

The Buffer Zone: Ottoman *Maskilim* and their Austro-Hungarian Counterparts – A Case Study*

by Tamir Karkason

Abstract

This paper explores the relations between Ottoman maskilim (Jewish enlighteners) and their Austro-Hungarian counterparts during the second half of the nineteenth century. I shall illustrate this issue by means of a case study of the relationship between an Ottoman maskil, Judah Nehama of Salonica, and his Austro-Hungarian counterpart, Chaim David Lippe, who was born in Galicia but lived in Vienna.

Based on the conceptualizations proposed by scholars such as Matthias Lehmann and Yaron Tsur, the paper analyzes the emergence, during the second half of the nineteenth century, of a “pan-Jewish” maskilic space. This space facilitated the strengthening of the “integrative pole” over the “reluctant pole” in the relations between Jews from “East” and “West,” thereby also weakening the “internal Orientalism” that was prevalent in the Jewish world of the time. Thus the paper highlights the contribution of the Haskalah movement to consolidating the affinities between Jews from across the Diaspora during this period.

The Ottoman *Haskalah*

The Salonican *Haskalah* and Judah Nehama

Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin

Nehama and His Viennese Booksellers

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Chaim David Lippe: A Galician-Viennese *Wissenschaft* Scholar

Commercial and Personal Relationship

Lippe and the Distribution of *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin*

Concluding Discussion: Pan-Jewish *Haskalah* between “East” and “West”

The Ottoman *Haskalah*

Starting with the *Tanzimat* (1839-1876) and continuing into the Hamidian (1876-1908) eras, a circle of around hundred *maskilim* (Jewish enlighteners) was active in the Ottoman Empire. These *maskilim* operated in the urban Jewish centers in the Southern Balkans (mainly Salonica and Edirne) and Western Anatolia (Istanbul and Izmir), as well as in the province of Jerusalem. The Ottoman *maskilim* wrote primarily in two languages: Hebrew, the lingua franca of the *Haskalah* movement, and Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), the Ottoman-Sephardi vernacular. Some also wrote in other languages, particularly French and Ottoman Turkish. Three *maskilim* were particularly prominent: Barukh Mitrani (1847-1919), who wandered around Europe and Asia; Abraham Danon (1857-1925), who was active in Edirne, Istanbul, and Paris; and Judah Nehama of Salonica (1825-1899), the subject of the present paper.¹

¹ Esther Benbassa, Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry. A History of the Judeo-Spanish Community: 14th-20th Centuries*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 106-109; Julia Phillips Cohen, Sarah Abrevaya Stein, “Sephardic Scholarly Worlds: Toward a Novel Geography of Modern Jewish History,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 100/3 (2010): 349-384; Tamir Karkason, *The Ottoman-Jewish Haskalah (Enlightenment), 1839-1908: A Transformation in the Jewish Communities of Western Anatolia, the Southern Balkans and Jerusalem* (PhD Thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem 2018) [Hebrew]. In this article, I seek to explore in greater depth an issue that I discussed briefly in my doctoral thesis. The introduction to this article is based on the general findings of my study, which are presented here in a preliminary manner. I have completed a book manuscript in Hebrew based on my doctoral thesis and am also working on an expanded English edition.

The *Haskalah* movement, which emerged in Berlin in the second half of the eighteenth century, owes its fundamental ideas to Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786). According to the definition of Shmuel Feiner, the *Maskilim* joined together

in a unique Jewish enterprise of modernity and considered themselves to be responsible for an unprecedented historic shift [...] – the rehabilitation of traditional society in light of the values of enlightenment, distribution of broad general knowledge of the world of nature and human being, [and] the education of the young generations for their integration in life as productive citizens enjoying access to European society and culture [...].²

The Berlin *Haskalah*, which reached its peak during the last three decades of the eighteenth century, spread first all across German-speaking areas, including Austria. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the centers of *Haskalah* moved to Galicia (in the Southeastern periphery of the Austro-Hungarian Empire), the Russian Empire, and Italy.³

In the early nineteenth century, shortly after the *maskilic* centers shifted to Eastern Europe, the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement (literally “Science of Judaism”; hereinafter – “the *Wissenschaft*”) appeared in Germany. The movement saw itself as founding modern research, based on the systemic use of “scientific” critical tools, into Judaism and the Jews. The *Wissenschaft* led to a significant expansion in the scope of research in these fields. The movement sought to understand texts in the context of their time and place and insisted on its right to “free exploration”; as such, it “posed a fundamental challenge to the assumptions, interests, and methods of traditional Jewish learning.”⁴

² Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment in the 19th Century*, (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2010), 29-30 [Hebrew].

³ Shmuel Feiner, “Towards a Historical Definition of the *Haskalah*,” in *New Perspectives on the Haskalah*, eds. Shmuel Feiner and David Sorkin, (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001), 184-219.

⁴ Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context. The Turn to History in Modern Judaism*, (Hanover: Published for Brandeis University Press by University Press of New England, 1994), 177-183; 183.

This movement soon migrated into the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires (particularly the capital Vienna and Galicia), where its exponents wrote mainly in Hebrew. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, at least, the borders between exponents of the *Wissenschaft* and moderate *maskilim* in Eastern Europe were somewhat vague. Accordingly, for the sake of simplicity, I will also use the term ⁵ *maskilim* to refer to European exponents of the *Wissenschaft* who maintained contacts with Ottoman *maskilim*.

Actual documentation of the Ottoman *Haskalah* and its products only exists from 1850,⁶ but we can determine that the movement began at least a decade earlier, around the beginning of the *Tanzimat* period⁷ – an era of legal and administrative reforms that commenced in 1839 and lasted until the proclamation of the First Constitutional Era in the empire in 1876. This period was characterized by various attempts to modernize the Ottoman Empire and to secure its territorial integrity and prosperity both against internal nationalist movements and external imperial encroachment. The use of new transportation and communication means gradually expanded during this period, strengthening connections with Western Europe and facilitating the rapid spread of ideas, knowledge, and lifestyles.⁸ Such developments had a crucial influence on Jewish education; a major catalyst of change in this respect was the opening in 1865 of the first school of the Parisian

⁵ Chanan Gafni, “*The Mishna’s Plain Sense.*” *A Study of Modern Talmudic Scholarship*, (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2011) [Hebrew].

⁶ See the first letters of Judah Nehama from that year: Judah ben Jacob Nehama, *Mikhtevei dodim mi-yayin: Eize mikhtavim shonim asher hehlafti bein ohavay ve-doday* [Letters More Delightful than Wine], vol. 1, (Salonica: n.p., 1893), 2-6 [Hebrew].

⁷ Evidence exists showing that *Haskalah* literature was being consumed in Salonica and Edirne in the 1840s. This decade also saw the establishment in Izmir of the first Ladino-language newspaper. In the post-Ottoman Balkans, a Jewish national thinker born in the Ottoman Empire, R. Judah Alkalai (1798-1878) was active. Regarding the early harbingers of the Ottoman *Haskalah*, see Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 102-105.

⁸ M. Sukru Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 72-108; Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans. Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era*, (Oxford - New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 9-18.

philanthropic organization *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in the Ottoman Empire; dozens more would soon follow.⁹

The Ottoman *Haskalah* reached its peak under the rule of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876-1909).¹⁰ During that period, a growing number of citizens of the empire, including many non-Muslims, began to identify themselves as “Ottomans.”¹¹ By the late 1890s, the scope of activity of the Ottoman *Haskalah* decreased, paralleling various developments in the *maskilic* “Republic of Letters” in Eastern and Central Europe.¹² Until the beginning of the twentieth century, most *maskilim* born in the 1820s and 1830s had passed away, while others, born between the 1830s and 1850s, were unwell and increasingly withdrew from public life. After the Young Turk revolution of July 1908, the “Ottoman *Haskalah*” ceased to exist and was replaced by other movements, such as Ottomanism and Zionism.¹³

The Ottoman *maskilim* constituted a significant sub-group within the Ottoman Jewish intelligentsia (the group of cultural agents).¹⁴ This intelligentsia included two other sub-groups: the “Westernizers,” who promoted “Westernization” as a lifestyle in the spirit of the *Alliance*;¹⁵ and the senior rabbinical elite of the period, which controlled the Chief Rabbinate in Istanbul and its provincial branches, and whose members published over two hundred rabbinical books over the course of

⁹ Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990).

¹⁰ Cohen and Abrevaya Stein, “Sephardic Scholarly Worlds,” 352-359; Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 105-112.

