam.

As Jacob Lassner points out in his study for this collection, Geiger overstated the case for Islam's borrowing from Judaism. But the book has been rightly called the dawn of historical research on Islam, and Geiger's approach to the relationship of Islam to other religions retained its validity for a century. No less important, it introduced a tone of respect into the study of Islam—so much so that Geiger came under some criticism from Christian colleagues, particularly for assuming the sincerity of the Muslim prophet. Muhammad, he wrote, "seems to have been a genuine enthusiast who was himself convinced of his divine mission." His conclusion: "The harsh judgment generally passed upon him [by Europeans] is unjustifiable."²⁵ This caused something of a stir, and in an otherwise favorable review of Geiger's book, the French scholar Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758-1838), founder of

modern Arabic studies, felt compelled to insist that Muhammad was a “skilled imposter.”²⁶

Geiger, however, was not destined to become a historian of Islam. He applied his immense talents to building the intellectual foundations of Reform Judaism, applying the same source-critical techniques to Jewish origins. Nonetheless, Geiger remained a partisan of Islam, especially in comparing the experience of Jews under Islam and Christianity. In 1865, he contrasted Islam, which “always left itself favorable to the cultivation of science and philosophy, with a Christian Church that increasingly nourished a repugnance of science and reason.”²⁷ This was a clear voice of dissent in a Europe where Islam continued to be regarded as inimical to science and reason.

Only a handful of Jewish scholars, formed in the “science of Judaism,” went still further, and devoted themselves fully to Islamic studies. A German Jewish contemporary of Geiger’s was the first to do so. Gustav Weil (1808-89) was born in Sulzburg, Baden, to a rabbinical family. Like his forebears, he was to have been a rabbi, and he studied Talmud under his grandfather in Metz. But he abandoned this at the first opportunity, entering the University of Heidelberg at the age of twenty. There he studied philology and history, as well as Arabic. In 1830 he went to Paris to study under Silvestre de Sacy, and from there he accompanied the French forces which occupied Algeria, as a correspondent for an Augsburg newspaper. In 1831 he proceeded to Cairo, where he spent more than four years teaching French at the new Egyptian medical school established by Muhammad ‘Ali Pasha (r. 1805-49) and run by the French physician Antoine Barthélémy Clot-Bey (1799-1867). In Egypt he perfected his Arabic and acquired Turkish and Persian. After some months in Istanbul, he returned to the University of Heidelberg, where he served as a librarian for almost twenty-five years. He was appointed a professor in 1861.

In 1843, Weil published a life of Muhammad entitled *Mohammed der Prophet*. Lewis describes this work as the first Western biography of Muhammad “that was free from prejudice and polemic, based on a profound yet critical knowledge of the Arabic sources, and informed by a sympathetic understanding of Muslim belief and piety. For the first time, he gave the European reader an opportunity to see Muhammad as the Muslims saw him, and thus to achieve a fuller appreciation of his place in human history.”²⁸ Weil achieved this through an exacting and exhausting use of manuscripts then available in Europe.

Although trained in philology, Weil came to regard himself as a historian of Islam, who took his inspiration from Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886). The Rankean influence was most notable in Weil’s five-volume *Geschichte der Chalifen* (1846-62). A contemporary French scholar described this work as “the first complete history of the caliphate, written according to the demands of European criticism and composed from the original sources... the authors are controlled by each other, the facts discussed and the authorities cited.”²⁹ Weil reproduced the narrative style of his Arabic sources, resulting in an account that was neither dramatic nor analytical—a critic once described it unkindly as *ledern*, dull. But Weil’s

work nonetheless represented an advance in its dispassion and detachment.

Another Jewish scholar, Hartwig Derenbourg (1844-1908), achieved something similar in making possible a more sympathetic understanding of the Muslim view of the Crusades. The Paris-born Derenbourg, son of a specialist in Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew, studied Arabic in Leipzig. He then taught it in Paris, and in 1885 was appointed to the new chair of Islamic studies at the *École des langues orientales*. In 1880, while cataloguing Arabic manuscripts in the library of the Escorial, he discovered the autobiography of Usama ibn Munqidh, a twelfth-century writer and diplomat from Syria, who left a vivid and very human account of Muslim life at the time of the Crusades. Derenbourg published the text in 1886, and a French translation in 1889. Derenbourg also would be remembered for the direction he gave to one of his last students, Louis Massignon (1883-1962). In 1907, Massignon read Muslim mystical texts with Derenbourg, who encouraged him to take up the tenth-century mystic Hallaj as his thesis subject. Derenbourg died before the thesis was completed, and Massignon dedicated his *thèse complémentaire*, a lexicon of Muslim mysticism, to Derenbourg's memory.³⁰

The Great Goldziher

By the middle of the nineteenth century, research had replaced romance, philology had replaced poetry, and the new authorities on the East became preoccupied with establishing “scientific” hierarchies and categories. The idea that the Jews were Semites owed its origins to philologists, concerned to establish the genealogy of languages. Jews and Muslims came together under this Semitic rubric—benignly, as speakers of cognate languages, Hebrew and Arabic; condescendingly, as peoples limited in their cultural development and mental processes by the languages of their expression; and, ominously, as members of an inferior racial category. The passage from the benign to the condescending is usually associated with two comparative philologists, Ernest Renan (1823-92) in France, and Theodor Nöldeke (1836-1930) in Germany. Both had disparaging things to say about Semitic cultures—Renan, from a belief in the supremacy of Indo-European peoples; Nöldeke, from a veneration of Graeco-Roman antiquity.

Yet in the schema of both Renan and Nöldeke, the Jews of Europe had escaped the Semitic bind. Renan held that “race” was determined not by blood, but by language, religion, laws, and customs. A Muslim Turk, in his estimate, was “today more a true Semite than the Jew who has become French, or to be more exact, European.”³¹ Theodor Nöldeke, writing on “Some Characteristics of the Semitic Race,” reached essentially the same conclusion:

In drawing the character of the Semites, the historian must guard against taking the Jews of Europe as pure representatives of the race. These have maintained many features of their primitive type with remarkable tenacity, but they have

*become Europeans all the same; and, moreover, many peculiarities by which they are marked are not so much of old Semitic origin as the result of the special history of the Jews, and in particular of continued oppression, and of that long isolation from other peoples, which was partly their own choice and partly imposed on them.*³²

If this were so, then Jewish scholars were not to be regarded as Semitic specimens, but as fellow Europeans, who could participate as intellectual equals in Europe's discovery of Islam. And so even as Nöldeke made disparaging remarks about Eastern peoples and Semitic cultures, he could hail a Jew, Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921), for his brilliant insights into Islam.

Goldziher produced nineteenth-century Europe's great breakthrough in Islamic studies. Born in the Hungarian town of Székesfehérvár, son of a leather merchant, he received a rigorous schooling in the Hebrew Bible and Talmud from an early age. He completed his philological studies in Leipzig in 1870, and then undertook further travels in Europe and the East. But he could not secure a professorship at the University of Budapest on his return, and from 1876 he made his living as secretary of the Reform (Neolog) Jewish community in the city.

His two-volume *Muhammedanische Studien* (1888-89) overturned the world of orientalist scholarship, not just by its sheer virtuosity, but by its guiding notion that Islam was a faith in constant evolution. Goldziher's interests ranged widely, from the development of Muslim sects to Arabic poetry. But his best-known contribution lay in his study of Islam's oral tradition, the *hadith*, and his realization that it must be regarded not as a record of the Prophet Muhammad's deeds and sayings, but as a window on the first centuries of Islam. Bernát Heller (1871-1943), Goldziher's closest student, wrote of his teacher that

*[Goldziher] was able to grasp the depth and breadth of Islam because he had a deep understanding of Judaism. The distinction between the Koran and the Sunna became so clear to him because he grew up in the respect of written and oral teachings. He distinguished between halachah and haggadah in the Jewish tradition just as he did between the standards of the law and the ethical narrative and eschatological tenets within the hadith.*³³

This assessment has been criticized for implying "that the secret of [Goldziher's] academic achievement... must be something mysteriously Jewish," whereas "several of Goldziher's contemporaries (mostly the bearers of the 'white man's burden') recognized this duality within Islam and the special sanctioning of the social practice without much knowledge of

the Talmud. The cleverest of all was C. Snouck Hurgronje.”³⁴ The criticism simultaneously succeeds in making the point and missing it. The Dutch Islamicist Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936) reached his understanding of this “duality” through extensive travel in Muslim lands and years of service as a colonial administrator in the Dutch East Indies. He also drew upon the inspiration of Goldziher himself (to whom, wrote Snouck Hurgronje, “in defining the direction of my studies, I owe more than to anyone else.”)³⁵

Goldziher, in contrast, did not need to be positioned in a Muslim land by an imperial power to achieve his insight. As a young man of twenty-three, he did spend a *Wanderjahre* in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, but he never again stopped for more than a few days in a Muslim land. How was it that Goldziher achieved such an intimate understanding of Islam, without sustained contact with its living expression? There was the fact of his genius. But his understanding of Islam was mediated by his intimate familiarity with another religion of law, in constant tension with actual practice, and formulated in a Semitic language: Judaism.³⁶

Goldziher regarded Judaism and Islam as kindred faiths. Islam originated as a “Judaized Meccan cult,” but evolved into “the only religion which, even in its doctrinal and official formulation, can satisfy philosophical minds. My ideal was to elevate Judaism to a similar rational level.”³⁷ During his stay in Damascus, Goldziher’s assimilation of the two faiths reached a point where “I became inwardly convinced that I myself was a Muslim.” In Cairo he even prayed as a Muslim: “In the midst of the thousands of the pious, I rubbed my forehead against the floor of the mosque. Never in my life was I more devout, more truly devout, than on that exalted Friday.”³⁸ He nevertheless remained a committed Jew, convinced that a reformed Judaism, salvaged from rabbinic obscurantism, could attain Islam’s degree of rationality without sacrificing its spirituality. During his career, he continued to produce studies on Jewish themes, of a kind that followed the path pioneered by Geiger before him.

