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# Dangerous Liaisons in Cairo: Reginald Q. Henriques and the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Manuscript Collection

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# Dangerous Liaisons in Cairo: Reginald Q. Henriques and the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Manuscript Collection

## **Author Biography & Related Information**

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## **Erratum**

4 typos on p. 27, 33, 36, 43. February 4, 2018; missing text on p. 24. February 12, 2018.

# Dangerous Liaisons in Cairo: Reginald Q. Henriques and the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Manuscript Collection at Cambridge University Library

## PROLOGUE

The Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection at Cambridge University Library was formed as a result of an intense race in the late 1890s to find manuscript copies in the original Hebrew of the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*.<sup>1</sup> This book of proverbs and teachings, composed by the Jerusalemite Yeshua' ben Sira sometime between the third and second century BCE and translated into Greek around 132 BCE, became a crucial component in the nineteenth-century debate between the leading Protestant scholars of the school of Higher Criticism (biblical criticism) and the Jewish scholars refuting their more dubious claims. Among the questionable theories put forward by the Higher Critics was a late dating for books of the Hagiographa and Apocrypha: a period they characterized as contaminated with the priestly, legalistic, non-spiritual character of post-exilic Judaism. In this regard, they followed the work of earlier German theologians in attempting to separate the early, untainted, authentic Israelite history of the “Old Testament” (precursor to the ascendant Christianity) from later (descended and degraded) Judaism (Gerdmar 2009, 77–95).

Thanks to his Greek translator's colophon, Ben Sira is the one book of the period that can be reliably dated. Thus, Jewish scholars realized that recovering the original language and content of Ben Sira could be helpful for dating other biblical books by comparison, as well as demonstrating the vitality and spirituality of later Judaism. For one ardent Jewish scholar in particular, who considered Higher Criticism little more than Higher Anti-Semitism (Schechter 1915, 35–39), finding evidence to demonstrate the unbroken chain of Jewish tradition from the biblical period through to later Judaism became a preoccupation. This scholar was Solomon Schechter (1847–1915), Reader in Rabbinics at Cambridge University, Professor of Hebrew at University College London, and later president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. And in 1896, he did indeed discover a fragment of Ben Sira, in the original Hebrew, from a sack of medieval manuscripts brought out of Cairo by his friends, scholar-travellers Agnes Lewis and Margaret Gibson.

This rare find prompted him to travel to Cairo in 1897 in search of the rest of the book. Schechter subsequently uncovered more leaves of Ben Sira among the massive amounts of manuscript material he brought back with him to Cambridge from the genizot of Cairo. Additional leaves were identified among the genizah manuscripts and purchased by Oxford University in the same period, and individual fragments came to light in various other private and institutional genizah collections in the late 1890s and early 1900s. Thanks to these discoveries, it is now known that

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<sup>1</sup> The book of Ben Sira was excluded from the Hebrew Bible canon and only retained in its original form through quotations in rabbinic literature. The Greek translation, “The Wisdom of Sirach,” was the only known surviving version, and after it became part of the Catholic Church canon and regularly included in church services, it became widely known as the book of Ecclesiasticus.

at least six manuscript copies of the original Hebrew *Wisdom of Ben Sira* were in circulation in the Middle Ages, labeled by modern scholars as MSS A–F (a list of these is provided in Beentjes 1997, 13–19). In the mid-twentieth century, Hebrew fragments of Ben Sira, dating from around 50 CE, were discovered on Masada (MS Mas) and in Qumran (MSS 11QPS and 2Q18), and more medieval leaves have come to light in recent times (see Elizur 2006–2007, for example). To date, around two thirds of the original book has been recovered (Rendsburg and Binstein 2013).

While unified in their extraordinary efforts to demonstrate the importance of the original Hebrew book of Ben Sira for biblical scholarship, and to counteract rising anti-Semitism in the academy, Jewish scholars were at times separated by rivalry in the race to recover this crucial evidence. This article will examine one element of that race concerning a little-known Jewish businessman from Manchester, England, as well as various other local and international players involved in the discovery and recovery process and the creation of the Taylor-Schechter Collection at Cambridge University Library. In addition to increasing our knowledge about the provenance and dissemination of Ben Sira, a detailed exposition of this nature can enhance our understanding of Jewish material culture, and shed greater light on the ways in which Jewish libraries are formed, particularly the great collections of Hebraica in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

## I. BEN SIRA IS PRESENTED TO THE WORLD WITH A CURIOUS EXPRESSION OF THANKS

When the great genizah discoverer Solomon Schechter published his momentous scholarly work, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, in 1899, based on all the fragments of Ben Sira he had discovered in the “Cairo Genizah Collection at Cambridge,” he took the opportunity to single out and recognize the help of one Reginald Q. Henriques of Cairo. Schechter’s acknowledgement reads as follows:

I have also to express my thanks to my friend Mr. Reginald Q. Henriques of Cairo (originally of Manchester), to whose kindness, beginning during my stay and still continuing, I am indebted for many a precious document and important MS. (Schechter and Taylor 1899, 5)

By contrast, whatever early demonstration of kindness Mr. Henriques had displayed during Schechter’s stay in Cairo is noticeably absent from Schechter’s first article announcing his “Hoard of Hebrew MSS” (Schechter 1897, 13). Yet he did acknowledge the help of others, including Chief Rabbi Hemann Adler of England; Cairo Grand Rabbi Aaron Bensimon; and a leading Egyptian Jewish executive, Joseph Cattai.<sup>2</sup> What then had changed to make this tribute to Henriques suddenly appear? Moreover, why does it occur in a book dedicated to the discovery of the Ben Sira manuscripts? Was it simply that Mr. Henriques had aided Schechter to recover

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<sup>2</sup> Schechter erroneously describes Joseph Cattai as the President of the Jewish Community, and it is more likely that he meant to thank Moses Cattai. On the other hand, given Joseph’s position in the Ministry of Public Works, which oversaw the Antiquities Service, it is probable that both Cattais played a role in helping him.

important genizah manuscripts (even Ben Sira?) between 1897 and 1899? Or was there lying behind this statement a subtle message that can only be decoded once one knows the events that preceded and followed Schechter's visit to Cairo? The following investigation will attempt to supply an answer.

## II. WHO WAS REGINALD Q. HENRIQUES OF CAIRO?

Mr. Reginald Quixano Henriques (hereafter, Henriques; Figure 1) was born in Manchester, England in 1868 and died in Maadi, Egypt in 1916, at the age of forty-eight (*London Gazette* 1916, 12611). He was descended from a long line of Sephardi Jews, part of the Israel Henriques branch of the extensive Henriques families that originated in Spain and Portugal, migrated to Jamaica, and later became prominent in Britain (Rubenstein 2011, 414–415). The progenitor of the Quixano Henriques line was Moses Henriques of Kingston, Jamaica, who married Abigail Quixano in 1768. Their eldest son Abraham Quixano Henriques (eighteenth–nineteenth century) moved to London, and established himself as a West India merchant. The addition of the mother's maiden name (in this case, Quixano) to the family surname was a Portuguese practice; nevertheless, Reginald's father, Edward Micholls Henriques appears to have reinstated the Quixano name for his eight children. The Quixano Henriques family produced many notable individuals in the nineteenth century, including a number of successful businessmen and bankers. Henriques' brother, Henry Straus Quixano Henriques (1864–1925), was a lawyer, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews from 1922–1925, historian, and author of *The Jews and the English Law* (1908) and *Jewish Marriages and the English Law* (1909). Their younger second cousin (both were the great-grandchildren of Abraham Quixano Henriques and Rachel Henriques) was Sir Basil Lucas Quixano Henriques (1890–1961), a leading authority on juvenile delinquency, and an advocate

of progressive Judaism (Hermon and Fisch 2007, 808–809). Henriques' section of the family moved to Manchester in the middle of the nineteenth century and took an active role in that city's booming cotton trade.



**Figure 1.** Reginald Q. Henriques, c. 1887 (Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives, UK)

Henriques attended the Manchester Grammar School (founded as a free school in the sixteenth century), and at some point afterwards joined his family in running a large merchant company dealing primarily in the manufacture of lining and velveteen. His father, Edward Micholls Henriques, and his uncles established the firm Henriques and Co. in the 1860s. In 1896, Edward retired from the firm and handed over its management to his sons, Reginald Q. Henriques, and Frank Q. Henriques and his nephew, David Leopold Quixano Henriques (*The*

*London Gazette* 1896, 4045). The business had offices in Manchester and London, and in Cairo, Tanta, and Alexandria where it was styled as “Henriques and Henriques.” Henriques had been running the Egyptian side of the business from 1891 (Raafat 1994, 26), and his success there resulted in his establishing a separate Egyptian firm in December 1897 when the brothers’ partnership was dissolved by mutual consent. Henriques kept the same business name “Henriques and Henriques” for the Egyptian-based company, and Frank Q. Henriques continued the firm based in Manchester and London as “Henriques and Co.” (*The London Gazette* 1898, 38).

