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“A Time to Gather”:

A History of Jewish Archives in the Twentieth Century

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in History

by

Jason B. Lustig

2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“A Time to Gather”:

A History of Jewish Archives in the Twentieth Century

by

Jason B. Lustig

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor David N. Myers, Chair

At the opening of the twentieth century, Jewish scholars turned to archives as a primary source of Jewish history and culture, and created diverse archives of their own. It was to be, as one scholar put it, a “time to gather”—a time when Jews the world over worked to bring together the records of the Jewish past, but when the shared impulse to preserve the past led to intense conflict. This dissertation explores the landscape of twentieth-century Jewish archives, tracing a transnational network of archives and archivists in Germany, the United States, and Israel/Palestine. Rather than casting these archives as neutral oases of objectivity, this study examines them as highly political sites of struggle over control of Jewish culture and memory. It investigates Jews’ rising interest in archives and the proliferation of archival projects that followed, and excavates a tradition of comprehensive collecting and the resulting conflicts over who could “own” the past.

A Time to Gather argues that both before the Holocaust and especially in its aftermath,

the act of creating Jewish archives was just as much about the future as it was about the past. In the twentieth century, Jews in various parts of the world harbored dreams of “total archives” that would comprehensively document Jewish life. These aspirations fueled fierce competition, as centralizing historical materials was one way to project cultural hegemony and to shape the way that history would be written. Against this backdrop, the study examines major archives including, among others, the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden, founded in Berlin in 1905, the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem (since 1969 the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People), and the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, both of which opened in 1947. This work seeks to comprehend the scope of this “time to gather,” when Jewish scholars and leaders on three continents looked to archives as an important source of history and an anchor for communal memory, and to examine the significance of archiving for the development of the discipline of Jewish history as well as the politics of Jewish culture.

The dissertation of Jason B. Lustig is approved.

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List of Abbreviations

AD Bas-Rhin	Archives départementales, Bas-Rhin, Strasbourg
AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
AJA	American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH
AJAJ	<i>American Jewish Archives Journal</i>
AJHS	American Jewish Historical Society, New York City
AJYB	<i>American Jewish Year Book</i>
BArch	Bundesarchiv, Berlin–Lichterfelde
CAHJP	Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People
CCAR	Central Conference of American Rabbis
CCARYB	<i>CCAR Year Book</i>
CJ	Centrum Judaicum, Berlin
CJH	Center for Jewish History, New York City
CUL	Cambridge University Library
CZA	Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem
DIGB	Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund
GA	Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden, Berlin
GS	<i>Gesammelten Schriften</i>
GStAPK	Geheimes Staatsarchiv–Preußisches Kulturbesitz, Berlin–Dahlem
HUC	Hebrew Union College
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
HSI	Historical Society of Israel

JHGA	Jewish Historical General Archives, Jerusalem (since 1969, Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People)
JHSE	Jewish Historical Society of England
JMF	Jüdisches Museum in Frankfurt am Main
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSS	<i>Jewish Social Studies</i>
LBI	Leo Baeck Institute, New York City (archive)
LBIYB	<i>Leo Baeck Institute Year Book</i>
MGWJ	<i>Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums</i>
NLI	National Library of Israel (Sifriyah le'umit), Jerusalem
PAJHS	<i>Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society</i>
PHES	Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society (since 1951, Historical Society of Israel)
SIW	<i>Straßburger Israelitische Wochenschrift</i>
StA Hamburg	Staatsarchiv Hamburg
StadtAWo	Stadtarchiv Worms
UB Basel	Universitätsbibliothek Basel
UOBB	Unabhängige Orden Bne-Bris
YIVO	Yiddish Scientific Organization (today YIVO Institute for Jewish Research), New York City
YV	Yad Vashem, Jerusalem
ZAH	Zentralarchiv für die Erforschung der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, Heidelberg
ZGJD	<i>Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland</i>
ZWdJ	<i>Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judentums</i>

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- “Bernhard Brillling and the Reconstruction of Jewish Archives in Postwar Germany,” Association for Jewish Studies, San Diego, CA, December 2016.

Introduction

In August 1945, Judah Magnes, San Francisco-born rabbi and president of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, asked the American military to transfer to Jerusalem the historical files of the Jewish communities of Italy. When Cecil Roth, the Cambridge historian of Italian Jewry, heard of the plan, he wrote irately: “This is a Time to Gather, not the reverse.”¹ This sentiment spoke to a shared imperative to collect the forces of Jewish life and culture, as well as to its contentiousness: One person’s gathering was another’s scattering. This was particularly true after the Holocaust, when Jewish leaders looked to gather scattered survivors and cultural remnants to rebuild Jewish life. Roth’s words highlight a red thread through twentieth-century Jewish history and culture. It was, as the present study proposes, a “time to gather” in Jewish life, a feverish era of collecting—and conflict. It was a time when Jews turned to archives as sources of history and anchors of memory. It was a time when Jews around the world looked to preserve their past, pursuing diverse archive projects and harboring dreams of creating a “total archive” that could comprehensively document Jewish life. And it was a time of struggle, as archival centralization became a means to assert dominance over Jewish culture and life. It was the case at the opening of the twentieth century, when the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden* in Berlin proved a flashpoint for debates over the history and identity of German Jewry, and it was the case again after the Holocaust, when collecting the documentary fragments of the past symbolized who might carry forward the cultural legacy of European Jewry. In this time to gather, a rising urgency of archival memory in Jewish life and the importance of history’s physical trace meant that archives were powerful but contested symbols of control not just of the past but also of the present and future.

¹ Cecil Roth to Judah Magnes, 13 Aug. 1945, CAHJP P3/2056.

Scholars have spoken of a turn to history in modern Judaism, as historical thinking became a baseline for communal and individual standards of leadership and life, mirroring the historicization of all fields of intellectual pursuit.² Closely connected to this development, one can identify a transformation of similar magnitude, a turn to archives in Jewish culture reflecting new scholarly methods and the importance of the written record as a repository of memory. In times of social and economic upheaval, driven by emancipation and nationalism on one side and urbanization and mass migration on the other, collecting data and documents could be a salve for a vanishing past. After the Holocaust, historical materials held new significance as physical traces of the communities and cultures destroyed by the Nazi regime. In the 1950s, Jacob Rader Marcus of Hebrew Union College lectured his students about the “uncertain[ty]” of memory when studying the Jewish past.³ Later, Lucy Dawidowicz echoed this distrust of memory when she commented that “The memoirist would appear not to need documentary sources, yet memory alone is not dependable.”⁴ And in the 1980s and 1990s, as the Holocaust marched towards the inevitable era when it too would slip beyond the threshold of living memory, the Fortunoff Archive for Video Testimonies and the Shoah Foundation recorded survivor testimonies for posterity.⁵ Just as the turn to history was not limited to Jewish life, so too did this turn to written (or filmic) records reflect a wide-ranging transformation of western, industrialized society. In a renewed move “from memory to written record,” documents served as anchors of trust in an increasingly atomized

² See Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis 1994); E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (New York: Knopf, 1962), 71–72; Peter Reill, “Der Historisierung von Natur und Mensch. Der Zusammenhang von Naturwissenschaften und historischem Denken in Entstehungsprozeß der modernen Naturwissenschaften,” in *Geschichtsdiskurs*, ed. Wolfgang Küttler (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994), II:48–61.

³ Jacob Rader Marcus, “Methodology in Jewish History,” n.d., AJA MS-210 23/7.

⁴ Lucy Dawidowicz, *From that Place and Time: A Memoir, 1938–1947* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), xiv.

⁵ Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 107–119. Also see Michael Rothberg and Jared Stark, “After the Witness: A Report from the Twentieth Anniversary Conference of the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale,” *History and Memory* 15, no. 1 (2003): 85–96; Noah Shenker, “Through the Lens of the Shoah: The Holocaust as a Paradigm for Documenting Genocide Testimonies,” *History and Memory* 28, no. 1 (Spring–Summer 2016): 141–175.

world, and records provided a means of control in the face of rapid, accelerating change.⁶

A Time to Gather probes this turn to archives in Jewish life and the importance Jews placed in records and archives. The proliferation of Jewish archive projects in the twentieth century, the renewed effort to preserve the Jewish past after the Holocaust, and the overpowering impulse to possess the past all situate archives not as neutral oases of “objectivity” but as highly political sites. This study examines archive projects in Germany, the United States, and Israel/Palestine where Jews aimed to form collections of monumental scope and scale. These “total archive” projects—beginning with the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden, established in Berlin in 1905, and later the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem (since 1969 the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People) and the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, both founded in 1947—aspired to encompass the entirety of Jewish history. Before the Holocaust and especially in its aftermath, archives held great significance: Holding historical records marked epicenters of Jewish cultural hegemony and reflected the practical matter of who might tell and house the story of the Jews. Modern archive practice, especially as understood by the Jewish archivists considered in this study, has been based on an ideal of preserving records’ context and original order under the rubric of *respect des fonds* or provenance. However, as this dissertation argues, these varied archival efforts did not just preserve historical materials but also created entirely new frames of context.⁷ Gathering archives marked sources as part of a specifically Jewish history by placing them in “Jewish” archives. Archives, then, remain contentious settings of cultural production, where archivists

⁶ See M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), for a classic treatment. On written records in the information society: Josh Lauer, “From Rumor to Written Record: Credit Reporting and the Invention of Financial Identity in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Technology and Culture* 49, no. 2 (2008): 301–324; Craig Robertson, “A Documentary Regime of Verification: The Emergence of the US Passport and the Archival Problematization of Identity,” *Cultural Studies* 23, no. 3 (2009): 329–354; Robertson, “‘You Lie!’ Identity, Paper, and the Materiality of Information,” *Communication Review* 17, no. 2 (2014): 69–90; Anneli Sundqvist, “Documentation Practices and Recordkeeping: A Matter of Trust or Distrust?,” *Archival Science* 11, no. 3 (2011): 277–291.

⁷ The idea that the act of archiving disturbs “original order” and imposes a new “archival order” is explored in Brien Brothman, “Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice,” *Archivaria* 32 (1991): 78–100.

collected material in accordance with their notions of Jewish history's organizing principles.

Jewish History and the "Archival Turn"

Since the 1970s, the humanities and social sciences have seen the rise of new critical and theoretical approaches to archives, marked by intense interdisciplinary interest in archives and a radical transformation of perspectives on the nature of archives, archival practice, and research.⁸ This "archival turn" is usually associated with a set of oft-cited texts such as Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) and Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1995). However, it actually has risen from a broader intellectual revolution and a concomitant reappraisal of the position of archives in society. Some may have once believed archives to be "objective" sources, with archivists as "hewers of wood and drawers of water" in service of pure scholarship. Today, it is clear that archives are forces in their own right.⁹ Archives have been laid bare as instruments of state and political power, and not just in the sense of the etymological root in the "archon" or magistrate's abode, as Derrida noted.¹⁰ Medieval *trésors des chartes* weaved tapestries of overlapping claims of fealty and protection; in early modern Europe, archives were "arsenals of state power," the bureau of bureaucracy enabling the consolidation of centralized states.¹¹ Archives

⁸ Some attempts to describe the "archival turn" include Niahm Moore, et al, "In Other Archives and Beyond," in *The Archive Project* (London: Routledge, 2017), 1–30; Marlene Manoff, "Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines," *portal*, 4, no. 1 (2004): 9–25; Carolyn Steedman, "After the Archive," *Comparative Critical Studies* 8, no. 2–3 (2011): 321–340.

⁹ For an overview of recent work, see Elizabeth Yale, "The History of Archives: The State of the Discipline," *Book History* 18 (2015): 332–359; Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2, no. 1 (Mar. 2002): 1–19; Cook, "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms," *Archival Science* 13, no. 2 (2013): 95–120; Cook, "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (1997): 17–63.

¹⁰ Derrida, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (1995): 9–63; Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), also excavates archives as sites of power. Derrida was by no means the first to note this etymology; see, for instance, Jacob Jacobson, "Archive und Archivwesen," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica. Das Judentum in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, comp. Jacob Klatzkin (Berlin: Verlag Eschkol, 1929), III:236.

¹¹ See Robert-Henri Bautier, "La phase cruciale de l'histoire des archives: la constitution des dépôts d'archives et la naissance de l'archivistique (XVI^e–début du XIX^e siècle)," *Archivum* XVIII (1968): 139–149; Michel Duchein, "The History of European Archives and the Development of the Archival Profession in Europe," *American Archivist* 55, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 14–25. Posner, "Effects of Changes of Sovereignty on Archives," in *Archives and the Public*

have been instruments of the administration of empire, and an archival panopticon is the beating heart of information-age regimes of surveillance.¹² Moreover, this “archival turn” represents a dislocation of archives from the source of history to the subject of its inquiry, and the widening of the idea of “the Archive” to include any type of collection, becoming a concept to be applied broadly in understanding how society works and the power structures that underlie it.

The growing realization of the active role of archives and archivists has risen from a certain skepticism over the possibility of scholarly objectivity and the institutions and practices that once claimed to safeguard it. Indeed, the structuralist and post-structuralist critiques of knowledge of the 1960s and 1970s arose alongside efforts to historicize the methods of both natural and human sciences as well as the rising notion of history’s narrativity, bringing renewed challenges to the discipline of history—one which had for so long striven to categorize itself a “science,” with archives and historical seminars sometimes termed its “laboratories.”¹³ Meanwhile, since the 1960s many archivists have critiqued the notion of the “natural” accumulation of files in *fonds* or record

Interest (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006), 168–181, discusses the place of archives in medieval European peace treaties, and a more wide-ranging treatment is Thomas Fitschen, *Das rechtliche Schicksal von staatlichen Akten und Archiven bei einem Wechsel der Herrschaft über Staatsgebiet* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2004), 47–67.

¹² Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive* (London: Verso, 1993); Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Stoler, “Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance,” *Archival Science* 2, no. 1 (2002): 87–109; Indrani Chatterjee, “Testing the Local Against the Colonial Archive,” *History Workshop* 44 (Autumn 1997): 215–224. On archives and surveillance: Eric Ketelaar, “The Panoptical Archive,” in *Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, 144–150; Jacob Soll, *The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste Colbert’s Secret State Intelligence System* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009); Deborah Bauer, “Marianne is Watching: Knowledge, Secrecy, Intelligence and the Origins of the French Surveillance State (1870–1914)” (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 2013); Kirsten Weld, *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Timothy Garton Ash, *The File: A Personal History* (New York: Random House, 1997).

¹³ Georg Iggers traces this overarching trajectory in historical studies in *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1997), esp. 6–16. As part of this trend, see Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); Stephen Toulmin, *Foresight and Understanding: An Enquiry into the Aims of Science* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961); also Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination of Nineteenth-Century Europe* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); and Frederick Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 6–10. Also see Bonnie Smith, “Gender and the Practices of History: The Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth Century,” *AHR* 100, no. 4 (1995): 1150–1176; Alex Bein, to give one figure directly relevant to this study, often spoke of archives as “laboratories,” as in “Ha-’asifah ha-kelalit ha-shnatit shel ha-hevrah,” 2 Feb. 1950, CAHJP IHS/9; “Kibbutz galuyot le-ginze ha-’umah,” *Beterem*, Apr.–May 1950, 87–90; “Kibbutz Galujoth auch für jüdische Archive,” *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland*, 20 Oct. 1950.

groups, and have recognized that archival appraisal imposes new orders and creates new contexts.¹⁴ Many archivists have rejected their “objectivity,” promulgating instead what has been termed, since the 1970s, a “post-custodial” model in which archivists do not passively take custody of files at the end of their “life cycle”—a trajectory from a record’s creation to archival deposit—but instead proactively seek out materials.¹⁵ Some have proposed a “records continuum” whereby archivists shepherd files, especially digital materials, even before they enter an archive; and others have emphasized the active work of community-based archives to preserve materials that do not necessarily make their way into state archives, presenting one antidote to the statist perspective thereby enshrined.¹⁶ Moreover, archivists have acknowledged the evolution of archival practice by historicizing concepts like provenance, permanence, and uniqueness.¹⁷ For both scholars and archivists, it has been part of a growing recognition of the “content of the form,” with archives providing just one historical metanarrative that requires reading against the grain in order to recover the voices of women, colonized and disenfranchised peoples, and others who too often fall into the silences of

¹⁴ For an early critique, see Mario D. Fenyo, “The Record Group Concept: A Critique,” *American Archivist* 29, no. 2 (April 1966): 229–239. Another critique of the *fonds* is that it institutionalizes hierarchical, top-down structures that do not reflect trends in corporate and government management. See, for instance, Terry Cook, “The Concept of the Archival Fonds in the Post-Custodial Era: Theory, Problems and Solutions,” *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993): 24–37.

¹⁵ A useful summary of these trends is Anne Gilliland, *Conceptualizing 21st-Century Archives* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2014). On the “post-custodial era,” see F. Gerald Ham, “The Archival Edge,” *American Archivist* 38, no. 1 (1975): 5–13; Ham, “Archival Strategies for the Post-Custodial Era,” *American Archivist* 44, no. 3 (Summer 1981): 207–216; Terry Cook, “Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The Revolution in Information Management and Archives in the Post-Custodial and Post-Modernist Era,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 22, no. 2 (Nov. 1994): 300–328. Also Cook, “Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts,” *Archival Science* 1, no. 1 (2001): 3–24.

¹⁶ Jay Atherton, “From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management–Archives Relationship,” *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985–86): 43–51; Frank Upward, “Structuring the Records Continuum, Part One: Postcustodial Principles and Properties,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 24 (1996): 268–285; Upward, “Structuring the Records Continuum, Part Two: Structuration Theory and Recordkeeping,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 25 (1997): 10–35. As for community archives, the most useful recent work has been by Andrew Flinn, especially Flinn, “Archival Activism: Independent and Community-led Archives, Radical Public History and the Heritage Professions,” *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* 7, no. 2 (2011), article 6.

¹⁷ See, for instance, Richard Cox, “American Archival History: Its Development, Needs, and Opportunities,” *American Archivist* 46, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 31–41; Cox, “On the Value of Archival History in the United States,” *Libraries and Culture* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 135–151; Cox, “The Failure or Future of American Archival History,” *Libraries and Culture* 35, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 141–154; James O’Toole, “On the Idea of Permanence,” *American Archivist* 52, no. 1 (Winter 1989): 10–25; O’Toole, “On the Idea of Uniqueness,” *American Archivist* 57, no. 4 (Fall 1994): 632–658; O’Toole, “The Future of Archival History,” *Provenance* 13, no. 1 (Jan. 1995): 1–24.

archives.¹⁸ In one formulation, it has been a transition “from polders to postmodernism,” a useful if unrefined way of describing a shift from a self-assured idea of archives’ objectivity put forth by Dutch archivists in the 1890s to an appreciation of archives’ constructed nature.¹⁹

In a similar fashion, scholars have developed varied approaches to the history and theory of archives. Pierre Nora explicated the idea of “lieux de mémoire,” proposing archives as among the sites of memory that shape public discourse. He posited that memory has become increasingly “archival”—that is, rooted in writing—in the face of atrophying social contexts that once fostered collective memory.²⁰ Scholars have thoroughly examined the place of archives in imperial administration and decolonization.²¹ And Jacques Derrida’s elaboration of a Freudian “archive fever” has been a touchstone, adding a new term to the scholarly lexicon that speaks widely to the trend of scholars’ own obsession with archives and the wider trend of archives’ ubiquity in the digital culture of the early twenty-first century.²² Meanwhile, others have focused on the physicality and mystique of archives, as well as the ties of archives to policing and surveillance.²³

¹⁸ See Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

¹⁹ John Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of Archival Theory* (Duluth, MN: Litwin, 2009).

