

THE LITTMAN LIBRARY OF
JEWISH CIVILIZATION

MANAGING EDITOR
Connie Webber

Dedicated to the memory of
LOUIS THOMAS SIDNEY LITTMAN
who founded the Littman Library

for the love of God
and in memory of his father

JOSEPH AARON LITTMAN
יהונתן ברוך

*'Get wisdom, get understanding:
Forsake her not and she shall preserve thee'*

PROV. 4:5

The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization is a registered UK charity
Registered charity no. 1000784

HASKALAH AND HISTORY



*The Emergence of a Modern
Jewish Historical Consciousness*



SHMUEL FEINER

Translated by

CHAYA NAOR AND SONDRA SILVERSTON

Oxford · Portland, Oregon

The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization

2002 / 2004

deputy director, Sandra J. Edwards. I am indebted to them all; without their assistance, the publication of this book would not have been possible.

I should like to dedicate this book with love to my wife, Rivka-Sharon, and to our five beloved children, Merav-Hadas, Avital-Batya, Adi-Tamar, Noam-Yoel, and Michal-Alona.

Jerusalem
2000

S.F.

Contents

<i>Note on Transliteration and Conventions Used in the Text</i>	xii
INTRODUCTION. 'Haskalah' and 'History'	1
1. From Traditional History to Maskilic History in Late Eighteenth-Century Germany	9
An Enlightened Avant-Garde	9
The Legitimation of Traditional History	11
The 'Judgement of Reason': Legitimizations for a New History	17
Rationalistic, Realistic, and Moralistic History	31
The Modern Period in the Maskilic Picture of the Past	36
The Pantheon of Historical Heroes	50
The Dissemination of Maskilic History in the Early Nineteenth Century	60
2. The Manipulation of History in Nineteenth-Century Galicia	71
The Galician Maskilim	71
The Unfolding of Maskilic History	79
A Natural History of Hasidism	91
Nahman Krochmal: The Middle-of-the-Road Maskil	115
Wissenschaft des Judentums in Galicia	125
The Struggle for Freedom of Thought	138
Iconoclasm: Attitudes to Religious Reform	150
3. Optimism under Oppression: Maskilic History in Russia, 1825–1855	157
The Idea Yearning to be Realized	157
A Universal History for a Modern Era	163
The Maskilic Chain of Tradition	178
The Use of History in Maskilic Propaganda	192
Political History and Moral History	194
4. Reaching the Masses: The Dissemination of Maskilic History	204
The Channels of Distribution	204
Optimistic and Patriotic History	211

Scientific Knowledge of the Past	217
The Autobiography of the Haskalah Movement	224
Abraham Mapu and the Popularization of Maskilic History	229
Heroics and Sacred Memories in Popular Historical Fiction	234
Improvement of the Masses: History in Yiddish	241
Kalman Schulman: The First Professional Popularizer	247
5. Maskilic History in Crisis	274
The Radical Haskalah: A Loss of Optimism	274
The Anticlerical Struggle	295
The Historical Vindication of Hasidism	306
From 'Maskilic History' to 'National History'	317

CONCLUSION. New Directions

Glossary

Bibliography

Index

Note on Transliteration and Conventions Used in the Text

THE transliteration of Hebrew in this book reflects a consideration of the type of book it is, in terms of its content, purpose, and readership. The system adopted therefore reflects a broad approach to transcription, rather than the narrower approaches found in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* or other systems developed for text-based or linguistic studies. The aim has been to reflect the pronunciation prescribed for modern Hebrew, rather than the spelling or Hebrew word structure, and to do so using conventions that are generally familiar to the English-speaking Jewish reader.

In accordance with this approach, no attempt is made to indicate the distinctions between *alef* and *ayin*, *tet* and *taf*, *kaf* and *kuf*, *sin* and *samekh*, since these are not relevant to pronunciation; likewise, the *dagesh* is not indicated except where it affects pronunciation. Following the principle of using conventions familiar to the majority of readers, however, transcriptions that are well established have been retained even when they are not fully consistent with the transliteration system adopted. On similar grounds, the *tsadi* is rendered by 'tz' in such familiar words as *barmitzvah*, *mitzvot*, and *so on*. Likewise, the distinction between *het* and *khaf* has been retained, using *h* for the former and *kh* for the latter; the associated forms are generally familiar to readers, even if the distinction is not actually borne out in pronunciation, and for the same reason the final *heh* is indicated too. As in Hebrew, no capital letters are used, except that an initial capital has been retained in transliterating titles of published works (for example, *Shulhan arukh*).

Since no distinction is made between *alef* and *ayin*, they are indicated by an apostrophe only in intervocalic positions where a failure to do so could lead an English-speaking reader to pronounce the vowel-cluster as a diphthong—as, for example, in *ha'ir*—or otherwise mispronounce the word.

The *sheva na* is indicated by an *e*—*perikat ol*, *reshut*—except, again, when established convention dictates otherwise.

The *yod* is represented by an *i* when it occurs as a vowel (*bereshit*), by a *y* when it occurs as a consonant (*yevodot*), and by *yi* when it occurs as both (*yisra'el*).

Names have generally been left in their familiar forms, even when this is inconsistent with the overall system, and *het* has been represented by an ordinary 'h' in proper names of people and institutions appearing in the text.

Thanks are due to Jonathan Webber of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies for his help in elucidating the principles to be adopted.

FOUR

Reaching the Masses: The Dissemination of Maskilic History

THE CHANNELS OF DISTRIBUTION

NEW LIFE', wrote Shalom Abramowitz, better known by his pen-name Men-Adele Mokher Seforim (1835-1917), as he looked back nostalgically at the past, 'was in store for the Jews, beginning with the sixties of this century, a life marked by an uplifted, light-hearted spirit, full of hopes for the future.'¹ Although the hopes that the maskilim pinned on the reign of the Russian tsar Alexander II (1855-81) were not always realized, and while maskilic faith in Russia's 'benevolent government' gradually crumbled from 1870s onwards, changes did actually take place. The Jewish population increased (from 2,350,000 in 1850 to 3,980,000 in 1880); gradually, on a selective basis, more Jews were allowed to reside outside the Jewish Pale of Settlement; some of Nicholas I's edicts were abolished, chief among them the cruel conscription of Jewish boys and young men to the army; economic patterns fluctuated, with poverty and distress increasing, on one hand, and a small class of wealthy entrepreneurs developing, on the other, and processes of acculturation were intensified, particularly in the large cities that were the destinations of internal immigration.²

Changes also took place within maskilic circles. Young maskilim were exposed to Russian culture, a new generation of maskilim was affected by the prevailing spirit of modernity, and secondary streams were formed in the Haskalah movement. The numbers of maskilim grew, there was a substantial increase in works of Hebrew literature, the Jewish press offered vastly greater opportunities for publication and communication between maskilim, and the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia, founded in 1863, provided financial support for initiatives to bring the Jews closer to Russian culture.³

¹ Abramowitz, *Sefer hakabitsanim*, 197.

² Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, ii, 154-242; Slutsky, 'The Emergence', 212-37; Tcherikower, *Jews in Time of Revolution*, 127-200; Dimur, *Historical Writings*, iv, 202-28; Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa*; Greenberg, *The Jews in Russia*, i, 73-186; Nardi, 'Transformations in the Enlightenment Movement', 300-27.

³ Zinberg, *A History of Jewish Literature*, vii, 91-126; Bartal, 'Radical Enlightenment', 13-20; Feiner, 'Jewish Society, Literature, and Haskalah', 283-316; I. Kovner, *Sefer hamatsref*; Lilienblum, *Letters*, 133.

While my reconstruction of the maskilic sense of the past in the first half of the nineteenth century was based on a handful of prominent writings, some of which were never completed, in the second half of the century the maskilim produced a large number of historical works of different types. In this chapter I will attempt to find some order in these writings, and to classify them according to their aims and the particular audiences to which they were addressed. The expansion and diversification of the Jewish reading public enabled maskilic writers to impart the major messages of 'maskilic history' to various types of readers at different levels of popularization.

This chapter focuses on the channels through which maskilic history was disseminated in Russia, particularly in the 1860s and 1870s. Most of the maskilim who were active in furthering this aim had been influenced by the changes taking place in the reign of Alexander II, and regarded themselves and were regarded by their younger, more radical colleagues as belonging to the moderate stream of the Haskalah. In the 1840s they had advocated a militant Haskalah and inveighed against traditional ways, but now they favoured a conservative Haskalah that eschewed radicalism.⁴ This chapter then is devoted to the moderate maskilim, while the radical trends that subverted the original principles of the Haskalah are the subject of the next.

The historical literature written by the maskilim during the reign of Alexander II was part of a growing Jewish book market with an expanding readership. In 1859, for example, the Romm Press in Vilna planned to print 3,000 copies of each of Guenzburg's books *Sefer yemei hador* and *Kiryat sefer*; 2,000 copies of the fourth part of the translation by Kalman Schulman (1819-99) of the French writer Eugène Sue's adventure novel *Mystères de Paris*; and 3,000 copies of Schulman's *Shulamit*.⁵ *Ahavat tsyon* (The Love of Zion), by Abraham Mapu (1808-67), came out in five Hebrew editions, although its author could hardly conceal his envy at the more dazzling success enjoyed by *Mystères de Paris*. The most successful author of all was Isaac Meir Dick (1814-93), whose Yiddish stories sold in their thousands. The Hebrew periodicals, published from 1856 onwards, had close to 4,000 subscribers and a even larger readership, since every copy was read by several people.⁶

This expansion of the reading public does not necessarily imply that the situation had changed drastically and that the numbers of maskilim in Russia had increased dramatically. The maskilic circle itself, which included the 'creators', activists, and writers of the Haskalah, remained relatively small and continued to

⁴ In order to emphasize their link to the 18th-c. German Haskalah, the moderates called themselves 'the 1783 maskilim'. Eliezer Zweifel applied this term to Idel Sharshavsky; see Paperna, *Collected Writings*, 277.

⁵ Kohn, 'Romm's Printing House', 109-14.
⁶ Miron, *From Romance to the Novel*, 231-8; Werses, *Yiddish Translations of 'Ahavat Tsion'*, 15-48; Dick, 'Mikhrav leh. v. gurland', 408. The figures are based on Sokolow's estimation; id., 'David Frishmann', 281-3. For the expanded Hebrew readership, see Miron, *When Loners Come Together*, 56-85. Additional statistical data on the circulation of Hebrew books in Russia in the 19th c. can be found in Dimur, *Historical Writings*, iv, 217-20.

represent only an élite group of intellectuals, although it was joined by a new generation. A large proportion of the new readers were neither maskilim nor supporters of the Haskalah but came from traditional society, which also witnessed change during the reign of Alexander II. One innovation was the appearance of what Dan Miron, the scholar of Hebrew literature, later called a 'normal Hebrew-reading public'. It was composed of individuals who had acquired their education in the traditional houses of study (*batei midrash*) but were induced by their bourgeois lifestyle to expand their horizons. There were no intellectuals or ideologues like the maskilim among these readers, who were content to read the latest news and pleasant tales. Judah Leib Kantor (1849-1915) defined the readership of a Hebrew periodical at the close of the 1870s as:

Men who are no longer afraid to read 'external' books and are unable to read foreign languages—mostly people who will pay in full for the pleasure they gain from reading Hebrew periodicals when they are resting and relaxing. These people want news, pleasing stories, views about Jewish life, and the biographies of famous men, but not scholarly enquiry into history.⁷

Hence a maskilic writer desirous of attracting these readers could not limit his writing to historical studies, which would only appeal to the small readership of maskilim. Indeed, the most successful historical literature had a purely popular orientation: stirring historical tales, translated and adapted from German, and historical novels and stories in Yiddish that appealed to an even lower socio-cultural level of readership that included boys and women. Some of the maskilim were contemptuous of this low type of literature and found it hard to reconcile themselves to its dissemination. Mapu, Schulman, Dick, and others, however, understood that these popular works not only helped them earn their livelihood by writing but also enabled them to expand the target audience for maskilic propaganda.⁸

In quantitative terms, historical literature was very well represented in the Jewish book market in Russia at the time. The lists and catalogues of Jewish booksellers are an invaluable source of knowledge about the share of the market commanded by the various types of historical literature. A very large selection was offered to the reading public by the bookseller Aaron Faust of Krakow. His catalogue (1876-7) contained close to 1,700 books, most of them in Hebrew and some in Yiddish and German.⁹ There were scores of booklets of Yiddish tales, not included in the catalogue, that could be ordered by mail like all the other books. Most of the books on the list were works of traditional religious literature:

⁷ Kantor, 'Mikhuav el ha'ozar beharedaktstien', 68-9.

⁸ Miron, *When Loners Come Together*, 62-4.

⁹ *Hamagid*, 20 (1876), 397-8, 407, 433-4; *Hamagid*, 21 (1877), 39-40, 59-60, 69-70, 79, 89-90, 99-100, 109-10, 155-6, 173-4, 201, 211, 230. Additional publishers' and booksellers' booklists appeared in *Hamagid*, 15 (1871), suppl. to no. 6; 18 (1874), no. 9; 18 (1874), 97, 125, 152, 162, 187, 235; 19 (1875), 179-80; 22 (1878), 289.

Humash (the Pentateuch), Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash, *masar* (ethical teachings), and kabbalah. Only a quarter of the books (over 400) could be defined as modern literature, produced by maskilim in Russia and Galicia or by Jewish intellectuals from Germany. About 120 books (close to 7 per cent of all the available books) were history books or historical tales, though this group also included new editions of traditional historical literature or traditional biographies of great Torah scholars. In the final analysis, close to 100 works can be defined as new historical literature.¹⁰

The lists of historical literature available to the Jewish reading public in Russia in the 1870s reveal an accumulation of works from various periods and a great diversity in the types of works. Stacked together on the shelf of available history books were several levels of historical literature. It seems that the chronicles and chains of tradition written during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance continued to serve as a source of historical knowledge and a basis for the traditional picture of the past at the close of the nineteenth century. The fact that these traditional history books were constantly reprinted attests to their relevance for the reading public. Gedaliah ben Joseph Ibn Yahya's *Shashelet hakabalah* (Chain of Tradition, 1587), for example, went through eight editions in eastern Europe during the nineteenth century, five of them between 1862 and 1890; David Gans's *Tsemah david* (Offspring of David, 1592) came out in ten editions (eight in Lvov and Warsaw between 1847 and 1878); and *Shevet yehudah* (Rod/Tribe of Judah, 1554) by Rabbi Solomon Ibn Verga appeared in no fewer than fifteen editions. In Lvov, for example, it was reprinted every three to five years from 1846 to 1874. Jehiel Heilprin's chronicle *Seder hadorot* (The Order of the Generations), which first appeared in 1769, went through ten more editions. Unquestionably the most popular 'bestseller' was the book of Josippon; it was printed twenty-five times by various printing-houses in eastern Europe throughout the nineteenth century, seventeen of them in the second half of the century. In the 1870s, for example, Josippon was printed six times in Warsaw—every year or two! Amelander's *She'erit yisra'el* (Remnant of Israel, 1743), regarded as a sequel to Josippon, appeared in sixteen editions.¹¹

The publishers did not delete the introductions from any of the later editions of these books, so that the traditional view of the past, formulated several centuries earlier, continued to make its presence felt and to exert its influence in the nineteenth century. At the very most, a few attempts were made to update these works. For example, the story of the Damascus blood libel of 1840 was added to *She'erit yisra'el*, and 'Additions to the Sixth Millennium', which preserved the style of traditional chronography, were added to the later editions of *Tsemah david*.¹² The traditional approach underlying this historical literature is clearly apparent

¹⁰ This calculation includes the list of the bookseller Abraham Zuckerman of Warsaw which appeared in *Hashaqar*, 8 (1877), suppl. to no. 5.

¹¹ The data on the editions comes from H. D. Friedberg, *Bibliography: Catalogue*.

¹² Gans, *Tsemah david*.

when compared, for example, with Meir Wiener's edition of *Shevet yehudah*, published in Hanover in 1855. Here the editor made an effort to produce an annotated academic edition, using first editions to correct errors that had found their way into the later Warsaw and Lvov editions, and adding references, indexes, and names of people and cities.¹³ Against this backdrop, the role of this traditional historical literature in eastern Europe becomes increasingly clear. It served as popular history, on one hand, and as sacred, canonical, and legitimate history, on the other. But popular history was transmitted not only in books but also in oral stories, as Perez Smolenskin demonstrated: 'terrifying stories' from the distant and more recent past were the topic of lively conversation in the *bet midrash*, telling of

the war of Alexander the Great, who subdued the entire world under his feet until he came to the Garden of Eden and read, written clearly upon the gate, 'Ye shall come here but no further' . . . they sat together and conversed about Alexander and Rothschild, about the greatness of Moses Montefiore or the wars of Napoleon, they spoke of the heroic deeds of the Ten Tribes and the children of Moses, who resembled the sons of giants in their height and the sons of the gods in their righteousness.¹⁴

Similar comments about the stories current among the idle young men sitting around the stove at the house of study are expressed by Abramowitz's heroes in his *Ha'avot vehabanim* (Fathers and Sons, 1868). They mock the superstitions and the folk tales about 'the red-headed Jews, the mountain of darkness and the Sambatyon river, about the deeds of Alexander the Great, the tree he spoke with, and the formidable eagle he rode upon . . . about Sammael and his wife and the chronicles of Gog and Magog'.¹⁵ The maskilim condemned the popular, folkloric approach to the past, and their historical writings were intended to provide reliable and rational historical information in order to combat the traditional, popular view and to offer an alternative to it.

Among the books listed by the booksellers Faust of Krakow and Zuckerman of Warsaw were such eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works as Euchel's biography of Mendelssohn, *Toledot yeshurun* by Meir Fischer of Prague, *Toledot napoleon* by Feivel Schiffer of Warsaw, Krochmal's *Moreh nevu'kei hazeman*, and Feivel Goldshtof's *Korat ha'alam*. Close to forty books were penned by Russian maskilim, and readers could choose books of universal history translated by Kalman Schulman, scientific historical studies such as *Lakutei kadmoniyot* (Compilations of Antiquities) on the Karaites by Simhah Pinsker (1801–64), original historical novels such as Mapu's *Ahavat tsiyon* and *Ashmat shomron* (The Guilt of Samaria), and Hebrew translations of historical stories, such as Samuel Fuenn's *Ya'akov*

¹³ Ibn Verga, *Shevet yehudah*.

¹⁴ Smolenskin, *Kevurat hamor*, 43–4; it first appeared in *Hashahar*, 4, (1873).

¹⁵ Abramowitz, *Collected Writings*, 28. On the diffusion of 'history' from the level of the historian to the general public, see Stanford, *The Nature of Historical Knowledge*, 146–72.

tirado (Jacob Tirado), and those written in Yiddish by Dick. Booksellers also sold Graetz's series *Geschichte der Juden* in the original German immediately upon publication of each volume, as well as German books by Levi Herzfeld, Ludwig Philippson, Meyer Lehmann, Abraham Geiger, and others. The lists also included several history textbooks in Russian.¹⁶

Historical studies written by Russian maskilim in the nineteenth century reached only a very limited circle of maskilim. An example is Fuenn's *Direvei hayayim liveveni yisra'el* (The History of the Children of Israel), which was intended to be a scholarly Hebrew version of the history of the Jews from the time of the Second Temple onwards.¹⁷ In 1871 Fuenn wrote to Judah Leib Gordon (1830–92) in frustration: 'I have invested so much labour in it, and for whom have I laboured and toiled? Believe me that I have not yet sold even thirty copies, and who knows if I shall succeed in selling enough to recoup the 250 roubles I spent on printing it?' Fuenn was wealthy enough to sustain the loss, and the limited number of buyers did not prevent him from continuing his project. 'As long as the breadth of life is within me,' he wrote, 'I shall not cease from my labours for the enlightenment of our people and the expansion of the boundaries of Jewish wisdom, which I shall carry on to the best of my ability, for it seems to me that I was created for this purpose.'¹⁸ The circle of maskilim thus remained relatively small; in his efforts to reach a wider audience Fuenn also translated several historical books which had more dramatic and appealing plots.

The Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews made special efforts to disseminate maskilic historical literature. Established in St Petersburg, in 1863, the society became an focal point for the initiation of various maskilic projects, as well as the address to which maskilim could turn for advice or financial assistance.¹⁹ Mapu, for example, proudly bore the title 'worker and writer' awarded him by the society; Eliezer Tsevi Hakohen Zweifel (1815–88), a former teacher at the rabbinic seminary of Zhitomir, persuaded Abraham Harkavy (1835–1919), an eminent member of the society, to lobby for an annual stipend that would support him in his old age; and Gottlob, with the assistance of his student Hayim Jonah Gurland (1841–90), requested funds from the society to publish his writings. Gottlob was deeply hurt by the fact that the society had not included him among their numbers, thus denying him his due as a member of the maskilic movement: 'It grieves me that they did not call upon me to join them, thus dishonouring me. Why, I was a member of the movement before that group was formed; for thirty years I have sown its seeds in tears. How could I have been forgotten by the members

¹⁶ See booklists in nn. 9 and 10 above.

¹⁷ Fuenn, *Direvei hayayim liveveni yisra'el*; letter to Gordon, in Fuenn, *From Militant to Conservative Maskil*, 197–8.

¹⁸ Feigensohn, 'The History of the Romm Printing House', 278.

¹⁹ L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hevrat marbet haskalah*, introd. to vol. I; Greenberg, *The Jews in Russia*, 109–10; Zipperstein, 'Transforming the Heder', 87–109.

of this new society, as the dead are erased from the heart?' He was quick to forgive this affront to his honour, however, and shortly afterwards he asked the society to arrange a teaching post for him at the rabbinic seminary in Zhitomir.²⁰

The statutes of the society stated that it planned to publish or assist in publishing 'beneficial books . . . both in Russian and Hebrew, whose purpose is to disseminate enlightenment among the Jews'.²¹ Strengthening Russian patriotism was the first priority of the society's directors, and to achieve this goal they attached great importance to promoting an awareness of both universal and Russian history. As early as 1864 the society decided 'to endeavour to print a book of Jewish history written in Russian', since the contents of such a volume 'affect every Jew, and will stir in many the desire to read it'.²² Fuenn sent the society a letter in which he proposed publishing such a book in Hebrew as well, to be disseminated in two versions, one to students and a more popular version to the masses.²³ In the same year Schulman also wrote to the society requesting financial support for the publication of his translations of Josephus's writings, and stressing the universal importance of these books.²⁴ Although the society's committee did allocate 100 roubles to Schulman, it expressed greater interest in a project the society itself had initiated: two Hebrew translations, one of universal history and the other of Russian history. It put the project up for tender, as it were, asking several maskilim to take on the assignment. Eventually Schulman was chosen by the orientalist and Christian convert Professor Daniel Chwolson (1819–1911) and Dr Malis to carry out the first part of the project, and Abramowitz was chosen to execute the second part. Concurrently, the society entered into negotiations with Jewish printers to publish a large number of copies at a low price.²⁵ Abramowitz's work was halted almost at its inception; nor did any other books of Russian history meet the society's expectations. In 1868, therefore, Solomon Mandelkern (1846–1902), still a student in St Petersburg, was given the task of writing a comprehensive book of Russian history, under the close supervision of Professor Chwolson.²⁶ Another member of the society proposed that the Russian translation of Peter Beer's *Sefer toledot yisra'el* (Book of Jewish History) be used as a textbook.²⁷ The society's priorities become clear when the different amounts of financial support given to various maskilim are compared. Books written solely at the initiative of the writers, with no involvement on the part of the society, and books written in Yiddish did not receive a great deal of backing. Samuel Resser (d. 1880), for example, received 25 roubles for his Yiddish translation of *Sefer toledot yisra'el*, and Mikhel Gordon (1823–90), who sent his Yiddish history of Russia to the society, received merely

²⁰ Mapu, *Mikhtavei avraham mapu*, 229; Zwielfel, 'Mikhtavo leharakavi', 512–13; Gottlob, letter to Gurland (1871), in id., '13 mikhtavim me'et godolber', 414–15, 423–42. See also Lilienblum's criticism of the society in his letter to Gordon in 1872, Lilienblum, *Letters*, 132.

²¹ L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hevrut marhei haskalah*, i, 204.

²² *Ibid.* ii, 33.

²³ *Ibid.* i, 4, 7, 12–13, 17, 36, ii, 36.

²⁴ *Ibid.* i, 54, 59.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 3.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 31.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 71.

a promise that they would buy 30 roubles' worth of books from him. Mandelkern, on the other hand, who was being cultivated by the society, was granted a monthly allowance of 15 roubles for as long as it took him to complete his *Sefer d'irei yemei rusiyah* (Book of Russian History).²⁸

OPTIMISTIC AND PATRIOTIC HISTORY

During the reign of Alexander II most maskilim became more intensely aware of the positive historical turning-point.²⁹ The belief that 'the time of evil for the people of Israel has passed, the time when only disgrace, shame and scorn were their fate among other nations'³⁰ became widespread, allowing the Russian maskilim to hold fast to the picture of the past that had been shaped in the 1820s, and to pass it on to the second half of the nineteenth century. The relative relaxation of governmental pressure on the Jews and the liberal image of the tsar enabled the maskilim to pursue their campaign for the adoption of this picture of the past, by pointing out the clearly visible changes taking place in the present, harbingers of a better future.