In his politics, Goldziher supported the movement of Islamic revival and sympathized with resistance to Western imperialism. The diary of his youthful travels is replete with expressions of indignation over Europe’s intrusion in the East: “Europe has spoiled everything healthy and tanned the honest Arab skins morally to death after French example!”³⁹ During his stay in Cairo, where he became the first European admitted to studies at the Azhar mosque-university, “I spoke out against European domination in the bazaar....I spoke about theories of the new local Muslim culture and its development as an antidote to the epidemic of European domination.”⁴⁰ Goldziher also formed a fast friendship with Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-97), who was then in Egypt preaching against the country’s subordination to foreigners. His anti-imperialism found little outlet after his return to Budapest—Austro-Hungary had no colonial possessions in Muslim lands—but he later expressed sympathy for the ‘Urabi uprising in Egypt, and remained an unwavering

believer in the project of Islamic reformism.

The mid-nineteenth century saw the completion of the formal emancipation of Hungary's Jews, most of whom registered their nationality as Hungarian. Like many Jewish intellectuals, Goldziher became a fervent Hungarian nationalist, which destined him to remain on the margins of learned Europe. He was offered the positions at the University of Heidelberg and Cambridge University during the 1890s. But Goldziher, for reasons personal and patriotic, would not leave Budapest, and so did not assume a university chair until 1905. Neither was Goldziher a Zionist: freedom for the Jews had to come through affiliation with Europe, not separation. In a letter of 1889, he wrote: "Jewishness is a religious term and not an ethnographical one. As regards my nationality I am a Transdanubian, and by religion a Jew. When I headed [back] for Hungary from Jerusalem [after his *Wanderjahre*] I felt I was coming home."⁴¹ In 1920, Goldziher's schoolmate from Budapest, the Zionist leader Max Nordau (1849-1923), urged him to join the planned university in Jerusalem—the future Hebrew University. Goldziher replied: "Parting with the [Hungarian] fatherland at this time would be like demanding a heavy sacrifice from a patriotic point of view."⁴² He declined the offer.

In this collection, Lawrence I. Conrad considers Goldziher's critique of Renan. Goldziher was an incisive critic of Renan's theories about the limits of the Semitic mind, and Goldziher's deflation of Renan laid the groundwork for the subsequent development of Islamic studies. Ultimately, Goldziher, not Renan, exercised a predominant influence on the new field. (Unwary readers of Said's *Orientalism*, in which Renan looms large and Goldziher has gone missing, are all too liable to conclude the opposite.) Goldziher's enduring work, according to Albert Hourani, "created a kind of orthodoxy which has retained its power until our own time."⁴³ "Our view of Islam and Islamic culture until today is very largely that which Goldziher laid down."⁴⁴ Goldziher's paradigm has persisted for reasons best explained by Jaroslav Stetkevych:

[Goldziher] is emerging more and more as quite a solitary survivor of another age, looming higher the lonelier he stands. From among all the nineteenth-century philologists he is the one still capable of informing us and surprising us by being ahead of us in much of what we are doing or of what remains to be done....he figures among the pioneers of a meaningful integration of literary studies into cultural anthropology....At his best, he ceased practising the rites of Orientalism and participated in a cultural-interpretative enterprise of broad, contemporary validity.⁴⁵

German-Jewish Preeminence

From the turn of the century, universities across Europe opened their doors to Jewish scholars of Islam, especially in Germany, where the new Jewish scholarship already included the study of Arabic and Islam. Yet precisely in this heart of Europe, anti-Semitism was evolving into a fatal racism. It would strike the universities early and in full force, so that at crucial points in their careers, many of these scholars would become migrants and refugees. Some of them are the subjects of studies in this collection—an arbitrary selection from a distinguished list of displaced orientalists. If they may be said to have shared one thing, it would have been an admiration for high Islam, confirmed by the turning of much of Europe against its Jews.

Where does one begin? Perhaps with Josef Horovitz (1874-1931), born in Lauenburg, Germany, and son of a prominent Orthodox rabbi. Horovitz studied at the University of Berlin, where he also began to teach. He also traveled through Turkey, Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, on commission to find Arabic manuscripts. From 1907 to 1914, he lived in India, where he taught Arabic at the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh, the modernist school established by Sayyid Ahmad Khan in 1875. In 1914, he was appointed to teach Semitic languages at the University of Frankfurt. His range included early Islamic history, early Arabic poetry, Qur'anic studies, and Islam in India. In this collection, the late Hava Lazarus-Yafeh examines Horovitz's long-distance role as first director (*in absentia*) of the School of Oriental Studies at the new Hebrew University. He was not a fervent Zionist, and his political sympathies lay with Brit Shalom, the intellectual movement (comprised largely of German Jews) that abjured a Jewish state. Nevertheless, he gave crucial scholarly legitimacy to the fledgling enterprise in Jerusalem, which would provide a haven for so many of the Jewish refugee scholars from Nazi Germany.

Or one might begin with Max Meyerhof (1874-1945) born in Hildesheim, Germany. Trained as an ophthalmologist, he went to Egypt in 1903, where he served as chief of the Khedivial Ophthalmic Clinic. In 1914 he returned to Germany to serve as a military medical officer, and then practiced for a while. But he returned to Cairo in 1923 and remained there for the rest of his life, practicing medicine by day, and investigating the history of medieval Arab medicine and science by night. Meyerhof was also famous for his organization of medical care for Egypt's poor, for which he was much honored by medical societies.

Or one might well begin with the archeologist and art historian Ernst Herzfeld (1879-1948). Born in Celle, Germany, he conducted a sensational excavation at Samarra in Iraq, from 1910 to 1913. The discoveries in this early Abbasid capital put him at the forefront of the new field of Islamic art, and in 1920 he was made professor at the University of Berlin. The art historian Oleg Grabar has called Herzfeld "the most versatile of the small group of scholars who, at the turn of the century, set the study of Islamic art on a more or less scientific basis." He was the first to address the question of the uniqueness and originality of Islamic art, and "he was much in advance of his time and of the knowledge available to it. Because of his involvement in the exciting arguments of the newly developed art

historical schools in Vienna, he was conscious, especially in his earlier works, of the importance of theoretical and abstract considerations in dealing with the problems of early Islamic art."⁴⁶ After the First World War, Herzfeld focused on pre-Islamic Persia; in 1935, he left Nazi Germany and was appointed to the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.

Or perhaps one might begin with Gotthold Weil (1882-1960), born in Berlin, founder of the oriental department of the Prussian State Library in that city, professor of Jewish history and literature at the University of Berlin from 1920, and successor to Horovitz as professor of Semitic languages at the University of Frankfurt from 1931 until the Nazis dismissed him three years later. (Following Horovitz, he headed the School of Oriental Studies in Jerusalem *in absentia*.) In 1935 he emigrated to Palestine, and was named head of the National and University Library in Jerusalem. Weil's field was Arabic grammar and prosody, but his contact with Tatar prisoners-of-war in the First World War stimulated an interest in Turkish studies, a field in which he held a chair at the Hebrew University.

Or perhaps a point of departure might be Richard Walzer (1900-75) born in Berlin, who specialized in Islamic philosophy, and who sought the continuity of Greek tradition in the Islamic world, demonstrated by the preservation of lost Greek materials in Arabic philosophical texts. In 1933 he left Nazi Germany for the University of Rome, and then in 1938 relocated again to Oxford. Albert Hourani has attested to Walzer's influence there:

He and his wife Sofie had a kind of salon in which, among Biedermeier furniture and with the lovely Monet inherited from her parents looking down at us from the wall, we would meet colleagues and visiting scholars, and where books were discussed and a kind of stock exchange of scholarly reputations was held. Richard taught me the importance of scholarly traditions: the way in which scholarship was passed from one generation to another by a kind of apostolic succession, a chain of witnesses (a silsila, to give it its Arabic name). He also told me much about the central tradition of Islamic scholarship in Europe, that expressed in German.⁴⁷

Or perhaps one might commence with the Frankfurt-born Richard Ettinghausen (1906-79). After completing his doctorate in Islamic studies in Frankfurt, Ettinghausen came to the United States in 1934, in the first instance to the Institute for Advanced Study, and ultimately to the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. Ettinghausen had a far-ranging expertise in all aspects of Islamic art, but specialized in Islamic painting—Arab, Turkish, Persian, and Indian. He was famously active in the museum world, doing much to place Islamic art before the American public through exhibitions. He served as a head curator of the Freer Gallery of Art at the Smithsonian, and as the consultative chairman of the Department of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, directing its permanent

installation. His ties to Israel found expression in his avid promotion of the establishment of a museum for Islamic art in Jerusalem.

One could well conclude with the youngest of them all, Franz Rosenthal (1914-2003). Born in Berlin, where his early work focused on Aramaic studies, Rosenthal fled Germany in 1938, arriving in the United States in 1940. In 1943 he was naturalized, and he spent two years in army intelligence. In 1956, after teaching in Cincinnati and Philadelphia, he commenced a thirty-year career at Yale University. Rosenthal excelled in Muslim intellectual history, and especially the development of early and classical Muslim scholarship and historiography. He gained his widest renown for his fully annotated three-volume translation of Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddima*.

These (and other) German-Jewish scholars viewed the study of Islam as the perfect point of intersection of classical and Jewish studies. They were drawn to "golden ages" and those achievements of Islamic civilization that had universal significance, and which demonstrated Islam's tolerance of difference. They worked from the assumption that Islam arose in part upon Jewish foundations, and emphasized that it had provided the civilizational framework for a period of Jewish achievement since paralleled only by the present age. They also were fascinated by the role of this Judeo-Islamic civilization in the preservation and transmission of Greek philosophy and science. Needless to say, these Jewish scholars remained completely aloof from the efforts to mobilize German orientalism for political purposes, and they stood at the forefront of the intellectual struggle against the increasing ethnocentrism of the German academy.