¹¹ Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans*.

¹² Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, 298-335.

¹³ Cohen and Abrevaya Stein, “Sephardic Scholarly Worlds,” 359-367; Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 112-115.

¹⁴ Cohen and Abrevaya Stein, “Sephardic Scholarly Worlds.”

¹⁵ Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Making Jews Modern. The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), esp. 55-76, 123-149.

the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Both these circles had their main centers in Istanbul and Izmir, and to a lesser extent in Salonica.¹⁷

A demographic profile of *maskilim* in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire shows three common attributes: (1) financial security, which often took the form of membership of the upper-middle class, a status that guaranteed the individuals the leisure time needed to acquire a basic *maskilic* education and to participate in *maskilic* activities; (2) a Jewish religious education, ensuring literacy in the principles of the Jewish faith and in the Hebrew language; (3) and, as a clear derivative of the above, the use of two languages: Hebrew and Ladino.

In the Ottoman Empire, several hundred Jews at least met all these conditions. My study on the Ottoman *maskilim* focused on individuals who met all three basic criteria, as well as at least one of three additional factors: (1) contact with other *maskilim* in Europe and the Ottoman Empire, including correspondence, mutual references in the press, and personal meetings; (2) publication of articles in *maskilic* journalistic and literary platforms; (3) and participation in *maskilic* activities, such as associations and educational institutions. I was eventually able to locate around one hundred *maskilim* who meet all these parameters, although it is almost certain that additional names will be located in the future.¹⁸

The *Haskalah* acquired a distinct character in the Ottoman Empire, where neither the Hasidic movement nor Reform Judaism gained a foothold. The Ottoman *maskilim* developed their ideological and social character against the background of their identity as one of several non-Muslim communities within the Muslim empire – an empire that underwent profound changes in almost every respect over

¹⁶ Leah Borenstein-Makovetsky, "Rabbinic Scholarship. The Development of Halakhah in Turkey, Greece and the Balkans, 1750-1900," *Jewish Law Association Studies* 9 (1997): 9-18; Matthias B. Lehmann, *Ladino Rabbinic Literature and Ottoman Sephardic Culture*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

¹⁷ The *maskilic* sub-group was not completely separate in ideological terms, and certainly not in social terms, from the other sub-groups that comprised the Ottoman Jewish intelligentsia. See Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 44-53.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 66-79. For short biographies of the Ottoman *maskilim*, see *Ibid.*, 274-288.

the course of the nineteenth century. In this empire, as Dina Danon recently proposed:

The Ottoman interpretation of the *Sharia* law, coupled with the profound ethnic and religious diversity characterizing the Empire itself, cultivated a social fabric that was not only tolerant of difference but predicated upon it [...]. For the long arc of Ottoman history, the legitimacy of Jewish difference was simple not in question.¹⁹

The Ottoman *maskilim* aspired to strengthen the bond between the Jews and the Ottoman state and to enhance their identification with it,²⁰ an approach that intensified during the Hamidian era.²¹ They were acutely aware of the developments among the other non-Muslim communities, particularly the Greek-Orthodox and Armenians, and in some cases even engaged in contacts with these groups: from Bulgarian printers in Salonica in the 1860s²² to Greek enlighteners in the early 1890s.²³

Thus the *maskilim* served as agents of modernization in their communities, alongside others. They sought to advance Jewish education by founding modern schools in the various communities and/or by introducing innovative pedagogical methods.²⁴ This was combined with a strict insistence on study of the Bible and the Babylonian Talmud, on the teaching and inculcation of Hebrew, and, in many instances, on the study of Ottoman Turkish, the language of the state, along with useful foreign languages, particularly French.²⁵ The *maskilim* also advocated

¹⁹ Dina Danon, *The Jews of Ottoman Izmir: A Modern History*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020), 6. See also *Ibid.*, 22-23.

²⁰ See, for instance, Barukh Mitrani, “Masa turkiya ha-eiropit” [The Burden of Ottoman Turkey], *Ha-magid*, April 17, 1867, 124 [Hebrew]; Abraham Rosanes [Ha-abir], “Masaot ha-abir” [The Knight’s Travels], *Ha-magid*, July 1, 1868, 204; Ben Zion [Barukh Mitrani], “Prazot yerushalayim” [Jerusalem’s Phrases], *Havatzelet*, December 7, 1883, 46 [Hebrew].

²¹ Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans*, 19-102.

²² Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 1-118, 165.

²³ Cohen and Abrevaya Stein, “Sephardic Scholarly Worlds,” 374-375. I intend to include a chapter on this subject in my English book.

²⁴ Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 64-65, 106-108, 129, 142-148.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 69-73.

action to enhance productivity, including vocational education and the adoption of modern scientific and technological innovations.²⁶

In both ideological and social terms, the Ottoman *Haskalah* can be compared to the moderate and religious *Haskalah* that was prevalent during the nineteenth century – particularly in Galicia under Habsburg rule, but also in the Russian Empire, Italy, North Africa, and elsewhere. The moderate *maskilim* were profoundly attached to Jewish tradition, and in most cases they observed the Jewish commandments (*mitzvot*).²⁷ The leitmotif in their thought was a search for what was referred to at the time as “the Golden Mean” [*derekh ha-emitzayit*] between the members of the rabbinical class who were unwilling to countenance secular studies or learning of foreign languages and Hebrew grammar, on the one hand, and those who had undergone processes of secularization, eschewed the Hebrew language, and generally placed European culture above Jewish culture, on the other.²⁸

The Salonican *Haskalah* and Judah Nehama

Approximately seventy percent of the identified Ottoman *maskilim* lived in the Ottoman Balkans; the port city of Salonica was the second-largest center of *maskilic* activities, after Edirne.²⁹ Salonica was the capital of the Ottoman province of Macedonia and served as an important economic and commercial center. In the 1890s, the Jewish population of the city was at least 50,000, accounting for around sixty percent of the total population. This phenomenon of a “Jewish city” had no parallel in Ottoman Jewry, and only a few similar instances can be quoted throughout the history of the Diaspora. In 1912, as the Balkan Wars loomed, Salonica had a Jewish population of at least 80,000, and Jews still

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 211, 226, 298, 305.

²⁷ Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, 150-230; Yosef Chetrit, “Hebrew National Modernity against French Modernity. The Hebrew *Haskalah* in North Africa at the End of the Nineteenth Century,” *Mikedom u-miyam* 3 (1990): 11-76 [Hebrew].

²⁸ See Tamir Karkason, “Between Two Poles: Barukh Mitrani, *Haskalah* and Nationalism,” *Zutot*, (in press).

²⁹ Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 81-99.

constituted a majority in the city (this situation would change gradually over subsequent decades as the Jewish population fell, and was then devastated in the Holocaust). Alongside the Jews, Ottoman Salonica was also home to large Greek-Orthodox and Turkish-Muslim communities, as well as thousands of Sabbateans (*dönme*), Bulgarians, and foreign nationals.³⁰

The unique demographic reality in Salonica in the final years of the Ottoman era, as a city with a Jewish majority that continued to close down on Sabbath at least until the early 1910s, enabled the Jews of the city to develop an intense Jewish consciousness and encouraged a proto-national form of Jewish solidarity.³¹ There was no tendency toward separatism from the Ottoman Empire among the Jews of Salonica; rather, the reality in the city facilitated a perception of Sephardi communitarianism under the broad wings of the empire. Indeed, it was the tolerant Ottoman framework itself that permitted the well-established community in the city to enjoy a sense of being secure in its own home,³² leading to the emergence of an unofficial “Jewish republic” under Muslim rule. Thus on Friday afternoon, “as the *muezzin* calls Muslim worshippers to prayer from the minaret, and as the sun sets, the city readies itself for the Sabbath.”³³

Judah Ben Jacob Nehama was born in Salonica to a prosperous and respected family. His father Jacob served as an agent for English companies in the city.³⁴ Among other activities, the Nehama family transported merchandise (the precise nature of the products remains unknown) through the Austrian shipping

³⁰ Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts. Christians, Muslims, and Jews, 1430-1950*, (New York: A. Knopf, 2005), esp. 173-310; Orly C. Meron, *Jewish Entrepreneurship in Salonica, 1912-1940. An Ethnic Economy in Transition*, (Brighton - Portland - Toronto: Sussex Academic Press, 2011).

