

HOUSES OF THE BOOK

The Taube-Baron Collection of Stanford University: The Bibliographer's View*

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Introduction

Exciting things of Judaic interest have been happening at Stanford University. Two new chairs in Jewish Studies—the first ever at Stanford—have been established, and there has been a corresponding growth in the Libraries' collections supporting these two chairs. Central to this new commitment on the part of the Libraries to Jewish Studies was the acquisition in December 1985 of the library of Salo Wittmayer Baron, an outstanding scholarly collection of some 20,000 volumes.

Stanford's new commitment to Jewish Studies comes as the University begins its second century, having been founded in May 1887. There has been Judaica in the collections of the Library since its earliest days, evidenced by a quaint, faded shelflist card dated April 1903, the accession date of Wigram's *The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament*. Nevertheless, the Judaica collection was minuscule. A 1916 list of serial publications in the Library reveals that it then subscribed to none of the standard Judaica journals—*Jewish Quarterly Review*, *Monatsschrift fuer Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, etc. It was not until the 1960s that there was really discernible growth in Hebraica and Judaica at Stanford. This growth may be attributed to two factors: (1) the Library's Resources Development Program, created in 1963, inaugurated intensive and coherent development of the Library's collections, particularly in the humanities and social sciences; (2) about the same time, a faculty member in the Department of Religious Studies began to work with the Library, in an informal way, to suggest Judaica material for acquisition. Nevertheless, despite his good intentions and invaluable assistance, the Library itself

had neither the human nor capital resources required to develop its collections in this area in a really coherent manner. And, of course, it as yet had no real academic constituency to justify its doing so.

The endowment of two chairs in Jewish Studies—the Aaron-Roland Professorship in Jewish Studies and the Daniel E. Koshland Professorship in Jewish Culture and History—and the concurrent acquisition of Salo Baron's library were the result of a chain of events that began in 1979. At that time, Chimen Abramsky, formerly the head of Jewish Studies at University College, London, was a visiting professor in Jewish civilization at Stanford. His classes aroused considerable interest on campus, so much interest that the Chairman of the History Department, Peter Stansky, began to talk seriously about Stanford's starting a program in Jewish Studies. In a lengthy memo to Stansky, Abramsky outlined what this would require; a research library was essential. Some time afterwards, Abramsky heard rumors that Salo Baron's library might be up for sale. He managed to see it and to form his assessment, which he conveyed to Stansky—that it was an outstanding collection. Stanford's interest was piqued, and subsequently began serious negotiations with Professor Baron for the purchase of his library. With the generous support of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, and Marin and Sonoma Counties, and the family of Tad Taube, a distinguished San Francisco Bay Area philanthropist, the Collection was acquired. In recognition of Mr. Taube's appreciation of the need for a major collection of Judaica and Hebraica at Stanford University, the Collection has been designated the Taube-Baron Collection of Jewish History and Culture.

Salo Baron

The figure of Salo Wittmayer Baron looms large in Jewish historiography in the twen-

tieth century. The author of some 13 books on Jewish history (including his multivolume *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, still in progress) and hundreds of articles and addresses, as well as a leader in various communal activities, his outstanding stature is well known, but the nature and extent of the extraordinary library that he accumulated over three-quarters of a century may not be. Born in 1895, Baron began amassing his library about the time of his *bar mitzvah*, with the acquisition of a beautiful Romm edition of the Talmud. Over the years, he managed to assemble a personal library which grew nearly to dominate his two residences, one a seven-room flat between Barnard College and the Hudson River in Manhattan, the other an 1806 farmhouse called "Yifat Shalom" in Canaan, Connecticut, his summer residence (Figure 1). His library reflects the breadth and prodigiousness of his scholarly interest in many aspects of the social and economic history of the Jews. Despite the initial impression of disorder that one got from gazing at books shelved two and often three rows deep, Professor Baron had an uncanny knack for putting his hands on any book in his possession. His was not a library for show, but a working library. Yet he also took pride in the modest but impressive collection of rare items that he kept in a prominent place in the living room of his Manhattan flat.