Henriques’ business talents earned him an excellent reputation among Cairo’s Jewish business elite, the Soares Group. This group included the Soares, Cattauis, Menascas, and the Rolos: long-established Cairene families closely allied by marriage and by investment activity. At the turn of the century, their coalition, fronted by Raphael Soares, oversaw many remarkable business ventures together with French and British financial syndicates. The holdings of these families included large rural land-development and urban real estate development ventures, numerous private and joint stock banks, as well as ownership of many service and manufacturing companies (Vitalis 1995, 32–39). Members of this group were also financially involved with the British-run Egyptian Delta Light Railways Ltd. In 1904, Delta Light’s British chairman, Sir Elwin Palmer, proposed to establish an Egyptian Delta Land and Investment Company Ltd, a London-registered company that would fund the development of areas of Egyptian land bordering the burgeoning railway tracks (Raafat 1994, 15). Three years later, in 1907, the members of the board voted to appoint Henriques as their second managing director. Beginning under Henriques’ management, the company was deeply involved in the creation of the uniquely planned leafy green suburb of Maadi in Cairo: an enclave of well-heeled Cairene residents living in British and European style villas and mansions (Raafat 1994, 26–27). In addition, Henriques served on the executive board of the Salt and Soda Company and the Anglo-American Nile Steamers and Hotels Company. He died unexpectedly of ill health while at his home in Maadi on March 4, 1916, only three years after his marriage to Annie Barnard Henriques and the birth of their daughter, Margaret Steinart Henriques.<sup>1</sup>

### III. UNEXPECTED FRIENDSHIPS

By 1897, the momentous year in which Schechter visited Cairo, Henriques had been living and working there for six years. As outlined above, he had established strong ties with the leading Jewish families in Cairo, as well as friendships and working relationships with key British office-holders and financiers who, like him, frequented Cairo’s famous Turf Club. The Turf Club, located in the old British Agency building, was a center for relaxation, exchanging gossip and discussing business; it served as a rallying point for Britons in Egypt and symbolized British camaraderie in Egypt through the social and political discourse that took place there (Mak 2011, 96–97). Meeting for breakfast or later, for a drink and to read *The Times*, the British members of the Turf Club experienced a “fenced city of refuge of the higher British community” (Sattin 2011, 190).

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<sup>1</sup> This biographical information was pieced together using the archive notes on the Greater Manchester County Record Office (with Manchester Archives) record 1069: Photographs of the Henriques Family (<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/rd/a80ee220-d0d7-4875-b193-61173353ba5b>), as well as genealogical databases such as [www.wikitree.com](http://www.wikitree.com) and [www.geni.com](http://www.geni.com).

It was probably here in the Turf Club that the young Henriques first heard about Schechter, whose arrival seems to have generated great interest among its members and “much talk ... about the great Jewish Savant” (Solomon Schechter to Mathilde Schechter, January 12 1897, Solomon Schechter Papers, Jewish Theological Seminary [hereafter cited as JTS], Box 26/4). As his biographer wrote, Schechter’s genius “lifted him up, so that he seemed higher than any of the people from the shoulder and upwards” (Bentwich 1938, 232). Henriques, based on his subsequent behavior, was probably magnetized by this brilliant and engaging scholar from Cambridge, a man of varying temperament, for whom “nothing could give a sufficient notion of him to a person who never saw him” (Ibid., 232). According to those who knew him, Schechter had “a remarkable capacity for friendship” (Ibid., 244), and he was able to count among his friends persons young and old, Jewish and non-Jewish, male and female. It is also highly likely that in the company of fellow Jews like Henriques, Schechter felt free to voice his passionate sense of urgency to find material evidence with which to “save our literature from the *goyim*” (Ben-Horin 1963, 266).

When or where their first meeting took place and the unexpected friendship began is currently unknown, but clearly Henriques had rendered some sort of service to Schechter. As Schechter reports in a letter to his wife, Mathilde: “I have made here the acquaintance of [a] young delightful fellow, Henriques from Manchester, who has here a large commercial house. He ~~has~~ [sic] is very kind to me and did me some good service” (Solomon Schechter to Mathilde Schechter, January 14 1897, JTS Box 26/4). In the same letter, Schechter asks his wife to send him more visiting cards, which suggests that Henriques’ help had been (and would continue to be) in the form of important introductions and assistance in either making or furthering key connections. At the time of writing, Schechter had already been in Cairo three weeks; he had seen the Ben Ezra synagogue and obtained the necessary permissions to remove materials from its massive genizah chamber. Some preliminary introductions to important British officials at the Embassy had taken place, as Schechter had divulged to Mathilde nine days earlier: “On Sunday I left my card and letter of introduction (by Professor Gardner) at Mr. Rodd, First Secretary to Lord Cromer, and he called yesterday at the Hotel. Friday [8<sup>th</sup>] PG [Please God] I am going before noon to the Embassy to be introduced to Lord Cromer and others” (Solomon Schechter to Mathilde Schechter, January 5 1897, JTS Box 26/4). JTS SSP MS 26/4, January 5, 1897). As it turned out, Schechter did not visit the Embassy until the following Tuesday and even then, he was not able to see the British consul-general, Lord Cromer because it was the Khedive’s birthday. Nevertheless, someone he described as Cromer’s vice-consul welcomed him, and later that day he received a letter of introduction to the Karaite chief rabbi signed by Lord Cromer (Solomon Schechter to Mathilde Schechter, January 12 1897, JTS Box 26/4).

This vice-consul (actually Lord Cromer’s private secretary) would prove key to Schechter’s ability to export genizah manuscripts out of Cairo. And the clue to how this “vice-consul” is connected to Henriques and the way he may have helped Schechter lies in two letters Henriques sent to Schechter sometime after he had departed from Cairo. In both letters, Henriques conveys greetings from friends in Cairo, including a Mr. Boyle (Reginald Q. Henriques to Solomon Schechter, April 5, 1898, December 8, 1898, Cambridge University Library Archives, Box 6/6/1/2 [hereafter cited as ULIB 6/6/1/2]). Undoubtedly, the person mentioned here was Harry Boyle, Lord

Cromer's invaluable right-hand man, his interpreter and private secretary (Goldschmidt 2000, 39), member of the Turf Club (Sattin 2011, 190), and Henriques' very close friend since 1894 (Boyle 1938, 216). Finally, as we shall see, Schechter explicitly refers to Boyle's help in a letter sent to Mathilde late in January 1897 (Solomon Schechter to Mathilde Schechter, January 31, 1897, JTS Box 26/4).

Boyle himself was a fascinating, self-taught, extremely knowledgeable man of extraordinary linguistic talents; a "profound Oriental scholar" who could "speak Arabic better than any other Englishman" (New York Times 1914, 4). Unlike many of his fellow British sojourners in Egypt, Boyle spent a great deal of time in the company of the native Egyptians and through his deep local connections people knew him as "the man who helped Cromer rule Egypt" (Sattin 2011, 208–209). Much of what we now know about Boyle comes from a memoir written by Clara Asch (Boyle 1938), his much younger Polish Jewish wife, whom he married late in life. A review of the memoir describes how Boyle always put his talents at the service of others: "For honours and preferment, though they must have been within his reach, he had no use; generous to a degree, he was constantly in money troubles. A fastidious scholar and a splendid linguist, his gifts were always at the disposal of others and he himself was content to do the work of a trained diplomat on the salary of a junior clerk" (Meston 1939, 565). Of his power and influence, the *Al Ahram* nationalist newspaper reported that Boyle was "the source of all favour and disfavour; a look from him sufficed to bring all the happiness in the world, and a turn of his back would cause the deepest sorrow..." (Boyle 1938, xxiii).