³¹ For a picturesque description recorded by a German-Jewish traveler in 1911, see *Travel in Saloniki. A Translation of Chazkel Zvi Kloeziel's Book "In Saloniki"*, ed. Judith Dishon, (Jerusalem: The Haberman Institute, 2017), 124-133 [Hebrew].

³² Compare: Danon, *Izmir*, 6-7.

³³ Dishon, *Travel in Saloniki*, 126.

³⁴ The biographical details here are based on the article by David Benvenisti, together with findings from my studies. See David Benvenisti, “R. yehuda ya’akov nehama mevasser tkufat ha-haskalah be-saloniki” [R. Judah Ben Jacob Nehama, The Forerunner of the Epoch of the *Haskalah* in Salonica], in *Hagut ivrit be-artzot ha-Islam* [Hebrew Thought in Islamic Countries], ed. Menahem Zohori, (Jerusalem: Brit Ivrit Olamit, 1981), 144-164 [Hebrew].

company Lloyd, which engaged in trade throughout the Mediterranean Basin from its headquarters in Trieste, and represented the interests of the Hapsburg dynasty in the region.³⁵

Nehama studied at the *Talmud Torah ha-Gadol* in the city, and was placed in the *Me'aynim* class, intended for students who were expected to work as teachers and rabbis in the future. Before 1850, he married Mazal Tov, the daughter of Jacob Modeano, an educated and wealthy member of the community of *francos* (the descendents of *Anusim* from the Western Sephardi Diaspora). While his father was alive, Nehama was employed by him, serving in a part-time capacity in the family business while at the same time trading in books and acting as a publisher. After his father's death in 1857, Nehama was put in charge of the family's commercial affairs, while continuing his previous activities. As we shall see below, in the second half of the nineteenth century, Nehama maintained extensive correspondences with fellow Jewish *maskilim*, *Wissenschaft* scholars, Christian clerics, and merchants, within the Ottoman Empire as well as beyond its borders, particularly in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

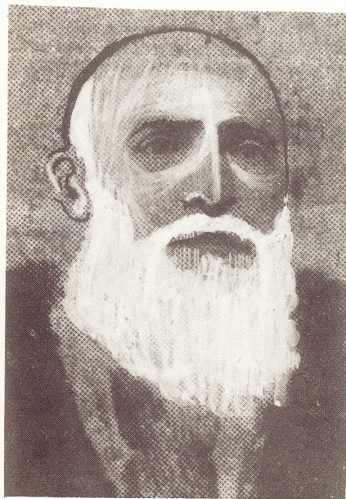


Fig. 1: A Portrait of Judah Nehama.
(with thanks to Salonika and Greece Jewry Heritage
Center, Petah Tikva)

³⁵ Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 1-73. On the Lloyd company, see Yoav Arbel, "An Austrian Lloyd Seal from Jaffa," *Strata* 32 (2014): 109-118; 112-113; Mazower, *Salonica*, 211.

Nehama was very active in Jewish communal life in Salonica, serving during various periods as a member of the lay leadership of the community. He was also a member of various mutual help societies, particular the *Bikur Holim* society (which arranged visits for the sick). In the mid-1860s, he founded and directed the modern school *Kolejio de padre de familia* (College of the Father of the Family), about which very little is known. In 1862 or 1864, Nehama was one of the founders of the *Alliance* committee in Salonica. He engaged in lively correspondence with the senior officials in the organization ahead of the opening of its first school in the city, though this only opened a decade later. From the late 1880s, Nehama's health began to deteriorate and he gradually lost his vision. He retired from his commercial affairs and handed over responsibility to his sons. In 1889 and 1890, he traveled to Central Europe to seek medical advice, taking the opportunity to meet some of his European correspondents in Vienna and Budapest.

Nehama authored and published some 15 works in diverse fields: geography, history, and biography; sermons and speeches; religious treatises; and textbooks. Notable examples include *El Lunar* ([The Moonlight] Salonica 1864-1865), a scientific-literary journal in Ladino;³⁶ and *Istorya Universal* (or *Istorya Universala* [A Universal History]) a Ladino non-fiction book on history and geography, adapted from an English original.³⁷

Nehama was the most important of the 15 *maskilim* born in Salonica before 1860.³⁸ His peers in the circle of *maskilim* in the city included, among others, Sa'adi

³⁶ On *El Lunar*, see Olga Borovaya, *Modern Ladino Culture. Press, Belles Letters, and Theatre in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Bloomington - Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2012), 79-81; Karkason, *Haskalah*, 62, 210-211, 219, 298, 303, 304.

³⁷ [Judah Nehama], *Istorya universal* [A Universal History], (Salonico: [Darzilovitis], 5621 [1861]); [idem], *Istorya universala* [!], (Salonico: n.p., ca. 1878); Id., *Istorya universala*, (Salonico: n.p., 6542 [1882]). All in Ladino. For the original book, see Peter Parley, *Tales about Europe, Asia, Africa, and America*, (London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1827-1830). I intend to devote a separate study to this work and its adaptation by Nehama, who may have received the English original from his friend Peter Crosby (1828-1904), a Scottish missionary who lived in Salonica from 1857 until his death.

³⁸ Regarding later *maskilim* who were active in Salonica, see Devin E. Naar, *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 189-238.

Bezalel Halevy (1819-1903), the founding editor of the popular Ladino newspaper *La Epoka* ([The Epoch] Salonica 1875-1911); David Pifano (1851-1924), who later served as the chief rabbi of Sofia (1899-1921) and thereafter of all Bulgarian Jewry; and David Abraham de Boton. In a written comment from 1890, the Ladino journalist David Fresco (1853-1933) of Istanbul mentioned that all three “read almost all the modern literature in Hebrew.”³⁹ Nehama passed away on January 30, 1899.⁴⁰

Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin

From ancient times, letters served as a means of communication between Jews from different regions. When the correspondents did not share a mother tongue, Jews usually wrote in Hebrew, as the lingua franca of the Jewish world. The *Haskalah* movement was comprised of dispersed individuals, and from the last quarter of the eighteenth century, an extensive Republic of Letters emerged, written primarily in Hebrew. Letters became a central platform of expression in *maskilic* culture, and “it was the *maskilic* communication network that created the new public sphere of the community of *maskilim*.”⁴¹ In the nineteenth century, letters written by some of the *maskilim* and *Wissenschaft* scholars were published, such as correspondence by Samuel David Luzzatto (Shadal, 1800-1865) and Judah Leib Gordon (Yalag, 1830-1892).⁴²

³⁹ [David Fresco], “Notas de viaje” [Travel Notes], *El Tiempo*, August 21, 1890, 499 [Ladino]. Sa’adi Halevy left a comprehensive autobiography in two different versions. See *Jewish Voice from Ottoman Salonica. The Ladino Memoir of Sa’adi Besalel a-Levi*, eds. Aron Rodrigue and Sarah Abrevaya Stein, translated by Isaac Jerusalmi, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011; Dov Cohen, “The Memoirs of Sa’adi HaLevy-Eskenazi of Salonika (1819-1903),” *Pe’amim* 159-160 (2019): 47-90 [Hebrew].

⁴⁰ On Nehama’s funeral, see David Fresco, “Nekrolojia. El rabenu yehudah nehama de salonika” [An Obituary. Rabbi Judah Nehama of Salonica], *El Tiempo*, February 2, 1899, 392-393 [Ladino].

⁴¹ Tova Cohen, Shmuel Feiner, *Voice of a Hebrew Maiden. Women’s Writings in the 19th Century Haskalah Movement*, (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2006), 48 [Hebrew].

⁴² For an introduction to the *maskilic* letter, see Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 162-163, and the references there.

Like some of his predecessors, Nehama also chose to preserve and print some of his letters. Many of these correspondences, dated between 1850 and 1895, were included in his two-volume printed collection of letters, entitled *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin*. The book's Hebrew title translates literally as "Letters More Delightful than Wine,"⁴³ but also contains a hidden pun, as *Yayin* [wine] is a Hebrew acronym for the author's initials. The first volume was published in Salonica on Nehama's own initiative in 1893.⁴⁴ The second, only partially edited, was published four decades after his death, in 1939, by Barukh David Bezes, a prominent printer in Salonica at the time, and Hananel Haim Hassid (d. 1939), a Hebrew teacher and later principal at the *Talmud Torah ha-Gadol* in the city.⁴⁵

In publishing his letters in 1893, after decades of extensive intellectual activity, Nehama apparently hoped to display his *maskilic* enterprise to his counterparts – mostly European Jews. Publishing the edited letters might have helped him accrue great symbolic capital⁴⁶ as an Ottoman Jew strongly connected to the European *Haskalah*. We may assume that his visit to Vienna during the summer of 1889, where he held personal meetings with Austro-Hungarian *maskilim*, also had an influence on his decision to publish his letters.⁴⁷

No later than the beginning of 1890, Nehama began collecting letters from several of his correspondents, those whose content he remembered but of which he had since disposed.⁴⁸ The main trigger for the publication was an unexpected disaster: the fire that struck Salonica on September 4, 1890,⁴⁹ which destroyed much of

⁴³ For this translation, see Feiner, "Towards a Historical Definition," 213 n102.