The Processing Team

I was responsible for the transfer of the two portions of the Collection, in January and July 1986. In September of that year, I was appointed Stanford's first Jewish Studies Bibliographer. One of my responsibilities was to work closely with the Taube-Baron processing team, for, early on, it was decided to approach the incorporation of the Collection into the resources of Stanford University Libraries as a special project, employing staff with particular skills and expertise.

About the same time as my appointment to the position of Bibliographer, the project

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cataloger, Susan Lazinger, joined the processing team, and, towards the end of the year, the bibliographic searcher. For all of us, working with the Collection has been intensely rewarding. Each of us feels that, in our own way, we are contributing to revealing the treasures of the Collection, the "ot-serot hoshekh," or "hidden treasures" of the Taube-Baron Collection.

Where's the Library?

One of the things that is frequently requested of me as Jewish Studies Bibliographer is a tour of "the Baron library." For several reasons, I am unable to comply with that request. First of all, the collection, as it is being processed, is being integrated into the collections of the Stanford University Libraries, a complex library system. This decision was based on several factors, one of which was our conviction that integration of the Baron material into our existing collections would better serve our scholarly community, rather than their physical separation solely on the basis of provenance. Identified as part of the Taube-Baron Collection by a special bookplate, most of the material will be incorporated into the general bookstacks in the Green Library—the graduate humanities and social sciences library—while some volumes will find their way to our Education, Music, or other branch libraries. Some 800 or more volumes will be housed in the Department of Special Collections because of their age, rarity, or other criteria. One glass case in Special Collections—climate-controlled, in an atmosphere of quiet dignity—will serve to showcase about three hundred volumes of particular interest. One of the purposes of the volumes in this case will be to serve as a surrogate for the entire Baron acquisition, providing something visible and readily available to visitors and others requesting tours of the collection.

Incorporating a collection of 20,000 volumes into a library is so much more than unpacking and shelving them. It is all the work in between that makes the collection coherent, understandable, usable, and locatable. It was no surprise to us when we purchased the Collection that a considerable portion of it would already be represented in our collections, for we had had, for some time, excellent library support for the cognate disciplines of Jewish Studies: religious studies, philosophy, and history. Nevertheless, virtually every volume needs to be searched against either the card catalog or the on-line catalog to determine whether or not it is presently held. We have found a duplication rate of over 50% of the material in Western languages; but our duplication rate for

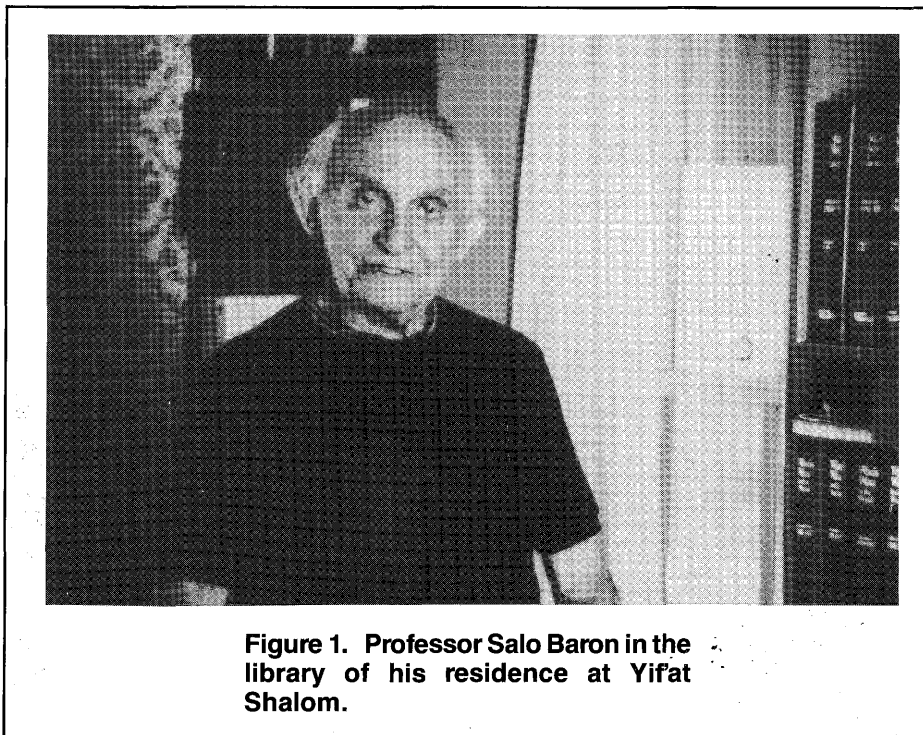


Figure 1. Professor Salo Baron in the library of his residence at Yifat Shalom.