Jews were forced out of the universities very early in the Nazi reign, so that nearly all of the Jewish orientalists managed to leave Germany.⁴⁸ Former colleagues who were Nazi sympathizers then wrote the Jews completely out of the history of German oriental studies. Hans Heinrich Schaeder (1896-1957), professor at the University of Berlin, was an authority on Islamic mysticism, the Persian poet Hafiz, the orientalism of Goethe, Iranian Manichaeism, and much else. He was also the effective spokesman of German orientalism throughout the Nazi period. Schaeder's colleagues and students included many Jews. But it was Schaeder who, in 1940, published a remarkable historical summary of the development of German oriental studies that managed to avoid mention of a single Jewish scholar.⁴⁹

The excision of Jews from the past record was not nearly as consequential as their absence from the subsequent development of Islamic studies in Germany. Not a single Jewish orientalist returned to Germany after the war. "The tradition of Islamic studies in Germany suffered irreplaceable losses in this period," relates a recent German account of post-war scholarship, "because most of the younger scholars who worked in the field had to leave the country. Their emigration has seriously and for at least two generations weakened the potential of the German tradition of Islamwissenschaft."⁵⁰

The greatest wartime loss to Jewish scholarship on Islam was the death by suicide of Paul

Kraus (1904-44). Kraus, who was born and raised in Prague, accumulated superlatives over a short but brilliant career. After Goldziher, opined one Jewish colleague, “there has not been a scholar like Kraus in this field who combined so many signs of scholarly genius.”⁵¹ An Egyptian colleague said that he inspired “awe.” After preparation in ancient Semitics at the University of Berlin (where he studied under Schaeder), Kraus became fascinated by the history of Islamic sciences, and seemed destined for fame at an institute established precisely for this field in Berlin. But the rise of the Nazis in 1933 compelled a move, and he managed to secure a scholarship in Paris with the help of Louis Massignon. There he and Massignon began an intensive cooperation, preparing the pericopes of Hallaj for publication.

The relationship between Massignon and Kraus was complex and asymmetrical, and remains difficult to put in focus. As Joel L. Kraemer demonstrates in his study for this collection, the two men were complementary opposites. Had Kraus remained in Paris, he might have opened an entirely different line of intellectual succession to Massignon, far from the spirit of Catholic penitence. But he was not a French national, and in 1936 he was informed that he could not be employed in France any longer. The Hebrew University made Kraus an offer at that time, but he had spent time in Palestine some years earlier, and found it an inhospitable place. He preferred an offer, arranged for him by Massignon, at the Egyptian (later Cairo) University, where he became a protégé of the Egyptian critic and scholar Taha Husayn (1889-1973).

Kraus spent eight years in Cairo. He had a masterly command of Arabic, in which he lectured and sometimes wrote, and a passion for the study of Islamic civilization in all its aspects. Yet in Cairo, his spirit was eroded by the specter of a possible German invasion, the death of his wife, fear for his academic reputation, and Egyptian nationalist resentment against foreigners in the university. He had come from a world which had gone dark, and whose darkness continued to pursue him. In 1944, after a change of government in Egypt, Kraus was told he would be dismissed from his post. He returned to his flat and hanged himself. Kraus, for all the complexity of his motives, must be numbered among the casualties of war.

The fate of Kraus raises the question of solidarity: the extent to which Jewish scholars were protected or assisted by their colleagues outside Germany. There is much lore about the many German-Jewish scholars of Islam who reached safe haven in America and Britain through the help of colleagues. France, however, represented a more complex instance, personified by the towering figure of French orientalism, Massignon. In December 1933, Massignon wrote this to a French diplomat in Cairo: “For myself, as one who has personally rescued one of the academic victims of the Hitlerite regime [Kraus], I am certain that we in France must resist every demand to increase the percentage of Jews among us, if we want to avoid a crisis as violent as that of our neighbors.” In the same letter, he took a dim view of the arrival of Jewish scholars in Turkey. (The Turkish government in 1933 invited some

thirty German refugee professors, many of them Jewish, to assist in the reorganization of the University of Istanbul.) “There is evidently a very strange international role that is being played presently in the world by a Jewish elite,” wrote Massignon. “The massive injection of German scholars of Jewish origin, to which Turkey has consented (the University of Istanbul) is rather revealing of this action. I hope we can spare Syria an immigration of the same kind, which would precipitate catastrophes.”⁵² Of course, neither did he want the German-Jewish scholars in Palestine: in 1939, he lamented that at the Hebrew University, “instead of Oriental Sephardim speaking Arabic, there are these Germanized Ashkenazim.”⁵³

This was the same Massignon who was guided to the subject of his life’s great work by his Jewish teacher, Derenbourg; who acknowledged the crucial encouragement he received from a Jewish mentor, Goldziher; and who depended in his later work upon the labors of a Jewish student, Kraus. Yet as the 1930s unfolded, Massignon showed a growing hostility to Jewish refugees, experiencing what he himself would describe as his “crisis of anti-Semitism.” This has been documented in detail by Massignon’s most recent biographers, who conclude that “in his episodic reactions to the Jewish question in France, Massignon was incontestably the prisoner of a time and a place in which anti-Semitism had become banal.”⁵⁴ Massignon’s views were an intimation of just how saturated with anti-Semitism continental Europe’s intellectual classes had become, and how certain it was that the continent would lose its privileged place as the center of great Jewish achievement in the field of Islamic studies.

Lay Orientalists

Scholarship was not the only medium of expression for the Jewish fascination with Islam. Jewish artists and writers also explored Islam for wider audiences, with an emphasis upon its superiority over a satiated, materialistic, or intolerant Europe.

Jews played no role at all in the nineteenth-century emergence of orientalism as a genre of art. Europe’s Jews hailed from those parts of the continent most remote from the Muslim world, and they came late to the traditions that informed orientalist art. By the turn of the century, however, a few Jewish artists began to draw upon orientalist themes, as they came into contact with the living East and orientalist art.

Perhaps the most internationally famous was Léon Bakst (1866-1924). Born Lev Samoilovich Rosenberg in Grodno, Belorussia, he was raised in St. Petersburg, where he enrolled in the Academy of Arts. Bakst did not conceal his Jewish origins; indeed, he announced his Jewishness to every acquaintance, sometimes as a provocation. (He was expelled from the academy for a canvas that portrayed a bereaved Mary as an old hag, “whilst the mourning band of Disciples gesticulated and shook like the congregation of a Lithuanian ghetto synagogue.”)⁵⁵

Bakst left St. Petersburg for Paris, and there he studied under the most famous of the late-nineteenth-century orientalist painters, Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904). But ultimately, Bakst became famous not for his painting, but for his inspired work in stage and costume design for the ballet, and above all the Ballets Russes, which took Paris and London by storm just before the First World War. The Ballets Russes pushed well beyond the outer limits of Victorian taste, by their excursions into sexuality and violence. Bakst had visited Istanbul, Algiers, Tunis, Crete, and the Caucasus, and oriental settings became his trademark: ancient Egypt in the case of the ballet *Cleopatra*, Near Eastern antiquity in the instance of *Salomé*, and then his greatest triumph, the 1910 ballet *Schéhèrazade*, based upon a story from *A Thousand and One Nights*. An admirer later described Bakst as “the Delacroix of the costume.” Bakst’s was a highly erotic orientalism, itself a precursor to the liberation of sexuality which would distinguish the twentieth century from its predecessor.

Some of Bakst’s critics, and some biographers, located the source of his orientalism in his Jewish background. As one put it, “stimulated by a sort of atavistic instinct, having its roots, undoubtedly, in his Semitic origins, Bakst inhaled with delight all the emanations of the Oriental spirit.” During Bakst’s travels, claimed another critic, “the call of the Asiatic was indistinctly awakened in this Occidental Jew.”⁵⁶ Bakst probably owed as much to his immersion in the traditions of Russian and French orientalism. But he certainly enjoyed presenting himself as a living embodiment of the East, and in a “Who’s Who” entry which he provided, he even concocted for himself a bogus Sephardic lineage, stretching back to King David.

While the Islamic East could be admired for its sensuality, it could just as readily be admired for its austerity. This approach characterized the work of the prolific dramatist Friedrich Wolf (1888-1953), specifically his play *Mohammed*.⁵⁷ Wolf, born in Neuwied, Germany, rebelled against all convention as a young man, and in 1913 renounced Judaism without taking up another faith. During the First World War he served in Flanders as a physician, but declared himself a conscientious objector and was sent to a sanatorium. After the war, he became a communist, practiced homeopathic medicine, organized free medical service for the poor, and wrote many plays, the most famous of which, *Professor Mamlock* (1933), warned of impending disaster in Germany. He fought briefly in the Spanish Civil War, then took refuge in France, and spent the Second World War in Moscow. After the war, he settled in East Berlin, and he served for two years as East German ambassador to Poland. His son was the famous East German spymaster, Markus Wolf (b. 1923).

In 1917, Wolf wrote his first play, *Mohammed*, at the battlefield in Flanders, where he had a German translation of the Qur’an in his possession. “I find hope in Mohammed,” he wrote to his mother from the trenches, “bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh.” The play follows Muhammad from his youth through the *hijra*, the departure from Mecca to Medina. Wolf presents the Prophet as a great champion of social justice and fervent advocate of non-violence, who distributes his wealth and frees his slaves. The Meccan oligarchy

organizes against him, but he repels them by non-violent tactics, never raising a fist, until he finally chooses to migrate with his followers. Wolf's Muhammad repudiates crass materialism in this exchange with the wealthy of Mecca:

MUHAMMAD (RESOLUTELY): ...you already have too much and yet you reach for more; you hunt down the smallest advantage, cleverness becomes cunning, cunning becomes spite, power becomes violence, violence becomes rape, feuds start, blood flows, clans kill one another, and the race for more finally ends in the grave of nothingness.

ABU JAHL: The bleating of a lamb! A strong people needs land and power—just as the body needs nourishment—or else it suffers from need.

MUHAMMAD (FIERY): Need! How would you know what we are suffering from? The despair of the people is the despair of the heart! Do not imagine you can subdue the people with land and bread, with swords and gold! One measures a people not by how much power and how many possessions it needs, but by how little it needs to be great!⁵⁸

Wolf wrote these words in the midst of Europe's self-immolation, which he saw as the wage of greed. The play sought to turn Europe's prejudice against Islam on its head, holding up the Prophet Muhammad as an exemplar of non-violence to a Europe seemingly bent upon its own destruction. (To do so, the play had to end at the *hijra*, before Muhammad's confrontation with the Jews of Medina, and before his emergence as a conqueror in battle.) The play was published in 1924, and excited interest among some Muslims, who wrote to Wolf expressing hope that it might be performed. But it never reached the stage, and by then Wolf had made a different commitment, not to Islam but to communism. Still, he continued to revise the play almost up to his death.