The concepts of *Zeitgeist* ('the spirit of the time') and the 'hand of time' were expounded by the maskilim at every opportunity in order to explain historical changes and persuade their readers of their inevitability. 'The hand of time' was responsible for progress: it ensured Jewish rights in Europe, abolished superstition, and toppled the barrier that had separated Jews from other peoples for so many years. It was futile to oppose the spirit of the time, and the maskilim compared those attempting to turn back the clock to 'the dead opposing the living'.³¹ Like Guenzburg in the 1840s, the maskilim continued to warn Jewish leaders against attempts to halt the Haskalah or the maskilim. Joshua Steinberg (1825–1908), the son-in-law of Adam Hacoheh (Abraham Dov Lebensohn) and a graduate of the rabbinic seminary in Vilna, published *Or la'yesharim* (A Light to the Righteous), a didactic maskilic book of ethics in which he exhorted his readers to study science, to be faithful to the homeland, and to cultivate other maskilic values. He pictured the Haskalah being carried along a 'river of the *Zeitgeist*' and asserted that efforts to fight against it were futile or would have radical and destructive results. Steinberg, who was then serving as the government-appointed rabbi in Vilna, admonished the traditional leadership: 'Have you not yet learned that endeavouring to halt the Haskalah at this time is like trying to dam the monumental waters of the river by throwing stones into it?'³²

²⁸ *Ibid.* 43, 64, 59.

²⁹ *Hamagid*, 7 (1863), 1–2; *Hamagid*, 9 (1867), 354 (editorials).

³⁰ Tarnopol, 'Hashpa'at hamamlakhot', 87–8, 96, 103–4, 107–8, 110–11, 115–16. See also Plungian, *Sefer ben-porat*, 56.

³¹ J. Steinberg, *Or la'yesharim*, 1–6. Cf. Plungian, *Sefer ben-porat*, 59–62; editorial, 'Hegyonei hamagid', *Hamagid*, 6 (1862), 145–6, 153–4, 160–1, 169–70; and Gordon's famous poem 'Hakitsah ami', 17.

³² Gottlob, 'Semel hakinah', 496–507.

On the other hand, maskilic optimism, based on an awareness of historical transition and on the concept of the spirit of the time, was rejected by spokesmen for Orthodox Judaism, a trend that had been developing in Russia as a reactionary force trying to influence public opinion, particularly after the dispute on religious reform at the end of the 1860s. In the 1870s Jacob Lipschitz (1838-1921), an Orthodox journalist and historian from Kovno, had already introduced an anti-maskilic picture of the past. He saw a terrible, cruel fanaticism at work in both universal and Jewish history, being used as a weapon to victimize the weak and undermine 'the tree of life' built on religious faith and wisdom. The noxious element could take on a number of forms, depending on the spirit of the time: in the Middle Ages the sword of religious fanaticism dominated, while 'in this generation . . . the clouds of folly have cleared like drifting smoke, and almost no memory of the disgrace and ignominy of religious fanaticism has remained. The sun of civilization has rays long enough to illuminate the land and its inhabitants.'³³ Is this yet another expression of maskilic consciousness? It would appear that even if the concepts were the same, Lipschitz forced them into an Orthodox mould, attempting to reverse roles: he claimed that the Haskalah was merely a new disguise for religious fanaticism. He believed that the radical articles in Hebrew journals directed against the rabbinical establishment and the tendency towards religious reform demonstrated that the Haskalah was destructive in nature and formed part of the same malevolent historical force. Lipschitz argued with the maskilim about the true substance of the spirit of the time, claiming that they had fabricated a spirit antithetical to religion. He did not seem to reject an awareness of the historical turning-point, although by asserting that the success of the Haskalah was totally incompatible with the contemporary spirit of the time, he ascribed a counter-modernist meaning to the concepts 'Haskalah', 'spirit of the time', and 'a wise and intelligent generation':

Are these the fruits of the Haskalah? Has such a thing ever been heard of, that in the wise and enlightened nineteenth century, which champions knowledge and tolerance, those who presume to represent these values wreak vengeance through coercion and force, persecution, and defamation, to extirpate and desecrate the laws of the Talmud and the *Shulhan arukh* . . . [borne] on the wings of the new literature in the *Zeitgeist* they themselves have invented saying this is the true spirit of the times. It is as if nature has altered its dominion, and the new time is so lacking power and potency that it cannot bear the burden of religion.³⁴

The maskilim, for their part, continued to present maskilic history that they believed justified their stance. Dialectic thinking encouraged those who used it and offered consolation: the maskilim's struggle against opposing forces was merely a necessary stage in the historical process that would end in victory for the Haskalah. Levinsohn's method of historical precedent was also applied in the

³³ Lipschitz, 'Lahat ha'heret', 265-75. On Lipschitz as the creator of Orthodox historiography, see Bartal, 'Zikhron ya'akov', 409-14.

³⁴ Lipschitz, 'Lahat ha'heret', 266.

1860s and 1870s for similar purposes of persuasion and legitimization, and history continued to act as a critically important guide to the present. The eternal life promised to the Jewish people and its historical uniqueness as embodied in its ability to pass through several life cycles were fundamental maskilic concepts.

'Integration without self-abnegation' was the moderate Fuenn's slogan during the reign of Alexander II. In thus simplifying the desired goal, Fuenn was claiming that two forces are at play in the soul of every people: the urge to preserve their unique identity and the desire to unite with all other peoples. Throughout the course of history, the Jews too had manoeuvred successfully between their distinctive nature and openness to their surroundings. 'Coming closer to enlightened peoples' did not harm 'the spirit of the nation' but strengthened it: 'When the Jewish people settled among wise and enlightened nations, they rose above them in scientific and civil education, and scientific education breathed its spirit also upon religious and moral education, and purified and refined the articles of faith and the concepts of religion, thus adding to it strength and power.'³⁵ Fuenn returned from his musings on history to the Russia of 1868, admonishing the Jews 'to draw closer to other peoples . . . to be the active, vital limbs of the gentile body we have joined, and together to do good and beneficial work for its success, honour, and glory'.³⁶ This was similar to Gordon's entreaty to the Jews in his poem 'Hakitsah am' (Awake, My People!), that had appeared two years earlier in Fuenn's journal *Hakarmel*: 'Be . . . a brother to your countrymen and a servant to your king.'³⁷

Almost every year at Hanukah the maskilim felt the need to justify the Jewish military and political rebellion against Hellenistic rule in the second century BC. Since the maskilim perceived Jewish existence as spiritual, based on 'the union of faith', and considered 'the spirit of the nation' was incompatible with the art of government or war, they endeavoured to prove that the festival of Hanukah was not simply a national holiday. More than we recall the physical valour of the Maccabees, wrote *Hamagid* in 1857, we understand the war as a struggle for spiritual deliverance from Greek culture.³⁸ Apart from this and similar political-military events that had taken place when the Jews were living in their homeland, Jewish heroism had been entirely spiritual in nature during the period of exile: 'Spirit, not force, ensured the safety of the children of Jacob; its sword was a page, its strong bow was a tablet. Its valour has never been forgotten.'³⁹

The journals *Hamagid*, *Hakarmel*, *Hamelits*, and *Hashahar*, published during the reign of Alexander II, were manifestations of an expanding maskilic circle of both writers and readers, and a forum for scores of articles dealing with history.⁴⁰ In most cases these were neither scholarly articles nor original ones, but rather

³⁵ Fuenn, 'Yisra'el ba'amim', 41-2, 49-50.

³⁷ J. L. Gordon, 'Hakitsah am' first appeared in *Hakarmel* (1866), issue 1, p. 1.

³⁸ 'Mai hanukah?', *Hamagid*, 1 (1857), 205 (editorial).

⁴⁰ On the Hebrew periodicals, see J. Klausner, *History of Modern Hebrew Literature*, iv, 111-25; Elkoshi, 'The Hebrew Press in Vilna', 59-97, 105-52; Gilboa, *Hebrew Periodicals*.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 50.

translations and adaptations of secondary or tertiary sources: popular German historiography, Russian literature, and German Jewish journals. This was informative history intended to enrich knowledge and disseminate it to a relatively large audience of readers of the Hebrew press. This informative universal Jewish and Russian history constituted one channel through which maskilic writings were popularized. They were directed at traditionally educated, well-to-do men and educated young students of rabbinic seminaries, who had not yet gained direct access to European literature.

Until the appearance of Kalman Schulman's book, Feivel Goldshtof's *Korot ha'olam* (History of the World) was almost the only Hebrew volume of universal history on the shelves. In 1861 *Hamagid* recommended to its readers that they purchase the book, because up to that point, 'no other person had had the courage to put into a book the entire history of the world'. In the 1850s and 1860s *Hamagid* itself published several articles on the archaeological discoveries that had been made in the East. Two of their regular contributors provided readers with accounts of the ancient Egyptian, Babylonian, and Assyrian excavations. Both wrote with satisfaction that none of the findings contradicted the contents of the Holy Scriptures. On the contrary, 'Stones from ancient times corroborate the fact that the words of our Scriptures are right and true'.⁴¹ The reports on archaeology aroused widespread interest in ancient history, and the articles published on these subjects in Hebrew journals described ancient Egypt, the Hyksos kings, and 'the ancient land of Babylonia and its sages'.⁴²

In the field of natural history the maskilim sought to demonstrate the enormous progress of science, and a Jewish student from Kovno who was studying at the vocational school in Potsdam submitted a short biography of Copernicus to *Hamagid*.⁴³ For background on the stormy political events in Italy, which was fighting for its independence, the reader could scan a condensed history of contemporary Italy. Joseph Epstein (1821-85), a schoolteacher in Shavli, published a biography of Garibaldi, 'the father of all the events currently taking place in Italy'. During the political and military conflicts in the Balkans in the 1870s readers were provided with historical information that shed light on 'the history of the Slavic people residing in the Balkan peninsula and fighting against the Turks'.⁴⁴

As mentioned, the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment, which had initi-

⁴¹ Advertisement, *Hamagid*, 5 (1861), 8; Widover, 'Mifalot hakhmei dorenu', 69, 73-4; Brook, 'Ginzei nistarot', 169-70, 175; Rubin, 'Avnei miluim', 49-55. See also Y. Shavit, 'Truth Shall Spring out of the Earth', 27-54.

⁴² Orenstein, 'Toledot goyei yemei kedem'; Rubin, 'Ma'asch bereishit', id., 'Menaheg habaviv', Minor, 'Toledot yemei kedem', 118-20; N. Halevi, 'Malkhei haro'im hiksas'; J. L. Gordon, 'Eretz bavel ha'atikah', 241-60.

⁴³ Zalkind, 'Korot yedi'at toledot hateva', 106-7, 230-1, 237-8; Y. Levinsohn, 'Korot hokhmat hatekhnah', 336 ff.; *Hakarmel*, 5 (1865), 6-8, 15-16; Granowitz, 'Toledot kopernikus', 100.

⁴⁴ *Hakarmel*, 1 (1860), 7-8, 15-16; 91-2, 99-100; *Hakarmel habahadshi*, 3 (1876), 478-83. On accounts of contemporary events in the Hebrew press, see Y. Shavit, 'Window on the World', 3-10.

ated the project of translating a book of Russian history into Hebrew, considered a knowledge of Russian history a necessary step towards the integration of the Jews into Russian society. In May 1864 the society decided to translate some single-volume works of Russian history; books written by S. Solov'yev (1820-79) and D. Ilovaiskii (1832-90) were selected as possible candidates.⁴⁵ Ilovaiskii was the more conservative of the two, and his books portrayed autocratic Russia by glorifying the Romanov dynasty. Apart from a six-volume history of Russia, he wrote several textbooks and popular history books, one of which he submitted to the committee of the society.⁴⁶

As noted above, in November 1864 the society proposed to the young Abramowitz that he translate Ilovaiskii's book into Hebrew, and four years later his *Divrei hayayim levenei harusim* (History of the Russian People) was published in Odessa. His translation was intended to provide the Jews with clear and basic information about 'the history of the people in whose land they lived'.⁴⁷

For reasons that are not clear, however, Abramowitz translated only a small portion (covering the ninth to the seventeenth centuries) of the book, and he did not receive the society's backing upon its publication.⁴⁸ In 1866 the society was already looking for a different translator, and published a tender for the composition of a work to be titled *Toledot erets rusiyah* (History of the Land of Russia), which would incorporate the history of the Jews of Russia and would be based on the new edition of Ilovaiskii's work. Joseph Epstein was finally chosen as the translator, and he sent his manuscript to the committee in St Petersburg in 1868. The book was reviewed by the committee and found to merit a 50 rouble prize. After the manuscript had been sent to the writer for revisions, the committee withdrew its offer for some reason, deciding not to publish the book under its aegis, just as it had in Abramowitz case.⁴⁹ Epstein's book was not published until five years later,⁵⁰ and in the meantime a new contract was signed, this time between the society and the 22-year-old Solomon Mandelkern, then a university student in St Petersburg. This time the translator was not required to follow Ilovaiskii's book, though once again the proposed history of Russia had to include the history of the Russian Jews. The writing, which was to have taken a year, extended far beyond the deadline. It was not until 1872 that a contract for printing the volume was signed with a printing-house in Warsaw, and the book was held up by the censors for another two years. When Moses Montefiore visited St Petersburg in the summer of 1872, Mandelkern was photographed holding several pages of the

⁴⁵ L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hevrat marbei haskalah*, i, 7; ii, 36.

⁴⁶ Gooch, *History and Historians*, 414-15; Thompson, *A History of Historical Writing*, ii, 626-7; *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, x, 146.

⁴⁷ Abramowitz, *Divrei hayayim*, L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hevrat marbei haskalah*, i, 12-13; ii, 42.

⁴⁸ Abramowitz, *Collected Writings*, 6.

⁴⁹ Announcement, *Hakarmel*, 5 (1866), 312; L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hevrat marbei haskalah*, i, 54-59.

⁵⁰ Epstein, *Divrei hayayim lemalkhei rusiyah*. The author was a teacher in a government school in the Vilna district. The 200-page book also discusses Russian Jewry.

book which, at that time, was being proof-read. In an act of self-aggrandizement he presented Montefiore with the photograph, winning the Englishman's praise. It was only after the intervention of Gordon, the society's secretary, that the book was finally published in 1875, more than ten years after the society had first proposed a Hebrew translation of Russian history.⁵¹

Mandelkern's book comprised more than 800 pages in three parts. This was one of the first works to be written by this scholar, who eventually completed his doctoral studies at the University of Jena in Germany and wrote a monumental biblical concordance. His *Sefer divrei yemei rusiyah* (Book of Russian History) is packed with details, names, events, dates, and geographical locations and, in this respect, he achieved his goal: to provide extensive and detailed information about the history of Russia and its Jews. The book, however, contains no evidence of a profound historical conception, and was written, in accordance with the requirements of those who initiated and funded it, as the story of Russia, 'the benevolent kingdom'. The Jews identified with this Russia and were proud of its achievements. The maskilic tendency towards patriotism is apparent in the designations Mandelkern gave to the various periods: 'After Ancient Times', 'The First Rulers of the Rurik Dynasty', 'The Mongolian Yoke', 'The Muscovite Rulers', 'The Time of Anger and the Time of Perplexity', 'A New and Glorious Era Begins with the Romanov Dynasty'. The chapter titles proclaim gradual but constant improvement towards the climax, which was reached in the present: 'Days of the Kingdom's Renewed Strength', 'Days of the Reform and Renewal of Russia' (the period of Peter the Great), 'The Days of Valour and Glory' (Catherine the Great and Paul I), and 'The Days of Eternity and Grandeur', the period of Alexander I, at the heart of which was the defeat of Napoleon.⁵²

'Informative history' about the Jewish past appeared during the reign of Alexander II in the form of scores of articles in the Hebrew press. The maskilic authors, most of whom were teachers in government schools and rabbinic seminaries, generally adapted historical literature from secondary sources: Jewish magazines published in Germany, or the writings of Marcus Jost, Leopold Zunz, Heinrich Graetz, Meyer Kayserling, and others. The history of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, the monarchy and the rabbinic establishment in Portugal, Spain during the Inquisition, the history of the Jews of Sicily, France, Morocco, South America, and the Ottoman empire are examples of the subject matter of these articles.⁵³

⁵¹ L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hevrat marbei haskalah*, i, 59, 94, 116. See also J. L. Gordon, 'Pirkei zikhronot', 311. Gordon was opposed to Mandelkern's publicity campaign for his book and expressed some doubt about the author's integrity and ties to Judaism.

⁵² Mandelkern, *Sefer divrei yemei rusiyah*. See also Y. Levinsohn, *Erets rusiyah*; Schulman, *Kiryat melekh rav*; Deinard, *Sefer masa kerem*.

⁵³ Kanel, 'Lekorot gerush hayehudim', 419-21; anon., 'Hamelukhah veharabanut beportugal', 138-40; Y. Levinsohn, 'Shenot ra'nu ra'ah', 118-19, 134-6; anon., 'Hayehudim besefarad', *Hamagid*, 5 (1867), 3-4.

Not only was the Jewish history reflected in these articles entirely informative in nature, with almost no effort made to analyse, draw conclusions, or incorporate it into a wider schema, but the rhetoric employed lacked the dramatic quality that usually characterized maskilic history, with the exception of some scattered proclamations of joy at the improved lot of the Jewish people, or some emphasis placed on the 'maskilic character' of the medieval sages. It would thus appear that these historical articles served as chapters of a textbook on Jewish history intended to enrich the historical education of readers of Hebrew journals. They were intended, as mentioned, particularly for those who were still unable to read books by Jost and Graetz in the original German.⁵⁴

SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE PAST

The picture that has emerged up to this point might lead one to conclude that the Russian maskilim left historical research to the 'wise men of the West', and were content to copy or adapt already existing material in order to recast it into literary forms requiring relatively less intellectual effort. This, however, was not the case. The popularization of universal historical Russian Jewish knowledge through textbooks and journalistic channels existed side by side with maskilic efforts to develop scholarly history, making an original contribution to the nineteenth-century Wissenschaft des Judentums.

It was once again Samuel Fuenn, undeterred by the failure of his *Nidhei yisra'el* in the 1850s, who began a new, comprehensive book of Jewish history. In 1870 Fuenn informed the readers of *Hakarmel* that he was about to print the first part of a planned series called *Dvarei hayyamim liveinei yisra'el* (History of the Children of Israel) that would survey Jewish history from the Babylonian exile to contemporary times. 'This book of ours', Fuenn prefaced his work, 'is not copied from the books written by contemporary historians, but it is based upon their words and on the results of many investigations and researches that we have conducted at length in this field, by studying the *midrashim*, the *agadot* and the books of the earlier and the later sages of Israel and of the nations.'⁵⁵ Fuenn planned that this series of books would comprise seven or eight parts and considered it an important enterprise that would fill the void in Hebrew literature. Why did Fuenn begin a new book rather than completing his *Nidhei yisra'el*? His abandonment of the earlier book once again reveals the frustration of east European maskilim attempting to write Jewish history, with their eyes turned constantly in the direction of Western scholars—a phenomenon already observed among the Galician maskilim. The publication of a great number of studies in the 1850s and 1860s,

⁵⁴ A popular textbook was written by the Odessa maskil Isaac Warshavsky, *Sefer toledot yisra'el*. Warshavsky was a Hebrew teacher in Odessa, and in his book for young people he adapted the biblical story from the Creation to the construction of the Second Temple. Nine editions had been printed by 1910.

⁵⁵ Fuenn, 'Kol kore', 209.

particularly in Germany, led Fuenn to conclude that *Nidhei yisra'el* did not meet the scientific criteria of modern historical research. Dissatisfaction with the quality of his book caused him to decide to begin the new series, *Divrei hayayyim liveinei yisra'el*, twenty years after the publication of the first part of *Nidhei yisra'el*:

We became aware that, in that book, we did not live up to our obligation to the science of history, and therefore, we should not live up to our obligation if we completed it in the same manner we began it. And with God's help and with renewed strength, we have undertaken to labour faithfully in the field of the science of Judaism.⁵⁶

The criticism levelled at *Nidhei yisra'el* by Levinsohn, the figure Fuenn most admired, may also have weakened his desire to continue the project. This time Fuenn decided to base his work on that of the best scholars, including Rapoport, Krochmal, Zunz, Jost, Geiger, Herzfeld, Graetz, and Kayserling. In addition, he would study and enquire into 'the primary sourcebooks of that wisdom'.⁵⁷ The influence of Krochmal's *Moreh nevukhei hazeman* is obvious. Fuenn sketched the broad outlines of the unique course of Jewish history: the antiquity of the Jewish people ('a people that has always been, a people much older than all other peoples of the world'), the marvellous and diverse forms its history took ('its ages have been miraculous throughout all its existence'), God's revelation to the Jewish people at Sinai, and the Jews' survival despite the loss of their political life. This was a chronological history, 'a great and monumental chain of momentous actions, commencing in the past, moving and spreading until it encompasses all times and places'.⁵⁸ The Jewish people's singular ability enabled it to be reborn and to return to the cycle of historical life, even after its decline.

Acquisition of a 'scientific knowledge' of the past naturally entailed a much greater effort than that required for writing 'informative history' or the historical tales discussed below. Fuenn took upon himself the tasks of a scientific historian as he understood them from the works of Wissenschaft des Judentums, setting a historiographic challenge for himself:

to present a complete whole, not one composed of various materials that are independent of each other, but one in which the organs are interdependent, act and are acted upon, influence and are influenced by one another . . . to paint the spectacle of history as a great chain made up of many, many interconnected links . . . joined by cause and effect.⁵⁹

However, a careful reading of the book reveals Fuenn's almost total dependence on previous studies and, except for the polemical comments and assessments that he appended to the views and conclusions of those studies, this work is simply yet another Hebrew adaptation of the Western Wissenschaft des Judentums. Fuenn's contribution lies in his annotated criticism and comments rather than in any original

⁵⁶ Fuenn, *Divrei hayayyim liveinei yisra'el*, 6. In 1860 Fuenn was still planning to continue *Nidhei yisra'el*; see Fuenn, *Kiryah ne'emanah*, 18.

⁵⁷ Fuenn, *Kiryah ne'emanah*, 5-6; I. B. Levinsohn, *Pituhet hotam*, 18-20.

⁵⁸ Fuenn, *Kiryah ne'emanah*, 3-6.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 4-5.

and independent study of primary sources. Particularly striking is Fuenn's affinity for the work *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, by Levi Herzfeld (1810-74), whose three volumes on the Second Temple era were published in Germany between 1847 and 1857.⁶⁰ Herzfeld was a perfect example of Wissenschaft des Judentums in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century; trained as a historian at the University of Berlin and serving as a Reform rabbi in Braunschweig, he had also participated in the conferences of Reform rabbis in the 1840s and worked alongside Ludwig Philippson in the Israelitische Literaturgesellschaft. The first part of Fuenn's book coincides with the structure of the first part of Herzfeld's work: both open with the destruction of the First Temple and end with Alexander the Great. The body of Fuenn's text follows Herzfeld's step by step, and only occasionally does he allow himself a comment that runs counter to the latter's conclusions. As a typical representative of the east European version of the Wissenschaft des Judentums aspect of the Haskalah, Fuenn refrained from criticizing the traditional sources too sharply. Thus, for example, he rejected Herzfeld's claim that Nehemiah was an envious man who banished Ezra because he wanted no interference in his affairs. Heaven forbid, Fuenn argued with Herzfeld, that we should denigrate Nehemiah, a great benefactor of the Jewish people, who risked his life for the nation and acted in the name of God.⁶¹

This is only one of many examples. Fuenn rejected criticism that cast doubt upon the sources, people, and events. He wrote favourably, defensively, and admiringly of the Jewish past, and identified with it.⁶² In his view, for example, the Hasmonians were defeated because they had abandoned the guiding principle of the revolt; the moment they lost sight of the fact that their forefathers had given their lives for 'the revival of the faith' and chose to pin their hopes on the political regime, the revolt was doomed to fail. Fuenn's description of the revolt is based on those of Herzfeld, Graetz, the books of the Maccabees, and Josephus. His discussion of the figure of Judah, however, is an almost literal translation from Graetz, reiterating his portrait of Judah as 'an enlightened and prodigious hero' in both his faith and his valour.⁶³

The discrepancy between Fuenn's claim to be writing an original, scientific history and his dependence on the studies of Jewish historians from Germany points up the dilemma of the Russian maskil. Fuenn knew that if he wanted to write as a historian, he had to conform to the scholarly and scientific works of Jewish history. However, he did not succeed in achieving anything beyond translations and adaptations, annotated with his own comments. His independently acquired,

⁶⁰ On Herzfeld and his book, see Baron, *History and Jewish Historians*, 322-43.

⁶¹ Fuenn, *Divrei hayayyim liveinei yisra'el*, i, 41, n.