material in Hebrew or Yiddish is considerably lower.

Stanford is a member of the Research Libraries Group and uses the RLIN (Research Libraries Information Network) bibliographic utility for its technical processing. (Our bibliographic searcher also has access to a search-only OCLC terminal.) It seemed to be fortunate timing when RLIN announced its Hebrew vernacular support at about the time we acquired the Baron library, but two developments dampened our early enthusiasm. RLIN's schedule for implementation slipped, and we made a preliminary decision *not* to participate in the Hebraica program. We are, however, hedging our bets to the extent that we are keeping copies of cataloging worksheets with photocopies of title pages, so that if we later decide to go with RLIN Hebrew, we can identify and upgrade our records.

Much of the Collection, particularly the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century material, is in extremely brittle condition. Therefore, we are undertaking a large-scale preservation project. Our initial effort, for which we have just sought funding from the Koret Foundation of San Francisco, will be to microfilm approximately 1,000 volumes and to photocopy on acid-free paper an additional 500 volumes. Further efforts will be aimed at additional microfilming, preservation photocopying, and physical repair and preservation.

The Taube-Baron Collection

My colleague, Susan Lazinger, and I present the scope and composition of the Taube-Baron Collection from the bibliographer's and cataloger's viewpoints. Our differing views of the Collection are reflected chronologically. Dr. Lazinger provides an overview of the 19th and 20th-century material in the Collection, while my focus is on the earlier material. My description is based upon an examination of approximately three-quarters of the Collection, for a portion of it, still in packing boxes, is still a "hidden treasure." For example, we thought we had identified nearly all of the pre-1800 imprints in the Collection, but just recently, an entire cache of late 18th-century material, some additional 100 volumes, particularly from Leghorn and Salonika, came to light.

Overall, the Collection reflects closely Professor Baron's interest in the social and economic history of the Jews and is particularly strong in Central European and American communal history and in works relating to the legal status of Jews. It consists of monographic material, serial publications, pamphlets, and reprints in all languages, roughly about a third in Hebrew and Yiddish. Abramsky, in his initial assessment of the Collection, was enthusiastic about the "mine of information" it contained on virtually every aspect of the social, religious, economic, and political life of the

Jews. A year of working with the Collection has reinforced his assessment.

In more specific terms, the Collection includes material in every area of Judaica—Bibles, commentaries, rabbinic literature, philosophy, kabbalah, the sciences, the Enlightenment, anti-Semite, the fine arts, and history. A few examples from each category follow.

Highlights of the Collection

While editions of the Bible are not numerous in the Collection, they are representative of the chronological and typographical scope of this central text in Judaism. Among them are the elegant Bomberg edition of the Prophets (Venice, 1511–1518), Sebastian Muenster's Hebrew edition of the Latter Prophets and Writings, accompanied by his Latin translation (Basel, 1535), a lovely edition of Psalms for the use of Christians, published in Basel by Froben in 1563, and an edition of the Prophets and Writings containing a Yiddish translation, published in Basel from 1823–1827.

The Collection includes commentaries on the whole Bible as well as on particular divisions and books. Among them are Isaac Abravanel's commentary on the Latter Propets, *Perush 'al nevi'im aharonim* (Pesaro, 1520), from the press of Gershom Soncino; Isaac Aboab de Fonseca's *Parafraſis Commentada sobre el Pentateucho*, published in Amsterdam in 1681, with its accompanying Spanish translation; and Abraham Laniado's *Nekudot ha-Kesef* (Venice, 1619), on the Song of Songs, which includes, in addition to the text, an Aramaic targum and a Ladino translation.