²⁰ Pierre Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992); Nora’s introduction was published in English as “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7–24. For a recent retrospective on Nora’s contribution, see Michael Rothberg critique, “Between Memory and Memory: From *Lieux de mémoire* to *Noeuds de mémoire*,” *Yale French Historical Studies* 118/119 (2010): 3–12.

²¹ Richards’ *The Imperial Archive* (1993), is perhaps the most important early work; others have followed in focusing on the context of colonial India, including recent works like Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Nicholas B. Dicks, *Autobiography of an Archive: A Scholar’s Passage to India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015). Also see Kathryn Burns, *Into the Archive: Writing and Power in Colonial Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); and Jeannette Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost its Archives and Found Its History* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003).

²² Jacques Derrida, “Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,” *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 9–63.

²³ See, for instance, Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archive*, trans. Thomas Scott-Railton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Carolyn Steedman, “Something She Called a Fever: Michelet, Derrida, and Dust,” *AHR* 106, no. 4 (2001): 1159–1180; Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002); and Antoinette Burton, *Archive Stories: Facts, Fiction, and the Writing of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), in which many contributors focused on their own research experiences. On archives and police, see Kirsten Weld, *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Timothy Garton Ash, *The File: A Personal History* (New York: Random House, 1997).

On the whole, scholars have looked to archives as targets for fruitful cultural critique, recognizing inscription as an elemental force in human history from ancient scribes and steles to the precipice of the digital era and the evidentiary function of files and paperwork—the process of writing itself—as a means to master fields of knowledge and culture.²⁴ And so, since the 1990s and early 2000s scholars have produced a rising wave of research that has yet to finally crest.²⁵ It represents scholars’ intense interest in archives as their professional tools alongside an impulse to apply ideas about archives widely. Indeed, scholars have turned to “the archive” not just as a place or an institution, but also as a concept—a highly exploitable and exportable one, encapsulating the power of writing and literacy in shaping society. This “archival turn” has been a process by which scholars read archives and their sources against the grain, and utilize “the Archive” as what Anne Stoler has called an “analytic stylus,” identifying “archives” of all kinds—far afield from state, business, and other administrative archives—placing under its umbrella the archive of urban landscape, personal collections of photographs, sound recordings, memories, and more, extending archives beyond the realm of official documents or even paper and material objects.

In this burgeoning field, the place of archives in Jewish culture has not been entirely passed over. Jeffrey Shandler described the place of “inventory” in Jewish life, a wide-ranging practice of listing, recounting, organizing, and giving order to the diverse products of Jewish culture as

²⁴ For a recent example of an examination in this framework, see Yael Sternhell, “The Afterlives of a Confederate Archive: Civil War Documents and the Making of Sectional Reconciliation,” *Journal of American History* 102, no. 4 (2016): 1025–150. Also see Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

²⁵ Among the multitudinous works dedicated to this topic and its critical appraisal, one can mention only a handful of the most significant and wide-ranging: *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (London: Duke University Press, 2005); *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory*, ed. Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006); Blouin Jr. and Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). This field has also benefitted from new journals dedicated to critical review of the topic such as *Archivaria* (1975–) and *Archival Science* (2001–) and a series of special journal issues dedicated to archives such as *History and the Human Sciences* (Nov. 1998, May 1998, “The Archive and the Human Sciences”), *Invisible Culture* (2008, “The Future of the Archive”), *FLOW* (2010, “The Archive”), and *AHR* (2015, “The Archives of Decolonization”).

part of the fabric of Jewish modernity.²⁶ Likewise, scholars have identified traditions of collecting in Jewish life. The Cairo Genizah, ever since its “discovery” in the 1890s, has been a site of constant fascination, and many have sought to uncover other similarly hidden “archives.”²⁷ Others have looked to documentary projects like *kinus*, the Zionist effort to gather and curate Jewish culture, and eastern European Jewish folk collecting like the historian Simon Dubnow and the *zamlers* who sent him documents, the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO), and S. An-sky’s ethnographic expeditions.²⁸ The Ghetto archives of the Holocaust and efforts to document pogroms and other anti-Jewish violence reflect an impulse to “collect and record” in the wake of historical trauma.²⁹ And recently, some have turned to the fate of archives in the Holocaust and in its aftermath as part of a wider debate over looted cultural property including books and Torah scrolls.³⁰

²⁶ Jeffrey Shandler, *Keepers of Accounts: The Practice of Inventory in Modern Jewish Life* (Ann Arbor: 2010), 8–9.

²⁷ Recent studies include Stefan Reif, *A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University’s Genizah Collection* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000); Adina Hoffman and Peter Cole, *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza* (New York: Nextbook, 2011); Mark Glickman, *Sacred Treasure: The Cairo Genizah* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2011).

²⁸ See among many: Adam Rubin, “From Torah to Tarbut: Hayim Nahman Bialik and the Nationalization of Judaism” (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 2000); Israel Bartal, “The *Kinnus* Project: *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the Fashioning of a ‘National Culture’ in Palestine,” in *Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality, and Cultural Diffusion*, ed. Yaakov Elman, Israel Gershoni (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 310–323; Marek Web, “Dubnov and Jewish Archives: An Introduction to His Papers at the YIVO Institute,” in *A Missionary for History*, ed. Kristi Groberg, Avraham Greenbaum (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Eugene Avrutin, *Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. An-sky’s Ethnographic Expeditions* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2009); Cecile Kuznitz, “An-Sky’s Legacy: The Vilna Historic-Ethnographic Society and the Shaping of Modern Jewish Culture,” in *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, ed. Gabriella Safran, Steven J. Zipperstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 320–345; Nathaniel Deutsch, *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011); Kuznitz, *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture: Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

²⁹ For a general outline of this tradition, see Laura Jockusch, “Chroniclers of Catastrophe: History Writing as a Jewish Response to Persecution Before and After the Holocaust,” in *Holocaust Historiography in Context: Emergence, Challenges, Polemics and Achievements*, ed. David Bankier and Dan Michman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008), 135–166, and Jockusch, “Dokumentation als Reaktion auf Verfolgung im osteuropäischen Judentum. Von Kischinjaw zum Holocaust,” in *Jüdisches Archivwesen*, ed. Frank M. Bischoff, Peter Honigmann (Marburg: Institut für Archivwissenschaft, 2007), 243–268. Also see Samuel Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), *inter alia*.

³⁰ See Lisa Leff’s *The Archive Thief: The Man Salvaged French Jewish History in the Wake of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), and Silvia Schenkowleski-Kroll, “Jewish Archives and Archival Documents: Israel and the Diaspora,” *Archival Science* 16, no. 3 (2016): 309–326, which is mostly descriptive. Also see Jason Lustig, “Who Are to be the Successors of European Jewry? The Restitution of German Jewish Communal and Cultural Property,” *Journal of Contemporary History* (2016), doi:10.1177/0022009416647116.

Nevertheless, the critical and theoretical apparatus of the archival turn has not yet been widely applied in the field of Jewish studies. It may result, in part, from some confusion over what constitutes an “archive” and “archiving.” S. D. Goitein called the Cairo Genizah a sort of anti-archive, juxtaposing this Oriental “hoard” against Europe’s “organized” archives, and Jeffrey Shandler carefully articulated “inventory” as distinct from archiving, which he termed “typically the work of some kind of bureaucracy,” identifying it with a cultural elite in contrast with his own interest in vernacular practices.³¹ This study, by contrast, emphasizes initiatives that used the term “archives” to describe themselves. The history of Jewish archival institutions was long left to archivists who either provided general descriptions of their collections or otherwise sought to justify and explain their work with polemical intent.³² Alex Bein, from 1956 to 1970 Israel’s state archivist, assumed the primacy of state archives, seeing archives as a marker of historical agency. He argued that Jews did not maintain archives due to what he perceived as a passivity of Diaspora existence, and he suggested that the return to Zion and a concomitant “return to history” would foster an archival spirit reflecting a renewed historical agency.³³ Jacob Rader Marcus told a story no less ideologically charged when he claimed his American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati would be “scientific,” while he derided the American Jewish Historical Society in New York City as a domain of “apologetic” amateurs.³⁴ Bernhard Brillung emphasized that there were just two “professional” Jewish archives in Germany before the Second World War—the Gesamtarchiv

³¹ S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Genizah* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), I:1–2, 7–9; Shandler, *Keepers of Accounts*, 8–9. It should be noted that Stefan Reif dubbed the Genizah an “archive” in *A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo*.

³² In addition to the figures discussed below, also see Daniel Cohen, “Jewish Community and Organizational Archives,” *International Journal of Archives* 1, no. 2 (1980): 30–33; Cohen, “Sources for the History of the Jewish People in Archives in Europe and Israel,” *Yedi ‘on ha-‘igud ha-‘olami le-mada‘e ha-yahadut* 17–18 (1981): 5–22; Binyamin Lukin, “Archive of the Jewish Historical and Ethnographic Society: History and Present Condition,” in *Jews in Eastern Europe* 20 (Summer 1993): 45–61.

³³ Bein, “Me‘arekhet ha-‘arkhiyonim ba-‘arets ke-basis le-mehkar,” 12 Mar. 1957, HZA B. 1/7,241; Bein, “Matsav ha-‘arkhiyonim ha-yehudiim ba-tefutsot u-ba-‘arets,” CZA P64/163a, P64/164. See ch. 4 for an in-depth discussion.

³⁴ Marcus, “The American Jewish Archives,” *American Archivist* 23, no. 1 (Jan. 1960): 57–61; also ch. 5, pp. 313–314.

der deutschen Juden in Berlin and his own Gemeindearchiv in Breslau—as a way to bolster his own bona fides and thereby advocate for a new Jewish archive in postwar Germany.³⁵ And recent scholarship on the history of Jewish archives has remained focused on individual archives, with few exceptions mostly written by archivists describing their own projects or their predecessors.³⁶

In retrospect, many of the twentieth-century figures who sketched a history of Jewish archives did so on the basis of the seemingly paradoxical idea that there was no such thing—that, on one hand, Jews had no archival tradition, or, on the other, that archivists’ task was merely to assemble what sources had by chance survived. In 1903, when Ezechiel Zivier proposed an archive of German Jewry, he lamented that emancipation had led Jews to disregard their past and its relics.³⁷ Markus Brann in 1917 wrote that a lachrymose history had left Jews with “no leisure to create well-ordered archives,” just as Alex Bein a generation later claimed that the Jews’ dispersion had led to a lack of archives.³⁸ Zivier, Brann, and Bein all argued that Jews’ neglect for their files justified programmatic efforts to remove historical materials from the hands of leaders and communities who supposedly lacked the knowledge and foresight, or the resources and expertise, to maintain their historical records. On the whole, they proffered a curiously ahistorical vision of

³⁵ Brillling, “Das jüdische Archivwesen in Deutschland,” *Der Archivar* 13 (1960): 271–290.

³⁶ See, for instance, Kevin Proffitt, “Jacob Rader Marcus and the Archive He Built,” in *New Essays in American Jewish History*, ed. Pamela S. Nadell, et al (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 2010), 5–18; Peter Honigmann, “Das Projekt von Rabbiner Dr. Bernhard Brillling zur Errichtung eines jüdischen Zentralarchivs im Nachkriegsdeutschland,” in *Historisches Bewusstsein im jüdischen Kontext. Strategien—Aspekte—Diskurse*, ed. Klaus Hödl (Vienna: Studien Verlag, 2004), 223–241; Honigmann, “Die Akten des Exils: Betrachtungen zu den mehr als hundertjährigen Bemühungen um die Inventarisierung von Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland,” *Der Archivar* 54, no. 1 (2001): 22–31. Also see useful work by figures like Honigmann as well as Frank Mecklenburg, Barbara Welcker, Inka Arroyo, Georges Weill, and others published in Bischoff and Honigmann, eds., *Jüdisches Archivwesen* (2007) and *Menora* 12 (2001), special issue, ed. “Haskala und Öffentlichkeit,” pt. 3, “Archive & Sammlungen” (311–408). A prime exception is Elisabeth Kaplan, “We Are What We Collect, We Collect What We Are: Archives and the Construction of Identity,” *American Archivist* 63, no. 1 (2000): 126–151, which has become a core text in archival training, presenting the AJHS as an early (if not the *earliest*) example of community-based archiving. Also see Richard Menkis, “Identities, Communities, and the Infrastructure of History: Creating Canadian Jewish Archives in the 1930s and 1970s,” in *History, Memory, and Jewish Identity*, ed. Ira Robinson, et al (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2016), 233–256.

³⁷ Zivier, “Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *Mitteilungen vom Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebund*, Dec. 1903.

³⁸ Markus Brann, “Heinrich Graetz,” *MGWJ*, 3rd ser., 25 (1917): 321–346; cf. *supra*, n. 33.

these archives and their genesis, one which requires significant revision and reappraisal.

This study challenges such received wisdom that there was no history of Jewish archives, and seeks to apply new critical approaches in a systematic manner. Indeed, even a cursory survey of the arc of Jewish history quickly breaks down the proposition that Jews lacked archives. In fact, the records of Jewish life that scholars turned to study and collect during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries arose from a long and varied history of Jewish ties to the state in medieval and early modern Europe, degrees of communal autonomy, and bureaucracy in modern times. No doubt, the Israelite kingdoms and commonwealths held archives similar to those of other ancient Near Eastern states; in the Diaspora, Jews may not have used archives as “arsenals of state power” but they produced a rich historical record. Charters and privilegia represented the royal alliance and Pinkasim (communal record books) attested to the mechanics of self-administration, not to mention business records like contracts and debt receipts.³⁹ Consequently, the Jewish dispersion led not to a lack of archives but to their diversity. In one measure, this archival history demonstrates that even without a state of their own, Jews held a measure of historical agency, and cuts against the grain of the historical logic tying archives primarily to state power.

Jews have also had diverse relationships with colonial and administrative recordkeeping. Some have described Jews as an internal subaltern of Europe. Alternately, Jews have served as the colonizers, with some applying Orientalist frameworks to coreligionists in eastern Europe and in the Ottoman empire.⁴⁰ Jews, then, have been on both sides of the “imperial archive.” Jews were

³⁹ On the “royal alliance,” see Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, “Servants of Kings and Not Servants of Servants: Some Aspects of the Political History of the Jews,” in *The Faith of Fallen Jews: Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi and the Writing of Jewish History*, ed. David N. Myers, Alexander Kaye (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014), 245–276; Lois C. Dubin, “Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, the Royal Alliance, and Jewish Political Theory,” *Jewish History* 28, no. 1 (2014): 51–81.

⁴⁰ On the various positions of Jews as agents of colonization and objects of “internal colonization,” see, among many: Leo W. Riegert, Jr., “Subjects and Agents of Empire: German Jews in Post-Colonial Perspective,” *German Quarterly* 82, no. 3 (2009): 336–355; Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982); Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860–1925* (Bloomington: Indiana

subject to “internal colonization,” as one might characterize the efforts of European states to “improve” and productivize their Jews, and keeping records on them was one component of this Enlightenment program; the *Alliance israélite universelle*’s archives documenting their “mission civilisatrice” in North Africa and the Ottoman empire, the Gesamtarchiv’s collecting efforts in eastern German locales, and Solomon Schechter’s extraction of the Cairo Genizah to Cambridge can all be called parts of the wider French, German, and British colonial projects. In this light, the radical transformation of modern Jewish individual and communal life led to archival preservation, not loss. Across Europe, state intervention in Jewish life led to increased documentation: In Austria, Joseph II’s policies of “toleration” led to a new internal bureaucracy, as did Napoleon’s reorganization of Jewish communities as consistoires, mandating that Jews maintain records.⁴¹ In Imperial Russia, “state rabbis” were primarily tasked with recording vital data on the Jewish population.⁴² In these and other instances, Jews’ archives were a part of a new panopticism, from one side, and self-policing, from the other, stemming from the state’s aim to control diverse communities in the process of making citizens. Altogether, one finds a rich tradition of recordkeeping that had a direct, practical part to play in Jewish history.

All things considered, one can see the full range of archival history within Jewish history, not its absence, presenting a consequent need to re-conceptualize the place of archives in Jewish history. Instead of an absence of archives, one sees an overabundance. Indeed, one could write all of Jewish history as a history of archives, viewing the history of the Jews as a story of the written

University Press, 1990); Susannah Heschel, “Revolt of the Colonized: Abraham Geiger’s Wissenschaft des Judentums as a Challenge to Christian Hegemony in the Academy,” *New German Critique* 77 (1999): 61–85.

⁴¹ See, for instance, Joseph II’s 1789 edict of toleration for the Jews in Galicia; §23 calls for a Jewish census.

⁴² See ChaeRan Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2002), 95–106, 110–118; Laure Politis, “Les archives du CBIP/CASIP et du COJASOR: des sources pour une histoire de la bienfaisance et de l’action sociale juives de 1809 à nos jours,” *Les Cahiers de Framespa* 15 (2014); Eugen M. Avrutin, “The Politics of Jewish Legibility: Documentation Practices and Reform During the Reign of Nicholas I,” *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 2 (Winter 2005): 136–169.

record they have produced and preserved (as well as what was not) in order to comprehend the history of memory on one hand, and power and state relations on the other. Moreover, the question of archives in modern Jewish life is one more means to understand the tension between oral and written media in Judaism. The rise of archives in modern Jewish scholarship and of archival memory after the Holocaust, the focus of this dissertation, reflects a renewed emphasis on the written trace in Jewish culture. Likewise, the history of archives provides a way to consider how knowledge has been passed down from one generation to the next, and a cultural history of the written record, with these archives as material products of Jewish culture.

If in medieval times, charters and privilegia provided one governing framework for Jewish life by prescribing the legal basis for Jewish settlement in European lands, these records have since been transformed into sources for historical scholarship and anchors for communal memory. And if gathering Jewish records and archives at the turn of the twentieth century was about representing the nature of Jewish life in the present, after the Holocaust, these archives again were transformed to be about the future. The act of creating archives, thereby, represented the possibility to achieve a few simultaneous functions in modern Jewish culture. It allowed for the recombination and relocation of the fragments of history in the aftermath of destruction. Such an act holds Biblical, theological, and mystical symbolism in Judaism, whether one looks to the image of the fragments of the tablets of the Law, fractured by Moses, or the core notion of Lurianic Kabbalah, the idea of *tsimtsum* (literally, God's contraction) and the reconstruction of the resulting shards of the universe in the form of *tikkun 'olam*.⁴³ In the state of Israel, gathering archives was one way to enact an "ingathering of the exiles" in parallel with the project of mass immigration, allowing for the performance of Israel's status as a nation-state. It is in this context that the current

⁴³ On Isaac Luria's conception of Jewish mysticism and his myth of creation, see Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and his Kabbalistic Fellowship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 123–149, and the classic account, Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1941), 256–265.

study proposes to examine the history of Jewish archives in the twentieth century in order to comprehend the development of the discipline of Jewish studies and the transformation of Jewish life in modern times, and to reconceive of the varied types of Jewish collecting to understand the rise of the archive as an organizing principle of Jewish culture and the concomitant struggles for its control. In this “time to gather,” creating archives was an aim shared by many Jewish figures in Germany, the United States, and Palestine/Israel, but it was an act that would prove a source of great conflict, as gathering archives was a metaphor of great power and broad symbolic meaning, representing the attempts to rebuild and reconfigure Jewish life by bringing order to the past.