⁶² *Ibid.*, vol. iii, ch. 5, pub. separately in *He'asif*, 5 (1880), 180-204; *id.*, *Divrei hayayyim liveinei yisra'el*, ii, 66-8, 98. Cf. H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, ii, 296-300. In contrast, on other issues Fuenn tended to accept Herzfeld's opinion and to reject that of Graetz. See Fuenn, *Divrei hayayyim liveinei yisra'el*, ii, 3-4 (nn.), 162-7.

informal education and his distance from the centres of Jewish historical research made it difficult for him to grapple successfully with the enormous task he had set for himself. This enterprise of Fuenn's was yet another failure, and only two parts of the seven or eight he had planned were published: the first appeared in 1871 and the second in 1877. He stopped writing after he had reached the end of the Hasmonaean era. Apparently, his attempt (discussed below) to translate Graetz's book into Hebrew in the 1870s discouraged him from continuing to write a book whose chances of competing successfully against that of Graetz were very slim indeed.

In 1860 he had undertaken a less ambitious task, and his book *Kiryah ne'emanah* (Faithful City) was published ten years before *Dicrei hayamim livenet yisra'el*. It was intended to present the history of the Jewish community of Vilna as part of 'the general history compiled from the details'. Noah Magrid Steinschneider (1829–1903) was his research assistant; he spent a year copying inscriptions from ancient gravestones and passages from the community registers for Fuenn, and both of them collected oral testimony from the community elders.⁶⁴ Their joint research resulted in a short chronological survey of the community's history and a history of the sages of Vilna, organized chronologically, in the form of a biographical lexicon.

Fuenn's *Kiryah ne'emanah* also manifested the maskilim's growing interest in the roots of east European Judaism and in their identity as east Europeans. The maskilim saw themselves as breaking new ground in this area of historical research, since they were dealing with subjects that had not received their rightful due from Western Jewish scholars. An outstanding example of this trend was the great amount of attention given to the history of the Karaites and the Khazars—historical topics which were also linked to the question of the origins of east European Jewry and its relations with the Karaites in Russia. The learned Crimean Karaite Abraham Firkovich (1786–1874) undoubtedly provided the main impetus for a historical discussion of the Karaites. It eventually became clear that the Karaite books, journals, documents, and inscriptions published by Firkovich were 'adjusted' or forged to support the claim that the Russian Karaites were descendants of the Ten Tribes of Israel, had no connections to rabbinic Judaism, and thus were not responsible for its transgressions.⁶⁵

Firkovich had a loyal friend in Simhah Pinsker, the Jewish maskil from Odessa, who incorporated dozens of manuscripts he received from Firkovich in his book *Likutei kadmoniyot* (Compilations of Antiquities), published in 1860. Pinsker's book, which was primarily an annotated edition of manuscripts from Firkovich's

⁶⁴ Fuenn, *Kiryah ne'emanah*, 5–8 ('Ei hakore'). See also Beilinson, *Alci hadas*, 26. Cf. works that may have served as exemplars for Fuenn, such as Luzzatto, *Arcani zikaron*; Lieben, *Sefer galad*.

⁶⁵ As far back as 1851 Levinsohn had asserted that Firkovich's version of Karaite history did not pass the test of historical scholarship. I. B. Levinsohn, 'Ta'ar hasofer', 176–94. On the Karaites in Lithuania, see Bartal, 'The East European Haskalah and the Karaites', 15–22.

collection, did not methodically explicate Karaite history. The book was written within the 'literary republic' of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the nineteenth century: Pinsker was in contact with Graetz and even sent him sections of his book in manuscript before it was sent to be printed in Vienna, where Pinsker was assisted by A. Jelinek. Regarding the key issue of the origins of Karaism, Pinsker admitted that it could not be considered a movement until the time of Anan in the eighth century; however, in his opinion, Anan had not created Karaism *ex nihilo* and Karaite views were already being circulated among individuals at a much earlier period. As far as an assessment of the significance of the Karaites in Jewish history was concerned, Pinsker claimed that Karaism served as an 'opposing power' necessitated by 'the course of history', whose function was to awaken the Jewish religion from its torpor. As had happened during the Second Temple era, religion had become so degenerate that sects had emerged to 'introduce new ideas which, unlike religion, impugned tradition, availing themselves of Hellenistic wisdom to destroy its foundations'. This had compelled the Pharisees to gather strength and join forces. In the same way, the Karaites had become the second opposing force to emerge, after the completion of the Talmud. In terms of a 'historical equation', therefore, the Karaites were a positive force, because they forced the rabbis into new patterns of thought. In an annotation that he did not develop further, Pinsker also alluded to the interdependence of such 'opposing forces' and to various stages in universal religious history: the sects of the Second Temple era appeared during the birth of Christianity; the Karaites were linked to the emergence of Islam; and the hasidim, whom Pinsker considered yet another opposing force, appeared in reaction to the development of Protestantism.⁶⁶

Gottlob's *Bikoret letoledot hakaram* (A Critique of the History of the Karaites) appeared four years after Pinsker's *Likutei kadmoniyot*. While writing this book, Gottlob had kept not only a copy of Pinsker's book on his desk but also the fifth part of Graetz's *Geschichte der Juden*, Jost's book, and *Geschichte des Karaenthums* ('History of the Karaites'), written by Julius Fuerst, a Jewish linguist, bibliographer, and historian from Leipzig. In fact, a substantial part of Gottlob's book is taken up by a Hebrew translation of sections of these three works, with the addition of critical and polemical annotations—a literary form quite similar to that of Fuenn's *Dicrei hayamim livenet yisra'el*. Gottlob described the aims of his polemics:

I did not wish to write a history of the Karaites according to Graetz and Jost, such as Fuerst did, for when laid in the scales, their words (or at least some of them) are together lighter than breath; and they seem to be history because of the beauty and arrangement of their language, that is to say, their external attributes do not attest to the value of their contents.⁶⁷

He accused Fuerst of basing his book entirely on Graetz and Jost, and believed that the latter two were in debt to Pinsker, from whom they drew inspiration.

⁶⁶ Pinsker, *Likutei kadmoniyot*, 2–13.

⁶⁷ Gottlob, letter to Gurland (May 1865), in id., '13 mikhavim me'et gotlob', 417.

Gottlobber therefore defended the representative of Russian Wissenschaft, and at least with regard to this particular historical issue, demanded recognition for the Russian maskilim's superiority over the Jewish historians in Germany. His critical discussion was intended first and foremost to prove that Jost, Graetz, and Fuerst had erred and to support Pinsker. Gottlobber continued with a challenge to the German Wissenschaft des Judentums, and with self-confidence containing more than a scintilla of arrogance, says of himself:

I translated Graetz's words from his book, and so I am not responsible for them; and in several places I commented on them justly and disproved his words, as I also did with Fuerst, who hastily based his work on those who preceded him and did nothing but rearrange their writings; and for the most part, whatever he did change is not true, as I have clearly demonstrated. Finally, it seems to me that the work of these wise men was done neither by day nor by night, nor at the Sabbath twilight, for they wrote nothing whole and proper. If God grants me life, I shall show them how a history should be written, and the truth shall guide me like a pillar of fire to illuminate this dark night before me.⁶⁸

Gottlobber eventually produced a complex, intricately structured scholarly work based on a short study he had submitted to Levinsohn in the 1850s. Studies of the 1860s, however, forced him to provide a detailed discussion, expanding the original work.⁶⁹ Gottlobber tried to pave an independent path, not only in his criticism of Jost, Graetz, and Fuerst but also in his reservations about several of Pinsker's hypotheses and conclusions. For example, he raised a well-founded fear that Firkovich had distorted the words of ancient sources and even falsified parts of them. He did, however, welcome Firkovich's involvement in the intellectual world of the Russian maskilim and believed that it was worth while to 'mediate peace between the two sects, at least by drawing the people, if not the religions, closer'.⁷⁰ In an era of growing religious tolerance, he believed the Jews and the Karaites should move closer together. He did not conceal his sympathy for 'the new sect' and even found similarities between it and the Haskalah. His assessment of the beneficial historical role played by the Karaites went far beyond Pinsker's, and he claimed that 'The way of every new sect . . . is to acquire wisdom and understanding, and not to follow all old things blindly. Indeed, in our time, the enlightened—that is to say, the people for whom intelligence is their guiding principle, lighting their path—have been called the *Aufklärer*.'⁷¹

Firkovich's forgeries were unmasked in the mid-1870s, and the maskilim's

⁶⁸ Gottlobber, letter to Gurland (May 1865), in id., '13 miktavim me'et gotlobber', 417.

⁶⁹ Gottlobber, *Bikoret letoledot hakaraim*, 6 n. With great caution, Gottlobber accused Levinsohn of having copied from his research in writing his 'Ta'ar hasofer'.

⁷⁰ Gottlobber, *Bikoret letoledot hakaraim*, 3–6.

⁷¹ Ibid. 22, 126 n. See also his letter to Gurland, in Gottlobber, '13 miktavim me'et gotlobber', 419. In 1830 Gottlobber met Karaites in Odessa, who even tried to persuade him to join their community (Gottlobber, 'Zikhronot miyemai ne'urat', in id., *Zikhronot umasaot*, i. 261–8). His poem dedicated to a Karaite sage in Odessa (1839) also demonstrates his favourable attitude towards the Karaites (Gottlobber, *Kol shirei mahalal*, 28).

image of the Karaites was tarnished. The Karaites were favoured over the Jews when they were granted civil rights in 1863, damaging the relationship between the two groups. The young maskil Ephraim Deinard (1846–1930) returned from his journey to the Crimean peninsula having met Firkovich, convinced that his version was at odds with 'stories of the history of the world and the judgement of common sense'. 'I thought', Deinard wrote, 'that the time has come for our people to unmask this man, who shocked the whole world with his amazing findings'.⁷² In his *Sefer masa kerim* (Travels in the Crimea) he claimed that Pinsker, Chwolson, and even the Russian government had fallen into Firkovich's trap. All the sources used by the Karaites to prove their antiquity were invalid, and he believed that an examination of their race would reveal that the Russian Karaites were of Mongolian or Turkish origin. They were nothing at all like the maskilic image they projected, and were possessed of extremely unpleasant traits; they were a greedy, obsequious people who practised strange customs.⁷³

Not all the maskilim were convinced of the truth of Deinard's harsh claims. At least one outstanding representative of the moderate maskilim in Russia, Eliezer Zweifel (1815–88), found it difficult to swallow Deinard's acrimonious approach and categorical conclusions. Zweifel continued to advocate a closer relationship between the maskilim and the Karaites, and *Sefer masa kerim* came as a blow to him. He felt that Deinard 'had had the effrontery to destroy all that is sacred and true, and demolish all peace and brotherhood, and dispel all hope that we might gradually unite with these brothers of ours who are so far off'.⁷⁴ Zweifel accused Deinard of being a provocateur and a government informant, and of burning the bridges between Jews and Karaites. For him, the Jewish origins of the Karaites were indisputable, and he had no doubt whatsoever that the Karaites were 'sons of our people'. Zweifel even tormented himself for being among those who had provided an approbation for Deinard's book before he had even read it.⁷⁵

Although Deinard planned to continue *Sefer masa kerim* to include accounts of the Khazars and the Jewish inhabitants of Crimea, these sections were never published. The history of the Khazars, on the other hand, was the subject of the first book written by Joseph Judah Lerner (1847–1907), a young maskil from Odessa. He discovered that there was no Hebrew version of the history of the Khazars, and sought to make his contribution to the subject of their origins as part of his study of the roots of Jewish settlement in Russia. In Lerner's version the Khazars, also possessed of maskilic traits (reason and morality), had deliberately converted to Judaism. In the eleventh century, however, increased Russian pressure had led the Khazars in the Crimea to adopt the Karaite religion. Lerner's sources were Graetz, Chwolson, and Rapoport, and he called for scholars, especially Abraham Harkavy, to continue their more detailed studies to shed light on the matter.⁷⁶

⁷² Deinard, *Sefer masa kerim*, 1.

⁷³ Ibid. 17, 40–1.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 2, 54, 58–9.

⁷⁵ Lerner, *Hukuzarn*, 5–6, 21. On Lerner, see Malachi, 'Joseph Judah Lerner'. See also Werskes, *Haskalah and Shabbateanism*, 181–2.

In contrast to Fuenn, Gottlobler, and Lerner, Harkavy was a historian who, although nurtured by the Haskalah, received academic training at the universities of St Petersburg, Berlin, and Paris, which put him on a different level in terms of historical research.⁷⁷ Though Harkavy's treatment of the history of Russian Jewry continued to demonstrate the maskilic trend observed in Fuenn and Gottlobler, his approach was philological. His expertise in languages and his reliance on primary sources made him a historian in the full sense of the word. Together with Ilya Orshanski (1846–75) and others, Harkavy was already part of a post-maskilic phenomenon: the beginnings of Russian Jewish historiography, written primarily in Russian and based on professional, scientific research.⁷⁸

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE HASKALAH MOVEMENT

The Russian maskilim opened a new avenue, in addition to their writing of scholarly history, with the aim of documenting and preserving the heritage of the Haskalah. This trend, which began with Eichel's biography of Mendelssohn in 1788, continued with Letteris's writings in Galicia and Levinsohn's 'chain of the Haskalah'. The biographies of German maskilim—Wessely, Solomon Maimon, and the physician and philosopher Marcus Herz (1747–1863)—were printed in instalments in the Hebrew press.⁷⁹ The first volume of *Hame'usef* was available in Letteris's edition, published in 1862, and Fuenn occasionally printed various letters from the Haskalah period in Germany in *Hakarnel*. Later maskilim were also the subjects of biographies: in 1863 Gottlobler decided to write Levinsohn's life story along the lines of Eichel's biography of Mendelssohn, but before he could carry out his plan an anonymous maskil anticipated him and published his version in *Hamagid* in serial form.⁸⁰ Abraham Kaplan (1839–97) of Riga dedicated a book to Mapu's life a short time after the author's death, in the belief that his biography was the story of one of the nation's great heroes.⁸¹

In addition to the preservation of the Haskalah heritage in order to bolster the self-confidence of the maskilim and unite them around their common origins, an attempt was made in the 1850s to deepen the roots of the Haskalah in Russia by promoting and enhancing the image of the maskilic hero Rabbi Manasseh ben

⁷⁷ T. Harkavy, 'Abraham Harkavy', 116–36.

⁷⁸ Magid, 'List of Articles and Books by Abraham Harkavy', 14–15, 18. Among his first works on the Jews of Russia are 'Derishot vehakirov' and 'Rusiyah besifrut hayehudim'. On the beginnings of Russian Jewish historiography, see Maor, 'Historians of Russian Jewry', Slutsky, *The Russian Jewish Press*.

⁷⁹ Joseph Kera, 'Toledot rabi naftali', 101–202; N. K., 'Devarim ahadim mitoledot shelomoh maimon', *I'angban*, 'Toledot rabi mordekhai ben rabi hertis', 37–9.

⁸⁰ Y. Sh. P. A., 'Yitshak ba'er levinson mikremnits', 357, 373, 381, 389, 397–8. See also Zinberg, *A History of Jewish Literature*, vi, 328.

⁸¹ A. Kaplan, *Hayei mapu*. Luzzatto's autobiography was published in *Hamagid* during 1858–60: id., 'Toledot shadal', 66–7, and then in instalments until *Hamagid*, 4 (1860), 174–5.

Joseph of Ilya (1767–1831). Manasseh was scarcely known to the maskilim and was not included in their pantheon until the publication in Vilna in 1858 of *Sefer ben-porat*, by Mordecai Plungian (1814–83), in which he presented, for the first time, Manasseh's biography and views. Plungian, who belonged to the group of Vilna maskilim, was a brilliant Torah scholar who was attracted by secular studies and absorbed the values of the Haskalah. For a while he worked as a Talmud teacher at the rabbinic seminary in Vilna, and he later became well known as a proof-reader at the Romm Press.⁸² He found it easy to identify with Manasseh of Ilya, another Lithuanian talmudist who had absorbed outside influences, and had dared to express original ideas that were unacceptable to the traditional élite and consequently aroused its antagonism.

The author of *Sefer ben-porat* was aware that he was creating a new maskilic hero, or at least redeeming a forgotten one.⁸³ According to his view of history, the fate of peoples and nations was the outcome of a lengthy process, replete with struggles against adversaries and enemies. Only after periods of oppression and humiliation could the end of the long road to success be attained. In Plungian's view, this was a divine form of education, teaching men to struggle and to achieve success through arduous efforts. He believed that this dynamic was given a concise summation in Manasseh's life. He had lived during a historical stage in which the struggle had not borne fruit; nevertheless, it was an essential stage since it paved the way for the mid-nineteenth-century Haskalah. Plungian wanted to revive this forgotten figure, whose ideas had fallen on deaf ears during his lifetime, since he believed that people were now ready to heed Manasseh's message and that the modern generation would enthusiastically embrace it.

Another reason for creating this new hero was the need to venerate the memory of great Jews in Russia. All nations, including the Jews in other countries, Plungian asserted, commemorated their wise men, but the Russian Jews had neglected theirs. To correct this oversight, he suggested that the Haskalah had begun in eastern Europe. His *Sefer ben-porat* was an early and deliberate attempt to establish the legitimacy of the Haskalah via the biography of an early maskilic hero.⁸⁴

Plungian's biography of Manasseh displayed all the usual maskilic hallmarks: a brilliant Torah scholar from Lithuania, whose tendencies to broaden his horizons were blocked from an early age; a youthful marriage that ended in divorce; religious scholarship that rejected *pi'pul* and adopted a critical approach. Manasseh's rationalistic critique of the religious sources made him a target of persecution. He had many enemies, but many pupils too. Manasseh was aware of the decay of Jewish society and foresaw that wisdom would triumph, and that in the end the changes brought by time could not be halted. However, he was ahead of his time; his generation was not yet prepared to absorb innovations, and he had to carry out

⁸² N. Nathanson, *Sefer emet*; Mapu, 'Mikhtavim le'avraham kaplan', 573; Werses, 'Mordekhai Plungian'.

⁸⁴ Plungian, *Sefer ben-porat*, pp. iii–iv, 4.

the mission of the maskil, courageously advocating change and new ideas in a hostile environment. He fearlessly urged Jewish youth to cleave to the Torah as well as to wisdom and science—the essence of the modern maskilic ideal—and laboured to save the 'glory of our people which is being trampled under the feet of the boors among them'.⁸⁵

However, Plungian's *Sefer ben-porat* did more than just construct an east European maskilic hero; it also served as a moderate maskilic alternative to a Haskalah with roots in the Vilna Gaon's house of study, advocated by Joshua Heschel Levin (1818–83). In this sense, *Sefer ben-porat* was a counter-history, written in direct response to Levin's *Atiyot eliyahu* (a biography of Elijah ben Solomon, the Vilna Gaon). Published in Vilna in 1856, Levin's book lavishly praised the Vilna Gaon, holding him up as a model for emulation and instructing the young generation to shun evil ways and follow in the path of *isadikim* and sages. In *Atiyot eliyahu*, he was depicted as a hero of giant proportions, and much more than a brilliant Torah scholar; he was the true maskil, who combined Torah and wisdom, was well versed in all the sciences, but eschewed the pitfalls of philosophy. Levin, himself a member of the mitnagedic Lithuanian élite, tried, on one hand, to endow the Gaon with the qualities of a maskil in order to advance his claim that the mitnagedic stream was consonant with the Haskalah; on the other hand, however, he criticized the maskilim, urging them to return to the path of the Vilna Gaon.⁸⁶

Plungian, who objected to the maskilic image that Levin attempted to foist on the Vilna Gaon, chose Manasseh of Ilya as a counterweight, arguing that he embodied the quintessential maskil. In *Sefer ben-porat* Plungian did not conceal the fact that Manasseh was an intimate of the Gaon, and to a certain extent depicted him as his disciple, but he stressed that Manasseh preferred the path of the hasidim to that of the mitnagedim: 'he said there is hope for a man who thoughtfully considers his ways, tortuous and devious as they may be, for he will prepare his steps in the future to walk upright, but there is no hope for a man who shuts his eyes and sees not where his ways lead him'.⁸⁷

Plungian was more open in levelling harsher, albeit indirect, criticism at the Vilna Gaon in other parts of his book. The Gaon not only refused to see the changes taking place in his time, and consequently did not merit the title of 'maskil', but, in Plungian's view, he erred in not taking responsibility for the Jewish community. The Gaon engaged in scholarly pursuits for his own sake, but hardly accepted any pupils: 'He kept his thoughts and his path concealed in his heart and did not reveal them to any man, and hence his wisdom died with him'.⁸⁸ Manasseh, on the other hand, fought all his life for the sake of maskilic ideals and laboured to impart them to his pupils. Plungian sharpened the boundaries between maskilim

⁸⁵ Plungian, *Sefer ben-porat*, 6–7, 43–6, 59–67, 73–4, 127–8.

⁸⁶ On Joshua Heschel Levin, see Zaron, 'The Dynastic Struggle'; Etkes, 'The Vilna Gaon and the Haskalah', 195–6. Cf. Mapu's criticism of Levin: Mapu, *Mikhtavei avraham mapu*, 21; I. Kover, *Sefer hamatsref*.
⁸⁷ Plungian, *Sefer ben-porat*, 14; see also 13, 33.
⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 90–1.

and non-maskilim and demigrated the maskilic image of the Gaon. He did not believe that the roots of the Russian Haskalah were embodied in the Gaon, but rather in Manasseh of Ilya, the prototype of the true maskil.

Many in the Vilna community took exception to this maskilic image of Manasseh. A short time after the appearance of *Sefer ben-porat* complaints were heard that Plungian had in fact falsified the true image of a peerless talmudist by ascribing a series of maskilic traits to him. An anonymous writer in *Hamaqid* reported that some of the community's rabbis and leaders were up in arms, and critics were asking how Plungian had dared to turn Manasseh into a maskil and a philosopher as if he were a Spinoza or a Solomon Maimon.⁸⁹ The maskilic camp was quick to react to these protests, arguing that the maskilic image was justified.⁹⁰ In spite of the controversy, from the publication of *Sefer ben-porat* onwards the new maskilic hero took his place in the consciousness of Russian maskilim, both those who sanctioned the maskilic image of the Vilna Gaon, like Fuenn, who regarded Manasseh as the Gaon's loyal disciple, and the followers of Plungian, like Retuben Asher Braudes (1851–1902).⁹¹ Braudes regarded Manasseh as one of the two potential reformers of Judaism in eighteenth-century Poland: Manasseh, along with the Ba'al Shem Tov, recognized the need for change among the rabbis and wished to see the halakhah and the way of life made more lenient. Both men wanted to kindle a sense of vitality in the people's hearts and to introduce direct study based on literal interpretation and logic. The Ba'al Shem Tov's aim was to expel despair and to ease the severe strictures imposed by the rabbis. The good intentions of these two reformers were maliciously defeated by the Vilna Gaon. Braudes believed that had it not been for the Gaon's intervention, Manasseh's maskilic pupils and the Ba'al Shem Tov's hasidic disciples would, in the final analysis, have joined forces: 'for then they would surely have joined together, would have shared common views and methods, and all the children of Israel would have had vitality and light in their religion'.⁹²

In the 1870s two more works were written on the history of the Haskalah. In 1878–9 *Haboker* or printed, in instalments, Gottlob's 'Hagizrah vebaheniyah' (History of the Development of the Haskalah in Russia and Poland),⁹³ and in *Hakarmel* Fuenn published his book *Safah lane'emanim* (Language for the Faithful), also in instalments (1879–80). Gottlob and Fuenn, two of the oldest and most venerable of Russian maskilim, were both sworn advocates of the moderate Haskalah, but each employed a different historical schema to depict the history of the Haskalah in general and of the Russian Haskalah in particular.

According to Gottlob's narrative, the Haskalah in Russia was not a native product of east European Jewry. Instead, it came there from Germany, via Galicia, on its way to revolutionize Jewish society. Gottlob distinguished seven periods

⁸⁹ Anon., 'Hatsofeh', 34–5.

⁹⁰ On the maskilic image of the Vilna Gaon, see Etkes, 'The Vilna Gaon and the Haskalah'.