Another Jew drew a different conclusion, based upon a similar reading of the Qur'an. Leopold Weiss (1900-92) was born in Austrian-ruled Lemberg (now Lvov, in Ukraine) and raised in Vienna. Although he received a traditional education, Weiss turned away from Judaism, and at the age of twenty went to Berlin to pursue a career as a writer and journalist. On a visit to Palestine in 1922, he became persuaded of the injustice of Zionism, and joined the prestigious *Frankfurter Zeitung* as a stringer. The newspaper later commissioned him to travel across the Middle East and produce a book.

But in 1926, after his return to Germany, Weiss converted to Islam. On a Berlin subway, he noticed "an expression of hidden suffering" upon the faces of the "well-dressed and well-

fed” passengers. They suffered because they were “without any goal beyond the desire to raise their own ‘standard of living’, without any hopes other than having more material amenities, more gadgets, and perhaps more power.” At home, his eye fell upon an open Qur’an he had been reading, to this verse: “You are obsessed by greed for more and more / Until you go down to your graves.”⁵⁹ All doubt in the Qur’an as a revealed book vanished, and he converted to Islam. Weiss, like Wolf, thought Islam averse to materialism, and it is telling that Weiss in 1926 should have fixed on precisely the same verse in the Qur’an (102) that Wolf puts in the mouth of Muhammad in his play published in 1924: “you already have too much and yet you reach for more... and the race for more finally ends in the grave of nothingness.” This idea of Islam as a spiritual antidote to Western materialism seems to have had a particular appeal to Jewish seekers who felt that their own faith failed to strike a balance in its encounter with capitalism.

Weiss took the name Muhammad Asad and departed for Saudi Arabia, where he lived as a Muslim and married an Arab woman (a union that produced Talal Asad, the noted anthropologist). He became an adviser to Ibn Saud, and wrote Arabia-bylined stories for German-language newspapers. In 1932, he broke with the Saudi monarch and left for India, where he emerged as an Islamic thinker. In 1952, Pakistan appointed Asad to its mission at the United Nations in New York, and in 1954 he published an immensely popular account of his travels and life, entitled *The Road to Mecca*. In his later years, he lived mostly in the West, and published a modernist translation of the Qur’an.

Asad believed that, in embracing Islam, he was actually continuing the tradition of Abraham, that the Arabian sky was “my sky,” the same sky that “vaulted over the long trek of my ancestors, those wandering herdsmen-warriors”—“that small beduin tribe of Hebrews.”⁶⁰ While this was hardly a new idea, Asad’s conclusion—conversion to Islam—did go far beyond the literary and scholarly expressions of “Semitic” solidarity made by other Jews. Still, in his idealization of Islam, Asad did not depart from the path followed by earlier Jewish romantics and orientalists. As I suggest in my [article](#) for this collection, his attempt to make the Qur’an speak to modern minds incorporated those very ideals that drove the reform of Judaism. Indeed, it was precisely this resemblance that made his project so suspect in the eyes of many Muslims.

The Palestine Option

In the first half of this century, several hundred thousands of European Jews settled and remained in Palestine, where they came into sustained contact with the religion, languages, and peoples of Islam. This process of discovery constituted an important chapter in the history of modern Zionism, but it came too late to have much of an impact upon Europe. For example, the Zionist encounter with the scenery and Arab inhabitants of Palestine produced a brief flowering of orientalist painting in the 1920s. But by the time European-born Jewish artists painted orientalist canvases, orientalism as a genre had waned in

Europe. Their works never reached European galleries and never entered the Western canon.⁶¹

But Jewish scholarship on Islam, transplanted to Palestine, did have a continuing impact, drawing as it did upon a century-long tradition. The founding in 1925 of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, in large part a project of German-speaking Jews, exercised a strong attraction upon a younger generation of scholars, influenced already in their teens by organized political Zionism, the Balfour Declaration, and anti-Semitism. The late Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, in her essay for this volume, sketches some of the figures who established the study of Islam in Jewish Palestine. Mention has been made of Josef Horovitz and Gotthold Weil, the first two directors of the School of Oriental Studies at the Hebrew University. These were men of an older generation, educated, tenured, and rooted in the universities of Frankfurt and Berlin. It is doubtful they would have ever relocated to Jerusalem of their own free wills. (Horovitz never did, Weil came only after the Nazis dismissed him from his post.)

But their immense influence was sufficient to set the Hebrew University on a trajectory determined by the priorities of German Jewish scholarship on Islam, with its emphasis on philology and the history of classical periods. In their own way, they regarded this as a practical choice. Horovitz, who had taught for years in a Muslim institution in India, wanted the new School of Oriental Studies to be respected in Muslim lands. The large projects he launched, such as the concordance of early Arabic poetry, were meant to stand up to exacting orientalist standards, but also to win Arab admiration.

In the conditions that prevailed in the 1930s, these emphases seemed like luxuries to some outside observers. A 1934 report by an external committee of inquiry, submitted to the board of governors of the university, related that the School of Oriental Studies “has been and still is criticized by many,” because it had “no other object in view than to give the students a picture of Moslem civilization of the past.” This would not do: Jewish Palestine

*is surrounded on all sides by the Moslem world, a thorough knowledge of which is of the greatest importance for the economic and political development of the country. For this purpose it is not the study of pre-Islamic poetry nor the study of old Arab historians that matters, but the study of the living Islamic world. Its geography, dialectology, and commerce are far more important to the Palestinian Jew than Islamic art and archeology. In short, the School of Oriental Studies should be modeled on similar schools in Paris, Berlin, and London, in which the student is made to know the living and not only the dead Orient.*⁶²

The committee dismissed the notion that the emphasis on classical Arabic and Islam would

win Muslim admiration: “It is now quite evident that no Arab will change his political views on the Jewish question because of the preparation by the Hebrew University of a Concordance of Ancient Arabic Poetry.” The School, concluded the committee, should “begin the kind of practical work that is expected from a school of this kind.”⁶³

Yet this view never prevailed. In the midst of the dispersal from Europe, immigrant Jews sought to duplicate in Palestine the conditions under which they had thrived—whether they were ultra-Orthodox Ostjuden departed from their Talmudic academies, or worldly academics departed from the universities of Mitteleuropa. Chains of scholarly transmission continued to transmit. Scholarly agendas fixed in *fin-de-siècle* Berlin and Frankfurt could not simply be abandoned, and they survived intact in the new centers of scholarship in Palestine, later Israel. Even the exacerbation of conflict with the Arabs did not alter these priorities.

Leo Ary Mayer (1895-1959) was the decisive figure in perpetuating this tradition—and deflecting criticisms of it. Mayer, born in Stanislav (in Austrian Poland), came from a strongly Zionist background, and he settled in Palestine in 1921, after completing his studies at the University of Vienna. His field was Islamic art and archeology, and he worked for the department of antiquities before joining the fledgling Hebrew University in 1925, the very year of its establishment. At the new university, the personable Mayer became a mandarin. He was the first local director of the School of Oriental Studies, which he guided from 1935 to 1949, while at the same time serving terms as dean and rector. In Palestine, Mayer had endless opportunities to explore the many facets of Islamic art, and embarked on a project to recover the identities of the great anonymous artisans of Islam, producing studies on architects, astrolabists, woodcarvers, metalworkers, and sword-cutlers. He was best known for two works, *Saracenic Heraldry* (1933) and *Mamluk Costume* (1952). A museum of Islamic art in Jerusalem—itsself an unabashed statement of admiration for the high civilization of Islam—today bears Mayer’s name.

Under the impetus of Horovitz’s plan and the protection of Mayer, the Hebrew University perpetuated central European traditions in philology and Islamwissenschaft. In her essay, Lazarus-Yafeh emphasizes the role of David Hartwig (Zvi) Baneth (1893-1973), the son of a noted Talmudist, in establishing exacting standards in both fields. Baneth, who was raised in Berlin and educated there and in Frankfurt, came to Palestine in 1924. He began teaching in the School of Oriental Studies two years later, and continued to do so for forty years, essentially following the Frankfurt curriculum. Baneth, who was famously self-effacing and equally demanding, published little in his field (Jewish thought expressed in Arabic), but played a decisive role in transplanting the rigorous standards of central European scholarship to Jerusalem. Thanks to Baneth and others, the study of early and classical Islam, with an emphasis upon philology, philosophy, religion, and art, became a hallmark of the Jerusalem school. The scholars in this field, listed by Hava-Lazarus, enjoyed formidable reputations for their exacting scholarship, and put the Hebrew University in the

first rank of Islamic studies.

Among the many scholars produced in Jerusalem, one carried its reputation far afield: Hungarian-born Samuel Stern (1920-69). Educated in a Benedictine school and a rabbinical seminary, Stern began to teach himself Arabic at the age of sixteen. In 1939, when war broke out, his mother sent him to Jerusalem, sparing him the grim fate that befell her and Budapest Jewry. At the Hebrew University, his star shined. ("Stern had no need to be taught anything anymore," recalled Baneth.) But the war of 1948 disrupted the university, and Stern, an asthmatic, could not be mobilized. He left for Oxford, where he prepared his doctorate under Sir Hamilton Gibb (1895-1971), and there he remained for the rest of his career.

Stern's interests ranged widely, from medieval poetry (in Arabic, Spanish, and Hebrew) to the dissident sects of Islam, via diplomatics and numismatics. Shulamit Sela, in her article for this collection, relates how Stern combined his Islamic and Jewish interests, and how he used Jewish sources, including the Geniza, to illuminate aspects of medieval Islamic history. Stern wished in the early 1950s to return to the Hebrew University, but no place could be found for him. Later, after he established himself in Oxford, he declined an offer from Jerusalem. Stern died young in 1969, his work uncompleted. His colleague Albert Hourani wrote in a eulogy that he came to Oxford as a stranger, and "he remained a stranger, not quite at home in the world."⁶⁴ In fact, he had a strong attachment to Jerusalem, and he bequeathed his house and library to the Hebrew University.