A Time to Gather: Structure and Themes

The present study follows the history of Jewish archives in the twentieth century in two acts, roughly divided chronologically along the axis of the Holocaust. The first three chapters focus on scholars’ growing interest in archives as the primary source of Jewish history and culture, and the concomitant proliferation of archives in Jewish life prior to the destruction of European Jewry. The second half examines efforts to reconstruct the archival edifice of Jewish studies after the Holocaust and the struggles over how these archives would reflect the new realities of Jewish life. It focuses on the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem and the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, both opened in 1947, each of which followed the tradition of the Gesamtarchiv in working to create total archives but also presented divergent visions of a new archival order. Finally, I consider archival competition and how it reflected the fractious issues of Jewish life after the Second World War, stretching ultimately to the twenty-first century, with a focus on the cases of the looted archives of the Jews of Hamburg and Worms, efforts to create an archive in postwar Germany, and the fate of the archives of Vienna’s Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, which were the subject of a recent court battle in Israel.

This story is organized around three overarching themes. The first of these is the turn to archives in Jewish scholarship, which is the focus of chapter one, “Jewish History With and Without Archival Sources.” This chapter traces a research revolution in the field of Jewish studies over the course of the nineteenth century, as archives became the primary sources of Jewish history and culture. In this time, scholars increasingly extracted sources from their native setting, publishing and later gathering them to libraries and archives. By the *fin de siècle*, Jewish studies scholars had elevated archives to the level of sacred spaces for the study and storing of sources. This chapter calls into question the relationship between Jewish culture and its surroundings, arguing that Jews’ use of archives was not mere mimicry of wider trends. Instead, it suggests that archival scholarship in *Wissenschaft des Judentums* not only reflected scholars’ efforts to utilize new methods but also the changing genres of Jewish history; a shift from the study of Jewish literature and intellectual history to that of communities and organizations necessitated new sources by its own independent logic. This transformation also anticipates the increasing importance of archival memory in Jewish culture, which raised the stakes of holding archives. Moreover, it considers what Jewish history would be like without archival sources, placing before us the open question of the archival future of Jewish studies that was the animating impulse of those seeking to create archives after the destruction of European Jewry. On the whole, this chapter sets the stage for the flood of competing efforts to create archives for the study of Jewish history, the efforts to preserve the records of the past, and the struggles over who could lay claim to it given its importance for scholarship as well as memory.

The second major theme is the proliferation of Jewish archival efforts in the early years of the twentieth century alongside a totalizing vision of centralization closely associated with the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden* in Berlin that was then taken up by others. Chapters two,

“Archival Totality in the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,” and three, “Archive Fever: A Proliferation of Jewish Archives,” sketch the outline of an early twentieth-century archival moment in Jewish life. The Gesamtarchiv, founded in Berlin in 1905, presents a paradigm for Jewish archiving, a template for those who created archives on the model of total, comprehensive collecting. Following the formation of the Gesamtarchiv, Jews created a large number of archives in Europe, the United States, and Mandate Palestine, many in fact led by figures who had ties to the Berlin archive. The American Jewish Archives and the Jewish Historical General Archives represented variations on this theme, replaying some of the same struggles over centralization, comprehensiveness, and control over the past through possessing it. Alongside tracing the Gesamtarchiv’s prototype, I turn to a wide diversity of collecting efforts and how they were framed in archival terms. This is to say, there was not just a proliferation of projects to document Jewish history and culture but also a shift towards *calling* these efforts “archives” that marks a profound cultural transformation indicating the increasing gravity of historical archives. Together, these chapters explicate how and why Jews created archives, and how this archival moment led to conflict. They look especially to archive-making as part of the growing professional management of Jewish life, on one hand, and as a response to a sensation among scholars and laypeople that the Jewish past was slipping away with the rapid transformation of modern life. Just as Hegel’s owl of Minerva takes flight at dusk, we find that an impression of impending doom animated an archival explosion in Jewish life, mirroring the ways, as Simon Rawidowicz suggested, the sense that Israel has been an “ever-dying people” was a driving force for cultural vitality through the ages.⁴⁴

Third and finally, this study delves into the social and political struggles that resulted from conflicting visions of archival centralization. I begin this discussion in the first half of the

⁴⁴ See Simon Rawidowicz, “Israel: The Ever-Dying People,” in *State of Israel, Diaspora, and Jewish Continuity*, ed. Benjamin Ravid (London: Brandeis University Press, 1998), 53–64.

dissertation, considering early struggles over archival materials between the Gesamtarchiv and its discontents. Indeed, Ezechiel Zivier's 1903 call to create an archive of German Jewry began with the declaration that "all great peoples have an archive of their antiquities," highlighting the impulse to create archives. But, as the dissertation argues, once everyone wanted such an archive of his own, the matter of possessing the past became a source of constant conflict. This was the case with the Gesamtarchiv, when those who wanted to centralize communal archives in Berlin found opposition from those who wanted to keep archives close to home. After the Second World War, this impulse and what it stood for was magnified. It takes center stage in the second half of the dissertation, which looks to the history of the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem (chapter four, "Ingathering the Exiles of the Past? Collecting Jewish Records to Jerusalem") and the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati (chapter five, "An Archive of Diaspora at the 'Jerusalem on the Ohio'") as alternate visions of collecting after the Holocaust.

These two cases demonstrate the ongoing ideal of monumental collecting, each colored by their ideological and historical perspectives. Each sought to be a total archive of Jewish history. The Jewish Historical General Archives aimed to be a singular resource for the study of Jewish history by gaining historical archives from Europe and around the world, with a special focus on German Jewry. The American Jewish Archives presented an archival ambition no less grand, looking to document Jewish history throughout the Western Hemisphere. For each, the configuration of archives sketched an outline of the possibilities of Jewish life after the Holocaust, with monumental repositories testifying to the vitality of new centers of Jewish culture. For the Israelis, gathering records in Jerusalem signified the position of the new Jewish state as a successor to European Jewry as a cultural center. Marcus' archive presented a very different vision of the landscape of Jewish life in America and the world at large. His American Jewish Archives, with

its seat on the Ohio River, reflected his conception of Cincinnati as a historic center of American Jewry as well as the importance of dispersion in Jewish history, rooted in Marcus' notion of the "omniterritoriality" of Jewish life, that Jews could—and should—be everywhere.⁴⁵

The distinction between these two archives reached its greatest heights over the question of gathering originals or photocopies. The Israelis worked to gather whatever they could, but demanded original documents from the German archives that held archives looted by the Nazis. Marcus, by contrast, explicitly sought duplicates and microfilms, reflecting his vision of the possibility of a network of Jewish archives across the United States. It was a difference based in their distinctive worldviews, one colored by Zionism and the other by a vision of Diaspora vitality. It was a dispute rooted in their particular cultural contexts, as the Israelis focused on materials looted in the Second World War and Marcus thought in the terms of the Cold War, favoring decentralization in light of the possibility of nuclear war. And it was a division over the utility of copies versus the symbolism of originals. It was a struggle over what Walter Benjamin described as the lost "aura" of works of art (and documents) in an age of reproduction and especially filmic media, to which microfilm can be seen as analogous.⁴⁶ However, I suggest that the ability to reproduce historical materials actually made originals more valuable, leading to vigorous disputes over archival ownership. Consequently, I conclude by turning to struggles over specific archives during the 1950s in the concluding chapter six ("Contested Fragments: Framing the Jewish Past and Forging a Jewish Future"). On the whole, this study traces Jews' rising interest in archives, a proliferation of archival projects and a tradition of comprehensive collecting, and the resulting conflicts that demonstrate how, both before the Holocaust and especially in its

⁴⁵ Todd Endelman, "The Legitimization of the Diaspora Experience in Recent Jewish Historiography," *Modern Judaism* 11, no. 2 (1991): 195–209.

⁴⁶ Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Book Collecting," in Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 2007), 59–68; Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *ibid.*, 217–252.

aftermath, archival collecting was just as much about the future as it was about the past.

A Time to Gather examines visions of documenting the Jewish past shared by scholars on three continents and the conflicts that ensued. It explores an archival impulse that adds new wrinkles to debates about history and memory in Jewish culture. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi put forth the claim that Jews long lacked interest in writing their history, and presented the challenge that historical scholarship might be unable to heal communal memory.⁴⁷ The history of Jewish archives considered in this dissertation demonstrates a continuity of historical consciousness in Jewish life that produced and preserved a multitude of historical records. Moreover, this study trains our attention on the rising importance of archival memory in modern Jewish culture and the role of archives in preserving memory of the past, gesturing at the fluid relationship between history and memory. It thereby takes its cues not just from Jacques Derrida's discussion of a ubiquitous "archival drive" and the power embedded in archives, or Bruno Latour's suggestion that knowledge is possible only by "flattening" data to written inscriptions and the corollary that the archives considered in this study constituted similar attempts at flattening three-dimensional textures of Jewish life to paper objects which one could possess.⁴⁸ Moreover, this dissertation stands upon the basis of Derrida's glosses on the archival "prosthesis" as a crutch for memory—that is, how physical objects and especially the written word takes the place of lived memory.⁴⁹ It is a concept that gives further shape to what Pierre Nora called a shift from communal memory supported by social contexts to archival memory upheld by locales, institutions, and writing.⁵⁰ In the early twentieth century, figures like Eugen Täubler and Jacob Jacobson of the Gesamtarchiv

⁴⁷ Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 77–104.

⁴⁸ Bruno Latour, "Visualisation and Cognition: Drawing Things Together," in *Knowledge and Society: Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present*, ed. H. Kuklick (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1986), VI:1–40.

⁴⁹ Derrida, "Archive Fever," 17–19.

⁵⁰ Nora, "Les lieux de mémoire," 13.

and Moïse Ginsburger at the Société pour l'histoire des israélites d'Alsace et de Lorraine sought to preserve archives, partly, due to the erosion of small Jewish communities, just as Jacob Rader Marcus later lamented the decline of small-town Jewish life.⁵¹ After the Second World War, the devastating finality of the destruction of European Jewry meant that historical archives took on even greater significance as a medium of memory of that which was not just in the process of disappearing but was utterly no more. In this manner, the dissertation suggests a distinction between the past and history. This notion may seem odd, as the past is by definition already a part of history. However, the act of archiving marks the transition of records from practical utility to historical study, holding a dramatic symbolism of the past's entry into the realm of history, disconnected from the present, and its enshrinement thereby as the materials of memory.

Moreover, this dissertation articulates how archive-making was a means not just to give order to the Jewish past, but also to frame the present and future. The Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden was formed and led by German Jews who identified closely with the German state, and they created their archive as monument to the ties between *Deutschtum* and *Judentum*. The American Jewish Archives presented a similar though somewhat less statist vision; Marcus sought to gather archives to study the participation of Jews in American Jewish life in its broadest geographic scale, across the entirety of North America and in the Western Hemisphere at large. In Jerusalem, the project to gather historical archives at the Jewish Historical General Archives reflected a vision of the position of the land of Israel as a cultural center and their belief that the new Jewish state should serve as a successor to the Jews of Europe. Battles over where archives should be located stood for important questions of the geography of the cultural and political organization of Jewish life. For instance, establishing the Gesamtarchiv in Berlin, as

⁵¹ See ch. 2, pp. 137, 144–147, and ch. 5, p. 319.

opposed to Frankfurt am Main, marked Berlin as the capital of German Jewry and projected a Prussia-centered view of German history, just as creating a major Jewish archive in Cincinnati instead of New York City gave voice to Marcus' vision of American Jewish life with its epicenter in the hinterland, not the northeast. Altogether, the struggles over archives demonstrate the gravity of "owning" the Jewish past as part of the complex negotiation of Jewish culture in a global context at key moments when the future was not at all certain.

Despite the fact that this study is generally divided by the caesura of the Holocaust, it argues that the development of Jewish archives demonstrates significant lines of continuity. This is true in terms of both personnel and purpose: Of the major Jewish archival figures active prior to the Second World War, many lived to exert influence after the war, such as Eugen Täubler, who fled to Cincinnati, Jacob Jacobson, who survived Theresienstadt, or Alex Bein, Georg Herlitz, and Bernhard Brillung, who made their way to Palestine. Additionally, one can identify a continuity of ideals and traditions drawing together archives before the war, variations on the themes of archival totality pioneered by the Gesamtarchiv. Consequently, *A Time to Gather* argues that the proliferation of projects to create archives was not a phenomenon of unrelated initiatives, but was part of a broader turn to archives in Jewish life as well as an effort to document Jewish history and culture that cut across cultural and political boundaries. It suggests that the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden was an important prototype for later Jewish archives during the twentieth century in terms of its leaders, its program, and the kinds of struggles that surrounded it. This dissertation traces a network of Jewish scholars and archivists, thereby providing one organizing principle for the archives considered below: a closely-connected cohort of professionals set against the backdrop of a "time to gather" in which many held a common dream to document the past but also competed against one another. And so, the Holocaust and

the Nazis' looting and destruction of Jewish archival resources set the stage for a heightened debate over archives. However, many of the same issues remained: The question of archives represented the fundamental challenge of retaining the past, and archivists, animated by dreams of totality, found themselves engaged in fierce struggles.

This study thereby reclaims and reassesses an older geo-intellectual framework of Jewish history, following the development of Jewish archives in Germany, eastern Europe, and finally to new shores in the United States and the land of Israel.⁵² Many have criticized this trajectory of Jewish history as providing undue primacy to German Jewry in light of the reality that the German Jewish population was dwarfed by the Jews of eastern Europe.⁵³ It should be noted that the “Germanocentric” model has been derided since the days of Isaak Markus Jost and Heinrich Graetz, whose respective *Geschichte der Israeliten* (1820–1828) and *Geschichte der Juden* (1854–1876) were each criticized for overemphasizing German Jewry at the expense of eastern European Jews, leading Graetz’s Hebrew translator Shaul Pinchas Rabinovitch to make significant “corrections.”⁵⁴ More recently, the received model has been revised through critiques of the modernization hypotheses undergirding the idea of the spread of new ideas from Germany, and by taking a multilocal perspective. Scholars have widened the lens, looking to England and eastern Europe as centers of Enlightenment thought. Some have pointed out that not just Berlin but also Königsberg were leading centers of the Haskalah, or sought to reframe this movement as a part

⁵² Some of the seminal contributions that sketch this model include Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770–1870* (New York: Schocken, 1973); Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), and David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁵³ See recent critiques like Gershon Hundert, *Jews in Poland–Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 233–240; Hundert, “Re(de)fining Modernity in Jewish History,” in *Rethinking European Jewish History*, ed. Jeremy Cohen and Moshe Rosman (Oxford: Littman Library, 2009), 133–145.

⁵⁴ Michael A. Meyer, “Where Does the Modern Period in Jewish History Begin?” *Judaism* 24, no. 3 (1975): 331; also see Jeffrey Blutinger, “Writing for the Masses: Heinrich Graetz, the Popularization of Jewish History, and the Reception of National Judaism” (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 2003), 273–291.

of eastern European Romanticism; others have looked past the question of the “reception” of modern ideas by eastern European Jews to see figures like the Vilna Gaon as innovators in their own right.⁵⁵ In the study of modern Jewish historiography, too, the Hebrew-language scholarship of *Hokhmat Yisra’el* has been considered alongside the German *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.⁵⁶ What is more, scholars have looked for and discovered diverse examples of these phenomena beyond Germany, looking to southern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa as part of a wider bounds of European Jewish history.⁵⁷ And some have even sought to entirely reframe modern and early modern Jewish history by looking beyond the organizing principle of the state, considering broad networks of “port Jews” emanating outwards from centers of trade.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, the Germanocentric framework requires reassessment and perhaps even reapplication, especially in the history of Jewish archives. As this dissertation argues, the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden* was an important template for Jewish archiving activities around the world and the major Jewish archives that emerged in Israel/Palestine and the United States after the Second World War were led almost in their entirety by archivists and scholars of German Jewish extraction or, in the case of Jacob Rader Marcus at the American Jewish

⁵⁵ See, for instance, Eliyahu Stern, *The Genius: Elijah of Vilna and the Making of Modern Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); David Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key: Anglo-Jewry’s Construction of Modern Jewish Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Shmuel Feiner, *Haskalah and History: The Emergence of Modern Jewish Historical Consciousness* (Oxford: Littman Library, 2004); Olga Litvak, *Haskalah: The Romantic Movement in Judaism* (London: Rutgers University Press, 2012).

⁵⁶ See David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 25–29; more extensively discussed in Myers, “‘From Zion Will Go Forth Torah’: Jewish Scholarship and the Zionist Return to History” (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1991), 24–51.

⁵⁷ Julia Philips Cohen and Sarah Abrevaya Stein, “Sephardic Scholarly Worlds: Toward a Novel Geography of Modern Jewish History,” *JQR* 100, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 349–384; David N. Myers, “Peter Beer in Prague: Probing the Boundaries of Modern Jewish Historiography,” in *Fuzzy Boundaries: Festschrift für Antonio Loprieno* ed. H. Amstutz, et al (Hamburg: Widmaier Verlag, 2015), II:705–714; Devin Naar, “Fashioning the ‘Mother of Israel’: The Ottoman Jewish Historical Narrative and the Image of Jewish Salonica,” *Jewish History* 28, no. 3 (Dec. 2014): 337–372.

⁵⁸ Lois Dubin, *The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste: Absolutist Politics and Enlightenment Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); David Sorkin, “The Port Jew: Notes Towards a Social Type,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 50, no. 1 (1999): 87–97; C.S. Monaco, “Port Jews or a People of the Diaspora? A Critique of the Port Jew Concept,” *JSS* 15, no. 2 (2009): 137–166. Cf. Jonathan Sarna, “Port Jews in the Atlantic: Further Thoughts,” *Jewish History* 20 (2006): 213–219.

Archives, someone who was an unmistakable product of the cultural influence of German Jewry.⁵⁹ Consequently, it is no surprise that these archivists, with the exception of Marcus, were especially—though by no means exclusively—interested in historical materials relating to German-Jewish history. Thus, the Germanocentric model of Jewish history emerged and survived in part due to archivists’ orientations. And in fact, in order to read Jewish history against the grain of these sources and archives, one must first appraise the forces at work in bringing such files together and the narrative frameworks thereby engendered.