⁹¹ Braudes, *Hadat vchahayim*, 25–43.
⁹² Gottlob, 'Hagizrah vebaheniyah' 25–149.

in the history of the Haskalah movement. To designate the first, the period of pre-Enlightenment ignorance, he used the kabbalistic term *tohu shekodem hatikun*, 'the chaos preceding the restoration'. This period was characterized by the static and uniform life of the Jewish communities, who adhered faithfully to the religious faith and its discipline, either willingly or out of fear of their leaders. In Gottlob's view, this was an illusory peace: 'that calm was like the peace of a field of graves, devoid of any life or joy, feeling or movement . . . reason had concealed its face under the cloak of faith, knowledge had shyly withdrawn'. The next three periods were marked by grave crises in the history of Polish Jewry: the Chmielnicki massacres of Jews in 1648-9 and the catastrophic Shabbatean movement and its religious radicalism, followed by Jacob Frank and his sect, who were 'a catastrophe compounded'. Hasidism was depicted as the successor of Shabbateanism, but also as rebelling against it. The mitnagedic trend led by the Vilna Gaon did not, in Gottlob's view, hold out a promise of any change or reform whatsoever. Only the last three periods in his synopsis were pervaded by light and brightness, and they originated in the Haskalah of Berlin and the work of Moses Mendelssohn. Levinsohn was the first to absorb the message coming from the West, and the Russian government, for its part, galvanized the Haskalah.⁹⁴

A sharp contrast is presented by the book by Fuenn, who at the time was compelled to defend the basic values of the moderate Haskalah, which were no longer self-evident, particularly the observance of the commandments and the promotion of the Hebrew language. He chose to represent the Russian Haskalah as emanating from an authentic unbroken tradition, deeply rooted in Jewish history and the history of Russian Jewry. In *Sufah lane emanim* Fuenn did not attempt to uncover the historical circumstances that gave rise to the Haskalah; following Levinsohn's method, he merely presented a chronological list of Hebrew writers and books, which for him served as examples of the continuity of Hebrew literary works. In Fuenn's mind, the history of the Hebrew language and literature corresponded with the history of the Haskalah; thus his book opened with the Bible and worked its way through time until, in the last chapter, it reached the Haskalah in Germany and Russia. Fuenn also supported the maskilic image of the Vilna Gaon, and consequently placed him alongside Mendelssohn as one of the fathers of the Haskalah in Russia. By characterizing the Haskalah as a religious enlightenment that embraced all things—Torah, commandments, ethics, and secular sciences—Fuenn was able to argue that the Haskalah had begun even before the Vilna Gaon, that the course of its development was free of any friction or upheavals, and that it had originated in the early days of the nation. The dissemination of religious enlightenment had thus always been the mission of the Jewish people.⁹⁵ Hence, in Fuenn's view, the history of the Haskalah was not a particular section of Jewish history but rather the one and only spiritual history of the Jewish people throughout all epochs.

⁹⁴ Gottlob, 'Hagizrah vehabenyah', 25-6, 30, 34-5, 69-149.

⁹⁵ Fuenn, *Sufah lane emanim*, 573-88, 591-8, 657-77.

ABRAHAM MAPU AND THE POPULARIZATION OF MASKILIC HISTORY

The literary works of Abraham Mapu, the Lithuanian maskil from Kovno, and in particular his historical novels *Ahavat tsyon* and *Ashmat shomron*, which placed him at the very centre of the stage of Hebrew literature in Russia in the 1850s and 1860s, could perhaps be regarded as marking a significant shift in the maskilic sense of the past. His choice of Palestine during the period of the monarchy as the setting for the plots of his enormously popular novels and his idyllic depictions of ancient pastoral life might have led one to conclude that Mapu, yearning for the distant past, had written a national historical epic, departing significantly from the traditional goal of the maskilim to transform society.⁹⁶ The truth is, however, that Mapu remained within the boundaries of the maskilic consciousness, both from the standpoint of the picture of the past implicit in his work and as regards the topical functions of the past in his work. Mapu saw himself as a 'visionary author', a writer constructing fictional plots to capture the reader's imagination and enthral him with the adventures of his heroes. Mapu felt that by adopting the new literary genre of the romantic novel he would acquire an extremely influential propaganda tool and reach a much broader readership:

For the fable possesses great power, and drama strongly affects the masses of the people and will attract their hearts to wisdom . . . a multitude will heed the visionaries, but not many will find wisdom, and only a few among the people will ascend the mountain of wisdom; but the people will not live according to their ways and they will not light the way for the multitude . . . for as a remedy is for the flesh, so is this a remedy for the soul, and those struck by fancy will be healed by fancy, and those wounded by a false vision will be cured by a true vision.⁹⁷

Mapu's novels were philosophical books, whose fanciful plots were underpinned by maskilic logic.⁹⁸ In *Ahavat tsyon* and *Ashmat shomron* the ancient past in the Land of Israel served as a backdrop for social and cultural models that were typical of nineteenth-century Jewish society, and very far removed indeed from the seventh and eighth centuries BC, in the days of King Ahab and King Hezekiah. Mapu did not even try to conceal his objectives: of *Ashmat shomron*, for example, he wrote that this was a work that would 'express ancient riddles about Judah and Israel, the brothers separating into two inimical kingdoms . . . these plots are also relevant for us at this time and they call aloud to us: how good and pleasing it is for brethren to dwell together'.⁹⁹ For decades, lessons learned from

⁹⁶ Klausner, *Creators and Builders*, 182; Cohen, *From Dream to Reality*, 93-153; Kleinman, *Figures and Ages*, 55-6.

⁹⁷ Mapu's letter to the heads of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment (1864); Mapu, *Mikhtavei abraham mapu*, 230-1. Cf. Miron, *From Romance to the Novel*, 59-62. See too Mapu's letter to A. Beilinson (1860); Mapu, *Mikhtavei abraham mapu*, 180.

⁹⁸ Miron, *From Romance to the Novel*, 146. See also Patterson, *Abraham Mapu*.

⁹⁹ Mapu's letter to the heads of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment (1864); Mapu, *Mikhtavei abraham mapu*, 237. The same words were printed in the preface of his *Ashmat shomron*, 79.

precedents in the past had been one of the hallmarks of the maskilic sense of the past. Mapu's novels set in the biblical period, as well as the story 'Hozei hezyonot' (The Visionaries), set in the time of Shabbetai Tsevi, provided a new and attractive literary wrapping for familiar maskilic contents. In this sense, Mapu was one of the chief popularizers of the maskilic sense of the past.

Mapu chose to set his historical novels in periods of crisis. Unlike other maskilim, his optimism was qualified and he offered it as an ideal solution in his novels, more as a hope than as a realistic ending. He belonged to the older generation of moderate and self-taught Russian maskilim and did not gain fame as an author until he was in his fifties. Even after his books began to sell well to readers of Hebrew literature, his correspondence reveals him as a morose, bitter man, living a solitary, modest, and rather drab life.¹⁰⁰ During the reign of Alexander II Mapu was one of the first maskilim to reject the simplistic, dualistic maskilic view of contemporary Jewish society as one divided between the opponents of Haskalah and its supporters. The problem of the 'new generation' was a prevalent motif in his writing, expressing the moderate maskil's frustration at the emergence of a generation most of whose members had adopted a modern lifestyle but did not adopt the ideas of the Haskalah or belong to its circles. These were the 'pseudomaskilim', the sons of the wealthy, educated in the new schools, and young women who learned Russian and French. Their behaviour demonstrated their rejection of tradition and their acculturation into the surrounding society; nor were they intellectuals following the maskilic example of fostering Hebrew literature and language.¹⁰¹

Like Krochmal in Galicia in the 1830s, Mapu viewed the sharp polarization in Jewish society as a threat to its very existence, and gave this growing sense of danger expression in his literary work. He feared that the members of this new generation were likely 'to flee from the burning house', because they 'love life and luxury, and speak slander by saying: billows of smoke will rise up from the chimneys of the old house; ah! Fire is secretly consuming it, let us escape with our lives.'¹⁰² Mapu's three historical novels are set in times of historical crisis—an hour of 'fusion and annihilation' in Krochmal's terminology, which had a strong influence on Mapu. The plots of *Ahavat tsiyon* and *Ashmat shomron* unfold at the close of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth centuries BC, during the reigns of Ahab and Hezekiah, kings of Judah; the central events are Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem after Samaria had fallen to the Assyrians (in *Ahavat tsiyon*) and the death throes of the kingdom of Israel and its conflict with the kingdom of Judah (in *Ashmat shomron*). *Hozei hezyonot* tells of the state of crisis provoked by Shabbateanism in the

¹⁰⁰ B.-Z. Dinur's introd. to Mapu, *Mikhtavei abraham mapu*, J. Klausner, *History of Modern Hebrew Literature*, iii, 269–360; cf. Bartal, 'Gentiles and Gentle Society', 47–52.

¹⁰¹ On the distinction between 'enlightenment', 'assimilation', and 'acculturation' in Russia, see Zipperstein, 'Haskalah, Cultural Change', and Feiner, 'The Modern Jewish Woman'.

¹⁰² Mapu, *Hozei hezyonot*, 455.

seventeenth century, in 'a generation great in deeds . . . a sacred generation led astray by vain hopes and enticements whose foundation lies in the mountains of darkness, in the delusions of Shabbetai Tsevi . . . truth is stumbling through the streets, and falsehood has taken up a high place on the mountains of Israel'.¹⁰³

How did Mapu characterize hours of crisis in the distant past as well as in the present? This is clear from the foreword to his *Hozei hezyonot*, which appeared almost verbatim at the beginning of the first part of *Ashmat shomron*:

In the days of Ahaz, king of Judah, Pekah, son of Remaliah, and Hoshea, son of Elah, kings of Israel, the voices of the prophets grew hoarse from calling upon the defiant sons; and they grew weary of pleading with a rebellious nation that erred in its heart. At that evil time Ephraim rebelled, Judah betrayed . . . Torah vanished from Zion, and truth and honesty fled from the gates of Samaria . . . righteousness dwelt in the forest, and faith found refuge in the caves.¹⁰⁴

Crisis was explained by Mapu according to the antithetical model of maskilic historical thinking: right and wrong, light and darkness constantly contest with one another in a struggle that ends with the victory of the good and the upright. Even in a generation of evil and sin there were islands of justice and reason, and these were embodied by the maskilim in every generation, who provided a source of hope for future redemption. Apparently, as far as Mapu was concerned, the moderate maskilim in Russia the 1850s and 1860s filled the role that had been taken by their predecessors the prophets in the eighth century BC and the first maskilim in the eighteenth century. The figure of the ideal maskil was projected back into the distant past and onto his fictional heroes. In *Ahavat tsiyon*, for example, there were the figures of Yoram, 'chief of a thousand', and the generous Yedidiah: 'Yoram and Yedidiah burned brightly like jewels in the crown of the generation of . . . perversity, the generation of Ahaz, for their spirit was loyal to God and to His holy ones, and they were among the disciples of the Lord; the testimony of the prophet, son of Amoz, was bound up with them and the teaching of God was inscribed in them.'¹⁰⁵ These literary heroes were also compelled to grapple with the opponents of the Haskalah, the hypocrites and impostors, and the other social forces that were so repugnant to the maskilim.

Political strife, differing religious beliefs, and personal quarrels were the hallmarks of the 'generation of perversity' during the period of the monarchy and the generation of Ahaz, just as they were in Mapu's novel *Ayat isavua* (Hypocrisy), set in nineteenth-century Russia. In it Nehemiah, the maskil of the 'old generation', decries the divisiveness in his generation and longs for a leadership that will heal the rifts and unite the people. Similarly, in *Hozei hezyonot* the angel Michael

¹⁰³ Ibid. 457–8. See also Werses' discussion of the background and content of *Hozei hezyonot*, Werses, *Haskalah and Shabbateanism*, 228–35.

¹⁰⁴ Mapu, *Ashmat shomron*, 73; id., *Hozei hezyonot*, 458.

¹⁰⁵ Mapu, *Ahavat tsiyon*, 3.

blames Satan for having imposed the same state of divisiveness in Jewish history in general, and during the time of Shabbetai Tsevi in particular.¹⁰⁶

Mapu divided the battlefield on which the maskilim were struggling into two fronts: one facing inwards, confronting the hasidim and the 'pseudo-maskilim', and the other facing outwards against the external enemies of the Jews. Scattered throughout all Mapu's stories are the negative characters of the 'old generation', who are hostile to the Haskalah, with emphasis on the figure of the priests of Ba'al—period of the monarchy this character was represented by the priests of Ba'al—vain and reckless villains, plotting evil and holding to superstitions. In *Ashmat shomron* the priests of Beit El are denounced as responsible for the many sins of the kingdom of Israel and the widening internal rift that led to its demise. They are accused of deviating from the Jewish religion and imitating alien faiths, and are denounced for their greed and low morals: 'There is no truth, no mercy, no knowledge of God in the land, for all they desire is to fill their bellies, to wax fat on the choicest part of every offering of the people of Israel.' In this way, they were turned into the 'hasidim' of the eighth century BC; the same is true of the descriptions of the debauchery and drunkenness of these priests.¹⁰⁷ By depicting them as wisdom-hating men who entice the masses with vain delusions, Mapu turned his novel into a virulent piece of anti-hasidic propaganda. He was even more open in confronting hasidism in his *Hozei hezyonot*, and in a letter in 1858 he revealed his tactic: 'This lofty vision strikes at the hasidim purporting to do great and marvellous things . . . I didn't touch the hasidim themselves, but only Shabbetai Tsevi and his generation: "strike a scornor and the simple will beware".'¹⁰⁸

Mapu also concurred with Levinsohn's view about the duty of maskilic writers to contend with anti-Jewish trends, and was probably also influenced by Levinsohn's apologetic writings. Michael, one of the protagonists in *Ayit tsavua*, leaves a sum of money in his will to finance writers who 'beat their pens into spears to fight Voltaire and Eisenmenger, our enemies, who have invented things that are not true about the people of Israel to blacken their name among their neighbours'.¹⁰⁹ In the third part of *Ayit tsavua* Mapu introduced a discussion that takes place in the salon of the pro-Jewish gentile nobility, where Jews are also welcome—a situation that expresses a maskilic picture of the future. Loira, the daughter of the Count, has been given one of Voltaire's books by one of the ministers, a jurist by profession, and she condemns his disparaging words about the Jews:

¹⁰⁶ Mapu, *Ayit tsavua*, 282; id., *Hozei hezyonot*, 469.

¹⁰⁷ Mapu, *Ahavat tsiyon*, 7, 41–2; id., *Ashmat shomron*, 98, 125, 166.

¹⁰⁸ Mapu's letter to his brother (Jan. 1858), in id., *Mikhtavei abraham mapu*, 26. Cf. Werses, *Haskalah and Shabbateanism*, 228–35; see also Mapu, 'Igeret le'ahiv'.

¹⁰⁹ Mapu, *Ayit tsavua*, pt. 3, p. 426. Voltaire's attacks on the Old Testament and its Jewish followers provided ammunition for later antisemitic campaigns; Johann Andreas Eisenmenger (1654–1704) wrote a book which had a formative influence on antisemitic polemics.

If the honourable advocate will listen, I would like to tell you what I think about Voltaire's book, which you have lent me and have highly praised. And I do not know as yet why is he deserving of fame? For he is Voltaire, capable of abusing any who offend him. Is he the first to curse the Jews and to see in them only trouble? Our people is not like this today, nor are the Jews like this in this era, for they have chosen wisdom and all good ways.¹¹⁰

The minister who represents the Jew-haters enters into a debate with Loira about her enlightened and tolerant views. He counters her arguments by stressing the Jews' arrogance and their lack of productivity. Loira rebukes him, reminding him that the situation in Russia in the 1860s actually shows that the Jews are introducing reforms. Their economic role in trade contributes to the state, and their decision to take the path of wisdom obliges the surrounding society to change its attitude towards them. Did not Spain decline following her expulsion of the Jews? Elisheva, Loira's enlightened Jewish friend, has also read Voltaire's book, and has left her opinion of it in Hebrew among its pages. Mapu places three apologetic points in the mouth of his heroine to counter Voltaire's views: first, historians will find that every nation makes its own unique contribution to history—the Sidonians as merchants, the Babylonians as astronomers, the Greeks as philosophers, the Romans as jurists, and the Jews as the bearers of monotheism. Secondly, the Jews in ancient times far surpassed all other nations in their religion and ritual: 'Voltaire forgot all the deceits of the ancient peoples. Why did he not remember the Jew who afflicted his soul . . . why did Voltaire also forget the peoples who worshipped the forests and sanctified dress . . . and consulted the oracles and the dead and feared witches and wizards?' Lastly, the long and unbroken history of the Jews is worthy of the respect of the sages of all nations, and their antiquity attests to the Almighty's desire that they should endure.¹¹¹

It has already been noted that Mapu's maskilic historical schema was based to some degree on Krochmal's *Moreh nevukhei hazeman*, particularly in relation to the Jewish people's capacity for renewal after a period of crisis and decline. His adoption of Krochmal's ideas was not merely a literary and intellectual choice but reflected the similar maskilic situation in which the two lived, one in Galicia in the 1830s and the other in Lithuania in the 1850s and 1860s. The anxiety that gripped moderate maskilim drove both of them to emphasize trends of divisiveness and disintegration and ideological controversies. They also expressed their anticipation of historical renewal, an attitude in keeping with their maskilic picture of the future.

Nonetheless, the very existence of the Haskalah movement encouraged Mapu in his belief that the direction of the future was already evident, even in the midst of the crisis. He felt that cultural renewal was imminent since the distant past provided proof that Jewish renewal was possible. The biblical period of the monarchy not only served as a basis for Mapu's consciousness of crisis but also presented a

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pt. 3, p. 373. See the discussion of this meeting in Bartal, 'Gentiles and Gentile Society', 50–1.

¹¹¹ Mapu, *Ayit tsavua*, pt. 3, pp. 374–5.

utopia projected into the past, the idyllic picture of a society in which the wealthy supported the maskilim and Jews lived in peaceful villages, working the land.¹¹² Mapu's recommendation, in both *Ahavat tsiyon* and *Ashmat shomron*, was to remove the causes of divisiveness and to build a united leadership as the only solution that would ensure a harmonious future for the people:

A day unto the Lord that will surely come, a day of light for the children of Israel; and on that day He shall be the faith of their times, a store of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is their treasure. The old generation shall not do evil unto the new, and the new generation shall not mock the old, for the two will abide in peace together. A shepherd will lead them faithfully, by the springs of wisdom shall he guide them, and they will quench their thirst, drinking the pure waters of the source of Israel.¹¹³

This maskilic picture of the future, in keeping with the outlook of the moderate maskilim, was not reserved solely for the future. Mapu also believed that the reign of Alexander II in Russia provided ever greater assurance that the necessary conditions for internal renewal would be established. Tsar Alexander was, in his view, spreading serenity and tranquility throughout the land and acting as 'moon and sun' to the entire generation. 'In the light of his countenance', Mapu ardently hoped, 'the worm Jacob, crawling from the top of ancient mountains, passing through many generations, will recover its strength, see the light, and make the crooked straight.'¹¹⁴

HEROICS AND SACRED MEMORIES IN POPULAR HISTORICAL FICTION

Although Mapu's romantic novels did not become as popular among the masses as he had anticipated, they did reach a relatively wide readership of both sexes (in Hebrew and in Yiddish translation) that extended beyond the circle of readers of scholarly Haskalah literature. The success of *Ahavat tsiyon* brought in its wake a wave of historical stories, most of them Hebrew translations from German, which now served as a new avenue for the dissemination of maskilic history in Russia.¹¹⁵ The first to begin writing belletristic, popular historical literature was Kalman Schulman, who translated and adapted *Harisot bettar* (The Ruins of Betar, about Bar Kokhba) written by Rabbi Dr Samuel Meyer of Hanover. Schulman did not continue writing books of this genre, moving on to other areas, as will be discussed below. However, within a short time of the publication of *Harisot bettar* in 1858 more than thirty books, anthologies of stories, and individual short stories of

¹¹² Mapu, *Ahavat tsiyon*, 3; id., *Ayit tsavaa*, pt. 3, pp. 253, 440-1.

¹¹³ Mapu, *Hozei hezyonot*, 455; *Ashmat shomron*, 194; *Ahavat tsiyon*, 82.

¹¹⁴ Mapu, *Hozei hezyonot*, 456.

¹¹⁵ Halkin, *Modern Hebrew Literature*, 233-6; Ofek, *Hebrew Children's Literature*, 149-72; Werses, *Haskalah and Shabbateanism*, 145-91; Miron, *When Loners Come Together*, 56-85.

this type appeared. They were intended to provide the Hebrew reader with entertaining stories from the past that would 'educate and benefit young people'.¹¹⁶

Hardly any of these historical stories were the original creations of Russian maskilim, to whom they were readily available among the historical stories published in Germany in Jewish books and periodicals throughout the nineteenth century. Ludwig Philippson (1811-89), Marcus Lehmann (1831-90), Samuel Meyer, Hermann Reckendorf (1825-75), and Shalom Hachohen were among the authors whose stories were made accessible to the Jewish reader in Russia in Hebrew translation. In 1875 an attempt was made to encourage belletristic historical literature: the maskilic author and publisher Eliezer Isaac Shapira (1835-1915) established the series 'Beit ha'otsar' and commissioned translations of historical stories about the Jewish past from several maskilim.¹¹⁷

The historical stories were not all set in one particular period, but their plots were generally dramatic and grim, recounting the bitter fate of Jews in the pre-modern era or episodes of Jewish heroism in desperate situations. In *Harisot bettar* the reader followed 'the marvellous tale of Bar Kokhba's heroism and the destruction of Betar'. It was a tragic story about a doomed rebellion in the course of which supreme heroism was displayed and at the end of which rivers of blood were spilled, a tempest of emotion was unleashed, and Jews fell victim to horrendous tortures. The terrible fate of Rabbi Akiva, graphically described, vividly illustrates the florid language of these historical stories:

Then Rabbi Akiva, horrified, said: Now I choose death so that my eyes will no longer look upon such a dreadful traitor and murderer . . . and the killers approached him and removed his clothes, leaving him naked. Then they shackled him to an iron pole, and with sharp-toothed combs of iron they tore his flesh slowly, slowly, so as to prolong his horrible suffering . . . but the holy Rabbi Akiva did not cry out, but only lifted his eyes heavenwards . . . until his pure and holy soul left the prison of his torn body, so sorely wounded and bloodied.¹¹⁸

Kidush hashem—sanctification of the Divine Name, even at the cost of one's life—was a common motif in the plots of these historical tales. There was also a marked tendency to deal with the great crises in Jewish history. Influenced by Mapu, Abraham Shalom Friedberg (1838-1902) began to write an original historical book entitled *Aharit yerushalayim* (The Last Days of Jerusalem), set at the time of the destruction of the Temple.¹¹⁹ Other stories written in this vein included Marcus Lehmann's 'Bustenai' (1897), translated into Hebrew from German by Fuenn, set during the time of the *geonim* in Babylonia; *Hayehudim be'anglijah* (The Jews in England, 1869), translated by Miriam Markal-Mosesohn of Kovno

¹¹⁶ From the title-page of Shapira, *Siparim*.

¹¹⁷ Ofek, *Hebrew Children's Literature*, 156-62; Ben-Ari, *Romance with the Past*.

¹¹⁸ Schulman, *Harisot bettar*, 126-7.

¹¹⁹ Friedberg's letter to Mapu, in A. S. Friedberg, *Sefer zikhronot*, 113. Friedberg wrote eight chapters of the story but never completed it.

(1837–1920), from I. A. Francolm, *Die Kreuzfahrer und die Juden unter Richard Löwenherz* (1842), which was set in the time of the Crusades; and a long list of others that related dramatic episodes from the lives of the *conversos* in Spain and Portugal.¹²⁰ Samuel Fuenn, who, in addition to writing scholarly historical works, believed in the importance of popular belletristic history, contributed several translations of stories of this type. In *Ya ukot tirado* (Jacob Tirado, 1872) he translated a story by Ludwig Philippson about the early settlement of Jews in the Netherlands.¹²¹ The story recorded the exploits of the sixteenth-century hero, who manages to escape from the Inquisition, returns to Judaism, and after many adventures and adversities acquires the right for Jews to settle in a country that practices religious tolerance. This happens after the hero has proven his heroism and his value to the country by providing military assistance to the British navy and to the Dutch. Raphael Del Monte of Hamburg is the hero of *Hahiluf* (The Exchange, 1873), translated by Fuenn from a story by Lehmann. Raphael discovers he is a Jew, goes through a severe crisis, and is on the verge of committing suicide, but he slowly reconciles himself to his fate, and accepts his Jewish identity. Another short story, *Hakadish lifnei kol nidrei* (Kaddish before Kol Nidrei, 1876), which Fuenn chose from among Solomon Cohen's stories, recounts the fascinating tale of a military commander, a forcibly converted Jew, who wishes to regain his Jewishness. The reader is once again introduced to the horrible events of the Inquisition, but is also deeply moved by the fragile threads that still connect the forced converts to their Jewish origins.¹²²

A young maskil from Polotsk, Abraham Rakowski (1854–1921), inaugurated Shapira's 'Beit ha'otsar' series with another of Philippson's stories, whose plot was designed to recall 'sorrowful memories from the days of darkness of the Inquisition that bathed our forefathers in blood'. In the story *Nidrei yisra'el* (The Exiled of Israel, 1875), the stages leading up to the expulsion of Spanish Jews are described, and the author stressed that 'the entire spectacle is based on the evidence of history' and was not a literary fiction.¹²³ The story *Emek ha'arazim* (Vale of Cedars, 1875–6), adapted and translated by Friedberg from *Vale of Cedars* by the English author Grace Aguilar (1816–47) as the second volume in the 'Beit ha'otsar' series, is set in Spain during the period of the expulsion. A romantic love affair between a Spanish nobleman and a Jewish woman reaches its tragic climax when the couple's attempt to flee is thwarted and their death draws near. At this point the young woman proclaims her Jewish identity with pride, revealing her

¹²⁰ Markal-Mosesohn, *Hayehudim be'angiyah*; see also the very favourable review of the book in *Hakurmel*, 7 (1860), 238.

¹²¹ The quotations here are from the Vilna, 1881 edition. Philippson's story first appeared in 1855 and is included in the collection Philippson, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.

¹²² On Solomon Cohen and his historical stories, see Kressel's introduction to Solomon Cohen, *Podeh umatsil*.