⁴⁴ Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, vol. 1.

⁴⁵ Judah ben Jacob Nehama, *Mikhtevei dodim mi-yayin: Hibbur kolel haqiroṭ al inyanim shonim*, vol. 2 (Salonica: Bezes, n.d. [1939]). The year of volume's appearance is according to: Joseph Nehama, *Histoire des Israélites de Salonique*, (Thessalonique: Communauté israélite de Thessalonique, 1978), vols. VI-VII, 689. On the publication of the second volume, see Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 170-173.

⁴⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, "Symbolic Capital," in Id., *Outline of Theory of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 171-183.

⁴⁷ On this visit, see Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 2:16, 147.

⁴⁸ See, for instance, *Ibid.*, 1:29.

⁴⁹ On the fire of 1890, see Rena Molho, "Jewish Working-Class Neighborhoods Established in Salonica Following the 1890 and 1917 Fires," in *The Last Ottoman Century and Beyond. The Jews*

Nehama's rich library, including numerous original manuscripts and printed works from Ottoman Jewry and elsewhere, as well as hundreds of religious and *maskilic* works from around the Jewish world. The fire also destroyed bound collections of Hebrew-language newspapers.⁵⁰

The flames also consumed additional historiographic and religious texts written by Nehama himself and most of the collection of his letters. The disaster motivated Nehama to print his remaining letters: in his introduction to the first volume, he described the great sadness that filled him at the thought of his lost letters: "Oh! When I lie down and recall those pleasant moments I enjoyed, upon receiving my excellent letters [...], in my heart I am disturbed. And I grieve for this loss, which could never be returned. I asked myself, therefore, why me?"⁵¹ According to this testimony, the sudden catastrophe led Nehama to gather his surviving letters and print them: "Realizing this in bitter sadness, my heart spoke to me [...]. Let me rise and bring to the printing press those saved from the fire [...] so that they may remain for days to come [...]. I made up my mind and I did so."⁵²

The publication of the first volume of *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin* occurred during the early years of the *Haskalah* movement and its Ottoman branch. However, it also coincided with a period that Aron Rodrigue, referring to parallel enterprises in contemporary Salonican Jewish community, has described as "a time when the new economic and social power of this community was at its height, and its newly acquired place in the sun had to be defended." Such enterprises, Rodrigue suggested, were "a sign both to confidence and of anxiety about what the future would bring."⁵³ In Nehama's mind, this anxiety for the future was probably coupled with his own personal anxiety for the possible destruction of the invaluable material salvaged from the fire, and the grief over what had already been lost.

in *Turkey and the Balkans, 1808-1945*, vol. 2, ed. Mina Rozen, (Tel Aviv: Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, Tel Aviv University, 2002), 173-185, 193-194.

⁵⁰ The inventory of this rich library can be reconstituted by analyzing all the titles mentioned in both volumes of Nehama's writings, an avenue I plan to explore in the future.

⁵¹ Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 1: III.

⁵² *Ibid.*, IV.

⁵³ Aron Rodrigue, "Salonica in Jewish Historiography," *Jewish History*, 28 (2014): 447.

Almost half of Nehama's exchanges of correspondence were with peers living in the Austro-Hungarian Empire: 140 letters out of 315. Almost ninety percent of the letters from Austria-Hungary were sent from Vienna, Galicia, and the Italian provinces, regions that formed the heartland of the *Haskalah* and the *Wissenschaft* in the empire, and were home to a large Jewish population that had not yet undergone intensive secularization and was gradually exposed to the ideas of the *Haskalah*.⁵⁴

The Jews of Austria-Hungary thus constituted Nehama's principle reference group. This important finding, which has gone unnoticed in previous scholarship, strongly testifies to the direct and intensive links between the Ottoman *Haskalah* and the Austro-Hungarian *maskilic* circles.⁵⁵

Nehama and His Viennese Booksellers

Most of the letters sent to Nehama from the Austro-Hungarian Empire came from its capital Vienna: 18% of the letters in Nehama's collection. Vienna was one of the most prominent cultural and literary centers in Europe during the nineteenth century. In 1890, after a major expansion of the city, Vienna had a population of approximately one and a half million, around one-tenth of whom were Jews. Most of the Jews of Vienna were immigrants from throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire who came to the city in search of a better future for their children.⁵⁶ A detailed discussion of Vienna in this period is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is worth mentioning the book by Carl E. Schorske, which offers an extensive analysis of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, highlighting its role as the city that saw the emergence of urban modernism, the *Judenstil* (Youth Style) art school of Gustav

⁵⁴ Moshe Pelli, "From *Ha-Me'asef* (1783-1811) to *Bikurei ha'Itim* (1820-1831)," *Qesher* 34 (2006): 61-77; 62-64 [Hebrew].

⁵⁵ For a detailed and comparative discussion of this aspect, see Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 154-204, and particularly the works I am currently preparing.

⁵⁶ Anton G. Rabinbach, "The Migration of Galician Jews to Vienna, 1857-1880," *Austrian History Yearbook*, 28 (1975): 44-54; 48.

Klimt (1862-1918), and psychoanalysis as founded by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939).⁵⁷ A flourishing and tempestuous city, Vienna was also one of the main centers of the *Wissenschaft*, a status that was formalized in 1893 with the founding of the Rabbinical Seminary, which operated until the *Anschluss* of 1938.⁵⁸

Vienna's relative proximity to the Ottoman Empire (some 1,500 kilometers from Istanbul, and less than 1,200 kilometers from Salonica) made the city an influential cultural and trade center for Ottoman Jews, including in the fields of print and literature. By the early eighteenth century, at the latest, Vienna was home to an established Sephardi community, some of whose members held Ottoman citizenship.⁵⁹ Ladino was the mother tongue of some of the Sephardi Jews of Vienna, and from the 1860s newspapers were printed in the city in this language.⁶⁰ The members of the Sephardi community were often known as "Turkish Jews"⁶¹ and maintained extensive ties with the Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire.⁶² Rather surprisingly, almost all Nehama's Viennese correspondents were Ashkenazi Jews, and there are relatively few mentions of members of the Sephardi community in his letters.⁶³

Dozens of letters preserved in *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin* shed light on Vienna's crucial role in the distribution of *maskilic* literature to Salonica, mostly through Nehama's connections with various members of the Viennese book trade

⁵⁷ Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1979). For a more recent anthology, see *Vienna 1900: Blooming on the Edge of an Abyss*, eds. Sharon Gordon and Rina Peled, (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2019) [Hebrew].

⁵⁸ Peter Landesmann, "Die Geschichte der Ausbildung von Rabbinern in Wien bis zur Gründung der Israelitisch-Theologischen Lehranstalt (ITLA)," in *Wien und die jüdische Erfahrung 1900-1938. Akkulturation, Antisemitismus, Zionismus*, eds. Frank Stern and Barbara Eichinger, (Wien: Böhlau, 2009), 143-153.

⁵⁹ On the Sephardi Community of Vienna, see Martin Stechauner, *The Sephardic Jews of Vienna: A Jewish Minority Crossing Borders*, PhD Thesis, (University of Vienna, 2019).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 49-54.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 199, 259-260.

⁶² Yaron Ben-Naeh and Yochai Ben-Gdaliah, "The Support of the Bursa Community by the Community in Vienna in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Pe'amim* 139-140 (2014): 309-326 [Hebrew].