In another aspect, this study seeks to not merely document Jewish practices of archival collecting but also to deconstruct their intellectual and historiographical orientations. Many of the struggles over the archives considered in this dissertation were over what made archives and records “Jewish” in the first place. By gathering archives in so-called Jewish archives, they marked the figures and histories contained therein as a part of Jewish history. Ultimately, it then was not merely an act of accumulation but of categorization. Gathering archives stood in for the possibilities of remaking Jewish life, and the recombination of these fragments of the past which allowed for creating a new schema of the Jewish past and its study, to make this history in and of itself a “Jewish” history. The result of these archival framings has been to support what David Hollinger has called “communalist” histories focused on those who have identified as Jewish—or who have been so identified by their inclusion in “Jewish” archives.⁶⁰ In other words, this dissertation seeks to bring a critical perspective to these archives, turning our focus how archives are institutions that do not merely preserve Jewish history but produce it as a discipline.

⁵⁹ The archives as the province of those stemming from a German background is particularly striking among the cohort of leading Israeli archivists; the Central Zionist Archives and Jewish Historical General Archives were both led almost exclusively by Jews of German origin from the 1930s to 1980s.

⁶⁰ David A. Hollinger, “Communalist and Dispersionist Approaches to American Jewish History in an Increasingly Post-Jewish Era,” *American Jewish History* 95, no. 1 (Mar. 2009): 1–32; cf. Tony Michels, “Communalist History and Beyond: What is the Potential of American Jewish History?” *American Jewish History* 95, no. 1 (2009): 61–71.

What is more, the history of archives considered in this study suggests a revision to the idea of the relationship between Jewish “subcultures” and their host societies. David Sorkin, in particular, put forth the model of a Jewish subculture in Germany, which adapted ideas from a wider society due to a delayed or halted emancipation.⁶¹ The distinctiveness of the development of Jewish archival initiatives, chronologically or otherwise, was not due to a “subordinate” nature of Jewish culture but instead due to the unique path and priorities of Jewish scholarship and cultural institutions. Arguably, nineteenth-century Jewish scholarship was heavily influenced by the fact that Jewish scholars were not allowed the opportunity to take up university positions. Still, Jews created their own archives not because they were forcibly kept from the state archives. Instead, instances like the Gesamtarchiv or the American Jewish Archives demonstrate how archival leaders clearly saw themselves as well-integrated into the wider society. In fact, they hoped that the historical projects their archives would support would emphasize elements such as the ties between Jewish history and “general history” and support patriotic perspectives. The totalizing impulse within this history of Jewish archives developed in parallel the twentieth-century world documentation movement, drawing upon technologies like microfilm. These efforts also bore resemblance to other examples like the emerging Public Archives of Canada, whose leaders from the late nineteenth century onward espoused a concept of gathering all archival and historical material relating to the history of Canada and its provinces that would later be dubbed a “total archives” approach.⁶² Still, the impulse to comprehensiveness, and the conflicts which arose from it, related to the specific challenges within Jewish history and particularly to the question of the Holocaust and rebuilding Jewish life and culture in its aftermath.

⁶¹ See David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry*.

⁶² Laura Millar, “Discharging Our Debt: The Evolution of the Total Archives Concept in English Canada,” *Archivaria* 46 (1998): 103–146; Millar, “The Spirit of Total Archives: Seeking a Sustainable Archival System,” *Archivaria* 47 (1999): 46–65. Also see Wilfred I. Smith, *Archives: Mirrors of Canada Past* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 18–20.

This dissertation traces a “time to gather” in Jewish culture and also seeks to place Jewish archives within the development of archival research and practice at large. In this view, the history of Jewish archives presented here offers an alternate arc of the history of archives in modern times. If the history of archives and archival research in the nineteenth century can be broadly construed as a story of the opening of state archives—once the private “trésors des chartes” of kings and princes, now transformed into the property of a national public—Jews’ archives demonstrate a different pattern. Instead of a process of opening existing archives, the rise of archives in Jewish life was an exercise in actively collecting them; from one perspective, it was salvage and rescue, but from another it was appropriation and repurposing. In this way, the archives studied here present perhaps an epitome of what archivists have termed a post-custodial approach, as the Jewish scholars and archivists strenuously pursued historical files instead of receiving them passively from administrative offices. Even the Central Zionist Archives, as the archive of the Zionist Organization, had to doggedly pursue the files of scattered offices and leaders. Certainly, they are prime examples of what archival scholars now call community archives, and not simply because many of the Jewish archivists were primarily interested the archives of communities. The history of Jewish archives in the twentieth century, one might say, is very much the story of diverse community leaders seeking to collect historical materials that fell outside the purview of state archives, or alternately—especially in the case of archival restitution after the Holocaust, certainly from the perspective of the Israeli archivists—as an attempt to remove looted records from the hands of a perpetrator state to one that purported to represent, from the perspective of the Israeli archivists, the Jewish people at large. These projects thereby were efforts to enshrine history for purposes of communal memory and to assert a community’s control of its own cultural heritage. Consequently, the history traced in this

dissertation demonstrates the genealogy of these ideas prior to recent efforts to theorize and put them into practice. At the same time, it problematizes the idea of community archives by demonstrating that archives prior to the post-custodial turn were just as activist in their orientation, that is, they did not just naïvely accumulate historical materials but actively constructed scholarly edifices that supported preferred historical narratives and perspectives.⁶³ Moreover, the example of archives in Israel demonstrate that the community archives model can be utilized not just *against* state power but also in its service, and the post-Holocaust archival struggles highlight the challenges in trying to pursue a “survivor-centered” approach when different groups of survivors all lay claim to the same files.⁶⁴ This history, then, raises unsettled questions of how archives, even those consciously framed against the backdrop of restitution, can still be engines for crystallizing powerful metanarratives that require unpacking and deconstruction.

A Time to Gather seeks to comprehend, through the history of Jewish archives in the twentieth century, the functions archives have played in Jewish life, and its relation to the wider world of the history of archives. The rise of archives has long been associated with the state. However, the lack of a political state contributed to the development of diverse archival collections in Jewish history. This study demonstrates how archives can be sites of power for the powerless, on one hand, and also how archives remain sites of cultural domination, as scholars still sought to utilize archives as tools to give order to the past and thus control it. What draws together the major archives considered in this study—the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden in Berlin, the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem, and the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati—was

⁶³ This perspective is particularly notable in discussions of the “post-custodial era.” Archivists who proposed this approach have explained a “need” for archivists to take a more active role in gathering and organizing their files, in opposition to what they explained had been, previously, an attempt to hew to standards of “objectivity.”

⁶⁴ See Michelle Caswell, “Toward a Survivor-Centered Approach to Records Documenting Human Rights Abuse: Lessons from Community Archives,” *Archival Science* 14, no. 3 (Oct. 2014): 307–322.

their shared aspirations to total collecting and their hope to thereby recombine the archives of Jewish life into new forms. In all these cases, Jewish archival leaders held forth dreams of a comprehensive corpus of historical materials relating to their field of interest. These “total archives” all negotiated the complex problems of centralization and local control. And they all struggled with the enduring importance of the original document as a type of archival memory at a time when microcopies and photoduplicates became cheaper and sometimes preferable for scholars who could use them without assaulting the original. These issues, in a certain way, prefigure a wider interest in comprehensiveness. Paul Otlet’s “Mundaneum” in 1930s Belgium, a universal catalog of knowledge, Vannevar Bush’s envisioned Memex machine to handle tremendous amounts of data on microfilm spools, H.G. Wells’ idea of a “world brain”—all were visions of how to handle what Borges would call in 1942 the “library of Babel,” coping with information overload.⁶⁵ The archives considered in this study thereby anticipate the advent of the digital age and its renewed dream of total information. In a certain way, one might say that who controls and owns historical archives becomes moot in the digital era, when materials are more and more frequently available online for use regardless of physical location. The image of the ephemeral “cloud” compounds the idea of data divorced from its physical object. However, the struggles over Jewish archives make a powerful case for the continued relevance of archives’ locales and physicality. This study and its investigation of this “time to gather” and the conflicts that arose within it presents a reminder of the systems of control and submerged structures of power and cultural hegemony embedded in institutions like archives that scholars depend upon but often take for granted.

⁶⁵ See Jorge Luis Borges, “The Library of Babel,” in *Collected Fictions* (New York: Penguin, 1998); Alex Wright, *Cataloging the World: Paul Otlet and the Birth of the Information Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); W. Boyd Rayward, “H.G. Wells’s Idea of a World Brain: A Critical Reassessment,” *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 50, no. 7 (1999): 557–573; James G. Rice, “The Dream of the Memex,” *American Libraries* 19, no. 1 (Jan. 1988): 14–17; Ronald D. Houston and Glynn Harmon, “Vannevar Bush and Memex,” *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* 41, no. 1 (2007): 55–92.

Chapter 1

Jewish History With and Without Archival Sources

In 1917, Jewish scholars celebrated the centenary of Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891), whose *Geschichte der Juden*, published from 1854 to 1876, had been an immensely popular, pioneering synthesis of Jewish history. Reminiscing, Leopold Treitel and Moritz Güdemann each declared their teacher's oeuvre an "aere perennius."¹ Writing in 1918, Salo Baron also applauded Graetz's synthesis of a wide range of scholarship and a vast sea of sources, but he could only offer faint praise: "Even here," he reflected, "we must not judge [Graetz] by our own contemporary standards." Graetz may have brought a new sensibility to the study of the Jewish past, Baron wrote, but he "remained foreign to that which we regard today as an essential prerequisite of all modern historical research: the archive."² Graetz was, in Baron's view, groundbreaking for his time but by now antiquated, out of place in a world in which the archive had become the standard for professional historical research. Consequently, instead of a "work of bronze," Graetz's *Geschichte* presents a mirror of a changing field, and his centenary was a way to capture a century of change in modern Jewish studies. For when Güdemann effusively praised Graetz as one who "knew exactly in which archives and in which manuscript collections to investigate," he projected his own sensibility of scholarly work, reflecting the new pedestal to which archives had been raised. By this time, a new generation of scholars had come to see archives as the primary source of Jewish history, leading to a wide multiplication of efforts to gather and preserve the sources of the Jewish past and place them in diverse, and often conflicting, archives.

¹ Güdemann, "Heinrich Graetz," *MGWJ*, 3rd ser., 25 (1917), 355; Treitel, "Josephus Flavius bei Heinrich Graetz," *ibid.*: 391.

² Baron, "Graetzens Geschichtsschreibung: Eine methodologische Untersuchung," *MGWJ*, 3rd ser., 26 (1918): 5–15.

This chapter traces scholars' changing approaches and attitudes to archives in the course of this time, setting the stage for an era of feverish archival activity throughout the twentieth century. The first *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars hoped to set themselves apart from their predecessors through intensive research and criticism. But if Leopold Zunz called in 1822 for the opening of Europe's "two-thousand-year-old archives," he and his contemporaries did not examine them, and neither did Graetz a generation later. The turn to archives in Jewish studies, as in historical research at large, did not result from a Rankean revelation, whereby archives suddenly became the foremost source of history. Recently, scholars have stressed the continuity in research methods between Leopold von Ranke and his predecessors and the rise of competing models of archival scholarship.³ The development of Jewish historical studies demonstrates in a similar fashion that the transformation of scholarly practices extended far into the nineteenth century—and that the use of archives was not based on a universal standard, but was contingent on specific political factors and shifting topics of study. Figures like Gerson Wolf first examined state archives and Jewish communal records in the 1850s, at a time of growing interest in local history and the opening of state archives to research. New orientations to historical sources and evidence emerged alongside new topics requiring new kinds of sources; instead of studying Jewish "literature," as Zunz did, scholars turned to Jewish communities and the records of their relation to the state, on one hand, and of their autonomous self-administration on the other. And Jewish scholars increasingly feared these documents would be lost if left in private hands, leading to new attention to preserving them. Thus, the history of Jewish scholars' turn to archives reflected both their own

³ See Markus Friedrich, Philipp Müller, and Michael Riordan, "Practices of Historical Research in Archives and Libraries from the Eighteenth to the Nineteenth Century," *History of Humanities* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 3–13; Kasper Eskildsen, "Inventing the Archive: Testimony and Virtue in Modern Historiography," *History of the Human Sciences* 26, no. 4 (2013): 8–23; Daniela Saxer, *Die Schärfung des Quellenblicks* (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2013); Philipp Müller, "Archives and History: Towards a History of 'the Use of State Archives' in the Nineteenth Century," *ibid.*: 27–49; Herman Paul, "The Heroic Study of Records: The Contested Persona of the Archival Historian," *ibid.*: 67–83.

position as colonial subjects seeking to use archives against the grain, and their own Orientalist perspective on coreligionists who they believed incapable of preserving the sources of their own past. The coevolution of the archive as a marker of historical authenticity and as an institution to preserve historical sources from destruction, then, gave rise to a heightened impulse to extract sources from communities and private persons who held them, gathering them at an archive.

The result was a research revolution, as scholars turned to new subjects and new sources. Increasingly, they viewed archival work as a marker of professionalism, as reflected in Salo Baron's assessment of Graetz's deficiencies alongside Moritz Güdemann's projection of these new sensibilities onto his teacher. It is a history hidden in forewords and footnotes—but it is not a story that should remain on the margins.⁴ Instead, it sets the stage for the archival moment of the early twentieth century, when Jews created diverse archives to document the Jewish past. These efforts to preserve historical sources from destruction—whether by the banality of neglect or from the ravages of war and looting—and to pursue archival projects emerged from the transformation of the study of the Jewish past and the concomitant hope that future historians might not have to write Jewish history without archival sources.

Wissenschaft Without Archives

The early nineteenth-century scholars of Judaism hoped to bring so-called “scientific” advances and attitudes to Jewish studies, but they largely eschewed archival research. The Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden, identified by many as the opening of modern Jewish scholarship, was established in 1819 by figures like Leopold Zunz, Eduard Gans, and Isaak Markus Jost who had left the *heder* for the university and sought to apply what Zunz called “a

⁴ This direction of research in Jewish historiography follows Anthony Grafton's approach to look beyond the historical text to its wider apparatus, and the recent call for a “practical and material” history of the humanities. See Grafton, *The Footnote*; Friedrich, et al, “Practices of Historical Research in Archives and Libraries.” Cf. Moïse Schwab's essay on Basnage in *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1906), II:579–582, which presented a model of considering scholars' sources.

new, foreign *Bildung*” to Judaism.⁵ They had imbibed new ideas and philosophies alongside an outlook that privileged critical “*Wissenschaft*.”⁶ Such all-embracing “science” was not entirely novel; Vico’s *Scienza Nuova* and Herder’s *Wissenschaftslehre* present just two examples of the imperialism of “science,” conquering all disciplines.⁷ If the debate at the end of the nineteenth century was if history was art or science, the earlier consensus was of history’s scientific mood—or at least an aspiration, as Friedrich Beiser has articulated, to *make* it a science.⁸ For the founders of modern Jewish studies, “*Wissenschaft*” held two components, a vision of comprehensiveness and a standard of objectivity.⁹ Zunz’s programmatic essay “Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur” (1818) defined a field encompassing all of Jewish life.¹⁰ In “Über den Begriff einer Wissenschaft des Judentums” (1822), Immanuel Wolf gave voice to a *Wissenschaft* based on holism (“the essence of *Wissenschaft*,” he wrote, “is universality, limitlessness”) and objectivity (“only *Wissenschaft* rises above the partiality, passion, and prejudice of lower existence; because its goal is the

⁵ Zunz, “Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur,” *Gesammelten Schriften* (Berlin: Louis Gerschel Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1875), I:3. Famously, Zunz and Jost studied under Samuel Meyer Ehrenberg where, in the words of Ismar Schorsch, they “compressed the passage of a millennium into less than a lifetime.” Schorsch, “From Wolfenbüttel to *Wissenschaft*,” *LBIYB* 22 (1977): 109–128. Also see Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 83–86; Michael Brenner, *Prophets of the Past: Interpreters of Jewish History* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010), 27–36; Michael Meyer, *The Origins of the Modern Jew*, 157–182; Schorsch, “The Emergence of Historical Consciousness in Modern Judaism,” *LBIYB* 28 (1983): 413–437; Baron, *History and Jewish Historians*, 241; Reuven Michael, *Y. M. Yost: 'Avi ha-historiografyah ha-yehudit ha-modernit* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982–83). For an overview of recent research, see Kerstin von der Krone, Mirjam Thulin, “*Wissenschaft* in Context: A Research Essay on the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*,” *LBIYB* 58 (2013): 248–280.

⁶ See Giuseppe Veltri, “Altertumswissenschaft und Wissenschaft des Judentums. Leopold Zunz und seine Lehrer F.A. Wolf und A. Böckh,” in *Friedrich August Wolf. Studien, Dokumente, Bibliographie*, ed. Reinhard Markner, Giuseppe Veltri (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999), 32–47.

⁷ As Wolf articulated in 1822, “science is the characteristic attitude of our times.” Immanuel Wolf, “Über den Begriff einer Wissenschaft des Judentums,” *ZWdJ* 1, no. 1 (1822): 24.

⁸ Frederick Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 21. For a contemporary discussion, cf. Karl Lamprecht, *Die kulturhistorische Methode* (Berlin: H. Heyfelder, 1900).

⁹ David N. Myers, “The Ideology of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*,” in *History of Jewish Philosophy*, ed. Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman (New York: Routledge, 1997), 706–720.

¹⁰ A generation later, Moritz Steinschneider succinctly summarized this perspective when he began his bibliographic essay on Jewish literature by defining it as “encompassing all that the Jews have written from the earliest times to the present, regardless of content, language, or country.” Steinschneider, “Jüdische Literatur,” in Johann Samuel Ersch, Johann Gottfried Gruber comps., *Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste* (1850), 357–471.

truth”).¹¹ For Zunz, Wolf, and their colleagues, these aspirations were closely coupled in an attempt at a new field of study they called *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the Science of Judaism.

These scholars’ notion of the comprehensiveness of their new “science” was not limited to the scope of their proposed research. Just as *Wissenschaft* was meant to cover an exhaustive set of topics, so too would its sources be expansive. The short-lived *Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (1822–23) set forward a series of discussions of possible sources.¹² In “Grundlinien zu einer künftigen Statistik der Juden,” the journal’s final scholarly essay, Zunz proposed gathering data on the state of the Jews, both in the present and in historical perspective, in what may be termed a proto-archival impulse. He detailed a diverse set of sources, including books and manuscripts, administrative documents, monuments (gravestones), family and place names, linguistic and philological evidence, various writings about and laws relating to the Jews, and more.¹³ And he concluded with the hope to use state archives. “Asia, Europe, and Africa,” he wrote, “must open their two-thousand-year-old archives to writers, because the most important results of the internal history of the Jews are the children of these hundreds of laws, promulgations, edicts and privilegia,” echoing a prior call to study the archives of the Inquisition and Jewish communal *Memorbücher*.¹⁴ Zunz and his contemporaries saw a wide horizon of historical

¹¹ Wolf, “Über den Begriff einer Wissenschaft des Judentums,” *ZWdJ* 1, no. 1 (1822): 21, 23.

¹² See, for instance, Eduard Gans, “Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Juden im Norden von Europa und in den slavischen Ländern,” *ZWdJ* 1, no. 1 (1822): 95–113; Zunz, “Über die in den hebräisch-jüdischen Schriften vorkommenden hispanischen Ortsnamen,” *ibid.*: 114–176.