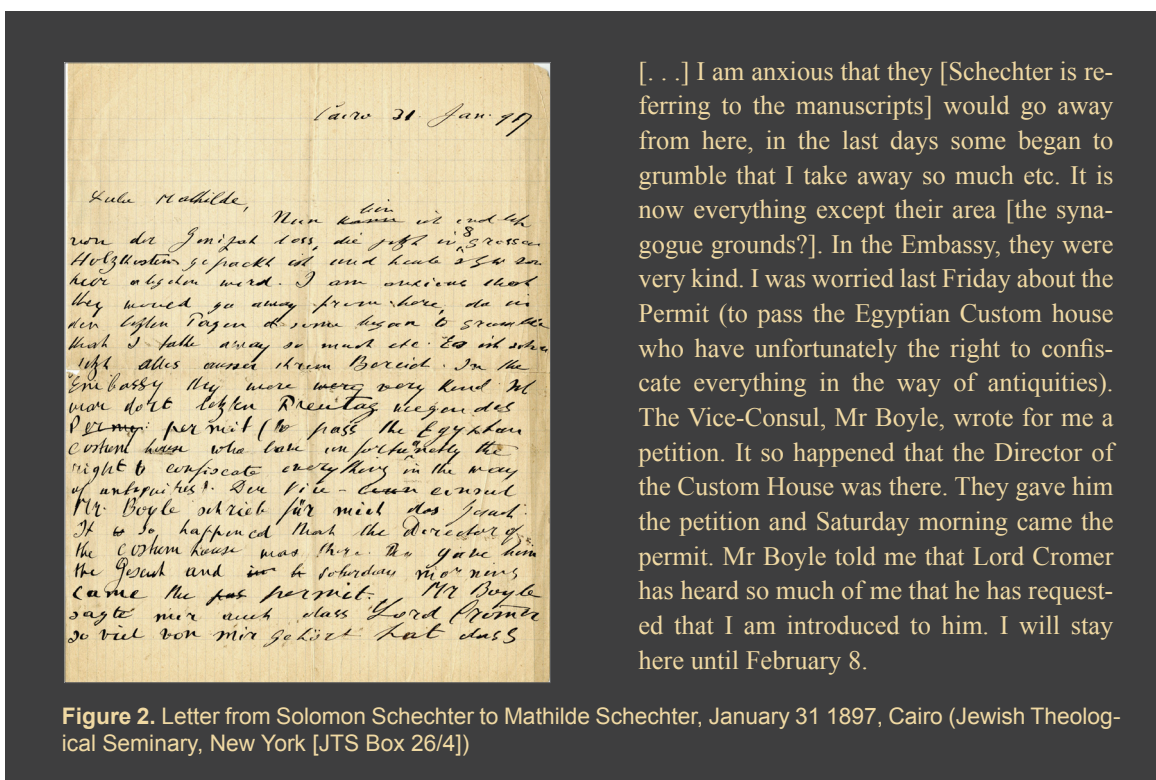
Boyle and Henriques were near contemporaries, both frequently dined at the Turf Club, and based on the fact of their friendship it is possible to deduce that Henriques was drawn to charismatic men. It is clear that Henriques found Schechter similarly compelling company, and Schechter probably felt likewise because he described Henriques as "delightful." Both men apparently shared negative feelings about certain members of Egyptian Jewish society (see Henriques' post-script about having to spend time with the Cattauis in his letter of April 5, 1898 below), in addition to the fact that the Egyptian Jewish way of life was so different from their familiar western modes of being. For Henriques, the Turf Club was a more comfortable and familiar surrounding than the homes of his Egyptian Jewish brethren (indeed, this is evident in his re-creation of a "Little Britain" in the suburb of Maadi he helped build in the early twentieth century). Correspondingly, it is clear from his letters that Schechter only barely tolerated Egyptian Jewish society and customs—a milieu he described as "quite a different world"—because they were kind to him. He actually expressed far greater enjoyment in the company of the Archdeacon Charles Henry Butcher ("delightful"), and his wife ("a true bluestocking") (see Solomon Schechter to Mathilde Schechter, January 5, 1897; January 7, 1897, JTS Box 26/4).

Henriques' letters to Schechter mention Boyle twice in conjunction with a man by the name of "Mr. Anthony." The most likely candidate for this "Anthony" is Henry M. Anthony, who served the British Government in Egypt and was subsequently employed as the controller of government lands from 1906 and the director-general of the State Domain Administration in Egypt from 1916 (Innes 1986, x, 39). According to Boyle's memoir, Henry Anthony was an old friend (Boyle 1938, 139, 329), and from Henriques' messages to Schechter, it is apparent that



Henriques, Boyle, and Anthony were good friends and that Henriques served as the linchpin to connect all three.

Lacking further written evidence, we cannot state categorically that Henriques helped garner Boyle's support for Schechter, although it is reasonable to suppose that Henriques' existing friendship of three years with Boyle must have gone some way towards influencing the outcome. That outcome was extremely important for, at the last minute, as Schechter was preparing to get his boxes of materials out of the country, he realized that he may encounter difficulties acquiring the necessary permit to get them through customs. According to Schechter's own account as he described it in a letter to his wife Mathilde,<sup>3</sup> Boyle stepped in to help by writing a petition and by handing it directly to the director of Customs (Schechter wrote his letters to Mathilde in English and German, freely mixing both languages within the same sentence. The author translated the quotation into full English; Figure 2):



[. . .] I am anxious that they [Schechter is referring to the manuscripts] would go away from here, in the last days some began to grumble that I take away so much etc. It is now everything except their area [the synagogue grounds?]. In the Embassy, they were very kind. I was worried last Friday about the Permit (to pass the Egyptian Custom house who have unfortunately the right to confiscate everything in the way of antiquities). The Vice-Consul, Mr Boyle, wrote for me a petition. It so happened that the Director of the Custom House was there. They gave him the petition and Saturday morning came the permit. Mr Boyle told me that Lord Cromer has heard so much of me that he has requested that I am introduced to him. I will stay here until February 8.

Figure 2. Letter from Solomon Schechter to Mathilde Schechter, January 31 1897, Cairo (Jewish Theological Seminary, New York [JTS Box 26/4])

In 1835, an ordinance of the Egyptian authorities first established a ban on exporting Egyptian antiquities without a permit (Ikram 2011, 142). Subsequent laws further delineated the rules surrounding the excavation, sale, and export of antiquities; at this point, the Antiquities Service, under the directorship of Jacques de Morgan, would have seized all excavated or purchased ob-

<sup>3</sup> A few excerpts from Schechter's letters to Mathilde have been translated for publication (see Cole and Hoffman, 2011, 76–79, for example), and an unknown transcriber (the archivist?) produced typescript transcriptions of most of the letters (which are included in the Jewish Theological Seminary's microfilm copies). However, none of these letters has ever been prepared in full for publication. I am the first person to transcribe the Henriques letters and the d'Hulst letters that follow in this article.

jects (including manuscripts) lacking a permit or special certificate of permission and repurposed them for the Egyptian Museum.<sup>4</sup> This did not deter many European collectors, and items still made it out of the country, smuggled out either illegally or through the intervention of a higher authority. Schechter's eight large boxes full of manuscripts would have raised many an eyebrow at the Customs House, and without the necessary permit they would have been confiscated. Consequently, without access to Boyle and his key governmental position and influence over the director of Customs, enabling a crucial petition for last-minute documentation, Schechter's central role in recovering a great "hoard of Hebrew MSS" might have been reduced to a frustrating footnote in genizah history. Furthermore, it must have been through Boyle that Lord Cromer had heard so much about Schechter and requested an introduction.

It was no doubt due to the realization of how he had been given such vital help that he extended notable thanks to Henriques in his opus magnum for "whose kindness, beginning during my stay . . . , I am indebted for many a precious document and important MS." The exact nature of this "kindness" may have been left unspecified because it would not have been politic to have named Boyle (and by extension Lord Cromer) explicitly. Nor could he have described how a high official of the British administration had helped him circumvent the Egyptian Antiquities Service and Custom House strict rules by applying for a permit well *after the fact*, when the materials stood ready and packed for shipping. Nevertheless, when *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* was published, a copy of the book was presented to Lord Cromer (Bentwich 1938, 131).

#### IV. A "STILL CONTINUING KINDNESS"

What is certain, however, is that to whatever length his early role had extended, Henriques remained steadfast in his loyalty to Schechter, happily assisting him after his return to Cambridge in 1897. In the spring of the following year, Henriques wrote a letter to Schechter, which was apparently part of an ongoing correspondence. The letter reveals Henriques' deep commitment to helping Schechter obtain any and all the fragments remaining in what he terms "your Geniza":

Turf Club

Cairo

5 April 98

Dear Dr Schechter,

Many thanks for your letter which I was very sorry to see was not in your own handwriting. I trust that your eyes are now quite strong again. I have been having most exciting times lately in your Geniza & but for my timely intervention everything that is left would [as] now have been carried off to the Bodleian Library Oxford.

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<sup>4</sup> See also the advice given to travelers in the section "Custom House" in Baedeker 1895, xvi and the note about "Bazaars" informing travellers that the export of antiquities was "strictly prohibited" (ibid., 25).

I was out there last Saturday & found a gentleman who introduced himself to me as the Comte de Hulst digging outside the enclosed space of the synagogue & with him some twenty Arabs moving considerable quantities of sand and rubbish; on my asking on what authority he was digging on private ground he produced letters &c [etc.] from the Ministry of Public Works and Finances here.

He seems an interesting sort of man & worked for some time for the Egyptian Exploration Fund & now was doing this job for Mr. Neubauer & the Bodleian Library. He went y'day to Cattai & got by dint of his letters &c [etc.] a full permit to take away whatever he could find within & without the precincts of the synagogue. I however had foreseen this & reached Cattai's office before this permit was signed & then got Cattai to rewrite the same giving authority only to dig outside the precincts where there is probably nothing of value. I may have some little expense but I think I am sure of finding a still further & considerably [*sic*] quantity of manuscripts inside the courtyard <of the present> ... [illegible] on the site of the former synagogue & you may be sure that this Cte. d'Hulst will succeed in taking away very very little. Tho' he has now been at it for 3 weeks he has only collected about ½ sack of manuscripts & this I may still succeed in preventing him taking away. You may be sure that I shall soon be able to ship you a fairly good lot.

Many thanks for your kind remembrances from myself & my sister who I am sure is keeping up her [intent with your] work. Boyle & Anthony both reciprocate your kind messages.

With kindest regards to Mrs Schechter & your children

Believe me

Sincerely Yours

Reginald Q. Henriques

PS. Many Happy Returns of Pesach, I am celebrating tomorrow evening at the Cattais. Do you most pity me?!