Talmudic material, as may be expected, is copious and diverse, ranging from early works such as Obadiah of Bertinoro's commentary on the Mishnah, published at various Italian presses in the middle of the 16th century, to the Vilna Gaon's commentary on Tohorot, entitled *Eliyahu Rabah* (Bruenn, 1802), to 20th-century works. The 1505 Constantinople edition of Isaac Abravanel's *Nahalat Avot* is one of the earliest works in the Collection. The dozen or so tractates of the Bomberg edition of the Talmud (published in Venice from 1520–1523) that are represented in the Collection are typographical masterpieces. Talmudic novellae, works on Talmudic methodology, and numerous other works round out Baron's holdings in this genre.

Responsa literature amounts to several hundred volumes, with impressive chronologic and geographic scope. Halakhic codifications are also numerous, including, among the early works, that of Jacob ben Asher,

entitled *Kitsur Piske ha-Rosh* (Constantinople, 1515) (Figure 2) and Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* (Bomberg edition, Venice, 1524). Several editions of the *Shulhan 'Arukh* of Joseph Caro as well as numerous commentaries on it are also represented. Other legal manuals, treatises on laws relating to particular topics, including the *isur ve-heter* literature, encyclopedic works such as Isaac Lampronti's *Pahad Yitshak* (Venice, 1749), and enumerations of the mitzvot such as David Vital's *Keter Torah* (Constantinople, 1536), a rhymed summary of the commandments, collectively constitute a significant element of the Collection.

Midrashic works include significant editions of collections of midrashim, such as the *Sefer Mekhila* (Constantinople, 1515) and *Sifra* (Venice, 1545–46), as well as commentaries. Samuel ben Isaac Ashkenazi Jaffe's *Yefeh To'ar*, a commentary on the Midrash

Rabbah (on Genesis, Venice, 1597), is just one example.

Some important works of philosophy and ethics are included in the Collection, as well as works of popular edification. A rather large selection of sermons and homiletic literature, ranging chronologically from Ibn Shem Tov's *Derashot ha-Torah* (Venice, 1547), through early Reform sermons from the middle of the 19th century, to the present day, are also included. Representative of the kabbalistic literature are several early works, including *Ma'arekhet ha-Elohut* (Mantua, 1558), Menahem ben Benjamin Recanati's *Perush 'al ha-Torah* (Venice, 1523), and Reuben Hoeshke ben Hoeshke Katz' collection of kabbalistic legends, entitled *Yalkut Re'uveni* (Homburg vor der Hoeh, 1712).

Although literature (i.e., belles-lettres, fiction, poetry, and drama) is not strongly rep-