¹³ In this light, Zunz’s *Namen der Juden* (1837) should be seen not simply as a response to calls for the restriction of Jews to so-called “Jewish names” (Zunz, *Namen der Juden: Eine geschichtliche Untersuchung*, Leipzig: L. Fort, 1837, 2) but as part of his broader “scientific” program. See Michael A. Meyer, *Judaism Within Modernity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), 174; Nahum Glatzer, *Leopold Zunz: Jude—Deutscher—Europäer* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1964), 189; also Jeremiah Heinemann, *Ergänzungen und Erläuterungen der die religiöse und bürgerliche Verfassung der Juden in den Königlich Preußischen Staaten betreffenden Gesetze: Zweiter Nachtrag* (1839), 215. On the broader meaning of *Denkmäler* (monuments), see Susan A. Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 29–34.

¹⁴ Zunz, “Grundlinien zu einer künftigen Statistik der Juden,” *ZWdJ* 1, no. 3 (1822): 532; cf. Zunz, “Über die in den hebräisch-jüdischen Schriften vorkommenden hispanischen Ortsnamen,” *ZWdJ* 1, no. 1 (1822): 129.

sources: For instance, Isaak Markus Jost countered criticism of his *Geschichte der Israeliten* (1820–1828) with the claim that there were so many sources that no one could examine them all, and he defended himself with claims of the tremendous effort and personal means he had expended to gain access to rare manuscripts.¹⁵ Scholars like Zunz and Jost, then, attempted to bring a new attitude to the sources to their study of Judaism, with special emphasis on Jewish sources such as prayers, *responsa* (rabbinic rulings and correspondence on Jewish law), among other writings.

The pioneers of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* perceived their project as radically innovative, and sought to distinguish themselves from their predecessors, who they ridiculed for partisan theological perspectives and shoddy research. The eighteenth-century French Huguenot Jacques Basnage and the contemporary Hannah Adams of Boston, who respectively published *L’histoire et la religion des Juifs depuis Jésus-Christ jusqu’à présent* (1706–1711) and *The History of the Jews from the Destruction of Jerusalem to the Present Time* (1812), proved easy-enough punching bags.¹⁶ These authors were derided for their unabashedly theological outlook.¹⁷ Basnage opposed forcible conversion—he himself was writing in Rotterdam, a fugitive of religious persecution—but he wrote at length about how the ancient Israelites believed in the trinity.¹⁸ Adams’ work had

¹⁵ Isaak Markus Jost, *Geschichte der Israeliten seit der Zeit der Maccabäer bis auf unsre Tage* [hereafter cited as *Geschichte*] (Berlin: Schlesingschen Buch- und Musikhandlung, 1828), VIII:iv–v.

¹⁶ See Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 81–82, who sharply criticizes Basnage; Brenner, *Prophets of the Past*, 18–21, has a more balanced treatment. Note that Basnage’s work appeared in seven books over five volumes, and was pirated in English. A second edition appeared 1716–26 of seven books over 15 volumes. Similarly, Adams was initially published in 1812 (two vols., Boston: John Elliot) and reappeared as a single volume in 1818 (London: A. Macintosh); citations are from the 1818 edition.

¹⁷ On Adams and Basnage, see Michael A. Meyer, “The Emergence of Jewish Historiography: Motives and Motifs,” *History and Theory* 27, no. 4 (Dec. 1988): 169–170; Lester A. Segal, “Jacques Basnage de Beauval’s *l’Histoire des Juifs*: Christian Historiographical Perception of Jewry and Judaism on the Eve of the Enlightenment,” *HUCA* 54 (1983): 303–324; Jonathan M. Elukin, “Jacques Basnage and the History of the Jews: Anti-Catholic Polemic and Historical Allegory in the Republic of Letters,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53, no. 4 (1992): 603–630. Particularly relevant is Miriam Silvera, “Contribution à l’examen des sources de l’Histoire des Juifs de Jaques Basnage: Las Excelenciados de los Hebreos de Ysaac Cardoso,” pts. 1 and 2, *Studia Rosenthaliana* 25, no. 1 (Spr. 1991): 42–54; 25, no. 2 (Fall 1991): 149–161, which examines how Basnage makes use of one particular source.

¹⁸ Jacques Basnage, *L’histoire et la religion des juifs, depuis Jésus-Christ jusqu’à présent* (Rotterdam: Reiner Leers, 1706–1711), III:10–25.

clear missionary intensions; it was republished in 1818 by the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among Jews. She opened with an epigraph evoking a narrative frame in which the Jews' suffering was due to God's wrath, presumably for not accepting Jesus, and concluded with a religious appeal to Jews.¹⁹ The *Wissenschaft* scholars also pointed to basic inaccuracies. Jost referred to Adams's book as "a poor compilation of older efforts" and noted that "I do not know where Basnage has got his reports and remarkable anachronisms," complaining that the French author made use of "little in the original, and even less in the main sources from older periods."²⁰ Similarly, in 1822 Eduard Gans cautiously wrote that Basnage reported that the Jews had been expelled from England in the year 1020, but Gans reflected that such an expulsion is not attested "in a single English source."²¹ Such comments illustrate the nineteenth-century Jewish scholars' efforts to mark their own advances by highlighting their predecessors' lack of sources.

Basnage was clearly familiar with the medieval and early modern Jewish historians and chroniclers, as well as church and canon law.²² But—as the Jewish *Wissenschaft* scholars noted rightly—both he and Adams were uncritical and credulous, often simply repeating others' reports, no matter how unbelievable. They drew heavily from travelogues, especially Benjamin of Tudela's

¹⁹ Adams, *The History of the Jews from the Destruction of Jerusalem to the Present Time* (London: A. Macintosh, 1818), title page, prominently prints Deut. 28:64–65, translated: "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other;—and among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest." Cf. Adams (1818), 549–555. See Robert Michael Smith, "The London Jews' Society and Patterns of Jewish Conversion in England, 1801–1859," *Jewish Social Studies* 43, nos. 3–4 (1981): 275–290.

²⁰ Jost, *Geschichte*, VI:141, III, Appendix, 165; VII:348. Later scholars did not pull punches, either. Graetz wrote that Basnage contained "thousands of errors," continuing: "Truly, there are only a few sentences that represent the truth." (Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart* [hereafter *Geschichte*], X:318.)

²¹ Gans, "Vorlesung über die Geschichte der Juden im Norden von Europa und in den slavischen Ländern."

²² See Basnage I, which notably lists his sources *before* the body of his text. Basnage made frequent reference to works like Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* (Moreh Nevukhim) and Yehuda Ha-Levi's *Kuzari*, which presented theological arguments for Judaism; he cited the Codex Theodosianus and other church councils; he further drew upon the medieval Jewish historians, especially David Gans' *Zemah David*, Solomon ibn Verga's *Shevet Yehuda*, and Gedaliah ibn Yahya's *Shalshet ha-kabbalah*, as well as medieval chronicles and the reports of various Christian theologians on Jewish practices. On the sixteenth-century Jewish scholars, see Robert Bonfil, "How Golden was the Age of the Renaissance in Jewish Historiography?" *History and Theory* 27, no. 4 (1988): 78–102; Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "Clio and the Jews: Reflections on Jewish Historiography in the Sixteenth Century," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 46/47 (1979–80): 607–638; Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 53–76.

twelfth-century account, as well as biblical sources and Josephus.²³ In one case of seeming source criticism that is illustrative of Basnage’s methods, he again discussed the expulsion of the Jews from England, which took place in 1290.²⁴ As Basnage rightly pointed out, sixteenth-century Jewish writers Solomon ibn Verga and David Gans both incorrectly dated the expulsion to 1260.²⁵ Based on “a document found in Winchester,” Basnage reported that the Jews were in England as late as 1287. He argued that earlier Jewish historians misread the year as a *khaf* (the Hebrew letter denoting the number 20, or 5020 AM, corresponding to 1260 CE), instead of the correct *nun* (50, for 5050 AM, or 1290 CE). However, this discrepancy was discovered not by Basnage but by the English scholar John Selden in 1640; throughout, Basnage primarily reported what he received from other scholars.²⁶ And Basnage did not see many of the sources himself. His most-utilized reference was Giulio Bartolucci’s *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica*, a seventeenth-century collection of rabbinic writings.²⁷ In one instance, he referred to a document “held in the Vatican”—but as with the “document found in Winchester,” Basnage likely did not see it

²³ See Basnage V:1902, which draws from Th. Herbert, *Voyage de Perse* (1677); Basnage V:1923, 1926, citing Tavernier, *Voyages*; other important travelogues included Stocave, *Voyage du Levant*, and Thevenot, *Suite de Voyage de Levant*; p. 1952 he quotes at length the report of a Mr. Reland on his travels amongst the Samaritans. For a consideration of Benjamin’s account, see David Jacoby, “Benjamin of Tudela and his ‘Book of Travels,’” in *Venezia Incrocio Di Culture. Percezioni di Viaggiatori Europei e non Europei a Confronto*, ed. Klaus Herbers, Felicitas Schmieder (Rome: 2008), 135–164. Also see the first modern publication, Adolph Asher, trans. and ed., *The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela* (London and Berlin: A. Asher & Co., 1840), I:1–28, II:ix–xix; and Marcus Adler, “The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela,” *JQR* 16, no. 3 (Apr. 1904): 453–473, with a critical introduction.

²⁴ On the Jews’ expulsion from England, see Robin R. Mundill, *England’s Jewish Solution: Experiment and Expulsion, 1262–1290* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Sholom A. Singer, “The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290,” *JQR* 55, no. 2 (1964): 117–136; Sophia Menache, “The King, the Church, and the Jews: Some Considerations on the Expulsions from England and France,” *Journal of Medieval History* 13, no. 3 (1987): 223–236.

²⁵ See *Zemah David*, fol. 52; Gans places the “Exile from Angletterre” in [50]20 AM (=1260 CE).

²⁶ Basnage, V:1844; cf. Selden, *De jure naturali et gentium juxta disciplinam Ebraeorum* (London: Richard Bishop, 1640) II:194–196. In another memorable instance, he passed on reports such as that of Christian Wurstisen, who wrote in 1585 that Jewish magicians were at fault for the invasions of the Persians and Tatars (Basnage, V:1853)

²⁷ On Bartolucci, see Steven Harvey and Rosanne Fontaine, “Creating a New Literary Genre: Steinschneider’s Leiden Catalogue,” in *Studies on Steinschneider: Moritz Steinschneider and the Emergence of the Science of Judaism in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, ed. Reimund Leicht, Gad Freudenthal (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 278–79.

personally, as he cited it from Bartolucci.²⁸ As for Adams, her primary source was Basnage himself. Only in a few more recent historical episodes did she discuss her sources.²⁹ Writing of Uriel Acosta, she cited his memoir *Exemplar humanae vitae* (1640).³⁰ On the 1654 reentry of Jews to England and their naturalization (the so-called “Jew Bill” of 1753), she consulted printed debates, and she referenced the 1780s’ discussion of civic amelioration and the articles of Abbé Gregoire.³¹ And she referred to tsar Alexander I’s 1804 proclamation outlining the legal status of the Jews, but it is not clear she saw the document, as she dated it incorrectly (1805), and apparently got her information from the *New England Repertory* newspaper.³² And so, Basnage’s and Adams’ footnotes—to the extent they pulled back the curtain to their sources—exposed extensive use of libraries, not unpublished manuscripts or archival sources.

Basnage and Adams’ limited and selective sources made them easy targets. They served as a useful straw man (and woman) for the scholars of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* who wanted to demonstrate their own heightened awareness of original sources. A remark by Heinrich Graetz, though himself of a later generation, is illustrative. Graetz perhaps revealed the bias of his time when he expressed that “it would be [too much] to expect of a woman that she would dive into the original sources of Jewish history.” But the full context indicates his overall view on original sources, as he described them as that “from which one derives the truth, with which one should distinguish [the truth] from the fraudulent.”³³ Such critiques highlight the characteristic of the new, “scientific” scholarship of Judaism that the *Wissenschaft* scholars sought to cultivate. If

²⁸ Basnage, V:1887.

²⁹ Also see Dan Judson, “The Mercies of a Benign Judge: Letter from Gershom Seixas to Hannah Adams, 1810,” *AJAJ* 56, no. 1 (2004): 179–189, which discusses her turn to contemporary Jewish leaders for information.

³⁰ Adams, 376.

³¹ Adams, 380ff.

³² Adams, 411.

³³ Graetz, *Geschichte*, XI:452.

Zunz and his contemporaries hoped to apply a “new, foreign *Bildung*” to the study of the Jews, it was the methods of *Quellenstudium*, the critical examination of original sources—as Jost put it in the eighth volume of his *Geschichte der Israeliten*, this new approach was “well-known to all friends of the truth” and should serve as the foundation for historical research.³⁴

Despite the ambitious program of the founders of modern Jewish studies and the frequent (and often fitting) criticisms hailed upon Basnage and Adams, a close examination of these early Jewish scholars’ methods and sources shows that they had more in common than they might have liked to admit. Zunz’s 1822 biography of the Talmudic scholar Rashi, in one instance, opened with a chain of transmission tracing the passing of Jewish teaching through generations of French and Rhineland scholars, a feature characteristic of medieval Jewish historiography exemplified by the twelfth-century chronicler Abraham ibn Daud’s *Sefer ha-ḳabbalah*.³⁵ The nineteenth-century Jewish writers worked with a range of sources only slightly broader than their Christian colleagues had. They frequently cited sixteenth-century Jewish scholars like David Gans, Solomon ibn Verga, and Gedaliah ibn Yahya, upon whom Basnage depended so heavily. They also continued to rely on travelogues like Benjamin of Tudela’s alongside published source collections and legal codes. For instance, in the first historical article published in the *Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Eduard Gans considered the history of Jews in Rome primarily according to Roman legal codes, Tacitus, and Josephus’ *Antiquities of the Jews*.³⁶ When Gans outlined the sources of the history of the Jews of England, he focused on published sources and general histories of Britain, Anglo-Saxon law codes, and only finally De Blossier Tovey’s 1738 compendium *Anglia*

³⁴ Jost, *Geschichte*, VIII:v.

³⁵ Zunz, “Salomon ben Isaac, genannt Raschi,” *ZWdJ* 1, no. 2: (1822), 277–278; cf. Gerson Cohen, *A Critical Edition with a Translation and Notes of the Book of Tradition (Sefer Ha-Qabbalah) by Abraham ibn Daud* (Phila.: JPS, 1967).

³⁶ Gans, “Gesetzgebung über Juden in Rom, nach den Quellen des Römischen Rechts,” *ZWdJ* 1, no. 1 (1822): 25–67.

Judaica, which published numerous excerpts from and summaries of original documents.³⁷

The early nineteenth-century Jewish scholars continued to rely upon older sources, but they attempted to bring a new criticism. For instance, Jost remarked that Ibn Yahya's 1587 tome *Shalsholet ha-ḳabbalah* had the wrong chronology, "as usual."³⁸ But as Jost explained, "the most difficult [task] was to locate the often completely unknown and hidden sources."³⁹ Nevertheless, in Jost's *Geschichte der Israeliten* he cited little that had previously been truly unknown. Instead, he primarily utilized published sources, like public ordinances and some rare manuscripts and printed works.⁴⁰ Travelogues—both medieval reports like Benjamin of Tudela's as well as more recent accounts like Barthold Georg Niebuhr's travels to Egypt, William Coxe's to Poland, and reports on Surinam—served as Jost's eyes and ears for far-off places, just as they had for Basnage and Adams.⁴¹ He also depended heavily on published collections of documents and laws.⁴² And he emphasized three main types of sources: public files (*öffentlichen Akten*), chronicles, and "old rabbinic writings"—that is, rabbinic responsa (legal opinions) and *ḳinnot* (lamentation prayers), which Jost sought to correlate with specific persecutions.⁴³ Zunz, similarly, made extensive use of responsa in his biography of Rashi. For the early modern period, Jost utilized contemporary works, particularly polemical literature. He provided long quotations from Martin Luther's *Daß Christus ein geborener Jude sei* (1523), and for the rise of the seventeenth-century pseudomessiah

³⁷ Gans, "Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Juden im Norden von Europa und in den slavischen Ländern."

³⁸ Jost, *Geschichte*, VII:283.

³⁹ Jost, *Geschichte*, VIII:v.

⁴⁰ See, for instance, Jost, *Geschichte*, IX, "Verzeichnis der merkwürdigsten Namen und Sachen," 27, which reproduces and translates an inscription from *Museum Veronense* (Verona: 1749), 326–328.

⁴¹ Jost, *Geschichte*, VIII:10,88–89, 165, 230, 266.

⁴² Especially *Sammlung Fürstlicher Hessischer Landesordnungen* (1767–1816), Anton Balthasar König's *Annalen der Juden in der Mark Brandenburg* (1790), Johann Casper Ulrich's *Sammlung jüdischer Geschichten in der Schweiz* (1768), and the collection of Eusèbe de Laurière's *Ordonnances des roys de France* (1723, 1729).

⁴³ Jost, *Geschichte*, VII:428, 430.

Sabbatai Zevi, he primarily referred to the works of the anti-Sabbateans Jacob Emden (*Torat ha-kena'ot*, 1752; *Sefer shimush*, 1758) and Jacob Saportas (*Ḳitsur tsitsit novel Tsvi*, 1736).⁴⁴ He often referenced sources without quoting or citing them directly, such as a letter sent by Zevi or the letter of Hasdai Ibn Shaprut about the medieval Khazar kingdom, which he translated but did not indicate where he had located it.⁴⁵ For more recent events, he looked to the growing products of the public sphere, notably journals—“*Der Sammler*,” that is, the Maskilic journal *Ha-me'assef* (Königsberg, 1784–1811), along with *Sulamith* (Leipzig, 1806–1848, intermittently) and various newspapers—as well as contemporary works such as Isaac Euchel’s 1788 biography of Moses Mendelssohn and the publication of the Napoleonic Sanhedrin’s activities by Diogène Tama.⁴⁶ On the whole, Jost’s history was based on published material, reflecting a general trend: Despite Zunz’s call for an expanded source base and particularly the study of archives, the early nineteenth-century scholars of Jewish studies remained tied to published sources.

Jewish scholars had an expansive and ambitious vision of their new “Science” of Judaism, both in terms of the scope of the project of study and the kinds of sources that they would have liked to use. They brought to bear a new critical perspective and also a century’s worth of newly available sources since the publishing of Basnage’s history. But despite the hope to use archives, such sources remained inaccessible; in their absence they needed to use what was at their disposal. Just as Isaak Markus Jost’s *Geschichte der Israeliten* may have been premature, trying to synthesize the broad history of the Jews before it had been sufficiently investigated in its details, the *Wissenschaft* scholars hoped to use material before it was collected and available for their research. The great methodological innovation of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was bringing the

⁴⁴ Jost, *Geschichte*, VIII:475, 101, 166.

⁴⁵ Jost, *Geschichte*, VI:118, VIII:113.

⁴⁶ *Collection des actes de l’assemblée des Israélites de France et du royaume d’Italie*, 1807; Jost, *Geschichte*, IX:122.