(Reginald Q. Henriques to Solomon Schechter, April 5, 1898, JTS Box 4/11)

## V. WHO WAS THE “COMTE DE HULST”?

The Comte whose efforts Henriques had thwarted for the sake of “Schechter's” genizah was Count Riamo d'Hulst. A former officer of the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF), d'Hulst had been involved with the Cairo genizah manuscripts since 1889, when he first discovered discarded and buried manuscripts in the rubbish mounds around the Roman Fortress near the recently dismantled Ben Ezra synagogue (Jefferson 2009, 126–127). After his dismissal from the EEF (due to clashes with other archaeologists), d'Hulst continued to work in Cairo as an antiquities dealer

(Jefferson 2009, 128). In 1892, the Oxford scholar Archibald Henry Sayce, acting on behalf of the Bodleian Librarian E. W. B. Nicholson and Bodleian sub-librarian and Hebraist Adolf Neubauer, commissioned d’Hulst to find the source of the Hebrew manuscripts coming to them from Egypt (Count Riamo d’Hulst to E. W. B. Nicholson, March 17 1898, Bodleian Library Records [hereafter cited as BLR] d.1084). Previous to this venture, Oxford’s Bodleian had enjoyed being the recipient of a steady inflow of genizah manuscripts sent in for their perusal and refusal by the British collector Greville John Chester and, after his death, the Bodleian continued to receive manuscripts from the scholar and collector Solomon Wertheimer in Jerusalem. Locating the actual source of the Egyptian manuscripts took d’Hulst several years (although, according to an undated typescript document in BLR d.1084, no. 70, he sent some genizah manuscripts to Oxford in 1893). In 1895, D’Hulst was finally given access to a large cache of manuscripts held in the Ben Ezra synagogue basement (Archibald Henry Sayce to E. W. B. Nicholson, March 26 1895, BLR d.1084) and negotiations went back and forth before he was able to ship many boxes’ worth back to Oxford in the winter of 1895 and the spring of 1896 (Archibald Henry Sayce to Adolf Neubauer, November 29 1895, Bodleian Library Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Eng. Misc.d.69, f. 70).

When Solomon Schechter made the extraordinary discovery of a fragment of Ben Sira that same spring, Neubauer responded by quickly identifying matching leaves in his recently acquired hoard and publishing them. Thoroughly outraged by Neubauer’s public display of one-upmanship,<sup>5</sup> Schechter determined to keep his own quest to find the manuscripts’ source a secret, a quest that his wife Mathilde attested took “so firm a hold of his mind that his sleep was disturbed and his health impaired” (unpublished writings of Mathilde Schechter, Solomon Schechter Papers, JTS, Box 28/2). Thus, it was a triumphant moment for Schechter when he was able to report in *The Times* that he had returned from Cairo with around 40,000 manuscripts, which, aside from representing major areas of interest such as Bible, liturgy, or Talmud, could yield further leaves of Ben Sira. And Charles Taylor in *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* would later reveal:

At midsummer in that year, Dr Schechter found in the Cairo Genizah collection at Cambridge another leaf of Ecclesiasticus from the same Codex, and afterwards from time to time six others, including the penultimate and last folios of the book, which were discovered together on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1897 ... In the same Genizah collection Dr Schechter had detected also two pairs of leaves from another manuscript of Ecclesiasticus, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 24<sup>th</sup> September, respectively. (Schechter and Taylor, 1899, v–vi)

Neubauer responded to the situation by enlisting the Count d’Hulst’s help once again—this time to excavate for manuscripts buried around Old Cairo, particularly in proximity to the Ben Ezra synagogue. Indeed, it is evident from his correspondence that Neubauer—like Schechter—was on a compulsive quest to recover Ben Sira. For example, in January 1898, Neubauer wrote to d’Hulst:

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, the response of Schechter’s friend, the British scholar, Israel Abrahams, to Schechter’s ire: “Why worry about Neubauer? Do try to keep calm about this pirate. He is not worthy of your anger. He has indeed treated you scurvily, but you cannot afford to waste your mind on anger against him.” (JTS SSP 1/6).

I am much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken about the fragments. I have examined them as far as possible in this dark weather. Although not containing any startling discovery, I think that on the whole they are worth the 8/-, more especially so as not to discourage the people from continuing. Mr. Schechter has begun in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* the continuation of my text of *Ecclesiasticus*—but, does not say expressly how much he has—. It is certain at least that he has not the whole of the remainder, & so we may hope that you will be the fortunate discoverer of some part of it in your excavations. (Adolf Neubauer to Count Riamo d’Hulst, January 18, 1898, quoted in a letter from Count Riamo d’Hulst to Falconer Madan, May 20 1915, BLR d.1084)<sup>6</sup>

During February and March of that year, d’Hulst excavated the rubbish mounds in the location where he first noticed materials being thrown out of the synagogue in 1889. The work involved separating out the piles of materials so that a crude sort of selection could take place. By the end of March, d’Hulst had moved on to excavate more closely within the Ben Ezra synagogue environs. At this point his work drew greater notice and during an excavation conducted on the Sabbath (April 2, 1898) he met with irate community members and, of course, had his first encounter with Henriques as described above.

## VI. FIGHTING OVER THE RUBBISH MOUNDS

Three days after Henriques reported to Schechter the details of this encounter and his attempts to thwart the Count’s excavations, d’Hulst wrote to Neubauer to relate his side of this unexpected event:

Cairo,  
April 8th 1898

Dear Prof. Neubauer,

Many thanks for your kind letter of March 31<sup>st</sup>.

My work at Old Cairo is going on successfully & if chance keeps on like at present, I shall with my present work more than double the quantity of Egyptian fragments at the Bodleian. I have already recovered more than two big grain sacks full & an unusual large quantity of these papers are manuscripts; there is also a larger amount of parchment amongst them. Some, when found are slightly damp & I dry them in the sun before storing them away. The work offers many drawbacks. We had piping hot days, which does not add to the comfort of the work in a place where there is not an inch of shade. The

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<sup>6</sup> D’Hulst was writing to the Bodleian Librarian, Falconer Madan, to ask for compensation for his former services to the Bodleian. He included a number of quoted excerpts from letters he had received from Sayce, Neubauer and Nicholson between 1893 and 1898. The quotation from Neubauer’s letter is dated erroneously to January 18, 1897, although it should read 1898).

dust is very bad, it is a fine, sharp, black dust which severely dries the eyes & respiratory organs; many workmen I had to replace, they leaving [*sic*] on account of the dust. But the worst trial [*sic*] are the carcasses of dead animals which are thrown in the neighbourhood.

Last Saturday, after the prayer in the synagogue, we were attacked by a number of Jews armed with sticks. They pretended that the ground upon which we worked belonged to the Synagogue. Sir William Garstin was kind enough to give me on Monday an introduction to Mr. Cattai, the chief of the synagogue. Mr Cattai promised he would obtain me for the following day a permission from the Israelitish [Consistory]. As Mr Cattai was obliging, I asked him for a permission to dig in the courtyard of the synagogue; (since last I wrote to Mr. Nicholson I have found that a large part of the courtyard of the synagogue has been covered about one meter high with the same papers—containing rubbish). The permission to dig outside the courtyard I obtained on Tuesday and permission to dig inside the courtyard could not be granted.

The work outside the courtyard will last this whole month through & you will obtain from there more than to occupy your time until winter. The rubbish inside the courtyard is not likely to be disturbed during the summer. Also the heat will by next month become rather great for excavation work.

As I am coming this summer probably to England, you will by then have had time to examine my spoil & form an idea whether you care to attack the rubbish in the courtyard. We might then [consent] together how to overcome the resistance of the consistory. I fancy some applications of very influential members of the Jewish community in England would obtain the desired object.

Yours very truly

R. d’Hulst

(Count Riamo d’Hulst to Adolf Neubauer, April 8 1898, BLR d.1084)

Although d’Hulst does not state exactly who had obstructed his work, or refer explicitly to Henriques, he does confirm that Jewish locals had interfered with his plan. His letter is further enlightening because it reveals that he had managed to uncover more manuscripts than Henriques supposed. It further discloses the fact that there were huge amounts of material left still to recover, even though much of it was fragmentary and in a poor state, and would subsequently be regarded as rubbish by Neubauer and Nicholson (E. W. B. Nicholson to Count Riamo d’Hulst, November 25 1909, BLR d.1084).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This document was a draft copy of a letter Nicholson was preparing to send to d’Hulst. The paragraph in which Nicholson reveals his view that d’Hulst’s manuscripts were of “very little value indeed” is scored through.

Schechter had not mentioned specifically any meter-high piles of manuscripts in his correspondence from Cairo, which begs the question: how and from where did these manuscripts suddenly appear? From d’Hulst’s testimony we learn that there were materials mixed in with rubbish lying around outside the synagogue courtyard. These were probably the materials tossed out into the existing rubbish mounds when the community restored the synagogue in 1889–1892. And we can infer from Schechter’s correspondence that the piles within the courtyard may actually have been created by Schechter himself as he and his local assistants cleared out the genizah chamber in an effort to locate substantial manuscripts of a certain age and type. Reporting on this method of selection, particularly the problem of later printed materials stuck to old papers, Schechter had written to his wife: “Most of my time in Cairo was getting rid of these parvenus [late, printed materials], whilst every piece of paper or parchment that had any claim to a respectable age was packed in bags and conveyed to the forwarding agent to be shipped to England” (Solomon Schechter to Mathilde Schechter, January 28, 1897, JTS Box 26/4).