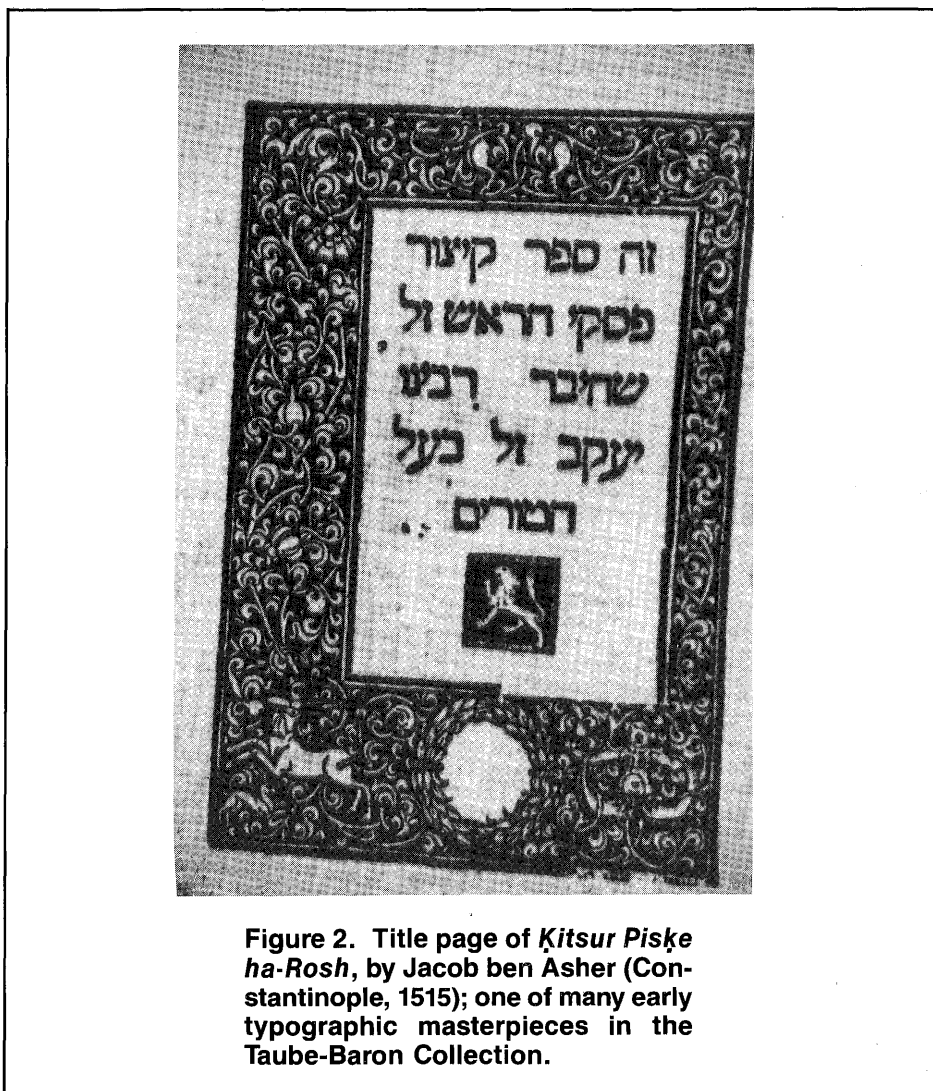


Figure 2. Title page of *Kitsur Piske ha-Rosh*, by Jacob ben Asher (Constantinople, 1515); one of many early typographic masterpieces in the Taube-Baron Collection.

resented in the Collection, there are some notable early works, including the oldest book in the Collection, the *Maḥbarot* of Immanuel of Rome, published by Gershom Soncino in Brescia in 1491.

Historical works by and about Jews constitute a particular strength of the Collection. These range from several breathtaking editions of Josephus (Latin, French, and Spanish editions, dated 1519, 1539, and 1554, respectively), to the classic works of Graetz and Dubnow, with a wealth of other material, ranging from general and comprehensive surveys in many volumes to tiny monographs on specific topics. Just one example of the rare material is the *Diarium historicum* (Frankfurt am Main, 1615), an account in German of the events leading up to and surrounding the Fettmilch Aufstand of 1614 which resulted in the expulsion of the Jews from Frankfurt.

Among works of science in the Collection are Gershon ben Solomon of Arles' *Sha'ar ha-Shamayim* (Venice, 1547), Joseph Solomon Delmedigo's *Elim* (Amsterdam, 1629), and Tobias Cohn's *Ma'aseh Tuviyah* (Venice, 1707). One of the fascinating aspects of the latter work is an illustration comparing the human body to a house: with the head corresponding to the roof, the mouth to the doorway, and so forth (Figure 3). A small treatise on the Hebrew calendar, with an attendant discussion of astronomy, by the Christian Hebraist Sebastian Muenster, entitled *Hokhmat ha-Mazalot bi-Tekufot u-Me'ubarot veba-Kevi'ot*, with the shorter Latin title *Kalendarium hebraicum* (Basel, 1527), is another significant work. Some of these books add a Jewish perspective to Stanford's already strong history of science collections. Although early geographical literature is not numerous, the Taube-Baron Collection does include significant works such as Estori ha-Parhi's *Kaftor va-ferah* (Venice, 1549) and Abraham Farissol's *Igeret Orhot 'Olam*, originally published in 1524 and represented in the Collection by the Latin translation published in Oxford in 1691.