⁶³ For some exceptions involving technical activities rather than intellectual relations, see Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 1:22, 66, 149, 179; 2:24, 27, 107, 130, 156.

network. In the early 1850s, Nehama began working with the Viennese bookseller Yisrael Knöpfmacher (1794-1857). The latter served as an agent for the important non-Jewish Viennese printer Anton Edler von Schmid (1765-1855), who since the first decade of the nineteenth century had also catered to a substantial Jewish audience.⁶⁴ Knöpfmacher used to acquire Hebrew non-fiction books for Nehama, dispatching them to him a few at a time. He also acted as mediator between Nehama and *Wissenschaft* scholars who were able to procure *maskilic* books for him, such as S.D. Luzzatto.⁶⁵ By the mid-1880s, Nehama also worked with various other Jewish booksellers in Vienna, among them Solomon Netter,⁶⁶ Jacob Kam,⁶⁷ Jacob Picker,⁶⁸ and the Winter brothers.⁶⁹ Evidently, the connections between Nehama and these booksellers were incidental and irregular, and he does not appear to have formed a close business relationship, let alone a personal one, with any of them.

Chaim David Lippe: A Galician-Viennese *Wissenschaft* Scholar

In stark contrast to Nehama's limited and intermittent contact with other colleagues in Vienna, his relationship with the Austro-Hungarian Jewish bookseller and bibliographer Chaim David Lippe (1823-1900) was warm and close, and including both personal and commercial dimensions.

⁶⁴ Moshe Pelli, *Haskalah and Beyond. The Reception of the Hebrew Enlightenment and the Emergence of Haskalah Judaism*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 63-65; Id., "Ha-mevi le-beit ha-dfus ha-nochri Anton Schmid. Madpis sifrei kodesh ve-sifrei haskalah," in *The Library of the Haskalah. The Creation of a Modern Republic of Letters in Jewish Society in the German-Speaking Sphere*, eds. Shmuel Feiner, Zohar Shavit, Natalie Naimark-Goldberg and Tal Kogman, (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2015), 130-151 [Hebrew].

⁶⁵ Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 1:16, 24, 27, 30, 35, 38, 39-40, 69, 72, 85, 146. Business disputes between Nehama and Knöpfmacher had already occurred in 1852 (*Ibid.*, 40), but the two were in contact until the Knöpfmacher passed away.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:27-9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

Lippe was born in the Galician city of Stanisławów (today Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine), and at the age of 26 moved to Tschernowitz, the capital of Bukovina, an Austro-Hungarian province (now also in Ukraine), where he served as teacher and cantor. He later moved to Epries (today Prešov, Slovakia), where he authored a booklet on social tensions in the communities of Hungary and the surrounding regions.⁷⁰ In 1873, he settled in the capital Vienna, where he made his career as a bookseller, devoting himself to his bibliographic occupation.⁷¹

From 1874 onward, Lippe published a series of comprehensive bibliographical studies of Hebrew literature, focusing in particular on works from the *Haskalah* and *Wissenschaft*. Of particular note are his bilingual German-Hebrew bibliographies entitled *Bibliographisches Lexicon / Asaf ha-mazkir*, published in Vienna between 1879 and 1899.⁷² These works are still used by scholars in Jewish studies, as evidenced by the fact that one of the volumes was reprinted in 2003.⁷³ On the title page of final biography in the series, *Asaf ha-mazkir he-hadash* (Vienna 1899), Lippe explained that the work was “a complete list [...] of all the books, essays, and journals published” over the preceding two decades, “both those written in the pure Holy Tongue and those written in the living languages [the vernaculars], in the tongue of each people.” He added that his list “included the names of [...] rabbis, preachers (*darshanim*) [...], sages (*hachamim*), authors and publishers [...]”.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Chaim David Lippe, *Sechs Briefe zur Beleuchtung der religiösen Wirren in Ober-Ungarn, von einem Beamten der israelitischen Kultus-Gemeinde zu Epries*, (Kaschau: C. Werfer, 1866).

⁷¹ Gershom Bader, *Medina ve-hakhamea. Toldot kol ha-hakhamim vеха-sofrim she-arisatam amdah be-galizia* [A Country and its Sages], (New York: n.p., 1934), 131-132.

⁷² Chaim David Lippe, *Ha-meassef. Bibliographische Monatsschrift zur Orientierung für den jüdischen Buchhandel*, (Wien: Ch. D. Lippe, 1874); Id., *Asaf ha-mazkir [...]: Ch. D. Lippe's Bibliographisches Lexicon der gesamten jüdischen Literatur der Gegenwart und Adress-Anzeiger*, (Wien: Verlag des Herausgebers, 1879-1889); Id., *Asaf ha-mazkir he-hadash [...]: Ch. D. Lippe's bibliographisches Lexicon der gesamten jüdischen und theologisch-rabbinischen Literatur der Gegenwart*, (Wien: Ch. D. Lippe, 1899).

⁷³ Id., *Bibliographisches Lexicon der gesamten jüdischen Literatur der Gegenwart und Adress-Anzeiger*, (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 2003).

⁷⁴ Id., *Asaf ha-mazkir he-hadash*, title page.

The correspondence between Nehama and Lippe, which I shall analyze below, shows that by the early 1880s Lippe already maintained a broad and well-developed network of connections with *maskilim* and *Wissenschaft* scholars from Central and Eastern Europe. Lippe's contacts in his capacity as a bookseller clearly provided the basis for his bibliographic activities. Thus, for example, Lippe was in contact with the editorial boards of various Hebrew-language newspapers and recruited many of his colleagues as subscribers for these publications, including Nehama.⁷⁵ In 1890, when the latter sought to clarify "what happened to him [the editor of *Ha-magid*], do you know?" it was Lippe that he addressed his question.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, in his bibliographical work, Lippe documented the same journals.⁷⁷

Lippe's attitude to the Jewish national movement is unknown, but it is worth noting that his younger brother was Dr. Karpel Lippe (1830-1915), a physician and one of the leaders of the *Hovevei Zion* movement in Romania from the 1880s. He also served as president of the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897.⁷⁸

Commercial and Personal Relationship

We do not know how the contact between Nehama and Lippe was initiated. It is highly likely that Nehama only heard about Lippe after the latter moved to Vienna in 1873, since it was in this city that his career as a bookseller blossomed, while the capital was also a key focus of Nehama's activities in the book trade. Nehama's correspondence with Lippe began no later than 1882, as is clear from a letter sent by the editor of the Hebrew journal *Ha-Magid*, David Gordon (1831-1886), to Nehama, in December 1882.⁷⁹ The relationship between the two is documented

⁷⁵ See, for instance: Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 2:31, 186.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁷⁷ For the list of Hebrew journals documented by Lippe, see Lippe, *Asaf ha-mazkir he-hadash*, 457-460. Regarding journals in other languages (German, Judeo-Arabic [*Arabische Zeitung*], English, French, Italian, Romanian, Ladino [*Spanische Zeitungen*], Dutch, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, and Yiddish), see *Ibid.*, 460-475.

⁷⁸ Bader, *Medina ve-hakhamea*, 132-3; Michael Reimer, "'The good Dr. Lippe' and Herzl in Basel, 1897. A Translation and Analysis of the Zionist Congress's Opening Speech," *Journal of Israeli History* 34/1 (2015): 1-21.

⁷⁹ Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 2:185.

in 22 surviving letters written between 1888 and 1895.⁸⁰ These represent just a portion of the letters the two exchanged, and we may assume that the correspondence between Nehama and Lippe was indeed more intensive than those Nehama maintained with other booksellers in Vienna and elsewhere in Europe.

The correspondence between Nehama and Lippe reveals the regular pattern of their commercial relations: Nehama would order various Hebrew books from Lippe, usually *maskilic* volumes. Residing in Vienna and with relatively easy access to books from the various *maskilic* centers, Lippe would in turn collect orders from Nehama, for whom he maintained an ongoing credit line. Each time the bill reached a certain sum, Lippe would inform Nehama of the sum due, and the latter would pay him. For example, Nehama wrote to Lippe on November 1891: “I hereby send you today directly from the post office the total of 11.64 frs [Gulden (*florin*)] that you say in your account I owe you.”⁸¹ Nehama was able to receive any payments due directly from the post office.