¹²³ Another story from the lives of the *conversos* was written by Philippson and translated into Hebrew; see Bellinson, *Gdlat se'arad*.

heroic readiness to die in sanctification of the Divine Name: 'I am a Hebrew! Your religion is not mine, your people are not my people, and your God is not my God.'¹²⁴ Another tragic human predicament is the topic of 'Haovdim vehamidahim' (The Lost and the Exiled) by Tuviah Pesah Shapira (1845–1924), in which a close friendship develops between a Jewish boy, the survivor of a massacre of a family of *conversos* in Portugal, and a Christian, who is trying to atone for his responsibility for this massacre.¹²⁵ In another story by Shapira, 'Hamistater o diego de agulars' (The Hidden One; or, Diego de Agulars, 1876), the surprising twist in the plot is that the head of the Inquisition in Madrid is of Jewish origin. He discovers this a short time after he himself has sentenced his sister to be burned at the stake. Just before she dies, she cries out, 'Don't harm me! I am a Jew! I was born a Jew and I will die a Jew in the name of the God of Israel! I will die but I will not convert; do with me what your cruel hearts wish, but I will not forsake my religion!' The Inquisitor flees from these 'immolators of humans', settles in the community of Spanish Jews in Vienna, and then moves to Amsterdam.¹²⁶

Shapira's story 'Haperud' (The Separation) describes the conflict between Rabbi Saul Levi Morteira of Amsterdam and his pupil Baruch. Only at the end of the story, when the reader has already completely identified with the protagonist's human suffering, does it transpire that he is really Baruch Spinoza. Spinoza's excommunication is not presented in the story as the outcome of an ideological and religious dispute; the emphasis is rather on the personal and tragic aspects. The fundamental problem in this fictional story is not the charge of heresy or ideological deviation, but the dissolution of the bonds of love between Spinoza and the rabbi's daughter. Hence, all the reader's attention is directed to the young woman as she listens to the ban of excommunication being read out: 'In the women's gallery sat a beautiful damsel; down her rosy cheeks tears flowed like a powerful waterfall, and the pallor of death covered her face . . . In such dreadful circumstances did Baruch Spinoza, the sage and inventor of a new philosophical method, leave the city of his birth in 1660.'¹²⁷ This is a perfect example of the popular function of belletristic literature. By lowering the level of the Spinoza affair from the theological, philosophical realm to that of a romantic love story, and by presenting the excommunication as the personal tragedy of a young enlightened man, the author hoped to awaken feelings of sympathy for the hero in the reader's heart, as well as repugnance for the harsh rigidity of the leaders of the Amsterdam community. This made it possible to grant legitimacy to the excommunicated philosopher without going into the intellectual background of the affair. The sentimental and emotional aspect seemed to be stronger than any logical argument, certainly when it was presented to a readership who, for the most part, lacked any other source of information about the Spinoza affair.

Belletristic history, originally written in central Europe, in Magdeburg,

¹²⁴ A. S. Friedberg, *Emek ha'arazim*, 215.

¹²⁵ Shapira, *Sipurim*, 11–28.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 50–61 (quotation: 60–1).

Hanover, Heidelberg, Leipzig, and Prague by German Jewish authors, some of whom were modern rabbis and community leaders, had a clear purpose: to help preserve Judaism. Philippson, for example, realized in the mid-nineteenth century that, apart from attempting to introduce religious reforms, there was also a need to counter assimilation and to strengthen the Jewish identity of the general public. In 1855 Philippson's proposal for the establishment of a Jewish literary society (*Israelitische Literaturgesellschaft*) was printed in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Juden-tums*. The purpose of the society was to publish Jewish literature of various levels, from classical Jewish literature and modern 'Jewish wisdom' (such as Graetz's and Geiger's books) to Philippson's own historical stories. The society issued some eighty publications between 1856 and 1874, with the declared aim of strengthening Judaism. Popular belletristic literature was intended to serve as an antidote to religious indifference and the harmful influences of secular life. In an era of materialism and spiritual limbo, Philippson wrote, the synagogue and the school no longer sufficed as centres to fortify Jewish identity, and literature should also be exploited for this purpose.¹²⁸

To counter the criticism that these historical narratives were ruining the good taste of the masses and degrading scholarship, Philippson described his concept of this genre and its aims. He believed that, despite the disparity between the historian and the novelist, it was possible to combine the 'genius of poesy and the genius of history' in the historical novel. Both writers aspired to revive the historical truth accurately and to describe internal developments, but the novelist had more freedom to concentrate on the psychological motives of the historical characters. In the meeting between the historian and the novelist both had to make compromises and concessions. The novel took its external circumstances (time, place, events, names, and persons) from history, thus limiting its freedom of action; but having paid his debt to history, the author was entitled to delve into the inner lives of his characters. Philippson cautioned authors about the danger of slipping into fantasy. Particularly since the historical narrative was so widely distributed to such a large readership, the author had to be careful to avoid disseminating a false historical picture. And what was it that made the historical story popular? Readers loved the story because it opened up a palpable flesh-and-blood historical world. The narrative plunged them into a realm of emotions and thoughts that history could only sketch in broad, general lines. From the ideological standpoint, Philippson wanted to harness the historical narrative to current issues. In his view, the writer of historical novels was obliged to present the great historical riddle of Jewish survival and the existence of the Jewish people despite all their adversities. He had to write about the period of exile after the Jews had lost their spiritual and political centre, and focus on the struggles, hardships, and persecutions. It was these difficult times in Jewish history that could provide the key to the

¹²⁸ Philippson, 'Aufforderung an alle deutsch-lesenden Israeliten', 87-9; Kressel, 'A Chapter in Jewish Culture', 25-34; Toury, *Between Revolution, Reaction and Emancipation*, 100-1.

secret of Jewish survival and teach readers about the power of the human spirit, the virtues, the love, and the commitment to Jewish identity that typified the Jews. In this way, the historical narratives would become what Philippson called a *Volksbuch* ('book of the people'), that enabled the present to be reflected through the prism of the past, and provided encouragement and consolation for its readers.¹²⁹

The maskilim in Russia who adapted German Jewish historical fiction and translated it into Hebrew not only found a collection of stories that could be transmitted with relative ease to Hebrew readers; they also found history that suited their own purposes. Letters, introductions to books, and readers' reactions all show that the maskilim were well aware of how appropriate this literature was to their efforts at popularization, and they used it to preserve the continuity of Jewish life (as had the original authors in Germany). The apprehension felt by the moderate maskilim in Russia for the new generation emerging during Alexander II's reign has already been discussed; they believed these stories would work against negative trends, such as the growing neglect of the Hebrew language, the abandonment of the halakhic framework of Jewish life, and the decline of the 'national spirit'. The identification with Jewish history, which had apparently been so self-evident in the previous generation, now seemed in need of reaffirmation and reinforcement. However, the aim of preserving the Jewish heritage, which was well served by belletristic history, did not blur the reformist aims that this history promoted in its maskilic Hebrew adaptation.

In 1875 Friedberg wrote from Grodno to the publisher Shapira to inform him that he had begun translating Grace Aguilar's book. It was a 'charming and enticing' book, he wrote, and its power lay in its ability to stir the reader's emotions.¹³⁰ In a letter to Perez Smolenskin, Friedberg related his impressions from his first emotional reading of the book: 'I was stirred by this wonderful story, which warmed my heart and aroused all my senses.' He hoped that his translation would affect readers similarly.¹³¹ Friedberg realized that he was writing romantic literature that appealed to the emotions, and he did not hide his intention to pluck at the reader's heartstrings until tears flowed from his eyes. However, this romantic aim was coupled with the moderate Haskalah's ideological orientation towards national romanticism. In his *Emek ha'arazim* Friedberg also wished to arouse feelings of nostalgia by reviving the 'sacred memories' of the nation from the time of the expulsion from Spain, 'a period that has been dear to us since then, a time that saw the troubles of our forefathers in Spain'.¹³² Friedberg summed up the aims he had in mind when translating *Emek ha'arazim* and explained the benefit to be derived from this story, particularly in a generation marked by the disintegration of Jewish identity:

This entire story is written in a national spirit mingled with sentimental feeling, fitting for the taste of our readers, who are just becoming acquainted with romantic literature, and

¹²⁹ Philippson, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ii, 7-13.

¹³⁰ A. S. Friedberg, *Sefer ha-zikhronot*, 125-6.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 127.

for this period, to fasten the bonds of a strong faith to our hearts as in the distant past. Even the most cold-hearted reader will not be able to refrain from weeping; his tears will fall like pouring rain to soften his heart and awaken in him love and great affection for his people and his homeland, that national love which is growing weaker in our midst in this generation, affected by the wind of cosmopolitanism that has gathered all of us under its wings.¹³³

Friedberg knew full well that these words would please Smolenskin, who was one of the outstanding exponents of early nationalism in the 1870s, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Several responses by readers suggest that Friedberg did indeed achieve his aims. Mordecai Plungian wrote to him that reading *Emek ha'arazim* had been a very moving experience for him: 'I am hastening to tell you about the impression left on my heart and my emotions when I read your book. It filled me with both pleasure and sadness.'¹³⁴ In his journal *Hanagid* David Gordon (1831-86) praised the publisher for having chosen to provide the reader with 'sacred visions' instead of 'profane stories and sensual novels, for which there is no longer any demand since young people have begun to understand the languages of the gentiles'.¹³⁵ Gordon was among those who were very concerned about the 'Jewish national spirit which, Heaven forbid, must not get lost among the host of new winds now blowing in the Jewish camp', and he thought that historical novels were the best means of 'arousing young people's emotions, inducing them to love their faith, which has been our bulwark throughout all the generations, and to revive us, living as we do in the midst of many nations today'.¹³⁶ Gordon also commended Friedberg for the change he had made in his Hebrew translation of the book, by turning the Christian protagonist in the original into a forcibly converted Jew, which Gordon believed would remove any taint from the love affair between him and the Jewish girl.¹³⁷

In addition to evoking national nostalgia, romantic excitement, and sacred memories, the historical stories were also used to sharpen the distinction between the past and the present and to nurture an optimistic approach to positive modern trends. In the publisher's foreword to Philippon and Rakowski's *Nidhei yisra'el* Shapira found it essential to emphasize that the memories of the dreadful past were of a historical period that had ended long ago. The Inquisition, which had steeped Europe in the blood of our forefathers, he argued, belonged to the days of darkness, and the reader was asked to dip into the stories of the Jewish past as if into a nightmare, and then to awaken and find with joy that it was only a dream.¹³⁸

¹³³ Friedberg, *Sefer hazikironot*, 127.

¹³⁴ Plungian's letter in A. S. Friedberg, *Sefer hazikironot*, 129-30.

¹³⁵ D. Gordon, 'Besorat sefarim', 87. Cf. Miron, *From Romance to the Novel*, 232-9.

¹³⁶ D. Gordon, 'Besorat sefarim', 87.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*; A. S. Friedberg, *Sefer hazikironot*, 127.

¹³⁸ Publisher's note to Rakowski, *Nidhei yisra'el*. Cf. Shapira's introduction to A. S. Friedberg, *Emek ha'arazim*, and Gordon's letter to Miriam Markal-Mosesohn, in Markal Mosesohn, *Hayehudim be'angliyah*.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MASSES: HISTORY IN YIDDISH

In order to expand the target audience for maskilic propaganda, it was vital to create literature in the Yiddish vernacular. Thus, despite all ideological inhibitions, attempts were made in the 1860s and 1870s to make maskilic history accessible to wider sections of Jewish society in Russia by writing belletristic and informative history in Yiddish. The maskilim used this avenue of popularization to appeal to those Jews, particularly young girls and women, who found it difficult to read books like Mapu's historical novels in Hebrew, or the stories translated by Shapira, Schulman, and Fuenn.¹³⁹ They had to penetrate a market that for many years had been dominated by Yiddish translations of traditional history, in particular Josippon, *She'erit yisra'el*, and Nathan Neta Hannover's *Yeven metsulah* (Miry Pit, 1653).¹⁴⁰ Their writings had to compete with marvellous and miraculous tales about Alexander the Great and the exploits of the Ten Lost Tribes, and to bring the general public up to date about the 'modern age', which had hardly been mentioned in traditional literature.

This sphere of popularization will be illustrated here by the works of three maskilim: Isaac Meir Dick, who wrote a great number of widely circulated historical stories in Yiddish, Samuel Resser, and Mikhel Gordon (1823-90). The latter two were less well-known maskilim who tried their hand at writing comprehensive works on Jewish history, world history, and Russian history. The literary historian David Roskies has asserted that the popular literature written by Dick in Yiddish could be categorized as a genre that lay between 'subversive' maskilic writing and traditional folk tales, so that it was also tolerated by non-maskilim. Dick took advantage of this fact in order to put across maskilic messages in the guise of piety. To his male and female readers, he offered wondrous and frightening tales from the past, such as *Der vunderlekhle geshikhte fun der ershter hatokhe vos unzere toyre hakdoyshc iz netak gevorn* (The Wondrous Tale of the First Translation of our Sacred Torah) or *Di shreklekhle geshikhte fun shabsc tsvi* (The Dreadful Story of Shabbetai T'sevi, 1864).¹⁴¹ Dick based his writings on a variety of historical material, which he found in the traditional chronicles as well as in German Jewish literature translated by maskilim into Hebrew. He introduced fascinating adventures and tales of love into his stories, as well as some ideas characteristic of the maskilic sense of the past.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ On Mapu's translation into Yiddish, see Werses, *Yiddish Translations of 'Ahasrat tsyyon'*.

¹⁴⁰ Erik, *The History of Yiddish Literature*, 373-91. *Yeven metsulah* described the massacres of 1648-9, carried out by the Ukrainian Cossacks under Bogdan Chmielnicki.

¹⁴¹ Dick, *Hadrat zekenim*.

¹⁴² Roskies, 'Isaac Meyer Dick', 7-47, 145-6, 157-61. Cf. Miron, *The Traveler Discovered*, 252-3; Sadan, introd. to I. M. Dick, *R. Shemayah*, 7-15; Werses, *Haskalah and Shabbateanism*, 143-5.

Dick adapted a historical chapter entitled *Der aryojsgetribener un bald tsurik-gerufener jaysef* (Joseph—Expelled and Immediately Called to Return, 1877). The story tells of the Jews in England during the Crusades and the dreadful fate of the Jews of York in 1190. According to the story, when Richard the Lionheart was absent from England, the Crusaders were able to attack the Jews with impunity, since it was the monarchy that protected the Jews and the mob could only molest them when the king was absent. These and other events were portrayed as belonging to a past with no parallels in the modern world. Most of his story on the St Bartholomew's Day massacre of 1572 (*Di blat hokhsayt fun pariz*, 1870) is devoted to detailed historical information: Dick explained the significance of the Reformation and the course of events from the time of Luther, through the Calvinists, the Huguenots in France, and the St Bartholomew's Day massacre, ending with the Thirty Years War. Dick thought this an especially important story, of great benefit to the Jewish reader. The story of Luther could demonstrate the great potential inherent in a poor young boy who had the power to challenge enormous forces such as the Pope and the Catholic Church. The significance of the Reformation for the Jews lay in the fact that it had weakened the Church and thus lessened the pressure on them. In his view, the Reformation had diminished religious fanaticism and contributed to an expansion of trade, science, and wisdom in Europe. Dick also employed the story of the Reformation to explain the phenomenon of religious sects in Christianity and in Judaism, during the Second Temple period as well as in the present.¹⁴³ In this way, he not only tried to spread historical knowledge but also attempted to encourage elementary historical thinking. He helped his readers to understand the socio-cultural reality of their time in general abstract terms as a historical phenomenon, with analogies in both the Jewish and the non-Jewish past.

In his popular works Dick waged a maskilic struggle against superstition, the fear of ghosts and devils, and the mystical conception of reality. In *Di shreklekh geshikhte fun shabse tsvi* he continued the maskilic strategy of denouncing false messiahs and their followers and emphasized that Shabbetai Tsevi had misled the masses just as all charlatans manipulate the ignorant.¹⁴⁴ Dick's maskilic reformist aims and his attempt to shape a popular maskilic consciousness were even more pointedly expressed in his rhyming introduction to the collection of stories *Alte idische sagen* (Old Jewish Sayings, 1876). Ostensibly longing nostalgically for the past, Dick characterized the pre-modern era as one of miracles and wonders, and as a world of magic, miracle-workers, and belief in wonder-working *tsadikim*. Unfortunately, Dick mockingly observed, this age of devils and spirits, reincarnation, and supernatural miracles was one that belonged exclusively to the past, to the 'old world'. In the new era, the age of Enlightenment, people were subject to the laws of nature and had their feet firmly planted on the ground.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Dick, *Di blat hokhsayt fun pariz*.

¹⁴⁴ Dick, *Alte idische sagen*, 4.

¹⁴⁵ Werses, *Haskalah and Shabbateanism*, 143-5.

Awareness of recent historical change, the presence of a 'modern era', the identification of the present with the Enlightenment and rational maskilic values, realism and negation of the imagination and the supernatural world were all new concepts which Dick tried to adapt from the intellectual sphere of the maskil in order to make them comprehensible and acceptable to the world of the Jewish woman and the community at large. The historical story in Yiddish was one of the literary means of disseminating the maskilic sense of the past on the lowest level to the broadest stratum of the Jewish population in the Russia of Alexander II.

*

In 1864 Samuel Resser, who was born in Vilna and lived in southern Russia, where he taught in a government school, wrote to the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews asking for financial support to translate history books into Yiddish.¹⁴⁶ Resser was already able to show the society his first book: a translation from Russian into German, in Hebrew characters, of a book of universal history, which he called *Eine kurze allgemeine Weltgeschichte* (A Short General History of the World, 1863).¹⁴⁷ He wrote his history books for a specific audience of uneducated Jews and young people who knew no foreign languages, for whom history had hitherto been a neglected and unknown field.

The book had more than 230 pages and in an informative, rather tedious exposition surveyed the history of the world from the Creation and the beginnings of civilization until 1821. Chapter titles appeared in Russian too, and various concepts and names in the body of the text were translated into Russian or Hebrew. Resser appended a 'Calendar of Olden Times', organized according to the well-known four-part periodization: *die alte Geschichte* (Ancient History) up to the fall of the western Roman empire; *die mittelere Geschichte* (History of the Middle Ages) up to the discovery of America; *die neue Geschichte* (New History) up to the French Revolution; and *die neuerer Geschichte* (Modern History) up to the Greek War of Independence of 1821 (apparently the final year covered in the Russian book which he used for his translation). Although it contains almost no interpretative comments or historical explanations the book is clearly maskilic in character. It ends with a chapter that could stand alone, a survey of the progress of enlightenment in the modern era.¹⁴⁸ The emphasis in this chapter is on literary works, the development of science, changes in industry, and various inventions as the pre-eminent and beneficial aspects of the period.

The Jews were not integrated into Resser's universal history; Jewish history

¹⁴⁶ L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hecrat marbei haskalah*, ii. 42. On Resser, see *Leksikon fun der najer yidisher literatur*, viii. 515-16.

¹⁴⁷ It received a favourable and encouraging review by Gottlob, 'Et lata at', *Hamelits*, 5 (1865), no. 12. On the discussion among the maskilim concerning the relative merits of Yiddish and German, see Shmeruk, *Yiddish Literature*, 261-93. On the Resser, see Shatzky, *Kultur geschichte*, 105-6.

¹⁴⁸ Resser, *Kurtze allgemeine Weltgeschichte*, 219-21.

occupied a separate place in his plans, and he produced another book, *Koroys yisra'el: di alte geshikhte funem folk yisrael* (Jewish History). The manuscript of the first part of this book—written this time, he said, in *prost yidish* (the Yiddish of the masses), and not in German transliterated into Hebrew, in order to expand its circle of readers—was sent in 1867 to the Society for the Promotion of Culture among the Jews, which decided to give Resser the minuscule sum of 25 roubles to help cover printing costs. The money, however, was insufficient, and the book, completed in 1866, was not published until 1869, in Vilna.¹⁴⁹ The approbations of the book reflected the maskilim's uneasy feelings about a book written in Yiddish. However, everyone, including the author, agreed that 'the language of the inarticulate' had to be used if the maskilim wanted to reach the masses. Abraham Margaliof wrote to Resser: 'I was very happy to see that you succeeded in improving the masses in their mother tongue . . . the Ashkenazi Jewish language, and you did not fall short of the target.' Why was a knowledge of Jewish history considered important for the ordinary Jew? Margaliof's reasons were similar in spirit to those used to justify historical stories: tales of antiquity would 'stir sacred feelings and love for their homeland' in the hearts of the Jews, arousing nostalgia for ancient times. Stories about the period of exile would intensify the Jews' memory of suffering and persecution and further sharpen their awareness of the great contrast between the past and the present. Readers would be convinced that Jewish life in Russia was preferable, and would understand 'that such is not the case in our land, the land of imperial Russia, in which the Jew can own property . . . and our great government does not strictly enforce the laws against us as do governments of other countries'.¹⁵⁰ In his introduction Resser specifically stated that he was impelled to write *Koroys yisrael* in Yiddish by a desire to disseminate knowledge of the past and, in particular, to cultivate an awareness of the spirit of the time among uneducated Jews, 'so that the simple folk who understand neither Hebrew nor other languages will know something about history'.¹⁵¹

*

Resser also planned to publish a Yiddish translation of Russian history, but another maskil anticipated him. In 1869 Mikhel Gordon's Yiddish book *Die geshikhte fun rusland* (The History of Russia) was published in Zhitomir. Gordon, the brother of Rabbi Israel Gordon of Vilna, belonged to the circle of moderate maskilim in that city and earned his livelihood as a private tutor. His numerous articles were published in Hebrew and Yiddish journals, and he also wrote textbooks, poetry, and translations.¹⁵² *Di geshikhte fun rusland* was another book

¹⁴⁹ See L. Rosenthal, *Toledot he'evrat marhei haskalah*, ii, 43.

¹⁵⁰ Approbations by Gottlob and Margaliof in Resser, *Koroys yisrael*.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, intro.
¹⁵² M. Gordon, *Di geshikhte fun rusland*. On M. Gordon, see L. Rosenthal, *Toledot he'evrat marhei haskalah*, i, 64; *Leksikon fun der nayter yidisher literatur*, iii-iv, 129-34; M. Pines, *Histoire de la littérature*, 74; Reizen, *Lexicon*, 510-18.

intended to inform readers about the history of the homeland, although Gordon attempted to recount it in the form of tales that would appeal to the simple folk. Gordon's aim was to cover Russian history from its beginnings to the present, an aim that was only partly achieved. The book began with the Slavic tribes and myths about the founding of Slavic countries and the beginnings of 'true history' in the ninth century AD, and continued up to the era of Tsar Michael Romanov in the seventeenth century.