The Collection contains works relating to Hebrew grammar and lexicography by both Jews and Christians. Among the former are works by David Kimḥi, Elias Levita, Nathan ben Jehiel of Rome, Solomon Ibn Melekh, David de' Pomis, and Samuel Archivolti. Among the works of Christian Hebraists are works of Santes Pagnini, Johann Andreas Dantz, and Johann Buxtorf the Elder.

Important anti-Semitic material includes Fabiano Fioghi's *Dialogo della fede* (Rome, 1611); Dietrich Schwab's *Juedischer Deckmantel des Mosaischen Gesetzes* (Mainz, 1616); Johann Christopher Wagenseil's *Tela ignea Satanae* ["Flaming Arrow of Satan"]

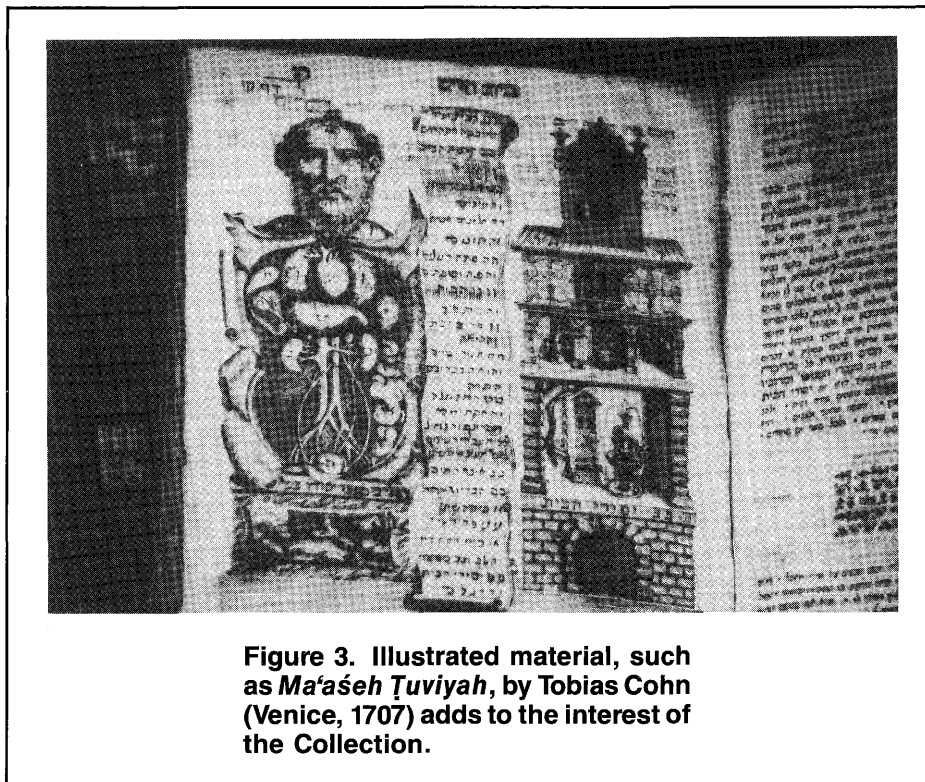


Figure 3. Illustrated material, such as *Ma'aseh Tuviyah*, by Tobias Cohn (Venice, 1707) adds to the interest of the Collection.

(Altdorf, 1681); and Johann Andreas Eisenmenger's *Entdecktes Judenthum* (Frankfurt, 1700). Material from the 19th and 20th centuries is well represented in the Collection, including an extensive collection of works of German racialists and anti-Semitic pamphlets issued by the Nazis.

One of the particular strengths of the Baron Collection is rare communal material. Among early examples of this genre are the *Costituzioni della Compagnia Ebraica della Misericordia della città di Modena* (Modena, 1791) and *Bekhore To'elet* of the Amsterdam Hevrat To'elet, published in 1820. Many other items of this nature, dating from the 19th and 20th centuries, and relating to Jewish communities throughout the world—particularly in Central Europe—constitute a vast treasure. Here again, the Collection enhances existing strengths, for Stanford's holdings on Austrian history and culture are already very rich.