New Emphases in Jerusalem

Another approach also flourished in Jerusalem, which was prompted by a deepening interest in the evolution of Muslim societies. This interest in Islamic history as something larger than language, religion, and art took its first strides forward in the work of Shlomo Dov Goitein (1900-85). Goitein was born in Burgkunststadt, Germany, and studied under Horowitz in Frankfurt. He emigrated to Palestine in 1923, and in 1928 joined the faculty of the Hebrew University, where he taught until 1957. His early work dealt with Islamic religious institutions and Muslim history. In recalling this phase of Goitein's career, Lazarus-Yafeh points to his abiding interest in the religious manifestations of Islam, and their relationship to Judaism—the kind of concerns typical of his teachers in Germany and his colleagues in Jerusalem. Goitein himself remained a practicing Jew throughout his life.

But he broke completely new ground in his monumental work on the Geniza documents—research and writing largely undertaken after he left for the United States in 1957. R. Stephen Humphreys has suggested the importance of the Geniza (the documentary storehouse of the Jewish community of medieval Cairo): the study of Jewish history in medieval Islam "can yield social history of a depth which we cannot achieve for any other group, even the highly articulate and vastly larger Muslim majority." But because of the Jewish milieu in which these documents were created, notes Humphreys, "it helps to have

been brought up in an observant Jewish home and to have had some training in rabbinics.” Goitein was the perfect match for Geniza research, and in the five volumes of *A Mediterranean Society* (1967-88), he laid the foundations for a revolution in the social and economic history of Islam in the Middle Ages—an achievement Humphreys calls “one of the most impressive and moving in the history of our field.”⁶⁵ The Geniza documents continue to yield new insights, and are likely to remain at the epicenter of research on the social and economic history of the Muslim Middle Ages.

The Jerusalem school also led breakthroughs in the social and economic history of other periods. David Ayalon (Neustadt) (1914-98) personified the successful transplantation of the European tradition to Palestine. Born in Haifa, he was educated entirely at the Hebrew University (apart from one year spent at the American University of Beirut). He worked for a time for the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, and served in the British army during the Second World War. In 1947 he published (with Pessah Shinar) an Arabic-Hebrew dictionary that has maintained its preeminence to this day. In 1950, Ayalon joined the faculty of the Hebrew University, and began to center his research on the Mamluks of Egypt. His work was the first to elucidate the social underpinnings of the institution of military slavery, without which no understanding of late medieval Muslim history is possible.

Eliyahu Ashtor (Eduard Strauss) (1914-84) explored the economic history of this same period. Born in Vienna, Strauss came from a strongly Zionist background, and at the age of nineteen he published an ardent defense of Zionism against its Marxist critics. Strauss took his doctorate at the University of Vienna in 1936, and would have been ordained a rabbi had the Nazi annexation of Austria in 1938 not cut short his studies. He came to Palestine that year and became keeper of oriental books at the National and University Library. In 1955, Ashtor joined the faculty, and later published what became the standard history of the Jews of Muslim Spain, before taking up the economic and social history of the Muslim Middle Ages. In this work, Ashtor made extensive use of Geniza materials, combined with Arabic chronicles and European trade records. In doing so, he was critical of “the Orientalists themselves [who], with few exceptions, have always been interested in the spiritual life of the Moslems, in Islam and in Arabic literature. So many texts which indeed refer to social and economic life have been overlooked or misunderstood.” It was his purpose to show that the Muslim East in the Middle Ages was “not at all a static, unchanging society,” and that “the bourgeois played a great role in political history and that there were strong revolutionary movements.”⁶⁶

The new emphasis on social history also characterized the career of Gabriel Baer (1919-82). Born in Berlin, Baer escaped to Haifa in 1933. He studied at the American University of Beirut and the Hebrew University, where he prepared under Goitein. In 1954, he joined the faculty of the Hebrew University, specializing in nineteenth-century social history, with an emphasis on Egypt. Baer did pioneering work on the history of guilds, landownership, and urban-rural relations, challenging entrenched myths. He died in the midst of an ambitious

project on Muslim endowments. A German scholar has described him as a rebel against scholarly convention:

His studies of specific social institutions within history contributed greatly to demolish the traditional orientalist view of an “Islamic” or “Arab” or “Middle Eastern” society as a uniform and static phenomenon. These facile generalizations of an “Islamic” mode of thought or behavior were unacceptable to him. In his opinion, the term “Islamic city,” for instance, could not account for the great differences and creative variations over space and time which could be observed for the city in the area.⁶⁷

Yet Baer “refused to replace the simplistic traditional orientalist approach with the fashionable but often facile theories and models of more recent origin.”⁶⁸

The same could be said of the entire Jerusalem school of social and economic history. Its practitioners sought to expand the perimeters of history, to widen the lens to include the breadth of society. But they were reluctant to trade tested tools for untested theories. The solidity and density of their work established standards of evidence and explanation that have not been superseded.

As late as 1948, the entire Jewish community of the country numbered only half a million, a narrow base to sustain the importation of so much specialized scholarship. The war of 1948 and the years of austerity and isolation that followed it were difficult ones at the Hebrew University. The campus on Mt. Scopus became inaccessible, conditions were far from ideal, and academic positions were few compared to the number of immigrant scholars. Jewish scholars who once freely traversed the region became Israeli scholars, isolated from sustained contact with Arab-Muslim colleagues, important archives and libraries.

Given these circumstances, the successful transfer of the Jewish tradition of scholarship on Islam to Palestine and Israel must be regarded as a signal achievement. The Hebrew University built directly upon the hugely influential legacies of central European Islamwissenschaft. And despite the difficulties, contact with the living East made for a diversification, which carried scholarship beyond the study of Islam as religion, to include the study of the social and economic history of Muslim peoples, and even the realities of contemporary Islam. In many of these areas, the Jerusalem school and its offshoots in newer Israeli universities not only held their own but helped to define the evolving international research agenda as oriental studies gave way to the disciplines.

The Continental Remnant

The Jewish tradition of Islamic studies in central Europe, especially in Germany, generated

immense energy at its height, and continued to do so after its displacement to Palestine, the United States, and Britain. The permanent departure of these scholars left a void in the heart of Europe. Yet Jews also occupied a significant place in the French and Italian traditions of Islamic studies. Jewish Islamicists from France and Italy knew less of the efforts to reconcile Judaism and modernity than did their German Jewish counterparts, many of who had rabbinical training. They tended to be more assimilated, less grounded in the Jewish tradition, less interested in the comparison of Islam and Judaism, and more influenced by Europe's reigning ideologies. Like their German Jewish counterparts, they were displaced by the war, but unlike them, they returned afterwards to the same universities, where they continued to exercise a profound influence on Islamic studies.

Giorgio Levi Della Vida (1886-1967) was born in the Piedmont of Italy, to a highly assimilated family of mixed Italian and Spanish origin. "For two generations," he testified,

*my family had detached itself from the practice of the Jewish religion. Brought up without any religious indoctrination, supposedly substituted by the vague theism of my mother and by the religion of duty and humanism of my father, one day I found within and around myself a great void which needed to be filled. Two ways were open to me: the return to the ancestral faith, of which I perceived the august majesty and which my family had put aside without formally denying it; or the resolute entry into the fold of the Catholic Church, which attracted me by its harmonious and solid doctrinal structure and by the very strong emotional charge of its cult.*⁶⁹

But Levi Della Vida opened a third way: the comparative study of religion and Semitic languages, a labor that provided a measure of spiritual sustenance. He prepared himself by assisting Prince Leone Caetani (1869-1935) in the monumental translation project, the *Annali dell'Islam*. Such preparation enabled him in 1914 to secure the chair of Arabic at the University of Naples, and in 1920 he occupied the chair of Hebrew and comparative Semitic languages at the University of Rome. Yet Levi Della Vida's horizons were much broader than philology. He synthesized many disciplines in his work, and he criticized orientalists who "do not see nor hear anything outside the closed and arid field of their erudite researches." He also showed political courage. At the end of 1931, Levi Della Vida was one of twelve lecturers, out of 1,225 university faculty, who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Fascist regime—this, at a time when most Italian intellectuals, Jews among them, supported Fascism. His principled stand cost him his professorship. In 1939, he relocated to the University of Pennsylvania, where he taught until his reinstatement in Rome in 1948.

Evariste Lévi-Provençal (1894-1956) completely obscured his Jewish antecedents, although

he earned his fame for his work on Islamic Spain, the very font of Jewish romanticism. Born in Algeria, Lévi-Provençal remained extremely reticent about his origins. He made a point of noting his military service to France in the First World War (he was wounded in the Dardanelles in 1917), his years of teaching and research in Rabat (he joined the Institut des hautes études marocaines in 1922), and his chair at the University of Algiers (occupied from 1935). But he was careful never to hint at his Jewish origins. Was this due to his thorough assimilation, or to the pervasiveness in France of the “banal” anti-Semitism personified by Massignon? Lévi-Provençal certainly fell victim to the latter: Vichy racial laws unseated him from his Algiers chair. It was during his “enforced leisure” that he began his three-volume *Histoire de l’Espagne musulmane* (1944-53), a synthesis that superseded its predecessors and has yet to be superseded.

As David Wasserstein notes in his essay for this volume, Lévi-Provençal seemed to avert his gaze deliberately from the crucial contribution of Jews to the life of Islamic Spain, and made no use of very rich Jewish sources. The reasons may have been technical. (Lévi-Provençal apparently knew no Hebrew, and had no background in Jewish studies.) Or they may have run deeper. The Jewish absence leaves Lévi-Provençal’s history of Muslim Spain an unreservedly French history, just as he gave himself an unreservedly French biography, culminating in service as an officer in the ranks of Free France. After the war, he relocated to Paris, where he became professor at the Sorbonne and the director of two institutes, for Islamic studies and the contemporary Middle East. But loyal as he was to France, he did not confuse France with French empire. In Paris, Lévi-Provençal became a critic of attempts to reestablish France’s damaged standing in North Africa by force, and was later an active member of the liberal Comité France-Maghreb.