At least until the mid-1880s, we may assume Lippe would only send Nehama books after receiving payment. After a while, however, as the trust between the two men grew, it is probable the Lippe sometimes sent books to Nehama on an advance basis. This is hinted at in a testimony from November 1889: Nehama thanks Lippe for three book deliveries he provided in the previous months, “with all the books for which my soul desired and yearned, that you have sent me and I have received on time.” We can infer from this document that Lippe had sent his counterpart the books without any advance payment requirement, which testifies to the great trust between them; thus, at the end of a long letter filled with personal details, Nehama writes: “Send me your bill that I owe you, and I shall pay.”⁸²

Yet the relationship between the Nehama and Lippe evidently evolved far beyond mere commercial transactions. In nearly every letter the two men exchanged warm

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 15, 16, 31-32, 34-35, 39, 44-45, 45, 46 (two letters), 49, 61-62, 97-98, 104, 104-105, 125-126, 146-147, 170, 171 (two letters), 185-186, 187, 190.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 125-126.

greetings of a kind that rarely appear in Nehama's other business correspondence. Their tone was usually amicable and intimate; from time to time, they updated each other regarding personal medical information⁸³ and even exchanged gifts. For instance, Nehama sent Lippe a gold-plated silver goblet as a gift for his seventieth birthday (1893).⁸⁴

Even before the two men met in person, their correspondence discloses a strong desire to do so, a plan that failed to materialize due to mundane preoccupations and the geographical distance. For example, in the fall of 1888 Lippe heard that Nehama was planning to travel to Vienna for medical purposes, and wrote to him: "I was so pleased to hear that you intend to come to Vienna [...], and I shall be most fortunate to see your countenance (*demutkha*) – the image (*temunat*) of a great and wise man!"⁸⁵

Nehama eventually visited Vienna in the summer of 1889, spending some two months in the city. His visit was primarily intended for medical treatments, but he also seized the opportunity to advance his scholarly interests. During his stay in the capital, he would often meet his old correspondent Lippe, and this visit intensified the close relationship between the two, as common in many relationships that began through correspondence (or, in later generations, through the telephone or digital means), before moving to direct personal contact. Some of the meetings even included their families.⁸⁶

This personal friendship naturally had an effect on the commercial relations between the two. Lippe provided Nehama, a devoted customer of his bookshop who had also become a personal friend, with various special services it is reasonable he did not offer most of his clients. For instance, Lippe would notify Nehama in detail of the publication status of titles he desired, such as periodicals that had not yet been published.⁸⁷ Lippe also offered Nehama, from time to time, special offers and discounts. In January 1893, for example, Lippe offered Nehama an excellent

⁸³ See, for example, *Ibid.*, 61, 92-95.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 16, 126, 146-147. See also *Ibid.*, 15, 45.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

opportunity to purchase a volume of a prestigious Hebrew book he had acquired from a Viennese priest for 20 gulden (*florin*) – less than one-quarter of its original price of 90 gulden.⁸⁸ It is worth adding that even 20 gulden was a considerable amount (a monthly salary for a Galician agrarian worker in the peak season),⁸⁹ and along with similar amounts mentioned in many of Nehama's letters, this is evidence of the latter's financial abilities.⁹⁰

Lippe and the Distribution of *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin*

Another prominent aspect of the personal relations between Nehama and Lippe is the latter's remarkable involvement in distributing the first volume of Nehama's collected letters in Viennese intellectual Jewish circles, and in particular among several key figures in the *Wissenschaft* circles of the time.

When Nehama published the first volume of *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin* in the spring of 1893, Lippe became its central distributor. Soon after the book was printed in Salonica, Nehama sent a copy to Lippe. The latter was delighted to receive it, and on May 26, 1893, he asked Nehama: "Perhaps you would like to send me several additional copies to distribute here [Vienna] among scholars [...] for a price you will set for your book [...]." ⁹¹

Three days later, Nehama replied: "I hereby send you five additional copies of *Mikhtevei Dodim mi-Yayin*. Present them to whomever you wish, free of charge [...]. But let me know the names of the scholars to whom you forwarded [the books] on my behalf." Nehama's only specific request was that Lippe "offer [a

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁸⁹ Between 1857 and 1892, the gulden was divided into 100 kreuzer. According to a Jewish memoir from the period, in the high season, "the spring, the wages rose suddenly [from 12 to 16.5 kreuzer a day] and peaked during the harvest, when even the women were paid 60 kreuzer a day." See Joseph Margoshes, *A World Apart: A Memoir of Jewish Life in Nineteenth Century Galicia*, translated by Rebecca Margolis and Ira Robinson, (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2008), 70.

⁹⁰ Compare: Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 197-199.

⁹¹ Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 2:46.

copy] to our friend Dr. Solomon Rubin.”⁹² Rubin (1823-1910), a key figure in the Galician *Haskalah*, lived in Vienna at the time. Lippe replied promptly, on June 5, 1893, sending the requested details of those who were given copies of the book. The recipients included some of the most prominent scholars of the *Wissenschaft* in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, all contemporaries of Nehama and Lippe:

I have received his gift together with five copies of his precious book – and I did what I had to do, and presented [the book] to R. Dr. [Moritz] Güdemann, [Adolf] Jellinek, Rubin, and the Vienna community library (*beit eked sefarim*). One copy remains with me, and I shall offer this to R. Isaac Hirsch Weiss [...] – and the book that you have sent me as a gift I shall give the scholar [...] Meir Ish Shalom. And you will be so kind as to send me another book [for myself] [...].⁹³

This excerpt presents a fascinating pantheon of *Wissenschaft* scholars who received Nehama’s book. Güdemann (1835-1918) was serving at the time as the chief rabbi of Vienna; Jellinek (1821-1893) was a prominent scholar of the Midrash and Kabbalah; and Weiss (1815-1908) and Ish Shalom (Friedman, 1831-1908) were shortly after appointed senior teachers at the newly-opened Rabbinical Seminary in the city.⁹⁴

On June 11, 1893, Nehama sent Lippe two additional copies, “to replace the one [copy] you asked for.”⁹⁵ Thus, Lippe began circulating Nehama’s book among Viennese *Wissenschaft* scholars he selected by himself, reflecting his conviction that the work contained “*Torah* words of the highest importance.”⁹⁶

Nehama had already made a name for himself among many of these Jewish *maskilim* four years earlier, during his visit to Vienna. On November 1889, after returning to Salonica, Lippe wrote to him that “quite many here (Vienna) who are

⁹² *Ibid.*, 171.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁹⁴ For bibliographical information about these figures, see Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 169 nos1002-1005 and the references there.

⁹⁵ Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 2:187.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 46. In original: “*dvarim ha-omdim be-ruma shel tora.*”

outstanding people, lovers of the *Torah*, are eager to know how you have been.” Lippe continued:

[...] Judah! *Now* your brethren thank you. Your name is known in Judah (*noda bi-yehuda*) for honor and glory [...], and here [Vienna] all lovers of their people and [its] *Torah* (*hovevei amam ve-tora*) honor and revere your name. All as one praise, glorify, and exalt the name of the wise and generous Rabbi Judah Nehama, the one and only (*ha-yahid veha-meyuhad*) among our Sephardi brethren! *The one* who will not discriminate between his Sephardi and Ashkenazi brethren – all beloved [...] to his pure soul!⁹⁷

Ismar Schorsch has claimed that from the mid-eighteenth century, a “myth of Sephardi supremacy” existed among the Jews of Central Europe. He suggests that “as construed by Ashkenazic intellectuals, the Sephardic image facilitated a religious posture marked by cultural openness, philosophic thinking, and an appreciation for the aesthetic.”⁹⁸ Schorsch, followed by John M. Efron, have identified such a “myth of supremacy” in the synagogue architecture, liturgy, literature, and scholarship of Central European Jewry.⁹⁹ Lippe’s lauding of Nehama as the “one and only among our Sephardi brethren” contains an element of this perception of “Sephardi supremacy,” but it also contains no less an element, and perhaps more, of patronizing condescension.

Nehama was regarded as a “one and only” among the Sephardi as a peer and an intellectual, despite the fact that in reality he was just one of a number of Ottoman *maskilim* of similar status, some of whom were well known to Lippe himself.¹⁰⁰ This paternalistic attitude echoed the manner in which certain *Wissenschaft* scholars, such as Yom-Tov (Leopold) Zunz (1794-1886) of Berlin, S.D. Luzzatto of Padua, and Solomon Judah Rapoport (Shir, 1790-1867) of Prague, regarded

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 147 (emphasis in the original).

⁹⁸ Schorsch, *From Text to Context*, 71.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 71-92; John M. Efron, *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic*, (Princeton - Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016).

¹⁰⁰ See Lippe, *Asaf ha-mazkir*, 324-325 (on Barukh Mitrani), 586 (on Abraham Danon).