Another strength is polemical and didactic material from the era of the Emancipation and later, relating to the legal position of Jews, particularly in Germany and Central Europe. One of the characteristics of these books is that the length of their titles is inversely proportional to the number of pages. None are, therefore, cited here; let it suffice to say that they represent a significant portion of the genre.

Miscellaneous items include Shabbethai Bass' *Šifte Yeshenim*, a bibliography of over 2,000 Hebraica and Judaica volumes that Bass was able to identify as of the latter half of the seventeenth century (first published in 1680, the work is represented in the Collection by the Zófkiew edition of 1806); Jacob Judah Leon Templo's *Tavnit Hekhal* (Amsterdam, 1650), giving a description of the Temple and illustrated with engravings from his own hand; and Issachar Susan's *'Ibur Shanim* (Venice, 1579), a code of synagogue customs in Eretz Israel and the Diaspora. Representing publications of the Haskalah period are several works by Mordecai Aaron Guenzburg, including his historical works on the Napoleonic wars and his *Sefer ḥemat Damešek* (Koenigsberg, 1860), on the Damascus blood-libel affair of 1840.

A description of the Collection would not be complete without mention of the wealth of serial publications it contains. The resources of the Library have been considerably enhanced both by titles totally new to the system (including Israeli publications, rare literary serials, and even some standard titles, such as *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*) and fill-in volumes. Overall, we have been able to add over one hundred serial titles to our holdings, and we are still discovering new titles as the unpacking nears an end.

Conclusions

While every piece in the Baron Collection has its own interest, it is especially the early Eastern European imprints that fascinate. They, perhaps more than any other class of books, demonstrate the particular esteem that books have had in Jewish life. While they are often non-descript in appearance, they attest to generations of use. Many of these have marginal notes drawing attention to passages in the text. Some include material of a non-religious nature of extreme interest. For example, one book published in Dyhernfurth (Upper Silesia, Poland, near Breslau) contains endpapers which are partially filled-out tax assessment forms, complete with the names of Jewish taxpayers and their assessments for what appears to be January 1830; it may be that they represent the only surviving official traces of these individuals. Certainly this adds a dimension to the book beyond its intellectual content.

The imprints from the pioneer presses in Eastern Europe: Grodno, Minsk, and Nowy Dwor, join the books from other areas and ages—the sober volumes from the Proops press in Amsterdam, the comely exemplars from the Hebrew presses in Venice, Riva di Trento, Sabbionetta, and their homely step-sisters from Constantinople, Salonika, and Smyrna—to remind us that books represent but the bridge between the generations that have gone before and that will follow. In a Jewish context, they fill us with a tremendous sense of pride at our bibliographic richness.

The idea of scholarly generations is reinforced in perusing a scholar's library; Salo

Baron's Collection includes many books that formerly belonged to other scholars. Many works relating to Oriental Studies bear the autograph of Richard Gottheil (1862–1936), Baron's colleague at Columbia University. Some items contain the bookplate of Elkan Nathan Adler (1861–1946), who retrieved the treasures of the Cairo Genizah for scholarly study at the end of the 19th century. Adler's own private library consisted of over 30,000 volumes and was sold before his death to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. The acquisition by these institutions of such a significant scholarly resource considerably enhanced their stature in the world of Jewish Studies, and we at Stanford hope to find ourselves in an analogous position.

Although the Taube-Baron Collection is still partially in darkness, our efforts over the past year have begun to shed some light upon it. Our cataloging efforts will probably require several more years and will be revealed to the users of the Stanford libraries and the RLIN database. A major exhibit focusing on the Taube-Baron Collection will be mounted in the Winter of 1988–89, to be accompanied by an exhibition catalog. We look forward to the flourishing of our Jewish Studies program at Stanford. Most of all, we look forward to generations of scholars actively using the Collection and continually revealing its "otserot hoshekh," its hidden treasures.

David L. Langenberg is Jewish Studies Bibliographer at the Cecil H. Green Library of Stanford University in California.

Lubetski

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Acknowledgment

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