Robert Brunschvig (1901-90) shared some of these scholarly commitments, but had much firmer Jewish moorings. Born in Bordeaux, he arrived in Tunis in 1922, where he taught French at a *lycée* for eight years. There he became interested in history, and he gained an appointment as professor in Muslim civilization at the University of Algiers in 1932. Brunschvig was also an avowed and charismatic Zionist, of the revisionist school of Jabotinsky, and a community activist who organized a parallel educational system for 20,000 Jewish children driven out of Algeria’s schools by the Vichy regime. (Brunschvig likewise was dismissed from the university.) After the war, he taught at the University of Bordeaux, and from 1955 to his retirement in 1968, at the Sorbonne, where he also headed the Institut d’études islamiques. Brunschvig specialized in North African Islam in the medieval period and the history of Islamic law, and became best known for his exemplary two-volume history of the Hafsid dynasty, *La Berbérie orientale sous les Hafsides* (1940-47). His work on North Africa, in contrast to Lévi-Provençal’s on Muslim Spain, included very dense accounts of Jewish life, based in part upon a close reading of rabbinic responsa.

Claude Cahen (1909-91) concentrated upon the Muslim East. Born in Paris, he received his *diplôme* in Arabic from the École des langues orientales in Paris in 1931, and undertook a

research trip to Turkey in 1936 that set his scholarly agenda. After the war, Cahen taught at the University of Strasbourg, where he founded the first journal devoted to the social and economic history of the East. In 1959, he went to the Sorbonne, where he taught for twenty years. Cahen specialized in the economy of the medieval Muslim world, with an emphasis on Anatolia and the Levant. Hourani has described Cahen's work as "perhaps the most systematic attempt to apply mature sociological concepts to the realities of Islamic society."⁷⁰ In doing so, he created an alternative to the heavy emphasis on religion and theology in French Islamic studies, itself the legacy of Massignon.

Cahen was more than ambivalent about his origins. An avowed communist, he once told a colleague outright, "I am not a Jew." In a document from the war years only recently published, he took a different tack: "I am [a Jew], it is a fact. I draw no pride or shame from it, I see it neither as a sign of a providential designation, nor as an outcome of my own will...Nothing in my education or associations has prepared me to declare myself a member any group other than humanity or France, or a professional community, an ideal, an action—the many forms of acceptable solidarity." He disliked

*encountering people who, due only to an accident of birth, treat you as someone who shares ideas and communal sentiments with them, who shares in their interests...in a word, members of a kind of conspiracy that positions you against the rest of humanity or the nation. It is still more disagreeable when circumstances make it impossible to disavow this solidarity without effectively breaking that other tie, so noble and consensual, which must bind us to any category of people who suffer.*⁷¹

Maxime Rodinson (b. 1915) had similar ideological commitments, although he struck a different balance between history and politics. Rodinson was born to Russian-Polish immigrant parents in an impoverished working-class neighborhood of Paris. He grew up in a home and surroundings that were fervently communist and Stalinist, "de-Judaized," and anti-Zionist. In 1932 he entered the *École des langues orientales* to prepare for a career as a diplomat-interpreter, and there took up the study of Arabic. Later he decided to prepare a thesis in comparative Semitics. Rodinson had none of the advantages brought to this field by other Jewish students. He was "initially quite ignorant of the Jewish religion," and his parents "were dismayed when they saw me learning Hebrew. For them, Hebrew was the language of the rabbis, and when they saw I was copying Hebrew letters they said, 'Look how he has tumbled into such foolishness.'"⁷² (His parents both perished in Auschwitz in 1943.) Rodinson spent the war years in Lebanon (in Sidon and then in Beirut), before becoming a librarian at the *Bibliothèque nationale* in Paris in 1948. In 1955, he began to teach at the *École pratique des hautes études*. Rodinson joined the French communist party in 1937; he left it in 1958.

Rodinson's seven years in Lebanon drew him to the study of the Muslim world. His work combined sociological and Marxist theorizing in an accessible (and polemical) style. Rodinson became best known for his 1961 biography of Muhammad ("probably in an unconscious fashion, I compared him to Stalin"),⁷³ a work of deep empathy setting the Prophet within a social context, but one resented by many Muslims because of its atheistic premises. In his *Islam et le capitalisme* (1966), Rodinson took issue with the view, widespread in Europe, that Islam hindered the development of capitalism and thus explained the underdevelopment of the Muslim world. At the same time, he did not accept the apologetic Muslim view of Islam as egalitarian. Islam was a completely neutral element, overridden by social factors—a position in accord with his theoretical premises. He credited his Marxism with "opening my eyes and making me understand and say that the world of Islam was subject to the same laws and tendencies as the rest of the human race."⁷⁴

Like other Jewish Marxists (and, indeed, Marx himself), Rodinson judged the Jews by another standard: "I confess a repugnance for Jewish nationalism (common among very many Jews of my generation) even stronger than the repugnance I feel for other nationalisms, as strong as it is."⁷⁵ Rodinson was an avowed anti-Zionist, whose views resembled Cahen's. But unlike Cahen, he published his positions repeatedly, especially after 1967, in articles and books. Rodinson regarded Judaism as a personal choice (which he rejected: "I have always had a greater repugnance for Jewish ritual than for any other"),⁷⁶ and he saw Israel as a colonial project, which could only be implemented through the wrongful displacement of Palestinian Arabs. But in later years he concluded that Israel's Jewish inhabitants, under changed historical circumstances, had become "a new nationality with a culture of its own," and that Israel rested on international legality, hence the necessity for mutual reconciliation. Rodinson's political engagements were never far beneath the surface of his scholarship. He once compared himself to the controversial philosopher Levi ben Gershom (1288-1344), who saw his struggles over ideas as "wars for God."⁷⁷ This was a far cry from the traditional scholarly detachment from politics, but the dislocations of twentieth-century Europe, from the Holocaust to decolonization, made such detachment difficult to maintain or justify.

These changes also eliminated continental Europe as a center of Jewish accomplishment in Islamic studies. The Italian and French Jewish scholars, who embarked on their careers before the war, finished them in Europe. But Jews then disappeared from the field. Not only were there far fewer Jewish academics in Europe, there were far more Muslims, and these would come to play the more significant role in the years following the war.

The End of Mystique

Most Jews drew very different conclusions from the Holocaust and the creation of Israel than those drawn by Rodinson. For many Jewish scholars of Islam, the experiences of the

war put in question the spirit that had underpinned favorable European Jewish approaches to Islam. “The [Arab] masses preponderantly favored a German victory,” acknowledges the Tunisian historian Hichem Djaït, “through which they hoped to be freed from colonialist rule. Beyond that, Nazism fueled the anti-Semitism that undeniably smoldered among the common people—who had no idea of the scope of Nazi persecution or of the dreadful atrocities being committed in Europe.”⁷⁸ Muslim anti-Semitism cast into doubt the very premises of a Jewish scholarly tradition that had presented Islam to Europe as a model of tolerance, especially toward Jews. Outbreaks of violence against the ancient Jewish communities of Muslim lands eventually led to their emigration and sometimes their outright expulsion. Arab opposition to Israel in the early years often employed anti-Semitic motifs, as did the Soviet effort to delegitimize Israel as racist. All of these revolutions in the Jewish condition fundamentally altered the vantage point from which many Jewish scholars viewed the Arab and Muslim worlds. Bernard Lewis (b. 1916) came to personify the post-war shift from a sympathetic to a critical posture.

Lewis was born to middle-class Jewish parents in London, and he began to study law. But he became captivated by history, which he studied at the University of London. As a youth, Lewis received a solid training in Hebrew, in which he composed both prose and poetry. Hebrew thus became his gateway to Arabic, and he later allowed that his own Jewish education made it easier for him to understand Islam, and even sympathize with its premises.⁷⁹ There were those who attributed his aptitude to his origins, as did Sir Cyril Philips (b. 1912), a pillar of the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London:

Capitalizing on the initial advantage of a Jewish background and knowledge of Hebrew, [Lewis] had gone on to achieve a first-class and higher degree in the history of the Near East and also an enviable command of Arabic and Turkish; and his abilities and qualifications were so obviously outstanding that I sought the earliest opportunity to get him established beside me with the rank of professor.⁸⁰

This was 1945, by which time Lewis had been through Syria on research, done a year in Paris under Massignon, received his doctorate, and spent the war years in intelligence work. He remained at the School of Oriental and African Studies until 1974, during which time he became the most influential post-war historian of Islam and the Middle East.

While Lewis possessed all the tools of orientalist scholarship, he was a historian by training and discipline, intimately familiar with new trends in historical writing. Along with Cahen, he was one of the first historians to apply new approaches in economic and social history to the Islamic world. While a student in Paris, Lewis had a brief encounter with the Annales school, which inspired an early and influential article on guilds in Islamic history. He

subsequently refused the straightjacket of any overarching theory, and especially Marxism, which he regarded as particularly unsuited to an understanding of the Middle East. But his studies of dissident Muslim sects, slaves, and Jews in Muslim societies broke new ground by expanding the scope of history beyond the palace and the mosque.

Lewis's early work centered upon medieval Arab-Islamic history, especially in what is now Syria. However, after the creation of Israel, it became difficult for Jewish scholars to conduct archival and field research in many of the eastern Arab countries. Lewis turned his efforts to the study of these Arab lands through Ottoman archives available in Istanbul, and to the study of the Ottoman empire itself. His great classic, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (1961), examined the history of modernizing reform not through European diplomacy of the "Eastern Question," but through the eyes of the Ottoman reformers themselves. Lewis relied almost entirely on Turkish sources, and his history from within became a model for many other studies of nineteenth-century reform in the Middle East. It also signaled his own deepening interest in the history of ideas and attitudes in Islam's relationship to the West.