Jewish sources to bear, especially rabbinic responsa. By analyzing Jewish sources together with general histories and sources, the *Wissenschaft* scholars brought a new perspective on the history of the Jews, but they were unable to utilize archives, either due to the choice of their topics or the realities of research at state archives, most of which remained closed to scholars.

Heinrich Graetz and the Study of “Primary Sources”

When Heinrich Graetz composed his eleven-volume *Geschichte der Juden* (1854–1876), he too sought to set himself apart from his predecessors on ideological and methodological grounds, revising earlier efforts with the fervency of a true believer alongside a sharper source criticism.⁴⁷ His merger of the sophisticated study of original sources with a knack for narration made him an important touchstone and model for early twentieth-century scholars and laypeople alike, as Gershom Scholem recounted.⁴⁸ He sought to imbue his work with a deep empathy for its subject, bringing not only a new Romantic, even *völkisch*, fervor to Jewish history. “I admit most of all,” he wrote in 1873, “that the love of the people, to whom I belong to by birth and conviction, has led me in the composition [of this work].”⁴⁹ Philip Bloch, one of Graetz’s early

⁴⁷ Graetz’s *Geschichte* has a peculiar publication history, appearing out of chronological order. The first part, published in 1854, was the fourth volume, and the final (1873) was the first volume. (See n. 49.) It also actually consisted of twelve books, as the 1873 volume was split into two parts. (However, Ismar Elbogen suggested that there were *thirteen* parts; Elbogen, “Heinrich Graetz, Historian of the Jews,” *AJYB* 43 (1941): 489–498.) Some of the most important recent scholarship on Graetz includes: Jeffrey Blutinger, “Writing for the Masses: Heinrich Graetz, the Popularization of Jewish History, and the Reception of National Judaism” (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 2003); Marcus Pyka, *Jüdische Identität bei Heinrich Graetz* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009). As noted, there was a great outpouring of commentary on Graetz around the time of his centenary in 1917, including an important biography by Joseph Meisl (son-in-law of Samuel David Luzzatto, and later director of the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem), *Heinrich Graetz. Eine Würdigung des Historikers und Juden zu seinem 100. Geburtstagstage* (Berlin: Louis Lamm, 1917); this centenary nearly coincided with the 100-year anniversary of the founding of the Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden, leading to broad retrospectives, particularly by Ismar Elbogen, who wrote essays including “Ein hundertjähriger Gedenktag unserer Wissenschaft,” *Festschrift zum 50jährigen Bestehen der Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin* (1922); “Die Wissenschaft des Judentums” (Berlin: Philo-Verlag, 1925); “Von Graetz bis Dubnow. Fünfzig Jahre jüdischer Geschichtsforschung,” in *Festschrift zu Simon Dubnows siebzigstem Geburtstag*, ed. Elbogen, Meisl, et al. (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1930), 7–23; “Zum Begriff ‘Wissenschaft des Judentums,’” *Zum sechzigjährigen Bestehen der Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (1932), 33–41.

⁴⁸ Gershom Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem: Memories of My Youth* (New York: Schocken, 1980), 38.

⁴⁹ Graetz, *Geschichte*, I:xiv. Graetz made this comment in the foreword to the *first* volume (dated 1873, when

biographers, provides a convenient anecdote: When Leopold Zunz first learned of Graetz’s ambition to write a history of the Jews, he asked the young scholar, “Yet another history of the Jews?” To this, Graetz’s response was simply: “This time, a *Jewish* history.”⁵⁰ In his *Geschichte der Juden*, Graetz did away with objectivity, itself a central tenet of *Wissenschaft* for an earlier generation, but cranked up source criticism, providing both detailed footnotes in the text itself and an extensive scholarly apparatus in a series of “notes,” perhaps best characterized as articles. In doing so, Graetz developed a peculiar attitude to historical sources and evidence that presents an important signpost in the path towards archival research in Jewish studies. For despite any claim to rely upon primary sources, like his predecessors Graetz also generally avoided archives.

If Graetz presented his vision of the arc of Jewish history in the introduction to the fourth volume (actually the first to be published, in 1854), detailing the “*Doppelbild*” of Jewish history—“*forschen und wandern, denken und dulden, lernen und leiden*”—it was in the fifth volume (1860) that Graetz provided a startling, if circumscribed, manifesto on historical method.⁵¹ He explained:

I have not made use of the newest ‘history of Judaism’ [*Geschichte des Judentums*], because I have stuck only to the primary sources [*primäre Quellen*]. Dr. Zunz’s more confusing than clarifying notes and dry nomenclature have aided my work only a little. If I have succeeded with the mentioned means and the many dignified preparatory works and monographs to fashion the image of the history of the Jews in the so-called Middle Ages corresponding to or only approximating to the original, unenviable experts can judge.⁵²

Graetz here presents an astounding claim. He declared independence from the “preparatory works and monographs” upon which he freely admitted he depended, maintaining that his history

completed, rather than 1874, when it was printed), which was actually the *tenth* volume to appear. Graetz’s *Geschichte* appeared in the sequence: Vol. 4 (1854); vol. 3 (1856), vol. 5 (1860), vol. 6 (1860), vol. 7 (1862), vol. 8 (1864), vol. 9 (1866), vol. 10 (1868), vol. 11 (1870), vol. 1 (1874), vol. 2, part 1 (1875), vol. 2, part 2 (1876).

⁵⁰ Here, Graetz perhaps anticipated Martin Buber’s call for a *Jüdische Wissenschaft* instead of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (*Die Welt* 5, nos. 41, 43 [1901]). See Michael Brenner, *Prophets of the Past*, 56ff, and also Philip Bloch in Graetz (Philadelphia: JPS, 1898), VI:60. Bloch indicates that Graetz referred to Julius Dessauer’s *Geschichte der Israeliten* (1846), not Jost’s work of that same name, which he “updated” that year. In either case, Graetz intended to write from a Jewish, even a parochial, perspective.

⁵¹ Graetz, *Geschichte*, IV:1; emphasis in the original.

⁵² Graetz, *Geschichte*, V:vi.

was solely the product of investigation of the “primary sources.” Thus, he indicated that he hoped to provide readers with unmediated access to the past, in contrast with later historians embarking on similar projects, such as Salo Baron, who even with his emphasis on archival research made extensive use of secondary literature in his *Social and Religious History of the Jews*.⁵³ Graetz further revealed his intended audience by suggesting that “unenviable experts” determine the truthfulness of his representation of the past; he thereby distanced himself from scholarly discourse, proposing to create a timeless picture of the past based entirely on primary sources but aimed at readers who would not question his “innovations.”

Graetz’s claim to work only with the “primary sources” was not entirely sincere. Broadly speaking, Graetz avoided citing secondary scholarship, but his *Geschichte* was built on the foundation of the work of other scholars, especially as sources of the sources he wanted to study. Graetz generally relied on outside accounts for three things: Background information from general histories, contemporary accounts from earlier Jewish historians, and—most of all—he depended on the new “Geschichte des Judentums” for access to the published primary sources that he maintained was the basis of his scholarship.⁵⁴ Indeed, Graetz mostly did not personally examine “primary sources” in archives or study manuscripts in his possession. Instead, he benefitted from a wide network of scholars, concealed in Graetz’s introductions to the various volumes of his *Geschichte* and its notes.⁵⁵ He extended his thanks specifically to the Paris librarian Eliakim Carmoly, Vienna’s chief rabbi Adolf Jellinek, the Padua scholar Samuel David Luzzatto, the Orientalists Gustav Weil and Emil Rödiger, and the libraries of Leiden and Hamburg

⁵³ Esp. see Graetz, *Geschichte*, III, whose notes refer less to original sources directly than to scholarly debates on the various historical questions that Baron considers.

⁵⁴ For instance, see Graetz, *Geschichte*, IX n. 10; in another case, the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* printed a source for the persecution of Jews in Prague in 1389, see Graetz, *Geschichte*, VIII:58.

⁵⁵ On networks in modern Jewish studies, see Mirjam Thulin, *Kaufmanns Nachrichtendienst. Ein jüdisches Gelehrtennetwork im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012).

for sending him items, not to mention Simha Pinsker, who gave Graetz a pre-publication copy of his history of Karaism, *Likute kadmoniot* (1860).⁵⁶ Carmoly and Luzzatto were a constant presence in Graetz's footnotes. He made extensive use of their personal libraries as well as the collections of the Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar in Breslau, where he taught Jewish history beginning in 1854. Only rarely did Graetz refer to documents in his personal possession.⁵⁷ More frequently, he borrowed them from helpful friends, as was the case with a letter of the sixteenth-century rabbi Elia Kapsali, lent to him by Salomo Nissen, a colleague in Breslau.⁵⁸ These scholars were often published in the *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the journal based in Breslau, which Graetz would edit from 1869 to 1887.

Graetz, like his predecessors, depended on travel literature and rabbinic rulings, but he brought forward a broader range of accounts. For instance, Graetz tracked the fate of Jews expelled from Spain in 1492 and the growing Jewish population of Jerusalem around this time on the basis of a number of anonymous accounts from Italian pilgrims and the report of a certain Nikolaus de Nikolai of Turkey.⁵⁹ Early modern Jewish historians also served as a fountain of knowledge for Graetz, both for details to be compared with other accounts and also as eyewitnesses, as did Samuel Usque's *Consolação ás Tribulações de Israel* (1553), which Graetz used as a first-hand account.⁶⁰ Graetz also added to the eighteenth-century source collections Jost had utilized, extensively employing materials found in newly published source books and recent scholarship such as E.H. Lindo's, *The Jews of Spain and Portugal* (1848), Juan Antonio Llorente's

⁵⁶ Graetz, *Geschichte*, V:v.

⁵⁷ Graetz, *Geschichte*, VIII:448, n. 7, where he refers to "a rare printed work in my possession, a small historical work without a title page and also lacking its conclusion."

⁵⁸ Graetz, *Geschichte*, VIII:452; he reports that "I have a true copy of a letter, which my friend S. Nissen has made [available] from a manuscript." Graetz goes on, like many in this period (see pp. 39–40), to print the letter in full.

⁵⁹ Graetz, *Geschichte*, IX:27–33.

⁶⁰ Graetz, *Geschichte*, VIII:300, 326.

Histoire critique de l'Inquisition en Espagne (1817–18), Josef Wertheimer's three-volume *Die Juden in Österreich* (1846), Joseph Perles' *Geschichte der Juden in Posen* (first published serially in the *Monatsschrift* in 1865), and the various articles and monographs of the Vienna scholar Gerson Wolf, to name just a few. Graetz tended to exploit them for the source material that they contained—in the case of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, he looked to two recent publications for the text of the decree—not for the conclusions they drew.⁶¹ And so, Graetz's declaration that he eschewed the newest “history of Judaism” for the study of “primary sources” concealed the reality of his scholarly practice, wherein he relied heavily upon these works.

More often than not, Graetz's sources and analysis appeared not in the body of the *Geschichte* but in his extensive notes, marking a gaping chasm between two parts of an ostensibly singular work. As Graetz's colleague Zacharias Frankel once noted, Graetz was a figure with two opposing personas: The Graetz of the scholarly *Monatsschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* was not the Graetz of the popular *Geschichte der Juden*.⁶² If Graetz's popular history put forth a definitive history and hid the arcana of scholarly debate, his notes presented the product of continuous research and recognized its limitations.⁶³ In his notes, Graetz frequently qualified his research as preliminary sketches rather than final product, outlining sources for future study. For example, he concluded his discussion of the Council of the Four Lands with the hope that the matter “will be complemented by future research.”⁶⁴ Such notes, as Graetz's critical

⁶¹ Graetz, *Geschichte*, VIII:351 cites for this document José Yanguas y Miranda, *Diccionario de Antigüedades del Reino de Navarra* (Pamplona, 1840), E.H. Lindo, *The History of the Jews of Spain and Portugal: From the Earliest Times to Their Final Expulsion* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1848).

⁶² When Graetz was translated, the notes were frequently left out.

⁶³ Indeed, Graetz's publication of the *Geschichte* over more than two decades meant that the later volumes made use of a great deal more recent research than earlier ones. The appearance of revised editions in the 1880s (not to mention the “updating” of Graetz at the turn of the twentieth century, after the author's death) demonstrate that the *Geschichte der Juden* was not an *opus* intended to be put aside when finished as a complete work but meant to represent the continuing development of the body of work of Jewish studies.

⁶⁴ Graetz, *Geschichte*, IX:LXXXII (n. 9); also see 280.

apparatus, were intended for scholars and were often left out by his many translators.⁶⁵ Whereas Graetz presented his historical *research* in his notes and footnotes, the main body of the work served for Graetz as a form of historical *writing*, tailored for non-historians. As we shall see, he tended to provide his decisive conclusions in the text and historical analysis in the notes.

Graetz's greatest achievement, referred to by his students as his "mastery" of the sources, was his ability to locate them among the growing published literature and his critical approach to them. Graetz gathered competing narratives and sources and determined historical details through close reading and critical comparison. The act of ascertaining such "facts" presents a window into Graetz's method. In one striking example, Graetz assembled a broad set of sources—Jewish communal sources, manuscripts, private letters, and Christian chronicles—to unsettle Zunz's report of a thirteenth-century blood libel in Fulda.⁶⁶ Zunz had argued, based on *selihot* prayers, that medieval Christian accounts of a 1236 blood libel had confused it with the murder of eight Jewish scholars in 1234. Graetz presented evidence to the contrary from the Mainz *Memorbuch* (held by Carmoly), private letters (published in *Monumenta germaniae historica*), and Friedrich II's pronouncement of the innocence of the supposed Jewish murderers (found in the *Codex diplomaticus moenofrancofurtanus*, composed 1314–1340 in Frankfurt); Graetz argued that a spelling error in the prayers Zunz cited indicated that there were actually *two* blood libels in 1236.⁶⁷ Considering the seventeenth-century origins of the Jews in Amsterdam, Graetz brought forward conflicting accounts, ultimately settling on a Jewish poem to pinpoint the community's

⁶⁵ See Blutinger, 74, 122–123, 131.

⁶⁶ See Zunz, *Die Synagogal Poesie des Mittelalters* (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1855), 30–31.

⁶⁷ Graetz, *Geschichte*, VII:399–401 (n. 4). This incident is notable as one of the earliest charges of blood libel, and scholars have identified *four* such events that year, in Fulda (Dec. 1235), and subsequently in Lauda, Tauerbischsheim, and Wolfhagen; see Yisrael Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 278. Cf. Moritz Stern, "Die Blutbeschuldigung zu Fulda und ihre Folgen," *ZGJD* 2 (1888): 194–199.

origin “according to the old source” in September 1596.⁶⁸ In another case, Graetz questioned the specific dating of a 1420 massacre of Jews in Austria. The nineteenth-century scholar Josef Wertheimer declared it took place on the twenty-fourth of May in that year, but Graetz preferred the claim of a contemporaneous Jewish source, a collection of responsa *Terumat ha-deshen* by R. Israel Isserlein (c. 1390–1460), who reported the twenty-third, which Graetz put in the body of the text; Wertheimer’s view only appeared in a note.⁶⁹ Clearly, Graetz preferred contemporaneous (or near-contemporaneous) observers as authoritative, and to leave scholarly debates to footnotes, providing the reader instead with a singular if opaque narrative, free of controversies or questions.

Such instances of historical deduction gesture at Graetz’s search for prooftexts. But certain cases point away from a strict focus on textual evidence. He often preferred texts not for objectively preferable traits such as a contemporary relationship with the events they described, but because they were written by Jews or they matched what he expected to find. For example, investigating the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, he found “unquestionable” evidence for their previous expulsion from Seville in 1485, both in a close reading of the March 1492 edict of expulsion and in the “exact” sixteenth-century chronicler Joseph ha-cohen’s ‘*Emek ha-bakha*’ (1558). Ha-cohen, however, provided contradictory information, stating that it happened in the year 5245 A.M. (that is, 1485 CE), but then gave 1481 as the Christian date. “The first number, the Jewish date 5245 is certainly correct,” Graetz remarked, continuing, “the Christian date of 1481 without doubt has been corrupted.”⁷⁰ But from where Graetz’s conviction of the corruption of the 1481 date arose, he did not specify. Upon examining the protocols of the disputation of Tortosa (1413–14), Graetz found “direct proof” that the convert Geronimo de Santa Fe, the main

⁶⁸ Graetz, *Geschichte*, IX:LXXXIII–LXXXIV (n. 10).

⁶⁹ Graetz, *Geschichte*, VIII:144 (n. 1).

⁷⁰ Graetz, *Geschichte*, VIII:332.

antagonist of the Jews in this case, had composed his tractate *Contra perfidiam Judaeorum* in August 1412, not a year later (that would be, during the course of the disputation). He drew this conclusion not just because Geronimo himself noted it, but also because if it had been the next August, then the work would have first appeared in August 1415, following the disputation, which would be “absurd.”⁷¹ And whereas Zunz had placed the birth of the Italian geographer Abraham Farrisol in 1451 “without any indication of the source,” Graetz sought to identify a minimal date for his passing not based on explicit documentation of his death but instead on Farrisol’s geographical work *’Iggeret ’orhot ’olam*, which concluded in October 1524.⁷² In all these cases, Graetz sought to fill in details based on his preference for Jewish sources.

Graetz also gave travel pride of place. Travel accounts were more than simply sources of pertinent historical information. Traveling, he suggested, was prerequisite for furthering archaeological investigations in Ottoman Palestine which would illuminate the ancient history of the land of Israel, and it also supplemented historical data with further color. In 1873, he opened the “first” volume of his history, dedicated to the history of ancient Israel, with a remark that his 1872 trip to Palestine had been crucial in spurring him to complete the *Geschichte*.⁷³ Travel to Palestine, he explained, provides the “key to understanding the obscurity of biblical history.” For Graetz, only together, the “observation of the scene of history and the criticism of sources” provides access to the proper understanding of history.⁷⁴ Thus travel, both contemporary and historical, offered crucial perspectives.

A useful comparison to Graetz is to be found in his contemporary Mayer (Moritz)

⁷¹ Graetz, *Geschichte*, VIII: 423 (n. 3).

⁷² Graetz, *Geschichte*, IX:469.

⁷³ Cf. supra, nn. 47, 49 about the publication history; this “first” volume was published last.

⁷⁴ Graetz, *Geschichte*, I:viii–ix.

Kayslerling. Like Graetz's *Geschichte*, Kayslerling's 1862 biography of Moses Mendelssohn was intended for a popular audience and was based on "primary sources." And like Graetz, Kayslerling primarily utilized published sources, in his case the seven-volume *Gesammelten Schriften* of Mendelssohn that appeared from 1843 to 1845. These volumes collected the Dessau philosopher's published works and also his extensive correspondence, which served as the foundation for Kayslerling's study. By contrast, when Isaac Euchel prepared his biography of Mendelssohn in 1788, just two years after the death of its subject, he gleaned information from Mendelssohn's contemporaries, not primarily from written sources, in a kind of oral history.⁷⁵ Kayslerling's biography reflected a different set of research standards. His sources, like Graetz's, came primarily from published collections and also, to a smaller extent, from material found in the library of Dresden and in private hands.⁷⁶ And similar to Graetz, when sources were lacking, Kayslerling drew upon general information to extrapolate, as with his use of Friedrich Nicolai's *Über meine gelehrte Bildung* (1799) to characterize Mendelssohn's approach to his studies.⁷⁷ Kayslerling's biography therefore mirrored Graetz in its approach to sources and also as a popular work.