Perhaps Mikhel Gordon was more aware than any other maskil who wrote popular history of the role played by the translator into popular Yiddish. His book had two introductions, one in Hebrew for the circle of maskilim to which he belonged, and the other for readers of Yiddish. In the first introduction he apologized to the maskilim who might wish to ridicule him for choosing to write in Yiddish and attempted to explain his maskilic attitudes. 'Historical tales', in his view, allowed for a great deal of manipulation, since the writer could do what he wished with them; in his hands, they were 'like a rubber cord that can contract or hold the tales of a whole year on one sheet of paper, or can expand, stretching one story over a hundred sheets of paper'.¹⁵³ Even before putting pen to paper, the writer of history selected his ideological goals and his target audience, and constructed his book accordingly. That was why, he explained, history books differed from one another, even though the events of the past could not be altered. Gordon was thus making the rather modern assumption that a historical tale changes in accordance with the writer's inclinations and his intended audience. He introduced his book as a new and original work because it was written 'according to the level of the readers for whom I laboured', and because of the maskilic messages it contained. The book's readers would be poor people who had no general education or knowledge of foreign languages, and were completely unfamiliar with universal history and biography. This reading public had difficulty exerting its mental powers, seeking only to derive pleasure from its reading. The writer who was aware of this had to reach out to the developed imagination and strong emotions of his readers, not to their dormant intellect. Gordon writes,

I caught the reader's heart by collecting pleasant and diverting stories that would please and amuse him, and I sometimes lengthened a pleasant story and shortened an uninteresting one . . . even though the second was important and the first irrelevant. I skipped over and omitted many names and events that were not pleasing and were not relevant, for I did not want the reader to tire of them, and to dislike the story and the book, and put it down.¹⁵⁴

As a writer of popular history, Gordon was thus willing to sacrifice much of 'history' in order to appeal to the readers of his book, and he scrupulously defined his task:

¹⁵³ M. Gordon, *Di geshikhte fun rusland*, i.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

I have done this work for the simple folk, and therefore I was careful to make their labour simple. I called it 'simple' because the French call this labour *populaire*, since the simple folk are called the 'populace' and many of the wise men of other nations write books to teach wisdom and science to the 'populace', and they are called popular books. These wise men knew how to be very careful to speak to the people in their own tongue and in their own way, and their work was popular, that is to say, all the simple people could understand it.¹⁵⁵

Gordon criticized Hebrew historical novels and romances, which were also intended for the masses, claiming that the writers of such history had erred and failed, because they 'did not observe the laws of popular writing'. Such history books could be read only by maskilim and remained unfathomable to the masses. 'For whom, therefore, did these wise men of our people labour and toil', he asked, 'and who in the world was made better by their labours?'¹⁵⁶

Why did he choose to write history, of all things? In this, Gordon was an exponent of the maskilic view that historical knowledge had the power 'to enlighten man and improve his mind much more than any of the other *hokhmot* or sciences'.¹⁵⁷ However, he cited another reason related to his target audience: the poor were still at the pre-modern stage of development, their minds bound by 'Asiatic stupidity'. History would serve as a means of education that would persuade them to break away from the Asiatic mentality and draw closer to the European world of the modern era, as had the Russian and the European poor.¹⁵⁸

In his Yiddish introduction, however, Gordon naturally did not reveal his maskilic guidelines. Instead, he attempted to cajole the reader into recognizing the importance of historical knowledge and to guide him towards reaching the right conclusions from the book. Familiarity with the course of universal and Jewish history, in his opinion, should arouse in his readers a sense of gratitude for their present situation. Gordon described Jewish history in the old pre-partition Poland-Lithuania as a series of decrees against Jews and deprivation of their rights, a time when they were forced into non-productive professions and given an inferior level of education and culture. He did not blame the Polish and Lithuanian peoples for this, but rather the religious fanaticism of the Church and the Jesuits. The Russian occupation of Poland (1772-95) totally altered Jewish destiny. Religious tolerance and the desire to turn the Jews into productive inhabitants of the country were the guiding principles of the Russian government's policy. A comparison of the Jewish past with its present under Russian control was therefore the main maskilic message of Gordon's history book, and its major objective was to weaken the Jews' fear and loathing of Russia's Jewish policy: 'First of all, you must thank the Creator for redemption and salvation, and then you must thank and bless the good Russian government and the Russian people for the perfect peace you enjoy in this country'.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ M. Gordon, *Di geshkhte fun rusland*, 2.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. iii.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

The religious concepts Gordon used also suited his target population and gave his arguments religious legitimization. The entire course of history was ascribed to the Almighty. The sufferings of the past were described as punishment for the transgressions of the Jews, and the Christians did not bear sole responsibility for them. In general, it was advisable to forget the harsh past in order not to violate the biblical commandment 'You shall not avenge nor bear any grudge'. Accounts of the era of persecution, Gordon emphasized, were not meant to inspire hatred, but were to be used as the criterion for appraising the present situation and to draw closer in friendship to Russia and its people.¹⁶⁰

We cannot know the impact the book had on the masses of the Jewish people Gordon was addressing. Perhaps the fact that the book was not highly publicized and was only printed once speaks for itself. Gordon did not complete his plans, although, like Dick and Resser, he provides an example of the maskilim's deliberate attempts to disseminate maskilic concepts of the past among the common people.

KALMAN SCHULMAN: THE FIRST PROFESSIONAL POPULARIZER

The most prolific popularizer of universal and Jewish history during the reign of Alexander II was undoubtedly Kalman Schulman, a moderate maskil from Vilna. In his modest apartment on Little Stephan Lane, in Vilna, Schulman wrote, adapted, and translated almost thirty books and many more articles, at his own initiative as well as under the aegis of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews. These were all written in Hebrew, which Schulman believed ought to be diligently preserved and fostered. The Romm Press in Vilna printed most of his works, which sold well and came out in a number of editions. Schulman, who until the 1860s had earned his living by teaching Hebrew in the secondary school attached to the rabbinic seminary, was able to devote all his time to his literary pursuits and to earn his livelihood as a professional author thanks to his contacts with the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews. Schulman belonged to the Vilna circle of moderate maskilim, and his age, religious education at the Volozhin yeshiva, cultural baggage, traditional dress, religious lifestyle, and maskilic outlook made him a typical member of this circle, which included Samuel Fuenn and Mordecai Plungian. Schulman attended services at the maskilic synagogue, 'Taharat Kodesh', and corresponded with many maskilim throughout Russia.¹⁶¹

Thousands of copies of Schulman's books were sold. The secret of his success was unquestionably the fact that he did not address his books to the relatively limited circle of maskilim but managed to appeal to a wide readership. Thanks to his strongly religious approach, which was not merely a device to win the reader's

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁶¹ Posner, 'Rabbi Kalman Schulman'; Zaitron, *The Makers*, i, 143-66; Friedman, *Sefer ha-zikaronot*, 181-5; J. Klausner, *History of Modern Hebrew Literature*, iii, 361-88.

heart but a basic element of his maskilic outlook, expressed in all his writings, his books also found their way on to the bookshelves of non-maskilic homes. The prominent Jewish thinker Ahad Ha'am (1856–1927), for example, wrote in his memoirs that only Kalman Schulman's books had succeeded in getting past the stringent censorship imposed by his hasidic father on the books his son was permitted to read.¹⁶² Schulman, it seems, stretched his Haskalah to its religious extreme, but still remained a maskil. He found his ideal in Naphtali Herz Wessely and identified with his moderate approach: 'The light of Torah, enlightenment, and pure devotion to the Lord all merged in his soul . . . like all true lovers of the faith of Israel, he knew that the Torah and wisdom are sisters and their Father is one and the same.'¹⁶³

Like other popularizers, Schulman also regarded history as an excellent medium for educating the Jews.¹⁶⁴ His main aim was to fill the great void in Hebrew literature, which in his opinion lacked 'two areas of knowledge that are of the greatest importance to all wisdom and science, namely a knowledge of world history and geography'.¹⁶⁵ As will be seen, Schulman did succeed in fulfilling this task, particularly in his comprehensive nine-volume work *Dvarei yemai olam* (World History), which opened a window on the vista of history for many Hebrew readers. The young Joseph Klausner (1874–1958), who later became the national historian of the Second Temple period and an expert on modern Hebrew literature, read Schulman's translation of Josephus' *Wars of the Jews* when he was about 12. According to his own testimony, it gave him 'the first impulse to a love of and addition to the Second Temple period'.¹⁶⁶ The historian Simon Dubnow (1860–1941) recalled that Schulman's *Shulamit*, a book about travels in Palestine, was one of the first secular books he read, at the age of 10 while still a pupil at *heder*. 'With delight I read and reread the lyrical descriptions, written in the flowery language of the Holy Scriptures', Dubnow recalled nostalgically. On one hand, he was interested in reading the historical stories and geographical descriptions of places familiar to him from the Bible, and on the other, he indirectly learned about later historical events. 'I was especially fascinated', Dubnow wrote, 'by the historical descriptions of the East after the period at which [Josephus] Flavius' book ends. I learned about the Crusades, Arab and Turkish rule . . . In retrospect, as a mature and professional historian, Dubnow did criticize Schulman's romantic approach, but he did not deny that in his youth that same 'naive book . . . about the past glory that turned into a wilderness . . . captivated my tender heart!'¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² Ahad Ha'am, *Prakei zikhronot*, 45.

¹⁶³ Schulman, 'Toledot harav nafiali herts veseli', 1.

¹⁶⁴ Schulman, Letter to Gurland, in Schulman, 'Mikhtavim', 411.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 412.

¹⁶⁶ J. Klausner, *History of Modern Hebrew Literature*, ii, 384; Zitron, *The Makers*, 159; Nisanboim, *In my Lifetime*, 20.

¹⁶⁷ Dubnow, *Sefer hahayyim*, 46–7. More reactions to Schulman appear in J. Klausner, *History of Modern Hebrew Literature*, iii, 379–80. See also testimony by Werses: 'Even in my grandfather's home, in which there was a mixture typical of the moderate Vilna mode of enlightenment—Torah, Haskalah, and devoutness—I found in his bookcase the autobiography *Art ezter and Dvarei yemai olam*! Werses, 'Highways and Byways', 8.

Shulamit and Schulman's other books on Palestine were written for young readers, in particular pupils in *heder* and yeshiva, to acquaint them with events that had taken place in the Holy Land.¹⁶⁸ The five books on Palestine that he published between 1854 and 1870 included extensive historical and geographical information, as well as a survey of conditions there in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁶⁹ Schulman collected the material from travel and research books, in many cases also expanding its scope to include the general history of the East (Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia). He contributed to the rediscovery of Palestine in the nineteenth century by imparting some of this information to Hebrew readers in eastern Europe. In doing so, Schulman laid the foundation for the study of Palestine and its historical past, which later served as an important element in the consciousness and ideology of the nationalist Zionist movement. However, despite later attempts to draw him into the modern Jewish nationalist movement, he illuminated the past of the Holy Land in a different spirit and with different objectives in mind.

What were the aims underlying Schulman's books on Palestine and what did he hope to instil in the young reader in Russia by providing him with a knowledge of its past? His treatment of Palestine linked it to three focal points: scientific archaeological research, the sanctity of the land, and its antiquity, which evoked romantic emotions. The first aspect perceived the past of the Holy Land and the past of the ancient East in general, which in the nineteenth century were being uncovered by archaeological excavations, as one more example of the importance of historical knowledge. This knowledge expanded the boundaries of human wisdom and also contained 'profound moral lessons and sage counsel'.¹⁷⁰ 'In such a wise generation', Schulman asserted, 'all those uncovering the ancient past have added accumulation of knowledge to all that existed before them'. The archaeologists were wisdom and knowledge to all that existed before them'. The archaeologists were carrying the 'torches of the light of research', 'digging under the soil of ruined lands, in felled forests, between the crumbling walls of abandoned palaces, and in the dark rooms of decaying temples and wrecked castles . . . they have removed from the very depths of the underworld their dearest friend: wisdom'; it was scientific reason that enabled men to use these findings in order to reconstruct a more complete historical picture.¹⁷¹

For the Jews, the past of the Holy Land which was being uncovered carried a special meaning. Schulman believed that Jews were obliged not only to appreciate the achievement of scientific progress but also to recall the religious significance of Palestine. On one hand, the historical and geographical past of the country could help clarify the language and content of the Bible, and on the other, Jews should cherish the memory of the land and learn about the ideal Jewish past. 'Oh, who is the man whose heart has been touched by the love of God, and the love of His

¹⁶⁸ Schulman, *Halikhhot kedem*, 3.

¹⁶⁹ Schulman, *Harek; Shulamit; Sefer ariel; Shevitei erets hakedoshah*. See also T. Cohen, *From Dream to Reality*, 230–55.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. 8–9, 113–25.

Torah and His people?', Schulman asked, in the spirit of the moderate Haskalah, 'and does not long to know of the events of those happy days? [And of] the history of the people of the God of Abraham in those sacred times? . . . how I would love to walk in those places where God was revealed to your prophets and your visionaries.'¹⁷²

For Schulman, beyond the findings of scientific research and its religious implications, Palestine was the stage for a romantic historical spectacle that deeply affected the mind and emotions of the Jew. Here the scholarly, rationalistic, and moralistic significance of history was relegated to the sidelines, supplanted by the moving experience of the Jew observing the past with a sense of the glory of the ancient world. This was not an intellectual observation of the kind to be found even in Mapu's historical novels; it was clearly a romantic view that elevated the spirit of the beholder, and not necessarily a source of philosophy or moral lessons. It was the antiquity of the biblical past that was the source of its influence. In Schulman's view, a traveller in the ancient world of Palestine could experience a spiritual uplifting that actually transcended physicality: 'Whose heart will not be overflowing with thousands of lofty ideas when he conjures in his mind's eye life in his precious land . . . exalted majesty enfolds it all day long . . . awe-inspiring grandeur of antiquity envelops it for eternity.'¹⁷³ Archaeologists, too, in Schulman's view, were motivated by this fierce passion to uncover the roots of the ancient past. Antiquity had a stirring effect on the mind: 'For something which is very ancient will engage our thoughts with the memory of its splendour and will excite our minds with the power of its grandeur.'¹⁷⁴

In this way, Palestine blended modern scientific research, religious sanctity, and antiquity in its past. One could look back with nostalgia at the antiquity of Palestine, and the study of its history uplifted the spirit of the Jews, stirred their emotions, and strengthened their identification with their ancient past.

Schulman was the first to undertake the task of translating Josephus' writings into Hebrew, and in his eyes this endeavour also formed part of the redemption of the age-old remains of the past of the Holy Land. When in 1864 he applied to the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews for financial support for this project, Schulman stressed the importance of Josephus' books, as 'vestiges of sacred stones which in days gone by shone on the holy ground, and lit the way for all the sages of the globe throughout the generations, and in their light will walk all those delving into the ancient history of our people'.¹⁷⁵

In 1854, in his *Halikhot kedem* (Ancient Customs), Schulman wrote about the Second Temple period and what he regarded as the major historical dilemma of that period: how to judge the Zealots who had rebelled against the Roman empire. 'Who can we blame for the destruction of the Temple', Schulman asked, 'the Romans or the vile rebels?'¹⁷⁶ We ought not to forget, he reminded his readers, that the Romans in the first century BC were different from the peoples living in

¹⁷² Schulman, *Halikhot kedem*, 11.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

¹⁷⁵ L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hevat marbet haskalah*, ii, 31.

¹⁷⁶ Schulman, 'Divrei yemei yerushalayim', in *id.*, *Halikhot kedem*, 61 n.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁷⁸ Ben-Ami, 'Kaiman Schulman', 123.
¹⁷⁹ In Jan. 1859 Gordon told Schulman that Ze'ev Kaplan had also begun to translate this work. Schulman, who did not want to compete with him, was alarmed, but was prepared to accept the fact that there would be two translations. In the end only Schulman's was published; Schulman, 'Fesor igerot', 539.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 541.

the nineteenth century, since they had no knowledge of monotheistic faith nor of the Enlightenment and humanism. Their ruthless behaviour was understandable against this historical background, but what was less understandable was the emergence of cruel fanatics and murderers from the midst of the Jewish people. Schulman had no compunction about blaming the Zealots for the destruction of the Temple and harshly rebuked them for not heeding the sages. In particular, Schulman denied the legitimacy of any revolt against the ruling authority: 'Anyone rebelling against his king is also rebelling against God who has enthroned him . . . kingship of the land is likened to the kingship of heaven, and he who lifts a hand against the throne of the king shall be reckoned as one who attacks the throne of the Lord.'¹⁷⁷

When Schulman next addressed his fundamental dilemma, it was in his adaptation of *Harisot beitar* as a historical tale; as already mentioned, it dealt with the second-century Bar Kokhba revolt. This time he depicted the historical events in a more balanced manner, including arguments both for and against rebellion, and emphasizing the heroism of the Jewish rebels and their leader. Nonetheless, there was no change in Schulman's maskilic message; he believed these tragedies of the first centuries AD and thereafter actually attested to the Jews' duty to remain loyal to the government under all circumstances. In conversation with a friend, Schulman insisted that it was not censorship considerations that led him to express a negative attitude towards rebellion but rather his inner conviction.¹⁷⁸ His firm belief in loyalty to the ruling government and in its legitimacy, a belief supported by the moderate Haskalah, inspired him with an affinity for the character and fate of Josephus. This is why, in translating his writings, Schulman introduced an apologetic strain, with the aim of clearing the name of this Jewish historian and justifying him to all those who had labelled him a traitor to his people.

The first book of Josephus which Schulman translated (from a German translation) was *Toledot yosef* ('The Life of Josephus'), which came out in Vilna in 1859.¹⁷⁹ In a letter to J. L. Gordon, Schulman wrote that he had composed an introduction in which he vindicated Josephus, countering the unfavourable portrait sketched by other historians, such as Jost and Graetz. This introduction, however, was so long and costly to print that it was ultimately omitted from the book.¹⁸⁰ In its stead Schulman appended historical and geographical notes to the translation, giving the book the appearance of a scholarly study, and included a short introduction explaining the importance of Josephus' writings. Schulman believed that Josephus had possessed ideal attributes that justified his promotion to the status of a Jewish hero in the historical pantheon. He compared him to the prophet

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁷⁸ Ben-Ami, 'Kaiman Schulman', 123.
¹⁷⁹ In Jan. 1859 Gordon told Schulman that Ze'ev Kaplan had also begun to translate this work. Schulman, who did not want to compete with him, was alarmed, but was prepared to accept the fact that there would be two translations. In the end only Schulman's was published; Schulman, 'Fesor igerot', 539.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 541.

Jeremiah, who had warned of present and future evil, and enumerated his virtues: he was beloved by his people, concerned about their fate, and acted for their benefit; he was an excellent writer and historian; he had been acquainted with contemporary sages and he was possessed of a valiant spirit, which he demonstrated in the Galilean War. In addition, Josephus' books had already been translated into many languages, and it was inconceivable that such an important historical source should remain inaccessible to the Hebrew reader.¹⁸¹

Immediately after the publication of this book, *Hakarmel* published a biography of Josephus written by Schulman, apparently taken from the unprinted introduction. In the biography Schulman underscored the superiority of the position Josephus had taken on the revolt against Rome and condemned the behaviour of the fanatic 'Jewish elite'. Nonetheless, Schulman lauded the battles in which Josephus fought in the Galilee. In his view, the Jotapata War was even more exalted than the Trojan War portrayed in Homer's epic, and merited inscription in the pages of universal history. It was only hostility towards the Jews that had caused this heroic conflict to be relegated to the sidelines of history.¹⁸²

In 1861 Schulman published a manifesto in which he declared that he had undertaken to translate all of Josephus' writings into Hebrew. He intended to publish them in serial form, producing four pamphlets a year, and was looking for agents to enlist subscribers in advance in order to finance the enterprise.¹⁸³ In 1862 the first part of his translation of *Milhamot hayehudim* (The Jewish Wars) appeared, and in 1863 the second and final sections were published. For the first time the Hebrew reader could read the principal historical source on the revolt against Rome, as if it were a fascinating historical novel. The approbation of Rabbi Abraham Simha of Mastislav also sanctioned the book for Lithuanian scholars. He linked his approbation to the Vilna Gaon's recommendation, reported by Barukh of Shklov, that the wisdom literature necessary for an understanding of the Scriptures should be translated into Hebrew, as well as to the specific request of Rabbi Hayim, the founder and head of the Volozhin yeshiva, who, according to Rabbi Simha, wished to see 'Josippon of the Romans' translated 'to enable us to understand the intentions of our great rabbis of blessed memory in the Talmud and the Midrashim'.¹⁸⁴

In his introduction to the book Schulman described Josephus as a hero who could have prevented the destruction: 'If the Jews had heeded his words, Titus would not have crushed the Jewish people and made its garden a desolate waste.' He justified Josephus' actions at Jotapata, contending that it was not cowardice that kept him from committing suicide as the other surviving soldiers did, but rather, 'it was because of the sacred hope that it would enable him to be a mighty sanctuary for the remnants of the Jewish people against the enemy'.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ Schulman, *Toledot yosef*, 3-5.

¹⁸² Schulman, 'Toledot yosef ben matit'yan', 79-80, 95-6.

¹⁸³ Schulman, 'Kol kore', *Hakarmel*, I (1861), 252 (announcement).

¹⁸⁴ Schulman, *Milhamot hayehudim*, II, 4-6.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* I, 3-4.

Schulman's abridged translation of *Kadmoniyot hayehudim* (Jewish Antiquities) appeared in 1864. He did not deem it necessary to translate the sections that covered the periods included in the Bible, so the book opens with the reign of Cyrus and ends with Herod. In the same year Schulman's translation project encountered financial difficulties; as noted above, he turned to the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews in St Petersburg, and with its aid *Kadmoniyot hayehudim* was printed.¹⁸⁶ The following year, when he considered his enterprise completed, Schulman proposed to the society that they issue all his books and translations dealing with the history of the Land of Israel, his translations of Josephus, and *Harivot beitar* as one comprehensive volume 'that would encompass the history of the ancient world'. This plan, however, was never carried out, and Schulman addressed himself to a new project initiated by the heads of the society: a translation of universal history into Hebrew.

Divrei yemei olam, which eventually consisted of nine volumes containing more than 2,000 pages of world history from antiquity up to the assassination attempt on Tsar Alexander II in 1881, was Schulman's greatest, most influential, and most widely distributed work.¹⁸⁷ It began with the society's decision in May 1864 to translate a two-volume Hebrew version of *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte* by Georg Weber (1808-88).¹⁸⁸ The heads of the committee offered the assignment to four maskilim, among them Schulman and Abraham Kaplan of Riga. The candidates were asked to send a number of translated pages to St Petersburg as a sample. Schulman and Kaplan responded positively to the proposal. Kaplan promised to finish the entire translation within a year if the society selected him, and Schulman replied that he did not possess a copy of the book, and therefore could not submit a sample translation. On the other hand, he promised that if he were chosen, 'the honourable members could rest assured that the translation would not fall short of the original in eloquence and grace of utterance and in all the virtues of language'.¹⁸⁹ In October 1864 Professor Chwolson decided to assign the task to Schulman, apparently because he had already proved his ability in his translations of Josephus, although Chwolson may also have been influenced by the fact that they knew each other from the time they had studied with Rabbi Israel Ginsburg in Vilna in the 1840s.¹⁹⁰

Schulman happily accepted the assignment; once again, he did not have to depend on subscribers enlisted in advance, and he could finance his book in accordance with his agreement with the society. He even enthusiastically suggested that the project be expanded to include Jewish history. It was clear that Schulman was not independent; the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews not only financed the translation and its printing, but it also directed Schulman's

¹⁸⁶ L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hecvrat marbet haskalah*, I, 4, II, 31, 113.

¹⁸⁷ Additional editions were published for nearly half a century, until the eve of the First World War.

¹⁸⁸ L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hecvrat marbet haskalah*, I, 7.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 7-8, II, 36-9, 42.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 37, 42. See also Friedman, *Sefer hazibbron*.

writing through Chwolson, who was appointed as the head of the project. In November 1864 Weber's books were sent to Schulman in Vilna, along with Chwolson's comments and a list of topics he was to translate. Schulman was obliged to send every chapter to St Petersburg immediately upon its completion.¹⁹¹ He reported to St Petersburg that he would begin work immediately: 'I have freed myself from all other work, and all day and night I write and translate only Weber's *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte*.'¹⁹² In accordance with his agreement with the society, Schulman consulted Chwolson throughout his work. For example, he sought his permission to omit Weber's introduction because of the linguistic difficulties it posed, and he asked to expand Weber's abridged discussion of ancient Palestine. When Schulman began to translate the section on the Middle Ages, he even asked Chwolson what exactly he was permitted to write about Jewish history. Would the society's directors agree, Schulman enquired, to descriptions of antisemitism and detailed accounts of the edicts issued against the Jews? Schulman ultimately committed himself to presenting those 'days of darkness' from two well-known maskilic vantage-points that would tone down the harsh impression: on one hand, he stressed the contrast between that era of fanaticism and barbarity and the modern era, in which the sun of wisdom and religious tolerance shone over Europe, and, on the other hand, he 'proved to those who scorn science that in ancient times the rabbinic leaders and the scholarly *geonim* were not only sages but also skilled philosophers and writers, prodigious interpreters and poets.'¹⁹³

In 1866 Schulman was nearing the end of his translation, and the committee began to consider its printing. Chwolson proposed that it be initially published in serial form as a special supplement to *Hakarnel*, and that after it was completed, 2,000 copies would be printed at the society's expense from the same print blocks. This proposal was apparently rejected, and the committee asked several printers for bids. The heads of the society's committee wanted the book to be distributed at a price that would not put off potential buyers. They therefore stipulated that the price of printing the book be low—no more than 2 kopecks per galley.¹⁹⁴ In January 1867 Schulman submitted the final chapters of his translation, which had taken more than two years to complete. He was invited to travel to St Petersburg so that agreement could be reached on the terms of printing.¹⁹⁵ For Schulman, the visit to the capital city was an exciting experience that heightened his sense of 'awe at the majesty' of the government, and stirred him to write about Russian history, culminating in a book he wrote in Hebrew on the city of St Petersburg and its history.¹⁹⁶ With regard to *Divrei yemei olam*, the committee decided to go over the translation, make revisions if necessary, and have it printed in three

¹⁹¹ L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hecvrat marbei haskalah*, ii, 47–9, 53.
¹⁹² *Ibid.* 53, 59–60, 120, 123.

¹⁹³ 'Report of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among Jews for 1865', 49; L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hecvrat marbei haskalah*, i, 12, 36.

¹⁹⁴ Schulman, 'Hamasa le'ir peterburg', 273–4. The reference is to Schulman's book *Kiryat melekh rav*.

volumes as soon as possible, at Schulman's expense. The society stipulated that high-quality paper and print be used, and gave instructions to print a minimum of 1,000 copies. Profits from the sale of the book would be Schulman's, but he had to promise that it would be sold at a low price. The society lent Schulman 300 roubles, paid directly to Romm Printers in Vilna, to cover printing costs, which he had to repay in three payments upon the publication of each of the three volumes.¹⁹⁷

When the first part of *Divrei yemei olam*, from the creation of the world to the destruction of Carthage, was published at the end of 1867, it was already clear that at least four volumes, not the three originally planned, would be necessary to print the entire manuscript. Schulman asked his young friend Jonah Gurland, a student in St Petersburg, to write a favourable review for the Hebrew journals in order to promote sales of the book, and he also lobbied to have it accepted as a school textbook.¹⁹⁸ Schulman asked the society to try and obtain a specific order from the Russian minister of education requiring schools to purchase the book. The Alliance Israélite Universelle, for example, sent Schulman a congratulatory letter signed by Adolph Cremieux, and ordered thirty-two copies for its schools in Asia and Africa.¹⁹⁹

The remaining parts of the book, covering the Middle Ages and the modern era up to 1852, continued to come out serially, one each year from 1868 to 1870, and sold quite well. 'The masses of our people rushed to get copies of this book,' Schulman boasted, 'as if . . . they were grapes in the desert and streams in the wilderness. A reliable indication of this is the fact that in but a few days all the copies were sold.'²⁰⁰ Indeed, in 1872 a second edition of the first two parts was published, and in 1874–5 the second edition of the next two parts came out. By October 1872, according to Schulman, the entire first edition had been sold.