While Lewis's work demonstrated a remarkable capacity for empathy across time and place, he stood firm against the growing ideological third worldism of Western intellectuals and scholars. Lewis had an unshakable liberal commitment to democracy and its dissemination. With the onset of the cold war, he became alarmed by the expansion of Soviet influence in the Middle East, and the erosion in the Arab lands of the last vestiges of liberalism by strident anti-Western nationalism. In these years, he wrote, "the choices before us still retained something of the clarity, even the starkness, which they had kept through the war years and which they have subsequently lost."⁸¹ Certainly the choices made by Israel and Turkey—in favor of democracy and Western alliances—were his own moral preferences, and led to his growing identification with both countries, where he came to enjoy a broad influence.

In 1974, Lewis relocated to Princeton University and the Institute for Advanced Study, precisely at a time when orientalism as a branch of scholarship came under a combined attack by Arab-Muslim nationalists and Western post-modernists. These argued that the modern study of Islam in the West had evolved as a tool of imperialist domination, and that the West's pursuit of knowledge had conspired with its pursuit of power. Orientalism, effectively a form of racism, had misrepresented Islam as static, irrational, and in permanent opposition to the West. Lewis, whose own work was maligned in the campaign, offered a vigorous refutation. The development of orientalism, he argued, should be understood as a facet of Europe's humanism, which arose independently of, and sometimes in opposition to, imperial interests. It was precisely the orientalists who broke the grip of medieval prejudice against Islam, and who diversified the representation of Islam in the West. Lewis also rejected the view that only Muslims, Arabs, or their political sympathizers could write the region's history: he called this "intellectual protectionism." A

combination of curiosity, empathy, competence, and self-awareness was the only prerequisite for the writing of “other people’s history.”

The orientalism debate developed, in part, as a consequence of the large-scale entry of Arabs and Muslims into institutions of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies in the West. These now staked a claim to that “initial advantage” of intimacy with Islamic culture and the languages of its expression formerly claimed by Jews in the West. Yet no one could displace Lewis as preeminent interpreter of Islam, for his stature rested upon his elegant syntheses for general audiences, which were translated into over twenty languages, and which made his name synonymous with Islamic history for educated publics in the West. Neither could any scholar match what Humphreys calls “the extraordinary range of [Lewis's] scholarship, his capacity to command the totality of Islamic and Middle Eastern history from Muhammad down to the present day. This is not merely a matter of erudition; rather, it reflects an almost unparalleled ability to fit things together into a detailed and comprehensive synthesis. In this regard, it is hard to imagine that Lewis will have any true successors.”⁸²

A Jewish Contribution?

With Lewis, a chapter closed not only in the development of the Western understanding of Islam, but also in the role of Jews as interpreters of Islam in the West. Europe began that chapter as the prime center for the processing of Western (and Jewish) knowledge of Islam. Jews were the first to disappear from the field in Europe, but others followed, driven out by totalitarian rule. After mid-century, many more of Europe’s leading scholars moved to America. From Cambridge to California, America’s institutions imported Europeans, and the center of gravity of the Western understanding of Islam crossed the Atlantic.

The past was now forgotten. Nikki Keddie has pointed to the absence of a sense for the ways knowledge accumulates over time, as a succession of contributions:

*[T]he giants of the recent past tend to be largely forgotten as soon as they are dead if not before, especially if what they have written isn’t what is now considered fashionable or central. There is also an optical illusion, in the sense that much of what these people have contributed is not recognized because it has entered so much into the field that people do not realize how novel a contribution it was. They are criticized when they are in error, but their achievements are forgotten. So Middle Eastern history has become a field without its own history.*⁸³

It has been easiest to forget many of the Jewish “discoverers” of Islam, especially those who wrote in German or lost crucial parts of their careers to war and wandering. Many of

their names are no longer recognized, many of their writings are no longer read.

Yet these Jewish “discoverers” left behind an identifiable legacy. They contributed to Europe’s initial willingness to reevaluate Islam in an objective and even positive light. The Enlightenment in Europe had not banished ignorance of Islam or the tendency to denigrate it, both a legacy of medieval Christian prejudice. One historian of Western scholarship has written that “if we take a closer look at the many studies of Islam written between 1650 and, say, 1830, we see that prejudice, rather than disappearing, was usually only being modified or shifting from one object to another.”⁸⁴ It was Geiger’s essay of 1833 that broke with this prejudice, and Goldziher’s subsequent work that consolidated the new approach. Time after time, for over a century, Jews were among the first to arrive at insights that would serve as the basis for a modern and objective appreciation of Islam. This would have happened without the Jews; it happened earlier because of them.

They were motivated, for the most part, not by the kind of Islamophilia that found adherents on Europe’s cultural margins, and which was always suspect for its association with radicals and dilettantes. The Jews, on the contrary, hoped to assume their place in Europe’s cultural centers, in its great universities, newspapers, and theatres. They began their discovery of Islam at a time and place in the nineteenth century when some form of assimilation still represented their preferred option. Under these conditions, the favorable portrayal of the Jews under Islam, and the sympathetic study of Islam itself, served a purpose. They demonstrated the leavening role of Jews in the civilization of Islam in a past age when Islam had changed the world, and suggested that Jews could play that role for modern Europe.

The work of Jewish orientalists—liberals and Marxists, Zionists and assimilationists, believers and atheists—subverted the idea that East and West were polar opposites. Much of Europe debated whether the Jews belonged to one or the other; Jews replied that the question itself lacked validity. The work of Jewish orientalists at every turn challenged the tendency to interpret Islam or Judaism *sui generis*, and their message was remarkably uniform: Islamic history (like Jewish history) can be subjected to the same analytical tools as Europe’s; Europe’s civilization rests also on Islamic (and Jewish) foundations; Islam (like Judaism) is no anachronism, but undergoes constant adaptation, and would accommodate even European modernity. Jews urged European respect for peoples bearing cultures of extra-European origin, precisely because the Jews were the most vulnerable of these peoples, residing as they did in the very center of Europe.

Paradoxically, while Europe gradually assimilated this approach to Islam, it often declined to assimilate its Jewish bearers. Anti-Semitism in central Europe, and its manifestations in eastern and western Europe, undermined the project of Jewish assimilation. Jews were chased from the universities, then from the continent, as a prelude to the “final solution.” Yet their contribution to the understanding of Islam could not be erased from consciousness of Europe, even where their very names were excised from bibliographies.

Goldziher's influence on Islamic studies remained as profound as Durkheim's on sociology and Freud's on psychology. And the respect for Islam that Jews had done so much to disseminate not only survived in Europe but served as the basis for Europe's tolerance of Muslim minorities after the war. The mosque-like synagogues erected by Jewish communities in the nineteenth century prepared Europe to accept the real mosques which Muslim communities erected across the continent in the twentieth. Indeed, in the absence of Jews, Muslim migrants became primary beneficiaries of the regret felt by new European elites for Europe's failing of the Jews.

The history of Europe's discovery of Islam is being written piecemeal—a chapter here, an article there. Eventually this work will be synthesized, and the relative significance of the Jewish contribution—and indeed, the very idea of such a contribution—will have to be weighed carefully. The question has been posed. It may prove difficult to answer. To judge from the articles that follow, it will be impossible to ignore.

Notes

¹Bernard Lewis, "The Pro-Islamic Jews," in his *Islam in History: Ideas, People, and Events in the Middle East*, new rev. ed. (Chicago: Open Court, 1993), 142, 144.

²Bernard Lewis, "The State of Middle Eastern Studies," *American Scholar* 48, no. 3 (summer 1979): 369-70.

³Bernard Lewis, "The Study of Islam," in his *Islam in History*, 12.

⁴Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

⁵Maxime Rodinson, "Western Views of the Muslim World," in his *Europe and the Mystique of Islam*, trans. Roger Veinus (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987), 3-82.

⁶Albert Hourani, "Islam and the Philosophers of History," in his *Europe and the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 19-73 (on Goldziher, 51-53); idem, "Islam in European Thought," in his *Islam in European Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 7-60 (on Goldziher, 36-41). "Edward [Said] totally ignores the German tradition and philosophy of history which was the central tradition of the orientalist," said Hourani in an interview. "Therefore among others he has ignored Goldziher." *Approaches to the History of the Middle East: Interviews with Leading Middle East Historians*, ed. Nancy Elizabeth Gallagher (London: Ithaca Press, 1994), 43.

⁷On Heine's orientalism, see Mounir Fendri, *Halbmond, Kreuz und Schibboleth: Heinrich Heine und der islamische Orient* (Hamburg: Heinrich Heine Verlag, 1980); and Christiane Barbara Pfeifer, *Heine und der islamische Orient*, Mizan, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1990).

⁸On Heine's reading in orientalist sources, see *Heinrich Heine. Säkularausgabe*, vol. 4K (Kommentar) (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996), 21-46.

⁹*Ibid.*, vol. 1 (Gedichte, 1812-1827) (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1979), 140. (The lines are from the poem.)

¹⁰*Ibid.*, vol. 4 (Tragödien, Frühe Prosa, 1820-1831) (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1981), 15.

¹¹Ibid., 11.

¹²Hichem Djaït, "Islam and German Thought," in his *Europe and Islam*, trans. Peter Heinegg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 75.

¹³For an extensive survey, see Hannelore Kunzl, *Islamische Stilelemente im Synagogenbau des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts*, Judentum und Umwelt, vol. 9 (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1984).

¹⁴Albert Rosengarten, *A Handbook of Architectural Styles*, trans. W. Collett-Sandars (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878), 485 (originally published in 1857). Rosengarten was the first modern architect of Jewish birth in Germany, and a critic of the "Moorish" style, which he thought lacked the "elevating effect" of the Romanesque and Gothic styles.

¹⁵Cf. John Sweetman, *The Oriental Obsession: Islamic Inspiration in British and American Art and Architecture 1500-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Sweetman (287 n.13) points to the role of synagogues in familiarizing Europe with Islamic architectural forms. But he attributes use of these forms to an "urgent Zionism which sought to draw attention to Palestine as the true home of the Jews...the interesting fact remains the choice, by Jews disenchanted with Europe, of Islamic dome and minaret-forms." He also writes (236) that in adopting these architectural forms, "the Jews sought to give expression to their sense of alienation in Europe." This interpretation misses the mark. The Moorish style was most popular with the most assimilationist and anti-Zionist segments of European (and American) Jewry. Another verdict on one of the most famous Moorish synagogues in Europe, the Oranienburgerstrasse synagogue in Berlin, is applicable to the style as a whole: it "revealed the taste for Reform and modernity and cultural assimilation," and expressed "optimism and confidence." Carol Herselle Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe: Architecture, History, Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), 270.