But in order to see more clearly and make better selections, he had needed to empty the chamber of its contents:

I have emptied all. The whole rubbish down to the floor has been taken so that I had the floor free. This was a piece of hard work. The beadles and the other scoundrels refusing to go deep so that they would have a place from which to provide the dealers . . . The people here understand so little of the thing, they think that wherever there is rubbish, the crazy Englishman will be interested. (Solomon Schechter to Mathilde Schechter, January 28, 1897, JTS Box 26/4)

Once emptied out into the yard, Schechter could assess the age and substance of the material at hand more easily and hurriedly dispense with the scraps, papers, and printed materials he deemed worthless. After his departure from Cairo, it appears that some of the discarded materials mixed in with the rubbish were returned to the chamber. Early in 1898, d’Hulst had sent the Bodleian a report to this effect, which described the contents still remaining inside the genizah chamber:

There are at present about ten sacs [*sic*] of papers there (the eight bags I send you to form one . . .); but as far as I could examine it about 9/10 is printed, the remainder manuscript, but nearly exclusively on paper, parchments are hardly there. I suspect that they have carried & carry all sorts of rubbish paper together, to mix them up . . . with what was left with a view to selling them. (Count Riamo d’Hulst to Adolf Neubauer, February 17 1898, BLR d.1084)

D’Hulst knew that parchment, being the material primarily used for old sacred texts, might be of especial interest to Neubauer, in addition to the more rarely found substantial portions of co-

dices, but he had no ability to read Hebrew nor any acquaintance with Jewish texts.<sup>8</sup> Henriques' familiarity with Hebrew probably only extended as far as his childhood Torah studies.<sup>9</sup> Yet, in the spring of 1898, for both protagonists, the focus was on providing quantity over quality in order to supply the respective parties back in England with enough materials from which to uncover hidden gems, particularly versions of Ben Sira.

## VII. DANGEROUS LIAISONS IN CAIRO

In the 1890s, four Cairene institutions were working separately to preserve local heritage. The Antiquities Service (first founded by the French) was responsible for objects dating before 642 CE; after 1883, the Antiquities Service came under the administration of the Ministry of Public Works. Objects and buildings dating from after 642 CE came under the responsibility of the Ministry of Awqaf (if connected to a religious institution) or the Ministry of Public Works (if they were state property) or private individuals (if privately owned). The Comité (a commission within the Ministry of Awqaf with a predominantly European outlook) protected the “monuments of Arab art,” a sub-category of these objects. However, the real situation was even more complex than that, particularly with regard to structures and sites from multiple historic periods (El-Habashi 2001, 96). Hence, the site of d'Hulst's excavations, which was close to the Ben Ezra synagogue, the Roman Fortress, and Islamic mosques and monuments, would have concerned all these entities.

The above letters from Henriques and d'Hulst to the respective parties in Oxford and Cambridge also provide fascinating insights into the ways each side sought to bring outside influence to bear on its cause. Back in March of that year, D'Hulst had already reported difficulties with his excavation permit and the need to keep the news out of the French newspapers: “At the Ministry here, they did not want to make a case of this permission on account of the French newspapers, so they gave me what they call ‘une-permission-officiense’ [approved] not ‘officielle’ [official] (Count Riamo d'Hulst to E. W. B. Nicholson, March 31 1898, BLR d.1084). In order to dig in and around the synagogue grounds, however, he would need additional permits including, most vitally, the permission of Moses Cattau, the Jewish community president. Having little contact with the Jewish community and lacking strong connections with British men of influence, his only recourse was to apply to Sir William Garstin, the British engineer in charge of the Ministry of Public Works for an introduction to “Mr. Cattau, the chief of the synagogue.”

Henriques' existing friendship with Joseph Cattau (a near contemporary) and other members of the Cattau family, and his close ties and friendships within the British Embassy should have

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, d'Hulst's letter to the librarian Falconer Madan (undated) in Bodl.d.1084, document no.46: “As to the [genizah] MSS, I discovered them, when in 1889 carrying on excavations at Old Cairo they seemed to me valuable but I was not sufficiently Hebrew scholar to decide.”

<sup>9</sup> For example, Henriques sent a manuscript codex to Schechter, but he did not know what it contained, and merely observed that it had: “some very interesting rabbinical writing.” (Requinald Q. Henriques to Solomon Schechter, May 12 1899, ULIB 6/6/2/1).



placed him many steps ahead of d’Hulst. But at this point, Professor Archibald Henry Sayce, the man who had appointed d’Hulst to the task, and someone who was very well-connected with leading Egyptologists and the Egyptian and British authorities, weighed in to help. Sayce’s first letter to Nicholson on the subject reveals that additional interested parties were complicating matters further:

Hertz, who is at the Head of the Commission of Arabic Art has heard of the digging, & has lifted a protest against them at the Ministry of Public Works. Garstin can ignore the protest for the next week or two, but then it will be necessary to reply & our excavations would have to cease, as it seems that the Ministry of Public Works has legally no right to grant the permission to dig <without consultation with the Arab Art Commission> & Hertz [i.e., Herz]? wants the MSS for Berlin. (Archibald Henry Sayce to E. W. B. Nicholson, March 31 1898, BLR d.1084)

Max Herz was a Hungarian Jew who had been living in Egypt since 1880. His training in architecture led to his appointment in 1890 as chief architect of the *Comité de conservation des monuments de l’art arabe*, a position he held until 1914 (Ormos 2005, 159–201).<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, some weeks later, in spite of Herz’s interference and other obstructions on the ground, Sayce had managed to resolve all the difficulties d’Hulst encountered by gaining police protection and the approval of key authorities:

Cairo,  
Ap. 22/98

... I have settled all Count d’Hulst’s difficulties; he is working under the protection of the police & the Ministry of Public Works but has now the approval of the leading members of the Jewish community here under whose management the synagogue is. Mr Cattai tells him that he will be able in the course of the summer to excavate in the garden of the synagogue itself where, it seems, no end of MSS are buried. A box of MSS (not books) has just been packed for you. There are more MSS under the ground than we had anticipated.

Schechter’s expenditure amounted to £300.

Yours very truly,

H. Sayce

(Archibald Henry Sayce to E. W. B. Nicholson, April 22 1898, BLR d.1084)

By May 1898, d’Hulst could report to E. W. B. Nicholson his success in unearthing large amounts

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<sup>10</sup> Herz maintained close friendships with other European scholars and Orientalists, particularly Bernhard Moritz of Berlin (librarian at Friedrich Wilhelms University in Berlin; afterwards the head of the Khedivial Library in Cairo and member of the *Comité*) who may have been the intended recipient of these manuscripts.

of material for the Bodleian and the fact that they would arrive soon in Oxford:

Cairo,  
May 12th 1898

My dear sir,

Many thanks for your kind letter.

My work at Old Cairo has come to a close yesterday. There have been fifty-five working days & the amount advanced has been £27.16.8.

The result has been sixteen big grain sacs full of fragments, which have been in four big wooden packing cases & handed over to Mssrs Large & Co forwarding agents, Cairo, who will forward them to you. I hope that their contents will prove interesting. ...

Believe me

Yours sincerely,

R. d'Hulst

(Count Riamo d'Hulst to E. W. B. Nicholson, May 12 1898, BLR d.1084)

It seems surprising that after all his efforts in early April to thwart the count, and despite his close connections to men of influence, Henriques eventually lost out to Sayce and d'Hulst over this matter. But since Sayce's letter from April 21 also refers to the amount of money Solomon Schechter paid out to acquire his genizah hoard, it is likely that discussions of payment had turned things back in favor of the Oxford camp and even resulted in a promise from the president of the Jewish community to allow future excavations on the synagogue grounds. Henriques had not yet secured Schechter's permission to pay for the manuscripts and, in fact, he confirmed in a much later letter that the "Austrian" had "succeeded at last thanks to money that golden key to everything" (Reginald Q. Henriques to Solomon Schechter, December 8 1898, ULIB 6/6/1/2).

## VIII. LEAVING NO LEAF UNTURNED: PREPARING TO PUBLISH THE DEFINITIVE VERSION OF BEN SIRA

In the summer of 1898, while Oxford's Neubauer was busy examining d'Hulst's boxes of excavated genizah materials hoping for great finds and perhaps even more Ben Sira manuscripts, Schechter, over in Cambridge, had sent off his Ben Sira transcriptions to the press and was working on his introduction (Ben-Horin 1963, 267). Worried that he may have overlooked manuscripts containing Ben Sira, he wrote to the Cambridge University Librarian, Francis Jenkin-

son, for permission to have more space in which to conduct a re-examination of the materials: “I am particularly anxious to begin work again as the Sirach must not be published before I have ascertained that there are no more fragments of this work in the collection” (Solomon Schechter to Francis Jenkinson, June 17 1898, Cambridge University Library Manuscripts (hereafter cited as CUL), Add.6463.3903). In fact, Schechter’s anxiety about the project was so great that he even managed to rouse the ordinarily mild-mannered Jenkinson to anger when he interrupted a meeting to press him on the issue (Reif 1990, 300).