Encouraged by this success, Schulman asked the society whether he could translate works on geography and Russian history. He also planned to publish a book surveying the history of the Haskalah, based on material that, owing to its wide scope, had not been included in the fourth part of *Divrei yemei olam*. At the same time, Schulman asked the society's permission to add new sections to *Divrei yemei olam* that would update recent history, from 1852, the last year covered by

¹⁹⁷ L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hecvrat marbei haskalah*, i, 44. Schulman haggled with the heads of the society, asking for 4 kopecks per folio sheet instead of the 2 kopecks the society offered. The society's board partly acceded to his demand, setting the price at 3 kopecks (*ibid.* 49). In the end Schulman did not repay the loan, and managed to convince the board that thirty sheets more than had been planned had been printed and that the sum of the loan was payment for these (*ibid.* 94).

¹⁹⁹ Schulman, letter to Gurland, 'Mikhravim', 410–11.

²⁰⁰ Schulman, *Toledot hecvrat marbei haskalah*, ii, 196 (Apr. 1868).

Schulman, letter to Gurland, 'Mikhravim', 411. The publication and success of the book had an unfortunate effect on another Hebrew writer, Eliezer Rashkov, who had also written a universal manuscript form (Manuscript Dept., National and University Library, Jerusalem, 30828). On Rashkov, see Fuenn, *Keneset yisra'el*, 141–2.

the fourth part, up to the 1870s. The society rejected his proposal and his efforts to influence J. L. Gordon, the society's secretary, were of no avail. He did not give up, however, and in 1875, without the society's official consent, he prepared the fifth part for publication. This section gave an account of contemporary European political and military history of the 1850s and 1860s.²⁰¹ The book itself was not printed until a year later, in June 1876, after a long delay at the censors.²⁰² Other parts, covering all contemporary history up to 1881, were printed in a similar fashion: Schulman prepared the books at his own initiative and each time received 100 roubles to help offset printing costs. Owing to both financial problems and censorship delays, this process was a great deal slower than at the first stage, when the initial four volumes were printed, and the sixth to ninth volumes came out in 1879, 1880, 1882, and 1884.²⁰³ Although the final five parts of *Divrei yemei olam* thus encompassed a brief period, 1852–81, these books enabled Jewish readers to grasp the intricacies of the international relationships of their time. The readers of Schulman's books learned, among other things, about the American Civil War, the unification of Germany, the Polish Revolt, the Crimean War, and the rise of Louis Napoleon to power in France. In the sixth part Schulman again moved to Asia, describing European colonialism as a beneficial policy intended to save the East and deliver it from its ignorance, and the seventh part was devoted to a detailed description of the war between Russia and Turkey.²⁰⁴

Weber's universal history book *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte*, selected by the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews to be translated into Hebrew, was one of the most popular works of its kind in Germany and throughout Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century, just as Pöhlitz's books had been in the first half. Weber, who had received doctorates in philosophy and theology from the University of Heidelberg and was a student and admirer of Schlosser, wrote history for three readerships: scholars, school pupils, and the general public. His great project *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte*, which comprised fifteen volumes, was published between 1857 and 1881 and was supplemented by another four volumes of updated information. Before embarking on this comprehensive enterprise, Weber published two shorter, very popular books: *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte*, a textbook in two volumes, twenty editions of which were published from 1846 until Weber's death; and an abridged, single-volume universal history, which was also widely distributed, and passed through a similar number of edi-

²⁰¹ L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hevat marbei haskalah*, i. 91, 123; Schulman, *Mosdot erets*, i. 3–4; Schulman, *Divrei yemei olam*, iv. 22–4; Schulman, 'Tserot igerot' (Sept. 1872), 542–3.

²⁰² Schulman, 'Tserot igerot' (Jan. 1876), 545; (June 1876), 546. The sensitive nature of the political history covered in this part apparently lay behind the long delay at the censor's.

²⁰³ L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hevat marbei haskalah*, i. 141, 155, 184; Schulman, 'Tserot igerot', 550–1.

²⁰⁴ Additional edns. of *Divrei yemei olam*: vol. i (1880, 1912); vol. ii (1874, 1884, 1886, 1911); vol. iii (1911, 1914); vol. iv (1875, 1912); vol. v (1879, 1887, 1912); vol. vi (1912); vol. vii (1911, 1914); vol. viii (1912); vol. ix (1914).

tions between 1851 and 1889. Schulman possessed all the volumes of Weber's large, comprehensive history that had been published up to 1864, as well as the two volumes of the *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte*. He translated the *Lehrbuch* into Hebrew, with the assistance of the larger work and other books, particularly the final volumes of the *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte*.²⁰⁵

Weber perceived universal history as a mirror that reflected all historical knowledge that existed at the time of its writing, and he therefore undertook to include in his book everything that had been uncovered by the new scientific research flourishing in Germany's universities.²⁰⁶ On the other hand, he was careful to make a distinction between his scholarly, professional, and popular works, in contrast to Leopold Ranke, for example, whose studies were published in Germany at the same time. Weber stressed that he did not consider Ranke a rival, for each had different goals. While Ranke wrote for the professional historian, Weber endeavoured to make his books as popular as possible, and render them accessible to the educated classes—objectives similar to those that Pöhlitz had set himself at the beginning of the century. Weber attempted to cover all periods and the achievements, events, religious beliefs, ideas, cultures, and political and economic developments of all nations. In the manner of every nineteenth-century liberal and idealist, he regarded history as the stage for the struggle of the spiritual to dominate the material, and the story of the victory of liberty and equality in society—ideals which the maskilim found very easy to accept and identify with. In addition to writing history, Weber was active in the field of education and had clearly didactic aims. Carrying on Enlightenment concepts from the eighteenth century, he believed that history would supply examples of virtuousness and help teach young people to be moral and to shun evil and corruption. Like Pöhlitz, Weber combined liberalism and cosmopolitanism with German nationalism, and he added devotion to the Fatherland to the fundamental values of humanism and liberty. In his opinion, Germany deserved a central place in universal history because it had exerted great influence on other peoples in many periods. Germany's centrality in Europe, the Germans' aspiration to universal education, and their cosmopolitanism, Weber wrote in 1864, rendered the German historian particularly well qualified to write universal history. In Schulman's translation and adaptation, however, all allusions to Weber's Germanocentricity were expunged.²⁰⁷

Schulman did not translate Weber's introduction, in which the German historian elucidated his historical approach and outlined the structure of universal history, for, as noted above, he found it difficult to translate the terminology into Hebrew

²⁰⁵ L. Rosenthal, *Toledot hevat marbei haskalah*, ii. 53. Another work he used was Karl Becker's popular textbook *Weltgeschichte für Kinder und Kinderlehrer*. The two parts of Weber's textbook are nearly the same size (about 2,300 pages) as Schulman's book (2,150 pages).

²⁰⁶ Weber, introd., *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte*, 7; Weber, introd., *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte*, 30.

²⁰⁷ Weber, *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte*, 8–10, 11–14.

The introductions to the various volumes were therefore all written by Schulman himself, and expressed his own views of history.

According to its subtitle, 'The History of Man and the Events that have Occurred in all the Nations of the World throughout all Time, the History of Wisdom, Sciences, and Industry', *Divrei yemei olam* was intended to encompass universal political, economic, and cultural history; in addition, it would contain 'the history of the Jewish people from the time of the Hasmonians up to the present, the history of the great men of Israel, renowned figures of all the generations, and the history of the Haskalah in Israel from the time of Rabbi Moses ben Menahem Mendelssohn, of blessed memory, up to the present'. However, these last two subjects were not actually included in *Divrei yemei olam*. No history of the Haskalah was written, and the history of the great men of Israel was the subject of another book. Only parts of Jewish history were covered and the more ancient periods in particular were left out altogether.²⁰⁸ Most of the book, therefore, remained in the realm of universal history, where the Hebrew reader encountered the culture and rulers of classical Greece, learned about the development of religions, the greatness of the Roman empire, feudalism and the Crusades, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and many other episodes. Schulman's dramatic and colourful style transformed historical events into stories brimming with adventures, wars, revolts, slaughter, acts of cruelty, and struggles for justice and liberty. The plethora of exclamation marks in the book made for lively reading and, as Schulman had intended, it aroused his readers' awe and excitement.

In the book's general introduction Schulman recapitulated the Haskalah's familiar justification for the study of history and the importance of historical knowledge: 'True history teaches and instructs us how to improve our ways so we may walk the right path of life'; 'This knowledge is the source of life for the spirit of man'; the Torah itself commanded us to remember historical events; and history reflected the hand of Providence that directed the world.²⁰⁹ History stimulated the spirit and engendered the fear of God, and taught about the momentous transition that had occurred in the modern era. Weber himself did not deny that Providence was a dominant factor in history, but stressed that the historian was not qualified to study the ways of God. He saw history as an arena of action open to man's free will. In Schulman's introduction Providence played a much more central role in history, although he changed nothing in the general section entitled 'The Theory of History', translated from Weber, which claimed, as did the original, that the destiny of nations and people was determined by moral behaviour, patriotism, and other human factors. This section also asserted that the function of the historian was to study, criticize, and create a total picture of the history of man, with the assistance of geography and chronology.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Schulman, *Divrei yemei olam*, i. 228-47 (the Hasmonean revolt), ii. 40-84 (the Bar Kokhba revolt). Weber devoted only two pages to the topic: *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte*, i. 438-9.

²⁰⁹ Schulman, *Divrei yemei olam*, i. 3-9.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.* 16-19.

Weber's periodization of universal history divided it into the four periods characteristic of earlier writings: the ancient world, marked by despotism, republics, and paganism; the Middle Ages, in which 'a cloud of death lay upon the countries of Europe', the aristocracy oppressed the lower classes, and the Pope subjugated them all; 'the modern era', which began with the Reformation and the discovery of America, 'when the sun of wisdom broke through and dispersed the darkness of folly from Europe'; and finally, 'the newest age', depicted as the ideal realization of Enlightenment ideas, 'when every desire and every aspiration is to deliver the same just laws to members of the various faiths, to mete out eternal justice under all the heavens'.²¹¹ However, a more precise comparison between the structure of Weber's book and Schulman's adaptation of it reveals that the two do not completely correspond, and that Schulman did not fully implement the periodization that he himself had set out in the book's introduction. Schulman's expansion of his translation beyond the two sections planned at the project's inception also caused a break in the structure.

Schulman attempted to avoid Weber's term 'the revolutionary era' in referring to the period that encompassed the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic era. This was a problematic and radical term in tsarist Russia, as it was for the moderate maskilim, for whom loyalty to the government was unequivocal. Moreover, it appears that since Schulman viewed universal history from a Jewish perspective, he was unable to include the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries in the modern era, as had Weber. In accordance with the maskilic awareness of the past, which Schulman faithfully preserved, the historical turning-point of the new era was much more closely linked to the end of the eighteenth century, with the rise of enlightened absolutism and the Enlightenment, than with the Reformation and the Renaissance. Hence he preferred to designate the period by a name he found ready-made in Weber; the 'harbinger of the modern era', although Weber himself used the concept solely to designate a relatively short period of history that included the era of geographical discoveries and the Renaissance.²¹²

In his introduction to the Middle Ages Schulman showed complete independence from Weber. In his opinion, the entire period was a combination of 'marvelous and terrible times, the likes of which had never been before and would never come again'. The bright points of the Middle Ages were the elimination of idolatry, the establishment of universities, and towards the end, the invention of printing and the discovery of America. However, 'the papacy and fanaticism ruled over the gentiles, plunging Europe into a long period of darkness'.²¹³ Apart from these general comments, Schulman examined the Middle Ages from the vantage-point of Jewish history.

As noted above, Schulman consulted with Chwolson before writing the section

²¹¹ *Ibid.* 19.

²¹² Weber, *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte*, vol. ii, pt. 3, para. 1.

²¹³ Schulman, *Divrei yemei olam*, ii. 1.

on the Middle Ages, and in the introduction he reiterated his question: was there any point in minutely describing the persecution of the Jews and the edicts issued against them during this period? In his opinion, there were two key justifications for an affirmative reply. First, an examination of this bleak time in light of the modern era proved again and again the superiority of the present. Secondly, there was a danger that any history omitting this chapter would cause it to be completely forgotten. Schulman feared that in the ideal future, the era in which all men would be possessed of moral virtues and live within the framework of a perfect society, it would be impossible to imagine that the Jews could have endured such grim and cruel hardships. No one would believe that a people showing such exemplary loyalty to the kings, a people that had never been involved in political revolutions, could have been discriminated against and harshly repressed. In his view, therefore, there was a danger that the suffering of the Jews in the Middle Ages would be denied, and that readers in the future might doubt the credibility of the stories:

And thus he will deny the history of mankind in general, and of the Jews in particular, and he will decide that all things written in the book about the Jews and their dreadful hardships in the Middle Ages never truly existed, and are simply the invention of great poets with bold imaginations who have presented them as an example for the sake of capturing the hearts of the readers, just as all dramatists do in their tragedies.²¹⁴

Schulman's maskilic consciousness and profound conviction that the pre-modern era was a closed chapter in history and could not be repeated led him to believe that the memory of past episodes of Jewish suffering should be preserved so that they would not be obliterated from memory in the future. His belief in the modern era was boundless, and his assessment of the Middle Ages was a blend of elegy, romanticism, and nostalgia, on one hand, and maskilic optimism regarding the present and the future, on the other:

With a soul bursting with sorrow and eyes exhausted with tears, I recall those days of darkness and the terror of death, and with a joyous soul and eyes filled with light and happiness, we shall look upon these happy days in which all of us in this generation live . . . Ah, who would have thought that the Jewish people who had been sacrificed by Europe, placed upon the altar above the fire and the wood to be completely annihilated, who would have thought then that a time would come when it would be liberated, the altar would be destroyed, and the fire would be doused . . . and that it would have a glorious place in the temple of liberty like all the nations of the earth, and that the kings and lords of the land would walk before it bearing the torch of Enlightenment . . . Ah, now we can say to the Jewish people that the day will come in which all the visions and prophecies uttered by its prophets will come true. And the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord's glory as the waters fill the sea.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Schulman, *Divevei yemei olam*, ii, 3-5.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

Divevei yemei olam thus met the requirements of those who commissioned it and conveyed the spirit of its author's maskilic awareness of the past. It was a most optimistic book, written with an admiring eye towards the benevolent tsar Alexander II. Thus, for example, the monarch is mentioned in the chapter describing the massacre of the Jews by the Crusaders in 1096, to make readers aware of the enormous gap between the fanatic mentality of the Church in the Middle Ages and the tolerant rulers of the modern era.²¹⁶

Schulman places 'two terrible spectacles' at the opening of the modern era (which, as mentioned, paralleled Weber's 'Revolutionary Era'): 'the French insurrection' and the 'exploits of Napoleon Bonaparte'.²¹⁷ Schulman regarded these as unprecedented and crucial events that had destroyed the existing order, undermined all conventions, and led to bloodshed and political and religious radicalism. As a moderate maskil, his world-view and belief in the legitimacy of the absolutist, monarchical government left him no choice but to condemn both the revolution and Napoleon, as its direct offspring, almost without reservation.

Weber, who was Schulman's principal though not sole source for the description of the revolution, also had reservations about it. In his opinion, the English deist and French Voltairean versions of the Enlightenment were decisive causes of the revolution, and his view of it was ambivalent. On one hand, eighteenth-century literature contributed to the promotion of liberty, the sovereignty of the people, equality, humanism, and religious tolerance; it succeeded in restraining the Catholic Church and striking a blow against the Jesuits. However, on the other hand, it swept away values essential to social stability. As a moderate liberal and a German Protestant, Weber looked askance at the revolution's total subversion of religion and its challenge to the state and its laws. It was impossible, Weber asserted, to act on the basis of reason alone, without ascribing importance to the past and to historical development.²¹⁸ It was on these points in particular that Schulman chose to moderate Weber's criticism of the Enlightenment. He apparently did not wish to attack an ideology that he himself was preaching. Schulman's tactic was, on one hand, to underscore the achievements of the European Enlightenment, particularly its war against ignorance, superstition, and fanaticism and its mitigating influence on the monarchs, while, on the other hand, he made a distinction between the moderate Enlightenment and its radical representatives. Schulman admitted—this time, in an exact translation of Weber—that the enlightened men of France subverted the foundation of social existence, did not exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the legitimate boundaries of criticism, and brought about religious and political anarchy.

The revolution itself was described in *Divevei yemei olam* as an illegitimate act, carried out by the masses of the French people, who were possessed by 'an evil

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 206.

²¹⁸ Weber, *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte*, ii, 343, 351-2.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, iv, 3-4 (introd.).

and destructive spirit and the driving force to open the way to lawlessness'.²¹⁹ It was the inflamed masses who stormed the Bastille in July 1789, and members of the indigent class who forced the king to leave Versailles for Paris in October 1789, greatly dishonouring him.²²⁰ Louis XVI was portrayed as a pathetic king, beloved by his people but possessed of a weak character, and an ineffectual ruler. Schulman wrote an emotional condemnation of his execution by the 'accused insurrectionists'. This was, in his view, the great crime of the revolution and a rebellious continuation of the cycle of bloodshed that characterized it. His description of the 1793 execution was one of the most dramatic in his book, and attempted to convey to the Hebrew reader the oppressive atmosphere pervading Paris on the day of that 'terrible murder', the king's bravery, and his bitter end:

The silence of death prevailed over all the streets, and the city of Paris, usually so gay and filled with the noise of the multitudes, became a desolate wasteland. That terrible silence and the cloud that hung over that day were as harbingers of the disaster and dreadful evil that would come to that city of blood at the time of the fearful murder. At the tenth hour, the king's coach arrived at the place Louis XV, and there the executioner awaited him, and the instrument of death known as the guillotine . . . The door to the coach in which the king sat opened, and he stepped out and ascended to the platform of the slaughtering-place with a tranquil heart and a spirit befitting an innocent, righteous man, who knew that he was blameless and his hands clean. At that moment the executioners seized the king and led him to the slaughter, and the priest knelt at the feet of the king and cried: 'Rise, son of the holy Louis: rise to the heavens!' Then the blade of the instrument of death fell upon the neck of the king and severed his head from his body, and the head, covered in blood, rolled on the platform of the slaughterhouse . . . and the fierce tyrants danced and leapt and capered on the platform of the slaughterhouse, cavoring like drunken men, with happiness and merriment . . . But the French people whose hearts were touched by the fear of God privately mourned for the blood of the righteous and just king, which had been spilled by the wickedness of the despotic murderers of the land, and secretly, in the innermost chambers of their homes, they spoke a bitter eulogy for their beloved and exalted king.²²¹

Through his descriptions of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, Schulman defended two fundamental values that, in his view, ensured social order and human existence: the sanctity of the monarchy and the sanctity of faith. He believed that anything harmful to the monarchy inevitably harmed religion, as it had in France. 'The French insurrection', which destroyed these two fundamental values, was therefore an appalling historical event, and the struggle for liberty was swallowed up by the unjustified radicalism. It was not surprising, therefore, that Napoleon, a prodigious historical hero whose actions were destructive, was an

²¹⁹ Schulman, *Divrei yemet olam*, iv, 3.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 61-7. Schulman's complete description does not appear in Weber's book. Evidently he relied upon a different source here.

²²¹ Schulman, *Divrei yemet olam*, iv, 81.

inevitable product of the revolution, and that his ambition, which lacked moral bounds, brought about his downfall as well as that of the revolution.

These two historical phenomena, 'the French insurrection' and Napoleon, could serve, according to maskilic perceptions, as negative examples from which lessons could be learned: one must remain faithful to the king and to God, out of obedience, discipline, and an awareness of the price of pride and defiance of the rulers of the country and the Kingdom of Heaven. Schulman, however, saw that the major significance of the revolution for the Jews lay in its implications for the course of Jewish history. While 'the French insurrection' should be condemned, it was nonetheless ultimately responsible for bringing about 'Jewish liberty'. The historical paradox of the modern era, in Schulman's view, was that this particular revolutionary era had decidedly helped to improve the status of the Jews in the country, even though periods of unrest had always previously augured badly for the Jews. From the outset it was to be expected that the French Jews would be harmed by the revolution, and that the Catholic clergy would exploit the opportunity to incite the inflamed masses against them. Circumstances did not seem to bode well for the Jews: the monarch and the nobility had lost all their power, and the Jews, unable to find protection, had become vulnerable to attack by the masses and the Church. However, this particular cloud had a silver lining. Influenced by the radical Enlightenment, an anticlerical and intensely anti-Catholic trend developed in revolutionary France and the Church suffered some harsh blows. These revolutionary developments, which the maskilim shunned in principle but welcomed in retrospect, toppled the iron wall that had separated Jews and Christians. The French people realized 'that they had hated them with a vicious hatred, and for no good reason had they laid a trap for them, for no good reason had they persecuted them with fire and swords, to spill their blood'.²²²

This profound change in attitude towards the Jews and the pressure applied by the National Assembly to grant them political rights culminated in the Emancipation Act of 1791. While the Napoleonic era brought with it some regression and the clergy regained some of its former power, Schulman's Napoleon nonetheless made an effort to maintain Jewish equality. Schulman even found a positive aspect to the 'infamous edict' of 1808, claiming that its purpose was to placate the anti-Jewish stream in France, and that Napoleon knew quite well that the edict would cause no serious harm, 'since most Frenchmen had already made great progress in enlightenment, and would close their ears to this cruel law in those days of light'.²²³ Schulman was reluctant to spoil the pretty picture he had sketched, and, with his great optimism, was unwilling to imagine a severe reaction to 'Jewish liberty'. He believed that the revolution, an unjustified event in itself, had created an irreversible situation that promised a new era for the Jews. From that point onwards European Jewry made great strides forward, and during the nineteenth century 'would . . . rise to the heights in almost every area of science and know-

²²² *Ibid.*, 5-6.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 7-9.

ledge . . . and all of this in a very short time, while other peoples did not succeed in rising thus for many hundreds of years'.²²⁴

What should have been the attitude of Jews living in the Russia of Alexander II to the French Revolution? First, like all his predecessors, Schulman endeavoured to emphasize the Jews' political loyalty, in order to avoid the misleading impression that revolutionary actions could be even partly justifiable. In light of the situation in Russia in the 1870s, with the activities of the nihilists, the opposition groups, the attempts on the life of the tsar, and the aftermath of the 1863 Polish Revolt, this point had to be made clear beyond any doubt. In his introduction to the fourth part Schulman sought to respond to the analogy drawn by antisemitic historians between the Jewish wars at the end of the Second Temple era and the French Revolution. In this interpretation the Zealots and the Jacobins, John of Giscalca, Simeon bar Giora, Robespierre, and Danton were all presented as belonging to the same historical category of revolutionary leadership. Schulman, whose earlier writings had denounced Jewish revolts, considered this analogy a complete fabrication and asserted that

the wars of the Jews are as far removed from the French Revolution as the east is from the west. The path of the Zealots and their philosophy is as far from the path and philosophy of the Jacobins as the sky is from the earth, and the superiority of the officers of that war—John of Giscalca and Simeon bar Giora—over the officers of Sodom—Robespierre and Danton in that revolution—is as the superiority of light over darkness.²²⁵

How could one justify the first-century revolt against the Romans, on one hand, while rejecting every revolt and revolution in principle and condemning the French Revolution in particular, on the other hand? Schulman proposed four differences that, in his view, proved that the Jewish Revolt was justified and the French Revolution was not. First, Rome was a 'monstrous animal' that cruelly and unjustly set upon the Jews of Palestine, violating their peace and well-being. Rome's provocative behaviour and the existential danger to the Jews left no room for surrender. In contrast, the revolutionaries in France faced no such provocation or existential danger. Rather, they themselves were the initiators and attackers. Secondly, despite their difficult situation, the Jews did not intend to revolt against the Roman emperor, as the French revolted against Louis XVI. Their sole objective was to replace the evil governors ruling Palestine. Thirdly, only the 'poor people' and 'the young men of heroic strength whose hearts were enraged' initiated the revolt, while the upper classes attempted to restrain them. Only when it became clear that Rome could not be influenced by peaceable means to accept the Jews' demands to replace the governors did the 'Jewish noblemen follow the lead of the warriors in the war of the Almighty'. Finally, the revolt against the Romans was a war of monotheists against cruel pagans who had attacked what was sacred to the Jews, and, from this point of view, their struggle must be seen as an exalted vision and a

²²⁴ Schulman, *Divevei yemai olam*, iv, 13-19.