Nehama and his fellow Ottoman *maskilim* as suppliers of knowledge rather than equal partners in discourse.¹⁰¹ By way of example, in August 1851, S.D. Luzzatto wrote to Nehama:

For now the ancient books, and particularly manuscripts, are dispersed across the Jewish Diaspora. And in the lands of the Orient, in particular, there can be no doubt that some precious treasures are lying in darkness, unwanted and unclaimed. My pious hope is that considerable benefit could come to me and to all those who love the study of Jewish history if you would provide me with a list of valuable and ancient books held by yourself and your friends.¹⁰²

Then, Luzzatto assumed that in the “lands of the Orient” there was no comparable demand for these “precious treasures,” and asked Nehama to prepare a list of ancient manuscripts and books held by him and his Ottoman Jewish peers so that he could use them in his research.

To return to Lippe’s claim that Nehama was unique “among our Sephardi brethren,” despite its Orientalist overtone, Lippe’s comment embodies the perspective that the Sephardim were indeed “brethren” for the Ashkenazi Jews: members of the same religious and ethnic group, rather than complete strangers. It may be possible to detect in the reference to “Sephardi brethren” a manifestation of a “banal” Jewish proto-nationalism – to borrow the concept of “banal nationalism” – that binds together the Galician *maskil* now living in Vienna and his “Sephardi brethren,” manifesting their affinity in an almost trivial manner.¹⁰³

Be this as it may, the respect the distinguished European peers had for Nehama surely motivated him to continue distributing copies of the first volume of his letters. Furthermore, Nehama executed the entire distribution enterprise, which incurred substantial printing and postage costs, at his own expense. He refused to

¹⁰¹ I cannot expand on this aspect here. See Karkason, *The Haskalah*, 192-204.

¹⁰² Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 1:9.

¹⁰³ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, (London - Thousand Oaks - New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995), 11.

accept any payment for the book's distribution, although the amounts he spent on it must have been significant even for an affluent man like him.¹⁰⁴ This was his way to establish his legacy in the realm of *Haskalah* and to reinforce his position and self-esteem.

In the months following the book's publication, Nehama continued to send copies to Lippe, who distributed them in Vienna, and possibly also in other Austro-Hungarian cities. In the summer of 1893, Lippe wrote to Nehama: "Many and good among the wise men of our people (*hakhamei amenu*) who heard the glory of your book [...] yearn to purchase it for the price you will determine, and I have received letters from different Rabbis about your book." Therefore, Lippe asked him: "And so I shall dare to ask you to send me some editions for sale, for the price you will determine."¹⁰⁵ Nehama instantly sent additional copies, without requesting any payment. In August 1893, Lippe notified him that "I have received his [Nehama's] gift."¹⁰⁶ Nehama continued sending additional copies to Lippe, and in October 1893, Lippe thanked him for another delivery: "I have received your books and I shall give them to the scholars (*hachamim*)."¹⁰⁷

Initiated by Nehama, and managed by Lippe, the distribution of the book aroused great interest among the Austro-Hungarian *Wissenschaft* scholars and *maskilim* in Vienna and beyond. Nehama received many notes of thanks from scholars who obtained the book through Lippe,¹⁰⁸ and reviews of the book were published in German *Wissenschaft* journals. In November 1893, an unknown author – probably Lippe – sent to Nehama "a translation (*ha'ataka*) [into Hebrew] of an article in German" published in a periodical whose name is not specified.¹⁰⁹ A few months later, Eliezer Berr, the editor of a German periodical published in Körmend in western Hungary, asked Nehama to publish an article about Ottoman Jewry, including Nehama's biography, though it is unclear what became

¹⁰⁴ This is implicit from several remarks in Nehama's letters. See Nehama, *Mikhtevei*, 2:49, 170, 171.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 170.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, *Ibid.*, 60, 64.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 66-68. I was unable to locate the original article.

of this initiative.¹¹⁰ It seems reasonable to assert that the publication of such articles about Nehama's book would have been inconceivable without Lippe's widespread network.

The wide-ranging relationship between Nehama and Lippe continued until the final years of their lives; the last documented evidence comes from March 1895.¹¹¹ Both men passed away around the turn of the century.

Concluding Discussion: Pan-Jewish *Haskalah* between “East” and “West”

I shall now seek to show that the relationship between Nehama and Lippe reflects the emergence of a “pan-Jewish” *maskilic* space. This space was not free of the hallmarks of the social and demographic dominance of the “West” over the “East” within the “Republic of *Maskilim*,” but it certainly permitted the forging of strong friendships between the two sides of the Diaspora, bonds that strengthen internal Jewish solidarity.

This closing discussion draws on the theoretical foundation offered by postcolonial theory, which became highly influential since Edward Said's well-known book, *Orientalism*, was published in 1978. Said claimed that the stereotypical and patronizing attitude of what he termed the “West” toward what he termed the “East” was shaped in modern times under the influence of Western imperialism.¹¹² Over the past four decades, and particularly since the mid-1990s, enormous efforts have been made to apply postcolonial theory to the fields of modern Jewish history and Israel Studies. Suffice it here to mention the canonical

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 62. Berr stated that the name of the journal he edited was *Ha-dvora* (“the bee,” i.e. *Die Biene* in German). I was unable to locate a newspaper of this name in Körmend, and I am indebted to Prof. Jonatan Meir and Prof. Guy Miron for their beneficial advice on this matter.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 97-98.

¹¹² Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

works by Ella Shohat¹¹³ and Yehuda Shenhav,¹¹⁴ as well as two influential anthologies, the first from some 15 years ago and the second published in 2017.¹¹⁵

Said saw Orientalism as “a western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient,”¹¹⁶ that appeared primarily in the presence of a colonial reality whereby a Western power adopted the policy of a country seeking to extend or retain its authority over other, non-Western, people or territories. However, as Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar have stressed, “Orientalism is an instance of colonial discourse, but it is also more than that. This holds true for Orientalism in general, and certainly for Orientalism where it concerns the Jews.”¹¹⁷ Efron stated that “rather than a straightforward means of asserting colonial, corporeal, and cultural authority, Orientalism could be a profound expression of one’s own cultural anxiety and insecurity, one that could provoke deep-seated fears of inferiority.”¹¹⁸

Accordingly, postcolonial theory may also be used in a situation that did not include direct colonial control, particularly when it is applied to “internal Orientalism” in the Jewish world itself, directed by “Western” Jews toward their “Eastern” coreligionists.¹¹⁹

I shall now turn to applying the conceptualizations of two scholars who over the past two decades have examined the question of the affinity between “Western” and “Eastern” Jews. The analysis here of the relationship between Nehama and

¹¹³ Ella Shohat, *Israeli Cinema. East/West and the Politics of Representation*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989).

¹¹⁴ Yehouda Shenhav, *The Arab Jews. A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

¹¹⁵ *Orientalism and the Jews*, eds. Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, (Hanover - London: Published for Brandeis University Press by University Press of New England, 2005); *Colonialism and the Jews*, eds. Ethan B. Katz, Lisa Moses Leff, and Maud S. Mandel, (Bloomington - Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2017).

¹¹⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

¹¹⁷ Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, “Orientalism and the Jews: An Introduction,” in *Orientalism and the Jews*, xiii.

¹¹⁸ John M. Efron, “Orientalism and the Historical Gaze,” in *Orientalism and the Jews*, 80.

¹¹⁹ Davidson Kalmar and Penslar, “Orientalism and the Jews,” xxiii-xxiii.

Lippe both draws on and reinforces these conceptualizations. Matthias Lehmann saw the institutionalization of the position of the emissary (*shadar*) in the eighteenth century as a practice of pan-Judaism: “both the idea and the experience of an interconnected Jewish diaspora community that transcended regional or ethnic divisions between, for example, Sephardic and Ashkenazi or Ottoman and European Jewries.”¹²⁰ Lehmann suggested that in the eighteenth century the institution of the emissary established a “contact zone” facilitating contacts between Jews from geographically removed areas and cultures. As a result, these Jews “experienced themselves synchronically as part of a broader, pan-Jewish community [...]”.¹²¹

In some of his studies on the Jews of the Muslim countries in modern times, Yaron Tsur has argued that the relations of “internal Orientalism” between “Eastern” and “Western” Jews that developed from the late eighteenth century can be mapped along an axis with two poles. The first, which he terms the “integrative” pole, adhered to an ideal of absolute equality in the spirit of the values of inter-Jewish and national solidarity. At the opposite end of the axis, the “reluctant” pole, inegalitarian and exclusivist, was influenced by colonialist values and Orientalist discourse. Between these two poles a range of relations was possible; in some cases the attitude of “Western” Jews toward their “Eastern” counterparts might lean toward the “integrative” pole, while in others their attitude could be closer to the “reluctant” pole.¹²²

The relationship between the Salonican *maskil*/Nehama and the Viennese Lippe in many ways challenge a postcolonial dichotomy of “Orient” and “Occident,” and appear to offer a model of a close bond possible within the pan-Jewish *maskilic*

¹²⁰ Matthias B. Lehmann, *Emissaries from the Holy Land. The Sephardic Diaspora and the Practice of Pan-Judaism in the Eighteenth Century*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 2.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Yaron Tsur, “The Israeli Historiography and the Ethnic Problem,” in *Making Israel*, ed. Benny Morris, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 231-233, 257-260; Id., “Otobiografiya miktzoyit, keilu” [A Professional Autobiography, Be like], in *Lines of Our Character: Exploring Israel, Writing about Ourselves*, eds. Avner Ben-Amos and Ofer Schiff, (Sde Boker: The Ben-Gurion Research Institute 2020), 560-561 [Hebrew]. See also Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*, 24.

space. Unlike Nehama's relations with other *maskilim* (such as S.D. Luzzatto, as mentioned above), the relationship examined here seems to lie closer to the "integrative" pole. How could such a relationship have developed in this manner? I will attempt to offer some hypothetical answers to this question.