Though Graetz expressed a preference for "primary sources," he held a peculiar attitude towards the sources of Jewish history. It was this attitude that his readers would identify as one of the key factors that set him apart not only from his predecessors but also from those who followed him, who had a different attitude towards authenticity. Whereas later scholars privileged the archive, Graetz did not discriminate. For instance, in 1856, Graetz published an article considering an inscription at a former synagogue (converted to a church) in Toledo.

⁷⁵ Isaac Euchel, *Toldot rabbanan he-ḥakham she-ha-ben menaḥem* (Berlin: Orientalischen Buchdruckerey, 1788).

⁷⁶ Kayslerling, *Moses Mendelssohn. Sein Leben und seine Werke* (Leipzig: Hermann Mendelssohn, 1862); on p. 130, he gets a letter from Solomon Jaffe of Posen; 136, refers to a collection of letters owned by the Goldschmidt family in Cassel; 293 from Prof. Wattenbach; 307, Handbillet held by Dr. jur. Rubo in Berlin; 540, letter owned by Jähn in Berlin. For the Dresden library, see pp. 427, 569.

⁷⁷ Kayslerling, 28.

According to Graetz, a bad copy of the inscription had been circulated, translated into Castilian in 1572 by a crypto-Jew and then back to Hebrew in 1789 by Juan Joseph Hendeck, a Spaniard “who knew only a little Hebrew.” In Graetz’s search for the “original” inscription, he relied on the report of a commission of scholars sent in 1799 to reexamine the inscription in person; Graetz himself reproduced the “original” with notes from a Jewish numismatist who according to Graetz made “a good copy.”⁷⁸ But Graetz’s determination was founded upon critical appraisal of published sources, not his own personal observation of the originals. Similarly, in 1877 Graetz wrote about a letter from Ezechiel Landau, the eighteenth-century chief rabbi of Prague, to the empress Maria Theresa regarding Jacob Eybeschütz, the supposed Sabbatean. This letter, Graetz reported, was in the archives of the Jewish community in Prague, having been deposited from Landau’s estate. But Graetz demanded a higher standard of proof than simply that it was deposited in the community’s archive. Though Graetz could not determine whether the request had actually been submitted to Theresa, he explained that one should not doubt the document’s authenticity because its contents reflected the “historical setting,” and he could report that there were still many in Prague familiar with Landau’s Hebrew script. Graetz’s determination of historical truth thus derived from what he expected to find (the “historical setting”) or from assurances of authenticity, as in Landau’s correspondence, not from his personal examination of a material corpus that might make him personally familiar with Landau’s handwriting.⁷⁹

All this is not to say that Graetz was entirely “alien to archives,” as Salo Baron put it.⁸⁰

As we have seen, Graetz did not pursue archival research himself. But neither was he averse to

⁷⁸ Graetz, “Die hebräische Inschrift in der Kirche San-Benito oder del Tránsito in Toledo und ihre Geschichte,” *MGWJ* 5 (1856): 321–324.

⁷⁹ Graetz, “Ezechiel Landau’s Gesuch an Maria Theresia gegen Jonathan Eibeschutz: Ein Aktenstück,” *MGWJ*, 2nd ser., 9 (1877): 17.

⁸⁰ See Baron, “Graetzens Geschichtsschreibung,” 11.

archival sources, that is, sources that originated in an archive but accessible in published form. He also appreciated deep archival studies. For example, he referred to items in the Padua archives published in Isaac Cardoso's *Las excelencias de los Hebreos* (1679), and Juan Antonio Llorente's *Histoire critique de l'Inquisition en Espagne* (1817–18), which relied on the archive of Simancas.⁸¹ And he heaped praise on Alexandre Herculano, whose *História da Origem e Estabelecimento da Inquisição em Portugal* (1854–59) was based on the exploitation of “virgin archives,” echoing a discourse of sensuality surrounding archives.⁸² After considering Herculano's use of the Inquisition archives, Graetz wondered aloud of the possibilities proffered by other archives: “Do the archives of Lisbon contain other true historical novels [*historische Romane*] about the Inquisition?”⁸³

Graetz, then, was not opposed to archives on principle, but he was disinterested in direct archival research. In October 1885, the Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund (Union of German Jewish Communities) announced the establishment of a Historische Commission to collect and publish historical material and articles on the Jews in Germany, especially from German archives. Notably, they did not invite Graetz to join them.⁸⁴ In a letter Graetz penned shortly after the Historische Commission's formation to Samuel Kristeller, the Gemeindebund's leader from 1882 to 1896, he illustrated his views on searching for new historical documents in the archives:

Incidentally, I wish you the best of luck in the discovery of many *Regesten*. I doubt if [such] discoveries will be worth it, if it would be documentarily proven that in such-and-such years the hereditary ruler or the bishop admitted or persecuted or levied taxes upon

⁸¹ Graetz, *Geschichte*, VIII:271, VIII:348, 358.

⁸² Graetz, *Geschichte*, IX:liii, also 289, 306. On archives and sexuality, see Bonnie Smith, “Gender and the Practices of Scientific History: The Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth Century,” *AHR* 100, no. 4 (1995): 1150–1176; cf. Philipp Müller, “Ranker in the Lobby of the Archive: Metaphors and Conditions of Historical Research,” in *Unsettling History: Archiving and Narrating in Historiography*, ed. Sebastian Jobs, Alf Lüdtkke (Frankfurt: 2010), 109–124.

⁸³ Graetz, *Geschichte*, IX, 280.

⁸⁴ See Meisl, *Heinrich Graetz*, 68–69, Blutinger, 246–251, and CAHJP M1/23, M1/24. The Historische Commission did not see eye to eye with Graetz. They disapproved of Graetz's *Geschichte* as simplistic and inaccurate, substituting objectivity for a nationalistic viewpoint; they sought to develop German-Jewish history within the framework of German history as a whole, establishing a board of three German historians and three Jewish historians, as opposed to Graetz whose construction of Jewish history was based upon its own internal unity.

and harassed the Jews. The history of the Jews in Germany presents a picture of misery [*Jammerbild*]. It is worthy in the call [for the *Historische Commission*], that one can comprehend Jewish history first from the standpoint of German history. One can only comprehend the murders of the poor ... the expulsions and so forth from the point of view of German history! He who has conceived this has the right of it. He would like to know this; but he knows the sources of Jewish history little, if he thinks, [that there are] still new martyrologies from the time of the Crusades or new *Memorbücher* or responsa literature to be found. This is an already-grazed field.⁸⁵

Graetz viewed the pursuit of new documents as a mostly fruitless task; more research would only further confirm the lachrymose history of the Jews. He can perhaps be likened to Jacob Burckhardt, who railed against the tendencies of the archive-focused members of the *Monumenta germaniae historica* such as the Vienna scholar Theodor von Sickel, as “*Urkundionen*” intently focused on the mundane minutiae of history rather than its overarching framework.⁸⁶ Graetz felt that searching in archives was mostly pointless, a waste of time for one focused on the writing of history. In this striking letter, Graetz indicated that despite his claim to use only “primary sources,” his work was primarily a synthesis of recent research, not his personal study of archives, cemeteries, and manuscripts. As such, Graetz’s *Geschichte der Juden* presents a strange paradox of scholarship: Graetz insisted that he only made use of “primary sources” and had access to rare manuscripts and documents. But he simultaneously looked down upon the process of searching for documents as outside the historian’s purview and also made use of the newest archival research as it presented itself in the publication of documents by scholars such as the Hamburg archivist Johann Martin Lappenberg, his colleagues Josef Perles in Posen, and the prolific Gerson Wolf of Vienna.⁸⁷ Consequently, Graetz marks an inflection point in the new history of the Jews—as a figure who did not do archival research himself, relying instead on the work of a

⁸⁵ Graetz to S. Kristeller, 16 October 1885, published in Josef Meisl, *Heinrich Graetz* (1918), 183; Graetz, *Tagebuch und Briefe*, ed. Reuven Michael (Tübingen: Mohr, 1977), 406–407. On the history of the Gemeindebund, see “Zum 50 jährigen Jubiläum der Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebundes,” CAHJP P2/477, M1/9.

⁸⁶ Herman Paul, “The Heroic Study of Records,” 74–77.

⁸⁷ Graetz, *Geschichte*, X:15.

new generation of scholars who looked to archives as the source of Jewish studies.

The Sources and Context of Modern Jewish Studies

There are a number of reasons why the early scholars of modern Jewish studies did not utilize archives. Despite Zunz's call to open state archives, Jost's aspirations to find "unknown and hidden" sources, and Graetz's claim to study only primary sources, their limited archival work resulted from a confluence of political and intellectual timing, alongside the relationship between this broader cultural matrix and the topics they studied and even the fundamental character of state archives in contrast with the position of nineteenth-century Jewish studies as a postcolonial discourse.⁸⁸ *Wissenschaft des Judentums* emerged alongside rising anti-Jewish sentiment highlighted by the 1819 "Hep-Hep" riots, part of a broader conservatism of post-Napoleonic Europe.⁸⁹ The sources of Jewish history, then, remained unavailable within the broader trajectory of the history of European archives. The period of the French Revolution was characterized by the throwing open of the doors of state archives, sometimes with disastrous results: French peasants famously destroyed deeds and debt records, and Napoleon created chaos when he brought back archival booty from the Vatican and elsewhere for his planned "archives de l'empire," thereby opening a century of archival warfare between Germany, France, and others who hoped to reconstitute plundered archives.⁹⁰ In Metternich's Europe, the movement of the

⁸⁸ See below, n. 107.

⁸⁹ On the Hep-Hep riots, see Jacob Katz, "Fera'ot hep-hep shel shenat 1819 ba-germanyah 'al reka'n ha-histori," *Zion* 38 (1973): 62–115; Stefan Rohrbacher, "The 'Hep-Hep' Riots of 1819: Anti-Jewish Ideology, Agitation, and Violence," in *Exclusionary Violence: Antisemitic Riots in Modern German History*, ed. Christhard Hoffmann, et al. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 23–42; Werner Bergmann, "Ethnic Riots in Situations of Loss of Control: Revolution, Civil War, and Regime Change as Opportunity Structures for Anti-Jewish Violence in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe," in *Control of Violence: Historical and International Perspectives on Violence in Modern Societies* (New York: Springer, 2011), 487–516.

⁹⁰ See Ernst Posner, "Some Aspects of Archival Development Since the French Revolution," *American Archivist* 3, no. 3 (1940): 159–172; Judith Panitch, "Liberty, Equality, Posterity? Some Archival Lessons from the Case of the French Revolution," *American Archivist* 59, no. 1 (1996): 30–47. Also Jennifer Milligan, "Making a Modern Archive: The *Archives Nationales* of France, 1850–1867" (Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 2002), 17–23; Phillip Cuccia,

political pendulum meant a return to the protection of *arcana imperii*: It was a time of restricting archival access, not making state documents available to researchers. In the early nineteenth century, state archives remained sites of sovereign power, not historical research. Such archives only gradually opened to research, from England's Public Records Office (1838) to the Vatican Secret Archives, which opened in 1883.⁹¹ It was for this reason that Zunz remarked in 1864 of the "dragon... still blocking the way" to the Vatican and its archives.⁹² Consequently, projects of archival research like the *Monumenta germaniae historica* and Leopold von Ranke's archival work can be best understood as exceptions that proved the rule that archival research was the product of privileges afforded for political reasons, not universal access.⁹³

Consequently, the question of the sources of modern Jewish studies highlights the complex relationship between Jewish scholars and the wider intellectual world they inhabited. One might rightly expect that the nineteenth-century Jewish studies scholars' efforts to examine new sources and bring new criticism might reflect the wider transformation of the historical discipline in this era with the rise of historicism and especially archival research. But a reconsideration of

"Controlling the Archives: The Requisition, Removal, and Return of the Vatican Archives during the Age of Napoleon," *Napoleonica* 17 (2013): 66–74; Maria Pia Donato, "Des hommes et des chartes sous Napoléon. Pour une histoire politique des archives de l'empire (1809–1814)," *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 382 (Oct.–Dec. 2015): 81–102.

⁹¹ Robert-Henri Bautier, "La phase cruciale de l'histoire des archives: la constitution des dépôts d'archives et la naissance de l'archivistique (XVI^e–début du XIX^e siècle)," *Archivum* 18 (1968), 149–151; John D. Caswell, *The Public Records Office, 1838–1958* (London: HMSO, 1991); Philippa Levine, "History in the Archives: The Public Record Office and its Staff, 1838–1886," *English Historical Review* 101 (Jan. 1986): 20–41; Nicholas J. Tussing, "The Politics of Leo XIII's Opening of the Vatican Archives: The Ownership of the Past," *American Archivist* 70, no. 2 (2007): 364–386; Owen Chadwick, *Catholicism in History: The Opening of the Vatican Archives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 72–109, which details the gradual opening of the archives during the 1870s.

⁹² Zunz, *Die hebräischen Handschriften in Italien* (Berlin: W. Adolf & Co., 1864), 19.

⁹³ Philipp Müller, "Die neue Geschichte aus dem alten Archiv. Geschichtsforschung und Arkanpolitik in Mitteleuropa, ca. 1800–ca. 1850," *Historische Zeitschrift* 299 (2014): 36–70; Ulrich Päßler, "Lapsed into History: J.D.E. Preuß, the Prussian Academy of Sciences, and the Struggle for Access to State Archives in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Berlin," *History of Humanities* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 153–171; Daniela Saxer, "Monumental Undertakings: Source Publications for the Nation," in *Setting the Standards: Institutions, Networks and Communities of National Historiography*, ed. Ilaria Porciani, Jo Tollebeek (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 47–69. On MGH: Harry Bresslau, *Geschichte der Monumenta Germaniae historica im Auftrage ihrer Zentralkommission* (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1921); David Knowles, *Great Historical Enterprises: Problems in Monastic History* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1963), 63–98; Alfred Gawlik, *Zur Geschichte und Arbeit der Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Munich: MGH, 1996).

modern Jewish studies in Germany and its relation to its environment foregrounds the fact that the project of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was temporally, topically, and institutionally detached from the shift to archives in German historiography, leading to a distinctive path to the archive.

One could begin by noting that the first scholars of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* embarked upon their project prior to the turn to archival sources most famously associated with Leopold von Ranke and his school of archival research. Of course, Ranke was not the first historian to utilize archives.⁹⁴ But Zunz and Jost's mentors—respectively Friedrich August Wolf and Adolf Böckh in Berlin, and Johann Gottfried Einhorn in Göttingen—were classicists and philologists, not archival scholars in the mold of Ranke, who examined early modern and medieval documents from state archives.⁹⁵ And if some later Jewish scholars tried to identify Ranke's influence on Graetz, they referred to Graetz's vision of historical scope, not his approach to sources.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, Ranke provides a useful parallel and contrast to these Jewish scholars, suggesting that the rise of archival studies was generally contingent upon questions of topical relevance and illuminating how Jewish scholars' work differed from the new archival research.

Ranke popularized and dramatized archival research, and the breadth of his network of students cemented his place in the history of modern historical practice as well as guaranteed his enduring influence.⁹⁷ His three guiding principles of studying history “as it really was” (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*), the supremacy of foreign policy, and the use of archival sources can be both caricatured and hailed as revolutionary in the study of history. But Ranke's archival turn was

⁹⁴ Markus Friedrich, *Die Geburt des Archivs. Eine Wissensgeschichte* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2013), 112–114, 231–233.

⁹⁵ See, for instance, August Böckh, *Enzyklopädie und Methodenlehre der philologischen Wissenschaften*, ed. Ernst Bratuscheck, Rudolf Klussmann (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1886), which presents his recorded lectures.

⁹⁶ Baron, “Graetzens Geschichtsschreibung,” *MGWJ*, 3rd ser., 26 (1918):6–7; cf. Hans Liebschütz, “Jewish Thought and its German Background,” *LBIYB* 1 (1956): 219–221.

⁹⁷ See David Telman, “Clio Ascendant: The Historical Profession in Nineteenth-Century Germany” (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1993), 347–403, and Anthony Grafton, “The Footnote from De Thou to Ranke,” *History and Theory* 33, no. 4 (1994): 53–76.

neither a radical revelation, as it has sometimes been depicted in the impassioned hagiography promulgated by his students, nor an obvious outcome of the Prussian universities' new "research imperative."⁹⁸ Instead, his interest in archives was tied to his specific research concerns—just as, we will see, it was for the Jewish scholars of the mid-nineteenth century.⁹⁹ Ranke's *Die Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker* (1824), which catapulted him to the University of Berlin, was not primarily based on archival sources. This is not to suggest that the young Ranke was uninterested in archives: *Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtsschreiber*, the appendix to his 1824 treatise, considered other scholars' use of archives and demonstrated a keen awareness of which archives held relevant material.¹⁰⁰ In *Die Fürsten und Völker von Süd-Europa* (1827), Ranke used unpublished sources accessible in Berlin, but decried that which remained unavailable, "swallowed up" by archives in other cities. "How rich must this archive be!" he declared wistfully.¹⁰¹ That same year he travelled to Vienna, a sojourn of four years when he gained access to the archives from which he wrote his first work based primarily on archival sources, *Über die Verschwörung gegen Venedig im Jahre 1618* (1831). In this relatively brief work, Ranke chronicled an arcane "plot" (*Verschwörung*) to partition Venice and the eventual execution of the supposed conspirators.¹⁰² This turn to archives, then, was the culmination of longstanding interest

⁹⁸ See Steven Taylor, "The Prussian Universities and the Research Imperative" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1973); Georg Iggers, "The Image of Ranke in American and German Historical Thought," *History and Theory* 2, no. 1 (1962): 17–40. On Ranke's legacy, see Frederick Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 253–288, and Hans Schleier, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Doris S. Goldstein, Dorothy Ross, and Georg Iggers in *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 109–169.

⁹⁹ See Kasper Eskildsen, "Leopold Ranke's Archival Turn: Location and Evidence in Modern Historiography," *Modern Intellectual History* 5, no. 3 (2008): 425–453, esp. n. 7, which points to some of his students' recollections.

¹⁰⁰ Ranke, *Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtsschreiber. Eine Beylage zu desselben romanischen und germanischen Geschichte* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1824), 26–27, 89, 114.

¹⁰¹ Ranke, *Fürsten und Völker von Süd-Europa im sechzehnten und siebzehnten Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Friedrich Perthes, 1827), VIII.

¹⁰² For a detailed analysis, see Eskildsen, "Leopold Ranke's Archival Turn," pp. 435–439, and Philipp Müller, "Doing Historical Research in the Early Nineteenth Century. Leopold Ranke, the Archive Policy, and the *Relazioni* of the Venetian Republic," *Storia della Storiografia* 56 (2009): 81–103.

but also reflected the genre requirements of court intrigue. Investigating this “plot,” whose then-extant scholarship was based on “rumors,” required him to “lead the reader out of this labyrinth to a pure and satisfying opinion.”¹⁰³ In other words, Ranke’s first foray in archival research was meant to guide the reader through the details of a secret plot hidden in the secret archives.