However, as Charles Taylor’s introduction to *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* would afterwards confirm, Schechter did not uncover any more Ben Sira manuscripts that summer. A fragment of the version later known as MS C emerged in a section of the Taylor-Schechter collection labeled T-S Glass only after Schechter had already published his book (Schechter 1900, 456–465). Other fragments came to light in the T-S Glass and New Series (NS) boxes of the Taylor-Schechter collection during the 1950s (Schirman 1960, 125–134). The fact that these discoveries occurred later is partly due to the fact that prior to 1900 Schechter was only looking for “A” and “B” manuscripts not the unknown “C” version.<sup>11</sup> In the case of the one “MS B” manuscript found later in the NS section, it may have been undiscoverable at that point because Henriques had not yet shipped it to Cambridge University Library. This manuscript, now labeled T-S NS 38a.1, was identified by Jefim Schirman in the 1950s when it was drawn from a crate enigmatically described on library hand lists as “Unlabelled [? Genizah Lib. Coll. Not T/S.]” (Jefferson 2014, 19, Table 5).

Undoubtedly, as Schechter hunted through his collection for more manuscripts of Ben Sira he was aware, thanks to Henriques’ letter of April 5, 1898, that Neubauer had hired an agent in Cairo to unearth genizah materials for him. This news must have heightened his tensions as he worked towards producing the definitive volume on Ben Sira, and increased his determination not to be upstaged again. At this time, Jenkinson was also informed that more sacks of materials were available in Cairo from another source—his friends, the Crums and the Darwins, who announced their arrival by throwing a pebble at his window: “[...] I showed them the Cairo Collection, which interested them as they had had five sacks of fragments from the Genizah offered to them at Cairo, but were warned that Schechter had taken all that was worth anything, rather a hasty assumption” (Diary entry by Francis Jenkinson, July 24 1898, CUL Add.7421).

Writing to Schechter in December, Henriques revealed that while he had been away from Cairo “some German or Austrian” had succeeded in excavating large amounts of manuscripts. In spite of forgetting his name after their encounter in April, it seems most likely that the descriptor

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<sup>11</sup> In the case of the new “MS A” version, Taylor was cautious to point out that: “These four small leaves, which contain in close writing more than the seven from the other manuscript, could only have been singled out from a collection of so many thousands by a careful though necessarily rapid scrutiny” (Schechter & Taylor, 1899, v–vi.).

“some German or Austrian” refers to the Count d’Hulst,<sup>12</sup> even though there is some discrepancy between the numbers of sacks and bags reported:

8<sup>th</sup> December 1898

Dear Dr Schechter,

I trust you & your good lady & children are all well & write you a line to say that the matter of the Ghenisa is by no means finished. While I was at home in England some German or Austrian whose name I don’t know was here & by means of money that golden key to everything in the last succeeded in digging up at least 20 to 25 bags of manuscripts. I shall try to find out who he was & let you know. Now there is another man on the scene Dr Muller whose card I enclose you. This man has offered the beadle & people in charge £2 per bag but up to present as I heard of this I stepped in & collared what was already dug up which is 5 sacks full. I have put these now in my store under the condition that on receipt of your reply I must give them up again if we don’t come to terms on the price. Please let me know if you are prepared to pay this price £2 per bag & of course, the further expenses which I incur for packing shipping &c. If you can do this I can engage to secure all that was dug up & no doubt in a short time might ship you 10/15 bags. The paper I have is all manuscript & mostly of same type as sent you before.<sup>13</sup> Tho’ it is, if possible even more dusty & grubby having for most part being buried in the sand. Please let me have your views & instructions soon if possible so that I can take proper measures that no more of this gets into other channels, I fear too much already has been lost to you during my absence.

With kindest regards

Yours very truly

Reginald Q Henriques

[Postscript] Mr. & Mrs Nathaniel Cohen are here at present at the Continental and I find them [both] Cohens delightful companions. Mr Boyle and Mr Anthony who I saw today send regards.

(Reginald Q. Henriques to Solomon Schechter, December 8 1898, ULIB 6/6/1/2)

Henriques’ slightly confusing narrative suggests that after d’Hulst had finished his excavation project for Oxford in May, other excavations (perhaps funded by the local community) had continued. Five sacks of materials had already been unearthed (which Jenkinson’s testimony of July 1898 further corroborates), and another man on the scene, “Dr Muller” was offering two British

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<sup>12</sup> Sayce described d’Hulst as an Austrian and related that he had once served in the Austrian army (Archibald Henry Sayce to Falconer Madan, October 27 1914, BLR d.1084). D’Hulst referred to himself as German in 1909 (Count Riamo d’Hulst to E. W. B. Nicholson, November 16 1909, BLR d. 1084) and then in 1915, when it was dangerous for him to be known as either Austrian or German, he described himself as a citizen of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (Count Riamo d’Hulst to Falconer Madan, April 1 1915, BLR d.1084).

<sup>13</sup> Henriques refers to manuscripts that were “sent you before” yet, at present, there is no known record of any manuscripts sent to Schechter prior to Henriques’ shipments of 1899 and 1902.

pounds for every bag.<sup>14</sup> Henriques' reference to a "Dr Muller" may have been David Heinrich Müller, the Oriental scholar and close friend of David Kaufmann, another great Jewish scholar and collector of genizah manuscripts.<sup>15</sup> During November and December of that year, Müller had embarked on a scientific mission to Yemen with the Count Carlo de Landberg under the auspices of the Vienna Academy of Sciences (Fowler 1899, 249), a journey that would have taken him through Egypt.

By the end of December, Henriques was still fighting to get hold of additional manuscripts and to retain those he had already seized. The price on the manuscripts had been increased, no doubt in line with heightened interest from numerous dealers, including "the Austrian" (again, most probably the Count d'Hulst):

Ad 1899 Jan. 31 FJ. Buy

30-12-98

Dear Dr Schechter

Many thanks for your nice letter & the kind expressions therein and thank you also for the Jewish Chronicle in which I was delighted to see the glad news of your appointment which you so richly deserve and on the occasion of which please accept my hearty congratulations. These people connected with the Old Cairo "Schule" are I think the most annoying & unprincipled crowd one can possibly imagine & I sometimes wish I had never known of their existence. I am fighting again now for these M.S.S. & those which I wrote you could be got for £2 I have now had to pay £2.10.0 each sack which I have done rather than give them up to the Austrian I wrote you of. This also applies to the 5 sacks I had already got hold of & put in my warehouse under lock & key. I expect to get 3–4 more sacks next week & shall make you a shipment as soon as possible & am only sorry they will cost so much more than last time. As you may have heard my father is very dangerously ill & I am very much upset [on] that [of/c]. Please thank Mrs Schechter for her kind message & trusting you are both enjoying the best of health. With best wishes to you & yours for 1899.

Believe me

Yours sincerely

Reginald Q Henriques

(Reginald Q. Henriques to Solomon Schechter, December 30 1898, ULIB 6/6/1/2)

A note by Jenkinson at the top of Henriques' letter records that he had been sent an answer

<sup>14</sup> Confusion also arises from the varying references to bags and sacks. Overall, it seems from the various testimonies that prices were set according to bags, that bags were packed in grain sacks, and that grain sacks were packed in boxes.

<sup>15</sup> Müller and Kaufmann had previously published a genizah manuscript from the Archduke Rainer collection (Müller and Kaufmann 1892, 127–132.).

(“Ad”) a month later with the instruction to “Buy.” Direct correspondence between Schechter and Henriques was at an end: Schechter had begun his new appointment teaching at University College London, and for a while he even ceased writing to very close friends, such as Judge Mayer Sulzberger (Ben-Horin, 1963, 269–270). Henriques now addressed his letters to Jenkinson as he negotiated purchasing and shipping arrangements, and Jenkinson responded presumably consequent to consultations with Schechter. Henriques’ next missive, dated March 7, 1899 and addressed to Jenkinson, announced that he had dispatched the sacks. At the head of this letter, Jenkinson noted that he had replied on March 20<sup>th</sup> with the instruction “go on” and a note to explain that he may send a coded telegraph message to tell Henriques to either stop or purchase at the price of £5 per bag:

Ad 1899 March 20 ‘go on’

may telegraph

1) ‘STOP’

Or 2) ‘FIVE’[(&c)] i.e. ‘£5 per bag if necessary’

Cairo 7-3-99

Dear Sir,

I duly received your lines of 31<sup>st</sup> January which had my attention & beg to inform you that after a lot of bother I shipped 6 sacks of these M.S.S. by the ‘Crown Prince’ to Manchester invoice & documents you will duly receive from my Manchester people to whom I beg you will also remit the amount of my outlays. I believe that later on there will be more of these manuscripts dug up but each time these folks ask for more money saying that they incur such expense in digging & removing soil. The next lot when they appear will certainly cost 3 or even £4 per bag so I should like to know if you wish to give me faculty to secure them at best possible [in] your interest.