²²⁵ *Ibid.* 9-13.

holy war that had a just and worthy aim. Perhaps, Schulman wrote, if the revolutionary camp had not been split into factions, the 'flag of Zion' might have flown from the roof of the Capitol in Rome. The French Revolution, on the other hand, did not have a just aim. Quite the contrary: the insurgents fought against religious belief and not for it, wielding their weapons against a righteous king. Morally speaking, this was an unworthy, illegitimate revolution.²²⁶

In this apologia Schulman cleansed the Jewish past of the 'stain' left by the revolt against Rome. It also appears that he was frightened by his own audacity in endorsing 'the French insurrection' in so far as the achievement of 'Jewish liberty' was concerned, and since *Divevei yemai olam* was, to a great extent, a government-sponsored book, he was forced to emphasize the importance of Russia as a superior model to France. Improvement of the Jews' situation, Schulman claimed, was by no means contingent upon political revolution or changing forms of government. He reiterated the idealization of Russian Jewish history and the view that the Russian monarchs had always been benevolent kings who did not persecute the Jews, and that 'all men remained calm and quiet, [and] none were fearful'. The Romanovs' rise to power had brought with it an even more benevolent attitude towards the Jews, and during the reign of Alexander II 'Judah is redeemed and Israel shall dwell in tranquility'.²²⁷ Hence there was no need for revolution in Russia. The enlightened absolutist government, which demonstrated religious tolerance and encouraged education, could bring about the same conditions that had developed in western Europe as a result of the emancipation. The Jews' integration into the economic and cultural life of Russia, which Schulman depicted from his vantage-point in 1870, would, in his view, gradually bring about emancipation in Russia as well. 'Before much time has passed,' he believed, 'the Jews living in Russia will become equal to all the citizens of the land in all civil laws and all offices and ordinances of the country'.²²⁸

After completing the first four parts of *Divevei yemai olam*, Schulman planned to translate a history of Russia that would include the history of the Jews in that country. This decision was reinforced by his visit to St Petersburg in 1867, but, as noted above, the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews rejected his request, and assigned the task to the student Solomon Mandelkern. Nevertheless, the society's secretary, Leon Rosenthal, helped Schulman publish the book *Kiryat melekh rav* (The City of the Great King, 1860), in which, brimming over with enthusiasm and Russian patriotism, he described 'the history of Petersburg the capital, from the day of its foundation until the present, a description of its houses, its palaces and castles, the wonders of its fine buildings, the richness of its treasures, and all its power and splendour'.²²⁹ The book surveyed 'the new Rome', maintaining a laudatory attitude towards the rulers, and legitimizing enlightened Russian absolutism from Peter the Great to Alexander II.

²²⁶ *Ibid.* 11-12.

²²⁷ *Ibid.* 20-1.

²²⁸ *Ibid.* 22.

²²⁹ Schulman, Letter to Gurland, 'Mikhiavim', 410.

Rosenthal also funded the printing of a geography book in Hebrew, *Mehkarei erts rusiyah* (Studies of Russia, 1869), in which Schulman included an abridged history of Russia supplemented by maps of Russia in Hebrew. *Mehkarei erts rusiyah* described 'the greatest, the mightiest, the most prodigious of all the nations of the world, our homeland; and we eat of her fruit and are satisfied by her bounty and by the benevolence of her rulers, the benevolent kings. It was the first of a series of geography books written by Schulman, and was followed by the ten parts of *Sefer masdei erts: tehumot kol artsei tevel veteledot yoshveihen* (The Foundation of the World: The Features of All Countries and the History of their Inhabitants), once again funded by Rosenthal. Schulman saw these works as an essential supplement to *Divrei yemei olam*.

In 1871 Schulman completed an additional series of books, *Toledot hukhmei yisra'el* (Biographies of Jewish Sages), which from the start was intended to be incorporated into the larger work *Divrei yemei olam*.²³⁰ The four volumes of this work were printed in Vilna two years later, and included biographies of figures from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries. This work echoed Levinsohn's maskilic apologetics and the eighteenth-century *Hame'asef*, attempting to prove that even in the Middle Ages Jewish history had maintained a succession 'of illustrious figures who dispelled the darkness from the inhabitants of the earth'.²³¹ The biographies of these writers, poets, philosophers, diplomats, rabbis, and scholars were also meant to encourage respect for the Jewish people, and this project was a clear continuation of Schulman's book on antiquity.

Schulman's introduction pointed out that the first part of *Toledot hukhmei yisra'el* was based on the writing of 'the glorious wise rabbi, Professor Rabbi Tsevi Hirsch Graetz, may God bless him with long life, who sanctified the name of Israel in his magnificent book on the history of the Jews'.²³² However, a comparison between Schulman's book and Graetz's *Geschichte der Juden* reveals that the former was actually an almost literal translation of the sixth and eighth parts of Graetz's work—a fact Schulman did not trouble to disclose to his readers. In these volumes, which encompass the history of medieval Spanish Jewry from the time of Samuel Hanagid to the time of Maimonides, Graetz had included a series of biographies, which perfectly suited Schulman's needs.

In the 1860s and 1870s Graetz's books became the primary source of Jewish history for German-reading maskilim in Russia, displacing Jost's works. Anyone who wished to investigate historical issues could no longer disregard his *Geschichte der Juden*. Once again, as with Jost, the question arises as to how Graetz was received by the Russian maskilim. I shall attempt to address this, in the context of the discussion of Kalman Schulman, and then return, in the next chapter, to the subject of the reception of Graetz's work.

²³⁰ A single chapter was printed in 1868 in *Hakarmel*, 7 (1868), 71–2, 78–9, 88–9, 95. Schulman noted there that this was a chapter from part 2 of *Divrei yemei olam* which had not yet been published.

²³¹ Schulman, *Toledot hukhmei yisra'el*, I, 4–5.

²³² *Ibid.* II.

Graetz was perceived as the greatest and most important chronicler of Jewish history, whose like had never been known before and would never be known again. The newspaper articles announcing the publication of the various volumes of his book, until the project was completed with the eleventh volume in 1870, lauded his knowledge of details and his ability to recognize 'the internal, unifying causes of events that appear to have no order to them'.²³³ Very few people dared find weaknesses in Graetz's work. One critic was an anonymous writer in *Hamegill* who alluded to 'his fanciful suppositions'. Another was Ephraim Deinard, who protested at the inadequate representation of Russian Jewry in Graetz's book. Deinard, insulted and bursting with Russian Jewish pride, reprimanded Graetz: 'He had no right to cross the boundary of Russia to see the ways of the Jewish people and their deeds in that country, in order to pass judgement on what he saw there; and every man of knowledge will agree with me that one can judge our brothers in Russia differently, and perhaps find among them sages as wise as those of Germany, and even wiser.'²³⁴ Perez Smolenskin (1842–85) levelled even harsher criticism against Graetz's pro-German approach and his neglect of the Jewish sages of Russia. In order to compensate for this, in 1877 Smolenskin proposed to Benjamin Mandelstamm (1805–86) that he write a history of the Jews in Russia:

And in Germany, those Jewish scholars and historians will believe that only they merit the title of men, and that the history of the Jewish people in Germany is the history of the entire people, for there is not even a single mention in Graetz's books of the history of the scholars of Russia, or the wonderful things that were done there for fifty years. We cannot accuse Graetz of being sparing with his words; on the contrary, we are awed by the great indulgence shown in his books, which led him occasionally to write pages instead of one word, but nevertheless he abridged his discussion of the Jewish scholars of Russia.²³⁵

Graetz was the sole source of information on many historical subjects. The partial translations into Hebrew that appeared intermittently in the Hebrew press included chapters on Moses Almosnino, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, and the Reuchlin–Pfefferkorn dispute.²³⁶ This last chapter, from the ninth volume of *Geschichte der Juden*, was part of the first attempt to translate Graetz's books into Hebrew. It was made by Joseph Hertzberg (1802–70) from Mohilev, who had subscribed to Levinsohn's *Te'udah beyisra'el* in the 1820s, translated several of Mendelssohn's philosophical works in the 1840s and 1850s, and had also worked on a Hebrew translation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. According to his son-in-law, Hertzberg completed his translation of the eighth and ninth volumes of *Geschichte der Juden* in 1868, and the unpublished manuscript remained in his son-in-law's possession after his death. A letter Hertzberg wrote to Samuel Fuenn and appended

²³³ Anon., 'Besorat sefarim', *Hamegill*, 15 (1871), 31–2 (book notes).

²³⁴ *Ibid.*; Deinard, *Sefer masa kerim*, 63–4.

²³⁵ Mandelstamm, *Hazon lamo'ed*, 5 (editor's note).

²³⁶ J. L. Frankel, 'Rabi moshe almosnino'; Blumentfeld, 'Rabi shelomoh ibn gevirol'; Hertzberg,

'Mahloket reukhim vefeferkorn'.

to the three chapters of the translation published that year in *Hakarnel* indicated that he planned to translate the entire book. Hertzberg asked Fuenn to help him print the book and to assist him financially by addressing the readers of *Hakarnel* and enlisting subscribers for the book in advance. Alternatively, Hertzberg suggested that Fuenn publish the translation at his own expense. In his efforts to persuade Fuenn to accept his proposal, Hertzberg claimed that the enterprise would be very profitable and that the book would be much in demand. He was prepared to take only a few copies of the book as payment for authorship. In any case, the plan was never carried out, and the fate of the manuscript of the translated sections is unknown.²³⁷

The second attempt to translate Graetz into Hebrew was made at the initiative of the booksellers and publishers Winter Brothers of Vienna, who obtained translation rights from Graetz. They chose Abraham Cohen Kaplan, a maskil from Kovno then living in Vienna, to take on the job. Kaplan began with a translation of the third part, which covers the years from the height of the Hasmonean period and the death of Judah Maccabee to the destruction of the Second Temple.²³⁸ Kaplan apparently tried to postpone the translation of the first parts, which dealt with the period of antiquity, to a later stage; perhaps he feared that Graetz's historical analysis might appear too daring in the eyes of the traditional Hebrew reader in eastern Europe. Kaplan also attempted to render the translation suitable for the Jewish reader, by changing the Christian date of the destruction of the Temple and omitting Graetz's scholarly notes. 'Not for students of history', Kaplan wrote in his introduction, 'but for ordinary readers are we publishing these works in Hebrew, and these readers, when they learn that the writer has presented proof of his words in his book in the German language, will believe the translation and will not enquire any further.'²³⁹ The average reader would trust Graetz's credibility, and, in Kaplan's opinion, needed neither references nor scholarly, critical discussions; the maskilim would have no need at all for a Hebrew translation, since they could read the original German.

Kaplan's translation of the third part appeared serially, in ten pamphlets, during 1875. For some reason, however, the translation was halted at this early stage. The Winter Brothers looked for another translator, and Gurland, who was then editor of the literary column 'Book News' in *Hatsefirah* and was in contact with the publishers in Vienna, recommended Kalman Schulman as a suitable candidate.²⁴⁰ In 1876 Schulman undertook the task, and his first three pamphlets appeared the same year, including Graetz's introduction to the first part and his

²³⁷ On Joseph Hertzberg and his attempt to translate Graetz's *Geschichte der Juden*, see Gottlob, 'Hagitzrah vehabenuyah', 76-81; Hertzberg, 'Mikhtav lefin'.

²³⁸ A. Kaplan, *Divrei yemei hayehudim*. Avraham Zuckerman of Warsaw was appointed by the publishers as the sole distributor of this translation (see *Hatsefirah*, 2 (1875), 184). See also Zitron, *The Makers*, ii, 160-1.

²⁴⁰ Gurland, 'Hadashot sifriyot', 183.

description of the period from the conquest of Palestine to Saul's kingship.²⁴¹ Schulman's translation was also halted at this initial stage, when less than 200 pages, covering only the first five chapters of the first part, had been written. The criticism levelled at Schulman from various directions, his own disappointment at problems with the printers in Vienna, and Winter Brothers' dissatisfaction apparently led to the translation's termination. Biographies of Schulman suggest that Graetz himself informed the Winter Brothers that he was withdrawing his consent to having the book translated because of the changes Schulman had introduced into it. Another source indicates that it was a financial crisis at the printing-house, rather than problems with the translation itself, that prevented the continuation of Schulman's translation.²⁴²

When the first pamphlet, containing a translation of the introduction, appeared, Gurland praised Schulman, emphasizing in particular the quality of the translation as compared to Kaplan's, which he considered most defective. He advised Schulman to improve the translation even more by abridging or eliminating the author's notes so as to facilitate reading.²⁴³ Essentially, Schulman's attitude towards Graetz was a mixture of admiration and reserve. He considered him a great historian but he rejected what he called Graetz's unrestrained criticism, especially the freedom he allowed himself to slight the honour of the great men of the nation—an ambivalent attitude which resembled Rapoport's confrontation with the German Jewish historian Jost in the previous generation. 'Many times', Schulman claimed, 'he swerved from his path, passed a distorted judgement, defiled men of repute, desecrated holy men, brought shame upon their honour, and cast aspersions on the memory of their holiness.'²⁴⁴ Graetz's radical critical approach was unacceptable to the moderate maskil, for whom the Jewish past was a collection of 'sacred memories' of the nation. Schulman received complaints from Orthodox Jews, who believed that such a book should not be translated at all, for it contained sharply critical views and was not written from the vantage-point of religious faith. Schulman, most of whose books had found a place on the bookshelves of non-maskilic homes, was very sensitive to his reputation in the eyes of the Orthodox and responded quickly in order to allay their doubts. In an open letter printed in *Hatsefirah* he declared that such fears were unfounded; he intended to adapt Graetz's books to suit the tastes of the Orthodox reader as well, and would express his own personal rejection of 'free criticism'. Nonetheless, Schulman defended Graetz, justifying him and affirming his veracity, for he had never been one of the religious reformers and had always remained faithful 'to God and all that is sacred'. *Die Geschichte der Juden* was of supreme importance and its writer should therefore not be scorned. Nonetheless, Schulman promised

²⁴¹ Schulman, *Divrei yemei hayehudim*.

²⁴² Zitron, *The Makers*, ii, 160-1; J. Klausner, *History of Modern Hebrew Literature*, iii, 373-4; Schulman, *Laah ahiasaf*, 7 (1899), 322-4 (autobiographical note).

²⁴³ Gurland, 'Hadashot sifriyot', 183.

²⁴⁴ Zitron, *The Makers*, iii, 160.

to be careful in his translation and admitted that he intended to translate selectively: 'Heaven forbid that I should clothe the offspring of gentiles and deceitful sons in the holy language . . . and in my translation as well, I have chosen the path of faith, and have omitted all things based on the spirit of free criticism.'²⁴⁵

A comparison between the translation of Graetz's introduction to the first part and the original reveals that Schulman produced a maskilic-traditional adaptation, with departures from the original and his own additions. In the introduction to the first volume, which appeared only two years before Schulman's translation, Graetz grappled with the secret of the Jewish people's survival throughout history, underscored the unique nature of Jewish history, and explained the Jews' universal mission to disseminate monotheism, spirituality, and morality.²⁴⁶ This perception of history by no means contradicted Schulman's maskilic perception, and he could easily embrace it. He therefore translated the entire introduction, but his revisions indicate that he attempted to add the religious significance of history to Graetz's original. An example of this appears in the opening sentence, in which Graetz presented the unique phenomenon of continuous Jewish existence for 3,000 years. Schulman added: 'A people whose strength lies in its God will arise and be inspired from the beginning of history and up to the present generation.'²⁴⁷ Whereas Graetz wrote about Jewish ideals and values, such as the idea of equality, Schulman attributed these to God's teachings; and where Graetz described the superiority of ancient Hebrew poetry, which celebrated sanctity rather than heroism, tragedies, and comedies, Schulman added that the purpose of Jewish poetry was to express 'the exalted and holy spirit of God, to teach people to know the Almighty'.²⁴⁸ Graetz depicted the Jewish religion as spiritual, moral, and rational, a faith that not only taught the principles of abstract faith but also inculcated moral behaviour. This did not suffice for Schulman, who added the recognition of God and the observance of His commandments as fundamental components of religion. The Jews' mission, according to Schulman, included not only fulfilling the prophets' vision but also knowing 'what God demands of them', according to 'the vision of the Torah'.²⁴⁹ At the end of the introduction, too, Schulman added his own conclusion to that of Graetz, who had asserted the antiquity of the Jewish people and the continuity of its history; Schulman claimed that the secret of Jewish survival lay in the preservation of the Torah: 'The Jewish people still maintain their belief and faith in their God, and the trumpet call of His Torah, as in the days of antiquity'.²⁵⁰ Schulman could not reconcile himself to what he considered the abandonment of Providence and the role of the Torah and the commandments in Jewish history, and he attempted to rectify this wrong. In Graetz's view,

²⁴⁵ Schulman, 'Mikhtav galuy', 262-3.

²⁴⁶ H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. 1, pp. xix-xxxv (this introduction was not translated into Hebrew in the Rabinowitz edition). Cf. Schulman's introduction, *Dvarei yemei hayehudim*, 3-26.

²⁴⁷ H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. 1, p. xix; Schulman, *Dvarei yemei hayehudim*, 3.

²⁴⁸ Schulman, *Dvarei yemei hayehudim*, p. xvii. ²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xx. ²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.

the Jewish religion expressed a divine idea and bore socio-legal significance. Schulman, on the other hand, continued to see religion first and foremost as the relationship between the Jew and his Creator, manifested primarily in the observance of the commandments. This difference in views had an enormous impact on the way in which Schulman translated Graetz.

Schulman's assertion that he chose to translate Graetz 'through faith' and the fact that he allowed himself to omit the radical conclusions derived from 'free criticism' incurred the wrath of Moses Leib Lilienblum (1848-1910). In an article Lilienblum wrote for *Hasefirah* in 1876 he called upon the Winter Brothers to compel Schulman to translate all of Graetz.²⁵¹ Lilienblum praised the publishers for having initiated the translation; it was inconceivable that Jewish history should be available only in a language that most Jews could not read, and the translation would right this wrong to some extent. Lilienblum levelled severe criticism against Kaplan's translation, censuring his omission of the scholarly notes. In Russia there were surely many learned men more capable of investigating Graetz's sources than the German scholars. 'By what right', Lilienblum asked, 'did these publishers decide on their own to rob those learned in the Talmud of the possibility of investigating Graetz's words at their source and judging them?'²⁵² Furthermore, Lilienblum attacked Schulman's moderate translation, bluntly calling it nothing but a falsification:

Who granted him the right to omit those things he did not like? If he had had the ability to write a history book himself, as did the consummate scholars Rabbi Nahman Krochmal and Samuel Fuenn, and had omitted certain things in it, then he could have justified himself by saying that since he was of the Jewish faith, he was doing what he thought was right, for he was the one to decide what his book would contain; but he is translating, and who gave him the power to falsify his translation? . . . Or does this distinguished translator think that this translation was made only for Jewish children, like his books *Hareh, Halikhot kedem*, and others, which he took care to write in a style acceptable to yeshiva students?²⁵³

This was the most aggressive challenge yet to Schulman's tendency to popularize. Lilienblum, a radical maskil, could not accept what he believed was dilettantism, an attempt to appeal to the Orthodox reader, and a frivolous approach to scientific Jewish historiography. In his article he requested that Graetz forbid Schulman from continuing his lies and his distortion of the German historian's book; and he suggested to Schulman that if he was truly concerned about the faith of the yeshiva

²⁵¹ Lilienblum, 'Al devar ha'atakat grets', 303, 312; *id.*, *Complete Works*, ii, 117-18. Cf. a later review by Gordon of Schulman's translation of *Antiquities*, in which he accused Schulman of having introduced corrections into Josephus' text which rendered the translation fit for pious Jews but not for scholars of ancient history; J. L. Gordon, 'Bikoret sefarim'.

²⁵² Lilienblum, *Complete Works*, ii, 117. Lilienblum also protested about the high price of the book, which, at 2 roubles and 80 kopeks, was one of the most expensive on the list of books offered by Zuckermandl. ²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 118.

students, he would do better to leave the work of translating Graetz's book to a more accurate translator. The Hebrew reader in eastern Europe deserved an undoctored version of this scientific study.

In contrast to Lilienblum, the young Nahum Sokolow (1859–1936) published an article supporting Schulman's right as a translator to adapt the book as he saw fit. A historian, Sokolow believed, is indeed obligated to recount what has occurred without advocacy or moralizing, but to fulfil this obligation is impossible. One cannot cut oneself off from world-views, and this fact also explains why history books vary. As long as he does not alter the facts, the translator is entitled to draw conclusions different from those of the writer. Graetz was a most important historian, but his weakness was his inability to control his bias and the integration of his opinions into his writings. Schulman, as his translator, would therefore do no wrong by eliminating Graetz's views, thereby saving his readers from radical opinions and also increasing their numbers, for some of them might have refrained entirely from purchasing the book in its original form.²⁵⁴

Even before this criticism was published, Schulman regretted having undertaken the translation. He found it particularly difficult to work with a printing-house so far away in Vienna. 'If I had known at the outset', Schulman wrote, 'that so many egregious errors would be made at the printing-house, I would not have gone near this burdensome work.'²⁵⁵ Sokolow, looking back in 1884, placed the blame for the failure of Graetz's first translators on the immensity of the task, and proposed forming a group, 'a company of writers', that would prepare a Jewish history book in Hebrew. A single translator, Sokolow believed, could not bear the entire burden. This time, he proposed, Graetz's work should not be translated, but rather an original book, based on new research, should be written by a group of scholars in Russia.²⁵⁶ Sokolow's proposal was never carried out, and a complete and accurate Hebrew translation of Graetz did not appear until fourteen years after Schulman's effort. This was by Saul Pinhas Rabinowitz (1845–1910), and began to appear in 1890, nine years before Schulman's death.²⁵⁷

The thousands of pages Kalman Schulman wrote represented the peak of the intensive literary activity that promulgated maskilic history on different levels

²⁵⁴ Sokolow, 'Lamenatseh'ah al shigayon'; Kressel's introd. to Sokolow, *Ketzirim*, iii, 22. In 1905 Sokolow himself tried to translate Graetz's entire work, but he only published one part, entitled 'Toledot hayehudim'.

²⁵⁵ Sokolow, 'Kol mevasser', in id., *Ketzirim*, iii, 573–81.

²⁵⁷ Other unsuccessful attempts at translation included J. L. Kantor, 'Ben-Ami', in the monthly supplement to *Hayom* 1887 (Kantor received Graetz's permission to translate pt. 8 of his book in instalments in this supplement, but even this partial translation was never completed); A. D. Finkel (Warsaw, 1894) (the work was published in a series of pamphlets; all in all, pts. 4–5 of Graetz's book appeared). The translator claimed that he already had the complete translation in his possession, and that, unlike Rabinowitz, he had neither added nor omitted anything from the original. See Kressel, 'Saul Pinhas Rabinowitz'. An adaptation of Graetz's work in Yiddish by J. H. Lerner was published in Warsaw in 1897–8 (on Lerner, see Weises, *Haskalah and Shabbataicism*, 184).

among various social classes. By the early 1880s bookshops and bookshelves were filled with original historical studies in Hebrew, translations, textbooks, historical novels, and popular historical stories translated into Hebrew and Yiddish, written at a low level so that women and girls could acquire some historical information. New horizons were opened to the Jewish reader, helping him to fathom the complexities of international political events in contemporary Europe. He was exposed to information that enabled him to become acquainted with the national struggles in Italy and Germany, to become aware of European colonialism in Asia and Africa, to learn about the American Civil War, and to understand the historical background of the *Kulturkampf* taking place in Bismarck's Germany. As far as Jewish history was concerned, the maskilim attempted to convey to their readers their entire world-view, particularly their awareness of the crucial transition that had begun in the modern era and the critical role of enlightened absolutism; consciousness of the historical continuity and legitimacy of the Haskalah; and a condemnation of injustice, religious fanaticism, prejudice, and superstition. These messages were embedded in practically every historical work, whether it was a scholarly study, a translation, or a Yiddish story. While traditional history was content to print and reprint Josippon and the old chronicles or hagiographic stories of well-known rabbis, the maskilim gave a new look to the history shelves in Jewish libraries. It is true that the overwhelming majority of the books they contributed were not original but drew on German Jewish historiography and historical novels. However, from this time onwards a new corpus of historical works took its place alongside the traditional historical literature. Most of these new works were written in a flowing style that was very different from the discursive style of the traditional chronology and hagiography, and they lacked the traditional theological interpretation. A collection of secular historical information was created, even though it was often written from a religious point of view, as in Schulman's works. This was a detailed, usually factual, and occasionally dramatic history that could successfully compete with traditional chronicles and gradually alter conventional attitudes towards the past.

The picture sketched in this chapter, however, is far from complete. At the same time as maskilic history was being disseminated through the channels described here, an increasing number of voices in the maskilic camp itself were challenging the basic assumption of the Haskalah in general and of maskilic history in particular. Lilienblum's trenchant criticism of Schulman's mediocre and popular translation of Graetz was only one manifestation of the new mood of the Haskalah movement in Russia, and of the new approaches to history, which will be reconstructed in the next chapter.