Firstly, to a great extent, "money answereth all things" (Ecclesiastes 10:19). Nehama's elevated financial position, as well as the fact he was a loyal and valuable customer for Lippe's book trade for over a decade, may have made it harder for the latter to regard him as an allegedly "inferior", "Oriental" Jew.

Secondly, Nehama enjoyed a prominent status in his own community; he was privileged and affluent, and his marriage reinforced his social standing. While in objective terms his *maskilic* activities reached a limited circle in the local domain, he showed a strong sense of self-worth that may have been colored by the Sephardi concept of honor and dignity (in Ladino: *el onor*).

Like the Muslim-majority society around it, Ottoman-Jewish society confined expressions of admiration and respect to certain restricted groups and attached supreme importance to a person's family pedigree, a factor that in many cases also dictated socioeconomic status.¹²³ Nehama was a wealthy man from a respected family, and he married a woman from the Modiano dynasty of *francos* who enjoyed an even higher status. This allowed him to develop a self-image as a member of the Jewish elite of Salonica.

Lippe was also a respected man, though unlike Nehama he did not belong to the elite of his community and appears to have been significantly less wealthy. Moreover, despite living in an "Occidental" capital, Lippe was, like most Viennese Jews of his time, not originally from Vienna; born in peripheral Galicia, he came to the capital only after first settling in various provincial towns. In this sense, Lippe, despite his commercial success and established status as *maskil*, bibliographer, and bookseller, was somewhat overshadowed by the splendor of his

¹²³ On the importance of honor among Ottoman Jewry, see Yaron Ben-Naeh, "'*El onor no se merka kon paras?*' Honor and its Meaning among Ottoman Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 11/2 (2005): 19-50.

new place of residence and its wealthy inhabitants. Although the Austro-Hungarian Jews were perceived as “Occidentals” relative to their Ottoman coreligionists, and although Nehama always remained on the fringes of the Jewish “*maskilic* republic,” his pedigree, wealth, and elevated sense of self-worth may have enabled him to feel himself to be the equal, at least to an extent, of his “Occidental” counterpart, a Galician Jew who had become a Viennese.

Aziza Khazzoom has argued that the history of the Jewish Diaspora from the inception of the Jewish Enlightenment should be regarded as a series of processes of “orientalization” – that is, periods in which one group uses the East/West dichotomy in order to depict another group as inferior. Khazzoom mapped a “chain of orientalizations,” according to which the approach of the majority Protestant society in Germany influenced German-Jewish attitudes toward the Jews of Central Europe; this approach influenced the attitude of those Jews toward their coreligionists from Eastern Europe (*Ostjuden*), and this in turn influenced attitudes among the latter group toward Jews from the Muslim countries. Khazzoom did not discuss the Ladino-speaking Sephardim of the Ottoman Balkans, but I would suggest that for some Austro-Hungarian *maskilim*, such as Lippe, these Sephardim occupied an intermediate space between Eastern European Jews and the Jews in the other Muslim countries, who were perceived as more “Oriental.”¹²⁴ If this suggestion is accurate, it would seem that in the late nineteenth century, the borders between “East” and “West” were not as stringent as has sometimes been assumed, particularly in the case of the Ottoman Balkans.

¹²⁴ Aziza Khazzoom, “The Great Chain of Orientalism. Jewish Identity, Stigma Management, and Ethnic Exclusion in Israel,” *American Sociological Review* 68/4 (2003): 481-510. See also idem, *Shifting Ethnic Boundaries and Inequality in Israel. Or, how the Polish Peddler Became a German Intellectual*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008). I thank Prof. Aziza Khazzoom for the insights she kindly shared with me. My tentative suggestion here invites further research based on additional case studies. For now, I would mention the following statement by Rodrigue: “the Judeo-Spanish culture area, more open to European influences, was more predisposed to the work of the *Alliance* than the Arab world.” See Aron Rodrigue, *Images of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries in Transition. The Teachers of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, 1860-1939*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 49. Naturally, this does not detract from the importance of the scholarly worlds, including *maskilic* circles, in the other Muslim countries.

Thirdly, as two *maskilim* who did not share a mother tongue, Lippe and Nehama wrote to each other in Hebrew, the lingua franca of the *Haskalah*. Their proficiency in Hebrew in its various registers, and the fact that it was the mother tongue of neither, placed the two men on level ground. Had the correspondence between the two taken place, for example, in German, the Austro-Hungarian official language (which Lippe spoke well, but of which Nehama had at best limited knowledge), the situation might have been different.

The case of Nehama and Lippe clearly demonstrates the instrumental part language played in connecting a wide network of men of letters from all across the Jewish world, especially from the mid-nineteenth century onward. Indeed, in a comment from 1885, Nehama himself argued that the Hebrew language was the foundation for solidarity among Jews from different regions: “And what is the central bolt (*ha-bariah ha-tichon*) that links together this people [...] across all corners of Earth? This is only the *Torah*, which is written in Hebrew. It encourages them [the Jews] and unites them to this day.”¹²⁵ Thus, the correspondence of Nehama and Lippe shows how, in the modern Jewish distinction between “East” and “West,” Hebrew helped stress the “integrative” pole over the “reluctant” one, to return to Yaron Tsur’s proposed axis.

Fourthly and lastly: when examining the close friendship between two individuals, we cannot underestimate the importance of the rather prosaic factor of personal “chemistry.” The personal connection between Nehama and Lippe had made them close friends – well beyond trade partners, or a bookseller and his client. Not every friendship can cross every border, and if the two were, for instance, a Frenchman and a Sub-Saharan African in the colonial era, the case would probably have been different. Nevertheless, it appears that the borders that separated Nehama and Lippe were certainly crossable. The two men’s strong friendship, which apparently ended only as they approached death, certainly managed to cross these borders.

¹²⁵ [Judah Nehama], *Zekher Tzadik* [Memory of a Pious Man], (Salonica: n.p., 1885), 85 [Hebrew].

This paper has offered the first analysis of the extensive contacts between the *maskilim* of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires, based on a case study of the relationship between Judah Nehama of Salonica and Chaim David Lippe of Vienna. Drawing on previous studies, the discussion here helps to cast new light on the character of the *Haskalah* in the nineteenth century as a global movement that included Jews from across the Diaspora.

Based on the conceptualizations proposed by various scholars concerning the phenomenon of Orientalism in the Jewish context, and in particular on the studies of Lehmann and Tsur, the paper shows that by the second half of the nineteenth century a pan-Jewish *maskilic* space had emerged. In certain instances, at least, this space facilitated the strengthening of the “integrative pole” over the “reluctant pole” in the relations between Jews from “East” and “West,” thereby also weakening the “internal Orientalism” that was prevalent in the Jewish world of the time. Thus the paper highlights the contribution of the *Haskalah* movement to consolidating the affinities between Jews from across the Diaspora during this period.

In the modern era, a form of intellectual “buffer zone” was created between the Jews of the Ottoman Balkans and their coreligionists in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, just as a military buffer zone separated the two sides. However, the analysis of the relationship between Nehama and Lippe suggests that in some cases, the similarities between the two were greater than their differences, enabling them to maintain a firm friendship over two decades. Even if Lippe regarded Nehama as “the one and only among our Sephardi brethren,” the written word and the Republic of Letters of the *Haskalah* were ultimately able to draw together distant brothers.

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