I am Dear Sir

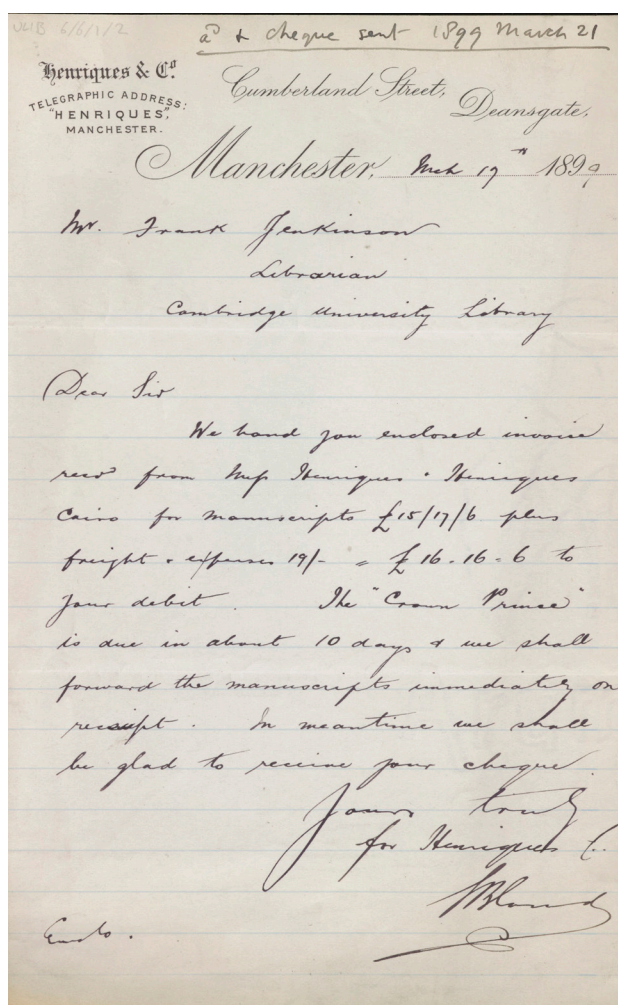
Yours sincerely

Reginald Q Henriques

(Reginald Q. Henriques to Francis Jenkinson, March 7 1899, ULIB 6/6/1/2)

Henriques’ family company sent a follow-up letter on his behalf to confirm the shipping arrangements and to invoice the library for the costs: “We send you enclosed invoice recvd from Mssrs Henriques & Henriques Cairo for manuscripts £15/17/6 plus freight & expenses 19/- = £16.16.6 to your debit. The ‘Crown Prince’ is due in about 10 days & we shall forward the manuscripts immediately on receipt” (Henriques & Co. to Francis Jenkinson, March 19 1899, ULIB 6/6/1/2; Figure 3). It too contains a note at the top of the letter in Jenkinson’s handwriting attesting that he had sent a check for the manuscripts: “Ad & cheque sent 1899 March 21.”

As Henriques' six sacks of manuscripts were being transported to Cambridge via Manchester (due to arrive at the end of March or beginning of April), Schechter was writing his prefatory remarks for *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, which he signed "March 1899." On April 5<sup>th</sup>, following his letter-writing hiatus, Schechter confirmed to Mayer Sulzberger that he would soon receive a copy of his "Sirach" which was: "finished as far as I'm concerned and will probably be out during next May" (Ben-Horin 1963, 270). For all he knew at that point in time, more portions of Ben Sira had just arrived in Cambridge (and, indeed, they probably had), but by now it was too late for this volume. At any rate, it may have given Schechter some comfort to know that they would be housed in Cambridge not Oxford. A few weeks later, Jenkinson recorded in his diary that he and Schechter were happy to continue to pay for additional manuscripts: "Wrote to Mr. Reg [Q] Henriques Thanking him, reporting progress, & saying we would pay what was necessary to secure further sacks" (Diary entry by Francis Jenkinson, April 21 1899, CUL Add.7421).<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 3.** Letter from Henriques & Co. to Francis Jenkinson, March 19, 1899, confirming the shipment of manuscripts (The Syndics of Cambridge University Library)

<sup>16</sup> Receipt of the manuscripts was officially reported in the Cambridge University Library Syndicate Minutes of April 26, 1899: "The Library reported that through the kindness of a gentleman living at Cairo six sacks of fragments from the Genizah had been secured at a cost including carriage of £16.16.6: & the payment was approved."

The last letter in this library archive, written in May 1899, reveals that Henriques was continuing to act on the library's behalf whenever feasible, and that he even wrested a manuscript codex away from the "Austrian Count" (presumably d'Hulst). Moreover, he noted that the supply of buried manuscripts was ending:

Cairo

12<sup>th</sup> May 99

Dear Sir,

I have delayed replying to your last letter for which please receive my best thanks in the hope of having some definite news to communicate re further consignments of M.S.S. which as you seem anxious to secure I am doing my utmost to procure. As you know there are still several people scheming to obtain whatever is brought to light especially an Austrian whose name I communicated to Professor Schechter some time ago. However, I am convinced that very little if anything will get into other hands than ours. There is only about one sack now ready in spite of continuing digging &c [etc.]. I fear the supply is mostly at an end. I send you by this post a manuscript found in the same place & for which the Austrian Count offered £2 please have it examined without delay & if of that value to you please remit for my a/c £2.10.0 or £3 when here or to me, which ever you think & which sum I will pay over to the authorities here [.] If not of this value to you please return it with as little delay as possible in parcel post. It seems to me it may be some very interesting rabbinical writing.

Awaiting your news

Yours very truly

Reginald Q. Henriques

(Q)

(Reginald Q. Henriques to Francis Jenkinson, May 12 1899, ULIB 6/6/1/2)

All the same, unbeknown to Henriques, additional genizah manuscripts would come to light during the course of the next decade, with a Mr. Joseph Offord supplying the Bodleian Library with a box in 1906 (Joseph Offord to Arthur Ernest Crowley, January 8 1906, BLR d.1083); the Egyptian businessman Jacques Mosseri uncovering buried materials in the synagogue grounds in 1912 (Mosseri 1914, 31–44); and a "new genizah" of nineteenth century materials being unearthed in Cairo's Bassatine Cemetery in the 1980s (Cohen 2006, 139).

Seventeen days after he received Henriques' letter, Jenkinson recorded in his diary: "The MS. Book from Cairo, sent by Mr Reg. Q. Henriques, arrived: & being pronounced no good by Schechter was at once sent back with thanks for the trouble taken" (Diary entry by Francis Jenkinson, May 29 1899, CUL Add.7422). At this point, the correspondence between Henriques and Cambridge University Library must have ceased, as there are no more letters in the collection. One wonders if the lack of interest shown in the manuscript book was off-putting or if other



matters intervened. Most likely, the death of Henriques' father, Edward Micholls Henriques, in 1901 (*Jewish Year Book* 1902, 408) had something to do with the fact that Henriques' final consignment of manuscripts did not arrive at the library until 1902. And Schechter's departure from Cambridge at that point may be the reason why there is no official accession record for them. The only record of their existence occurs on a note from the 1920s which had been placed inside a crate of residue labeled "crate 10": "These Hebrew MSS. **are part of** (my emphasis) a collection bought from Messrs Henriques and Henriques of Cairo and Manchester. Six sacks were bought 23 Feb. 1899. Three bags were bought 19 Jan. 1902. [signed and dated] 12 Jan, 1921. C. S." (T-S Genizah Research Unit departmental records).<sup>17</sup>

## IX. "MANY A PRECIOUS DOCUMENT AND IMPORTANT MS"

How much of today's Taylor-Schechter genizah manuscript collection came from Henriques will forever remain unknown. Still, we can surmise that Henriques' manuscripts were among those rejected materials put aside in crates until the 1950s. Hand lists in the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit departmental records enable us to reconstruct to a certain degree how Cambridge University Library classified these materials over time. For example, the note about Henriques' materials from 1921 was placed in crate 10 of the collection—a crate of material that was subsequently divided out among the folders of the T-S Collection classified as T-S NS 172 to T-S NS 209 (Jefferson 2014, 20, Table 6). Since crate 10 only contained "part of a collection bought from Messrs. Henriques and Henriques," the rest of Henriques' consignments must have been spread among the other crates in storage. Hand lists of "residue" material from the early part of the twentieth century also refer to boxes of manuscripts labeled as "Library Collection. Feb 1902" or "not T/S," or "From Liverpool. Not examined. Not T/S," or they were simply left undesignated and labeled with a question mark (*Ibid.*, Tables 3–5).