¹⁶Philippe Jullian, *The Orientalists: European Painters of Eastern Scenes* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1977), 146. These painters represented Jewish life in their work, but Jewish women also served as models substituting for Muslims: "Access to Muslim households and harems was notoriously difficult through the [nineteenth] century, and even in the 1880s Renoir complained of the difficulty of finding suitable models. In general, artists drew their subjects from the local Jewish population." *The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse*, ed. Mary Anne Stevens (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1984), 177.

¹⁷The famous landmarks: Delacroix's *Noce juive* (c. 1837-41, Louvre) and *Musiciens juifs de Mogador* (1847, Louvre); Chassériau's *Le Jour de Sabbat dans le quartier juif à Constantine* (c. 1847, lost to fire); and Dehondencq's *Mariée juive au Maroc* (c. 1870, Musée de Reims).

¹⁸For Arabia, Spain, and English romanticism, see Kathryn Tidrick, *Heart-Beguiling Araby: The English Romance with Arabia*, rev. ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 1989), 32-53; and the exhibition catalogue *The Romantic Image of the Legacy of Al-Andalus* (Granada: Presidential Committee of the Legacy of Al-Andalus, 1995), 30-44.

¹⁹Benjamin Disraeli, *Coningsby or the New Generation* (London: The Bodley Head, 1927), 289. (The passage appears in book 4, chapter 10.)

²⁰Lord Cromer (Evelyn Baring) quoted by Anthony S. Wohl, "'Dizzi-Ben-Dizzi': Disraeli as

Alien," *Journal of British Studies* 34, no. 3 (July 1995): 397.

²¹Quoted by Paul Mendes-Flohr, "Fin de Siècle Orientalism, the Ostjuden, and the Aesthetics of Jewish Self-Affirmation," in his *Divided Passions: Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 81.

²²They included David D'Beth Hillel (d. 1846), who spent a year in Baghdad, visited the Shi'ite shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala, and wrote a unique account of dissident sects of western Persia; Israel Joseph Benjamin (1818-64), who traversed Syria, Iraq, Persia, and Afghanistan, then crossed all of North Africa, and published an account; Jacob Eduard Polak (1820-91), physician to Shah Nasir al-Din (r. 1848-96); and Hermann Burchardt (1857-1909), photographer and ethnologist, who died at the hands of marauders between San'a and Mecca.

²³Arminius Vámbéry, "The Future of Constitutional Turkey," *The Nineteenth Century and After* (March 1909): 361-62.

²⁴Steinschneider's work did have an impact on Islamic studies; see Franz Rosenthal, "Steinschneider's Contribution to the Study of Muslim Civilization," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research* 27 (1958): 67-81.

²⁵Quoted by Lassner, 107 below.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Ibid.*, 106.

²⁸Lewis, "Pro-Islamic Jews," 142.

²⁹Jules Mohl, quoted by D.M. Dunlop, "Some Remarks on Weil's History of the Caliphs," in *Historians of the Middle East*, eds. Bernard Lewis and P.M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 320.

³⁰Mary Louis Gude, *Louis Massignon: The Crucible of Compassion* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 17-18, 251 n.44.

³¹Quoted by Daniel Rivet, "Les délices de l'ailleurs," *Télérama hors-série: Delacroix* (September 1994): 44.

³²Theodor Nöldeke quoted by Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), 45-46.

³³Quoted by Róbert Simon, *Ignác Goldziher: His Life and Scholarship as Reflected in his Works and Correspondence* (Budapest and Leiden: Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and Brill, 1986), 20.

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵Quoted in *Scholarship and Friendship in Early Islamwissenschaft: The Letters of C. Snouck Hurgronje to I. Goldziher*, ed. P.Sj. van Koningsveld (Leiden: Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, 1985), xiv.

³⁶Cf. Jean-Jacques Waardenburg, *L'Islam dans le miroir de l'occident*, 3d rev. ed. (Paris and the Hague: Mouton, 1962), 266.

³⁷Raphel Patai, *Ignaz Goldziher and His Oriental Diary* (Detroit: Wayne State University

Press, 1987), 20.

³⁸Ibid., 28.

³⁹Ibid., 144.

⁴⁰Quoted by Simon, *Ignác Goldziher*, 44.

⁴¹Quoted by Simon, *ibid.*, 61.

⁴²Quoted by Simon, *ibid.*, 60. After Goldziher's death, the new Hebrew University purchased his library of 6,000 books and transferred it to Jerusalem.

⁴³Hourani, *Islam in European Thought*, 2.

⁴⁴Interview with Hourani, in *Approaches to the History of the Middle East*, 42.

⁴⁵Jaroslav Stetkevych, "Arabic Poetry and Assorted Poetics," in *Islamic Studies: A Tradition and its Problems*, ed. Malcolm Kerr (Malibu, Calif.: Undena, 1980), 120-22.

⁴⁶Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 12-13.

⁴⁷Albert Hourani, "Patterns of the Past," in *Paths to the Middle East: Ten Scholars Look Back*, ed. Thomas Naff (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 38.

⁴⁸The Iranologist Fritz Wolff (1880-1943) was an exception, and did perish. The Arabist Werner Caskel (1896-1970), although not Jewish by any other criterion, had a Jewish father. He was dismissed from the University of Greifswald in 1938, and narrowly avoided deportation. The Turcologist Franz Babinger (1891-1967) had a grandmother of Jewish birth. In 1934, *Der Strümer* denounced him as racially tainted and he left Germany.

⁴⁹Hans Heinrich Schaeder, "Deutsche Orientforschung," *Der Nahe Osten* (Berlin) 1 (1940): 129-34.

⁵⁰Baber Johansen, "Politics, Paradigms and the Progress of Oriental Studies: The German Oriental Society (Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft) 1845-1989," *M.A.R.S.* (Paris), 4 (winter 1995): 88.

⁵¹D.H. Baneth, quoted by Kraemer, 181 below.

⁵²Massignon (Paris) to Henri Gaillard (Cairo), 12 December 1933, in the archives of the French embassy in Cairo, Archives du MAE, Nantes, carton 74/14 ("Français islamisants"). For Jews and other Germans at the University of Istanbul, see Hort Wildmann, *Exil und Bildungshilfe: Die deutschsprachige akademische Emigration in die Türkei nach 1933* (Bern: Herbert Lang, 1973).

⁵³Massignon's letter to *Nouveaux Cahiers*, quoted by Christian Destremau and Jean Moncelon, *Louis Massignon* (Paris: Plon, 1994), 257.

⁵⁴Ibid., 258.

⁵⁵Charles Spencer, *Léon Bakst and the Ballets Russes*, rev. ed. (London: Academy Editions, 1995), 19.

⁵⁶Ibid., 77, quoting Louis Reau and André Levinson.

⁵⁷For Wolf and his play, see Donna K. Heizer, *Jewish-German Identity in the Orientalist Literature of Else Lasker-Schuler, Friedrich Wolf, and Franz Werfel* (Columbia, South Carolina:

Camden House, 1996), 50-66.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 58.

⁵⁹Muhammad Asad, *The Road to Mecca* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 309.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 49.

⁶¹For examples of the genre, see the exhibition catalogue *To the East: Orientalism in the Arts in Israel* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1998).

⁶²Report of the Survey Committee of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1934, quoted by Menahem Milson, "The Beginnings of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem," *Judaism* 45 (1996): 175-76. The committee was headed by the British Jewish educator Sir Philip Hartog (1864-1947), who had been involved in the founding of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, and who had served from 1920 to 1925 as the first vice chancellor of the University of Dacca in Bengal.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 176.

⁶⁴Quoted by Sela, 264 below.

⁶⁵R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 262, 264, 268.

⁶⁶E. Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 7-8.

⁶⁷Thomas Philipp, "In Memoriam: Gabriel Baer 1919-1982," *Middle Eastern Studies* 19 (1983): 275-76.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

⁶⁹Quoted by Dan V. Segre, "Patriotism and Faith: Giorgio Levi Della Vida," *Middle Eastern Lectures* 2 (1997): 96.

⁷⁰Hourani, "Islam and the Philosophers of History," 73.

⁷¹"Claude Cahen: Histoire et engagement politique, entretien avec Maxime Rodinson," *Arabica* 43 (January 1996): 23, n. 21.

⁷²Interview with Rodinson, in *Approaches to the History of the Middle East*, 113.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 119.

⁷⁴Maxime Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World*, trans. Jean Matthews (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981), 22.

⁷⁵Maxime Rodinson, *Cult, Ghetto, and State: The Persistence of the Jewish Question*, trans. Jon Rothschild (London: Al Saqi, 1983), 10.

⁷⁶"Entretien avec Maxime Rodinson," *M.A.R.S.* (Paris), 4 (winter 1995): 27.

⁷⁷"Un texte inédit de Maxime Rodinson sur Maxime Rodinson," in *Le Cuisiner et le philosophe: Hommage à Maxime Rodinson*, ed. Jean-Pierre Digard (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1982), 22.

⁷⁸Djaït, "Islam and German Thought," 77-78.

⁷⁹Lewis describes his Jewish education in the preface to his *Alei Historia: Qovetz Mehqarim* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1988), 1-4.

⁸⁰Cyril Philips, *Beyond the Ivory Tower* (London: The Radcliffe Press, 1995), 158.

⁸¹Bernard Lewis, "Modern Turkey Revisited," *Humanities* 11, no. 3 (May-June 1990): 12

⁸²R. Stephen Humphreys, "Bernard Lewis: An Appreciation," *Humanities* 11, no. 3 (May-June 1990): 19.

⁸³Interview with Nikki Keddie, *Approaches to the History of the Middle East*, 145-46. She mentions the "true early giant" Goldziher as one who goes unmentioned.

⁸⁴Alastair Hamilton, "Western Attitudes to Islam in the Enlightenment," *Middle Eastern Lectures* 3 (1999): 69.