We can try to estimate the amount supplied by Henriques by comparing the number of sacks of unearthed fragments he sent to Cambridge (6 sacks; 3 bags) to the number d'Hulst sent to Oxford (16 sacks). Since we know that much of what d'Hulst sent to Oxford over the years was eventually sold on to the British collector, Elkan Nathan Adler, and since we know the overall size of Adler's collection (see the estimate in Jefferson 2010, 191), d'Hulst's 1898 excavations must have yielded in the region of 10,000–15,000 items. It would make sense to suppose, therefore, that Henriques sent almost half of that amount (around 5,000–7,500 fragments). On the other hand, this is an inexact science as one cannot guess with any degree of accuracy the number of small scraps that will squeeze into a sack. Unquestionably, greater numbers of tiny fragments from the T-S AS collection would fit inside a sack than the larger fragments found in the T-S Old Series. It is equally conceivable, therefore, that Henriques sent to Cambridge an equal or even greater amount than d'Hulst sent to Oxford depending on how small or large these particular recovered pieces were.

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<sup>17</sup> The 1920s note is copied at the end of a hand-list, titled "T-S Boxes Crates in Tower 7." The hand-list is signed D.G.S. and dated November 14, 1949. The Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit departmental records comprise un-processed hand lists and notes pertaining to the sorting and cataloging of the Cambridge Genizah collections.

If we consider the evidence presented by the amounts expended to excavate and purchase the manuscripts—Henriques’ six sacks cost £15.17.2, which is more than half of d’Hulst’s cost of £27.16.8 for 16 sacks—it might indicate that they contained more. Yet, according to Henriques’ testimony, prices were set on bags not sacks and they went up in line with demand. Similarly, it is not entirely clear whether the bags and the sacks mentioned in the various letters were even the same size. A comparison of freight costs, similarly yields no further insights: Henriques’ six sacks cost £19 to ship from Alexandria to Manchester to Cambridge, and d’Hulst’s 16 sacks cost £5.13.11 from Alexandria to Liverpool to Oxford (Bodl.d.1084 no. 13). However, in this case, we must take into account the differences between shipping companies and distances, as well as the fact that Henriques used his own company as the forwarding agent.

These challenges notwithstanding, it remains a curious fact that Schechter’s first estimation of his hoard was 40,000 (Schechter 1897, 13) whereas his second estimation, published in 1908, was 100,000 manuscripts (Schechter 1908, 9). Even if we consider that Schechter vastly underestimated its size in the early years before he had undertaken a sorting process, these are still quite divergent numbers.

Today, Henriques’ manuscripts are subsumed within the Taylor-Schechter New Series (NS) and Additional Series (AS), and it is now impossible to know which parts of these collections he supplied. The only folder of manuscripts fully attributed to him in the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection is T-S NS 172, which contains 189 miscellaneous manuscripts.

## X. *THE WISDOM OF BEN SIRA AS A DECLARATION OF WAR*

It is not likely that Henriques expected any special recognition or distinctive status for “his collection” since the manuscripts he supplied to Cambridge were purchased not donated. Nevertheless, in March 1899, while Henriques’ manuscripts were in transit and not knowing exactly how much or what he had supplied, Schechter still made sure to acknowledge him in his opus magnum, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*. Of course, Schechter was aware of the need to thank Henriques for his extraordinary uncompensated efforts to sequester manuscripts on his behalf, particularly as he had not paid credit to his earlier help in 1897 (which, as we have seen, may well have been crucial to Schechter’s ability to export genizah manuscripts). He was also cognizant of the fact that his genizah collection at Cambridge was about to be boosted by an additional six sacks worth of materials. Yet, reading the acknowledgment again more closely we see that it hints at great quality as well as quantity: “I have also to express my thanks to my friend Mr. Reginald Q. Henriques of Cairo (originally of Manchester), to whose kindness, beginning during my stay and still continuing, I am indebted for many a precious document and important MS.” (Schechter and Taylor 1899, 5).

Knowing what we know now about the timing of Henriques’ manuscript contribution (it hadn’t yet arrived) and the way it was subsequently set aside as unimportant residue (Schechter could only guess at its contents), what then lay behind this carefully worded, somewhat rhetorically amplified message?

A closer look at some of the driving forces behind Schechter's work, including personal ambition and scholarly crusade, combined with a temperament that "did not relish tame loves or hates" (Lipsky 1915, 145), may provide an answer. In the early 1890s, German Higher Criticism had migrated to England and America where it was fully embraced by the academy. As soon as Schechter assumed his role in Cambridge University as Reader in Rabbinics, he began to finesse his public response to this all-pervasive scholarly ethos by accepting the idea of the historical development of the Bible but rejecting the idea that this trajectory meant a deterioration of post-biblical Jewish culture (Starr 2010, 14). In private, Schechter expressed anger about the work of these Christian scholars; for example, writing to his friend, the scholar Richard Gottheil in 1894, he fumed:

If you would have the misfortune to read as much Christian theology as I do, you will be convinced that they are a to'eva [abomination] ... They now have the opportunity and want to undo the history, but let them say so frankly ... are there not such things as truth and untruth, and is it not the duty of the teacher to expound the former and warn against the latter? (Ibid., 15)

Four years later, in 1898, as Schechter prepared to present to the world the evidence with which to combat these critical theories, he admitted to Mayer Sulzberger that he was going to use the introduction to his volume as "a declaration of war" on "certain results of higher criticism concerning the *ketuvim* (the Hagiographa)" (Ben-Horin 1963, 267–268). Further, he voiced the need to "recover our Bible (Apocrypha included) from the Christians" and he remarked that "there ought to be such a thing as Jewish higher criticism conducted on the principles of a Jewish *Weltanschauung* [philosophy]" (Ibid., 268).

Burning no less a fire within his soul were Schechter's own scholarly ambitions, which during the early phase of his life had been held back by personal circumstance (Bentwich 1938, 234). Thus, the magnitude of his Ben Sira discovery fueled his desire to leave a lasting legacy and even led him to pronounce to his wife, "As long as the Bible lives, my name shall not die!" (Ibid., 140). Alongside this longing for a certain level of recognition and longevity, he expressed a deep sense of injustice when it came to academic rivalry and professional slights. Accordingly, he denounced his erstwhile colleague Neubauer as a "lump" (scoundrel) for trying to upstage him with the Oxford Ben Sira MSS (Reif 2000, 83), and he clearly felt great bitterness at the actions of such scholars as George Margoliouth, who rushed to publish a newly found Ben Sira MS in the British Museum (Margoliouth 1899) instead of lending it to Schechter's project (Reif 1990, 300).

Undoubtedly, Schechter knew the power of publishing in order to get across a veiled or implied message. As he explained to his friend and occasional competitor Elkan Nathan Adler, in a letter attempting to rationalize why he had failed to acknowledge publicly his help in gaining access to Cairo's chief rabbi:

In putting in the name of your brother in such a stiff formal way, I purposed to show the gentiles that the letter of our Chief Rabbi has with the Eastern Jews as much authority as that of the Archbishop with the Coptic Churches ... Your name would have undone the effected and **intended** [my emphasis]. Will you understand me now? You shall soon P. G. [Please God] be compensated by me. I have to lecture on the subject. (Solomon Schechter to Elkan Nathan Adler, August 5 1897, JTS Box 1/15).

By crediting Henriques with supplying precious and important manuscripts in his most important work, Schechter was able to infuse his acknowledgment with a number of subtle messages. First, he could signal (to those in the know) that his man in Cairo (Henriques) had got the better of Neubauer's man in Cairo (d'Hulst). Additionally, by affirming the "still continuing" kindness of this particular Cairo resident he could send a warning to fellow scholars and collectors hunting for Ben Sira manuscripts that Schechter's direct supplier was on the ground and on the case! Finally, by using those exact words, "many a precious document and important MS" (which would lead one to believe that there was a firm connection between Henriques' consignments and the present volume), he could send an "intended" message to the proponents of Higher Criticism that, thanks to the ongoing efforts of "Reginald Q. Henriques of Cairo," further evidence to prove the unbroken chain of Jewish tradition was out there and its recovery was imminent.

## CONCLUSION

This article has used an abstruse reference to a little-known protagonist in the history of the Cairo Genizah to explore the high stakes, great tensions, and subterfuge involved in recovering the original book of Ben Sira and in forming a major manuscript collection in Cambridge University Library. Such an investigation is more than a mere curiosity: it is important for a greater understanding of the motivations of the men and women involved in the genizah story, especially with regard to their scholarship and efforts at collection building. By piecing together archival evidence, in conjunction with a closer reading of published material, we see that the history of the famous genizah manuscript collections is more convoluted than previously supposed. Research into the history of such collections is vital because it aids our understanding of the ways in which Jewish libraries and archives have been assembled and organized over time; the forces and processes, organic and artificial, that have gone into shaping them; the information they retained and the information they excluded; and, most importantly, what a society values and what it casts aside.

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### ABBREVIATIONS

Bodleian MSS.: Bodleian Library Manuscripts (Eng.) Bodleian Library, Oxford, UK.

BLR: Bodleian Rec.: Bodleian Library Records, Bodleian Library, Oxford, UK.

ULIB: Cambridge Arc.: Cambridge University Library Archives, University of Cambridge, UK.

CUL: Cambridge MSS.: University Library Manuscripts, University of Cambridge UK.

Manchester Rec. Office: Greater Manchester County Record Office (with Manchester Archives)  
record 1069: Photographs of the Henriques Family.

JTS: Solomon Schechter Papers, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York.

Taylor-Schechter Rec.: Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit departmental records, Cambridge University Library, UK.

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