Ranke’s emphasis on archives was tied to his notion of the “supremacy of foreign policy” in which state archives provided the best source for the examination of diplomacy and court intrigue. None of this applied to the Jewish history, especially since Jews, by the nature of their existence in the Diaspora (at least apparently), had no “foreign policy.” The nature of the topics under study, then, distanced Jewish scholars from archives: The first *Wissenschaft* scholars wrote about Jewish literature and rabbinic scholarship, motivated as they were by an aspiration for political and social emancipation. By the mid-nineteenth century, those who turned their gaze to relations between Jewish communities and worldly authorities could look to state and church archives to provide not a Jewish “foreign policy,” but a “foreign policy towards the Jews.” What is more, the exclusion of Jewish scholars from university posts and the concomitant emergence of rabbinical seminaries as centers of Jewish studies scholarship meant that institutions like the historical seminar and *Übungen*, key sites of archival research, had limited influence.¹⁰⁴

Consequently, the fundamental ties between archives and the state—both institutionally and in terms of the historical studies these materials inherently encouraged—constitutes a key factor of distinction in Jewish historians’ turn to archives. Institutionalized archives arose in early

¹⁰³ Ranke, *Über die Verschwörung gegen Venedig im Jahre 1618* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1831), 1.

¹⁰⁴ On the historical seminar, see Hans-Jürgen Pandel, “Von der Teegesellschaft zum Forschungsinstitut. Die historischen Seminare vom Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ende des Kaiserreichs,” in *Transformation des Historismus. Wissenschaftsorganisation und Bildungspolitik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. Horst Walter Blanke (Waltrop: Hartmut Spenner, 1994), 1–31; Bonnie Smith, “Gender and the Practices of Scientific History”; Eskildsen, “Leopold von Ranke, la passion de la critique et le séminaire d’histoire,” in *Lieux de savoir; Espaces et communautés*, ed. Christian Jacob (Paris: Albin Michel, 2007), 462–482. Like his interest in archives, Ranke’s seminar was by no means novel, with roots in a long tradition; see William Clark, “On the Dialectical Origins of the Research Seminar,” *History of Science* 27, no. 2 (1989): 111–154.

modern Europe as a component of centralized state, and their opening in the nineteenth century constituted their transformation, as Robert-Henri Bautier put it, from “arsenal of [state] authority” to the “laboratory of history” as part of the nationalization of institutions that once constituted the nobility’s private property.¹⁰⁵ Still, the state exerted control over the history that could be written with its archives.¹⁰⁶ With this in mind, Jewish history’s position as a “subaltern voice of Europe,” as Christian Wiese and Susannah Heschel put it, places Jewish studies scholars’ limited archival research in new light.¹⁰⁷ The rising imperative of archival research, inherently imbued with an emphasis on the political and diplomatic history represented in its sources, left Jewish historical studies beyond the pale. It would only be with a shift in approach and topic, with the turn towards local and regional histories and Jewish writers’ local ties that would allow access to nearby archival resources, and growing interest in new sources of internal communal activity, that one will find the turn to archives among Jewish historians. And so, over the course of the nineteenth century, scholars’ growing interest in internal affairs and the autonomous Jewish community—perhaps best epitomized by the pinnacle of this research, Simon Dubnow—led scholars to Jewish communal archives and records such as *Memorbücher* and *Pinkasim* as a fundamental source for a new kind of Jewish history. It is thus not entirely surprising that the archival turn in Jewish scholarship reached its apex in the closing years of the nineteenth century, at a time of the rise of cultural history, when its origins in European scholarship at large can be traced to an earlier vision of political history, reflecting the distinctive path of Jewish studies towards archival research.

¹⁰⁵ Robert-Henri Bautier, “La phase cruciale de l’histoire des archives,” 149–151; Christoph Graf, “‘Arsenal der Staatsgewalt’ oder ‘Laboratorium der Geschichte’? Das Schweizerische Bundesarchiv und die Geschichtsschreibung,” *Studien und Quellen* 27 (2001): 65–92.

¹⁰⁶ Philipp Müller, “Ranke in the Lobby of the Archive: Metaphors and Conditions of Historical Research.”

¹⁰⁷ Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 26; Heschel, “Jewish Studies as Counterhistory,” in *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, ed. David Biale, et al (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 101–115. Cf. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson, Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 271–313.

The Turn to Archives in Modern Jewish Studies

In the middle decades of the nineteenth century, a new generation of scholars emerged who turned to previously unexamined types of evidence, thereby opening a new stage in the relations of Jewish historians to their sources. Zunz had emphasized “Jewish literature,” and Graetz depended on rabbinic responsa and rare manuscripts. Now, scholars looked to historical evidence that provided information on communities and individuals who did not produce literary or scholarly works. They also developed new professional practices and assumptions, gradually shifting towards new sources, among them gravestones and archival sources. Instead of reporting what might be considered “fables” or myths, they demanded documentary proofs, often provided in extensive appendices. And they turned to new topics, looking at communal and regional history. Altogether, it contributed to the growing use of archives by Jewish scholars.

The first new source scholars turned to was the cemetery, which proved one of the most significant sites of evidence for local and regional histories of the Jews and an important starting point for a discussion of the changing attitude towards the sources of Jewish history. In Moses Mannheimer’s 1842 treatise on the Jews in Worms, for instance, he considered the eighteenth-century argument of Johann Wendelin Jung that the Jews had been resident in the city of the *Nibelungenlied* since before the destruction of the First Temple in the sixth century BCE; the community was actually founded the late tenth-century CE, and its synagogue was first constructed in 1034 CE.¹⁰⁸ The crucial piece of evidence was a gravestone, no longer extant, which Jung had transcribed, but which Mannheimer rejected as “not a secure proof of the first appearance of the local Jewish (*israelitische*) community.”¹⁰⁹ Only after considering two other gravestones, both of

¹⁰⁸ Nils Roemer, *German City, Jewish Memory: The Story of Worms* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2010), 11–12.

¹⁰⁹ Moses Mannheimer, *Die Juden in Worms. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Juden in den Rheingegenden* (Frankfurt: J.S. Adler, 1842), 4.

which were illegible, and a seventeenth-century gravestone, did Mannheimer consider evidence from the book *Masse Nissim* (tales of miracles) which he offered as proof that Jews had been in Worms at least since the early first millennium CE.¹¹⁰ In his *Diplomatische Geschichte der Juden zu Mainz und dessen Umgebung* (1855), the Mainz jurist Karl Anton Schaab began with a similar discussion of the myth that Jewish exiles from Jerusalem came to Mainz in 70 CE. However, he explained that there was “no historical proof, no grave-monument, which can serve as stone documents (*steinerne Urkunden*),” a parallel construction that reveals his equation of gravestones with historical “proof.”¹¹¹ As early as 1845, Leopold Zunz had stressed the importance of gravestones, which Ludwig August Frankl, the first archivist of the Jewish community in Vienna, was quick to point out.¹¹² Frankl’s *Inschriften des alten jüdischen Friedhofes in Wien* (1853) was one of a number of collections of gravestone inscriptions that appeared around this time, including Samuel David Luzzatto’s *’Avne zikaron* (1841) and Koppelman Lieben’s *Gal-Ed* (1856), all of which sought to make gravestone inscriptions available to researchers.¹¹³ Gravestones would long remain an important source for Jewish scholars, especially among genealogists.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Mannheimer, 7–8.

¹¹¹ Karl Anton Schaab, *Diplomatische Geschichte der Juden in zu Mainz und dessen Umgebung* (Mainz, 1855), 1; see Bernhard Brillings’s “*Friedhöfe als steinerne Urkunde*,” n. 114.

¹¹² Zunz, *Zur Geschichte und Literatur* (Berlin: Veit & Co., 1845), 395–402; Ludwig August Frankl, *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien*, 2nd ed. (Vienna: J. P. Sollinger’s Witwe, 1853), iv.

¹¹³ See Samuel David Luzzatto, *’Avne zikaron* (Prague: M.J. Landau, 1841); Koppelman Lieben, *Gal-Ed. Grabsteininschriften des prager isr. Alten Friedhofs mit biographischen Notizen* (Prague: M.J. Landau, 1856). Esriel Hildesheimer supposedly published *Die Epitaphien der Grabsteine auf dem hiesigen [Halberstadt] Jüdischen Friedhofe* (1846), cited in Berthold Auerbach, *Geschichte der israel. Gemeinde Halberstadt* (1866), but it does not appear to be extant.

¹¹⁴ Moïse Ginsburger, who founded the Société pour l’histoire des Israélites d’Alsace et de Lorraine in 1904, first developed interest in local history with the study of gravestones (Ginsburger, *Der Israelitische Friedhof in Jungholz*, 1904), and long copied gravestones even though he was not being paid (Ginsburger to Charles Lévy, 19 Dec. 1907, Archives départementales, Bas-Rhin, 64J/15). In 1935, Bernhard Brillings of Breslau’s Gemeindecarchiv wrote of archives’ importance (“Merkblatt für die Aufnahme von Grabsteininschriften auf jüdischen Friedhöfen,” *Der Israelit*, 10 May 1935). The next month, Jacob Jacobson, leader of the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden, appealed for “systematic study of the Jewish graveyards...and the salvage of the content of their gravestone inscriptions” (“Jüdische Friedhöfe in der Mark,” *Gemeindeblatt der Jüdischen Gemeinde zu Berlin*, 30 June 1935), and in December 1936, Brillings and Alfred Grotte spoke at a meeting of the Breslau branch of the Gesellschaft für jüdische Familienforschung on gravestones as “steinerne Urkunden” (“Friedhöfe als steinerne Urkunden,” *C.V.-Zeitung*, 10 Dec. 1936).

Jewish studies scholars also developed an appetite for archives. Perhaps the first Jewish scholar in modern times to utilize historical archives extensively and directly was Isidor Kaim. Under the pseudonym K. Sidori, he published *Die Geschichte der Juden in Sachsen* (1840) on the basis of materials found in a number of local libraries as well as a group of *Landtagsakten* and *privilegia* provided by Christian Adolf Deutrich, the mayor of Leipzig from 1831 to 1839.¹¹⁵ To a limited extent, scholars began to take advantage of the “archives” of Jewish communities—that is, the files held by local Jewish leaders—although they may not have officially organized. Esriel Hildesheimer’s 1849 *Die Verwaltung der Jüdischen Gemeinde zu Halberstadt* and Josef Perles’s *Geschichte der Juden in Posen* (1865) are prime examples where authors sifted through communities’ record books, *Memorbücher*, and *Pinkasim*.¹¹⁶ Perles, in particular, published accounts of the *Ṭa’ad ‘arba ’artsot* (Council of the Four Lands) in the *Monatsschrift*.¹¹⁷ But Sidori and Hildesheimer were only the first trickling of what would become a deluge of archival research in communal history, when Perles’ work would become the norm: scholarly publication of a series of in-depth monographs and critical articles on the basis of archival research. The shift is evidenced in the work of David Podiebrad, the head of the *ḥevrah kadishah* (burial society) in Prague and archivist of the Jewish community there. Podiebrad published a series of works on the history of Prague Jewry, titled *Alterthümer der Prager Josefstadt*. The first edition, published in 1855, consisted almost entirely of gravestone inscriptions, but the second and third editions

¹¹⁵ K. Sidori, *Geschichte der Juden in Sachsen* (Leipzig: G.L. Friysche, 1840), xxi.

¹¹⁶ In 1887, Moritz Stern claimed that Hildesheimer was the first Jewish scholar to make use of such archives (Stern, *Zwei patriotische Kundgebungen aus dem israelit. Gemeindearchiv zu Halberstadt* (Frankfurt a.M.: J. Kaufmann, 1887), 5). Cf. L. Levyson, “Zur Geschichte der Juden in Worms,” *MGWJ* 7 (1858): 37–53, 361–368, which extensively utilized the *Gymnasialarchiv* and the “local Jewish community archive.”

¹¹⁷ Perles, “Urkunde zur Geschichte der jüdischen Provinzialsynoden in Polen,” *MGWJ* 16 (1867): 108–111, 152–154, 222–226, 304–308, 343–348.

(1862 and 1870 respectively) were expanded on the basis of archival research.¹¹⁸

In many cases, Jewish community archives were not even extant, having been destroyed in one manner or another. “All of the written documents have been lost,” wrote Abraham Stein, considering the history of the Jews of Danzig in 1857. “Only the dead, that is their gravestones,” he continued, “bear witness that also in prior centuries Jewish communities existed.”¹¹⁹ A decade later, Moritz Güdemann lamented the lack of a single “yellowed *Memorbuch*” that would attest to the scholars and martyrs of Magdeburg; he hypothesized that if the community had once held many historical documents, they had been lost in the city’s destruction during the Thirty Years’ War.¹²⁰ For this reason, Güdemann, like many other mid-nineteenth-century scholars, turned to state and municipal archives in their search for historical evidence.

In the turn to archives, two regions in particular piqued researchers’ interest, Spain and Vienna. Clearly, fascination with Spanish Jewry was not solely due to the rich sources available but also to a particularly German-Jewish obsession with the so-called golden age of Spain.¹²¹ There is no denying that scholars maintained consistent interest in Spain as an area of archival research, beginning with the British scholar Elias Haim Lindo’s *The History of the Jews in Spain and Portugal* (1848), perhaps the first work of Jewish scholarship to result from archival travel.¹²² Graetz, usually averse to direct archival materials, perhaps came closest to direct

¹¹⁸ David Podiebrad, *Alterthümer der Prager Josefstadt*, 1855, 1862, 1870.

¹¹⁹ Abraham Stein, “Zur Geschichte der Juden in Danzig,” *MGWJ* 6 (1857): 206.

¹²⁰ Güdemann, “Geschichte der Juden in Magdeburg,” *MGWJ* 14 (1865): 241–243; Güdemann, *Geschichte der Juden in Magdeburg* (Breslau: Schletter’schen Buchhandlung, 1866), 3–4.

¹²¹ See Ismar Schorsch, “The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy,” in *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 1994), 71–92; Ivan Marcus, “Beyond the Sephardic Mystique,” *Orim: A Jewish Journal at Yale* 1 (1985): 35–57; John Efron, *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 190–230.

¹²² Lindo reported that he traveled to Spain and “derived [his] information from many original and most authentic Spanish, Portuguese, and Hebrew sources” (Lindo, iv-v).

interest in archival sources when he wrote of Spain.¹²³ And scholars repeatedly produced reports on material in Spanish archives relating to Jewish history, like Kayserling's history of the Jews of Barcelona (1866), and Joseph Jacobs' *Inquiry into the Sources of the History of the Jews in Spain* (1894), continuing unabated through the 1920s and 1930s with the publication of Fritz Baer's *Die Juden in christlichen Spanien* (1929, 1936).¹²⁴

Vienna was a central site for the emergence of archive-based research in more ways than one. For Leopold von Ranke, Vienna was a touchstone, the place where he first had the outbreak of his "archival fever" when he visited from 1827 to 1831.¹²⁵ From the late 1850s, Vienna was also home to Theodor von Sickel, a founder of modern diplomatics, director of the Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, and member of the *Monumenta germaniae historica*, who was well known for his emphasis on archival study of medieval documents.¹²⁶ It also was an early locale of Jewish archival activity. In 1842, the Jewish community appointed Ludwig August Frankl to organize their archival collection, leading to a series of historical works on the Jewish community of that city.¹²⁷ Though Frankl first organized the communal archive, it was the teacher and prolific scholar Gerson Wolf who perhaps more than any other Jewish historian was infected with a Ranke-like archive fever.

From the 1850s until his death in 1892, Wolf published diverse manuscripts and articles on the history of the Jews both in Vienna and the historic Habsburg lands, all based on archival

¹²³ See p. 23, supra., and Graetz, *Geschichte*, IX:280–281.

¹²⁴ Kayserling, "Zur Geschichte der Juden in Barcelona," *MGWJ* 15 (1866): 81–95; Joseph Jacobs, *An Inquiry of the History of the Jews of Spain* (London: David Nutt, 1894); Fritz Baer, *Die Juden in christlichen Spanien* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1929, 1936).

¹²⁵ See Kasper Eskildsen, "Leopold Ranke's Archival Turn"; Philipp Müller, "Doing Historical Research in the Early Nineteenth Century."

¹²⁶ See Daniela Saxer, *Die Schärfung des Quellenblicks*.

¹²⁷ Frankl, *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien*, 2nd ed. (1853), v–vi; also Ludwig August Frankl to Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien, 2 Sept. 1841, CAHJP AW/1704.

research. In the first issue of Moritz Steinschneider's new journal *Hebräische Bibliographie* (*Hamazkir*, 1858–1882), Wolf published an article titled “Actenstücke zur Geschichte der Juden” in which he explained his introduction to archival research.¹²⁸ In the past, Wolf wrote, even great scholars such as the founders of the *Monumenta germaniae historica* had been unable to gain access to the Austrian archives, which Maria Theresa had established in 1749.¹²⁹ But as Wolf explained, in 1856 the Austrian minister of the interior, Alexander von Bach, permitted Wolf to peruse their archival holdings.¹³⁰ As a result, Wolf prepared a catalog of items relating to Jewish history. Based on his research in the archives of the ministry of the interior, the foreign ministry, and the Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Wolf would publish an impressive series of studies on Ferdinand II and the Jews (1859), the Jews in Worms (1862), Jewish converts (1863), and the Jews in Vienna (1864, 1866, 1876). Wolf also made extensive use of the Vienna Jewish community's archives in his 1861 study *Die Geschichte der Israelitischen Cultusgemeinde in Wien, 1820–1860*. What tied all of them together was his use of the state archives.

For Wolf, archives were of utmost importance. This sentiment comes across most clearly in his monograph *Die Geschichte der k.k. Archive in Wien* (1871), in which he detailed the history of the Habsburg and Austrian state archives from their sixteenth-century origins under Maximilian I, who first gathered the Habsburg archives in 1509, to the files' opening to research in the 1850s. Wolf explained the importance of archives as the foundation of modern historical study, itself based on “*Quellenforschung*,” enabled by the “new spirit” in which the state

¹²⁸ Wolf, “Actenstücke zur Geschichte der Juden, gesammelt in den k.k. Archiven zu Wien, Venedig, Mailand und Mantua,” *Hebräische Bibliographie* 1 (1858): 16–18; it was the first published under the heading “Vergangenheit.”

¹²⁹ Here, Wolf referred specifically to the *Monumenta*, see Harry Bresslau, *Geschichte der Monumenta germaniae historica*, and G.H. Pertz, *Das Leben des Ministers Freiherrn von Stein* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1850–1855), V:539, 580. On the history of the *Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*, see Gerson Wolf, *Die Geschichte der k.k. Archive in Wien* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1871), 25–102.

¹³⁰ As Wolf recounted in a brief autobiographical sketch, his access was initially limited but gradually was given freer reign. “Zur mähr.-schles. Biographie,” *Notizenblatt der Historisch-Statistischen Section der Gesellschaft zur Beförderung des Ackerbaues, der Natur- und Landeskunde* (Brünn), nr. 3 (1875): 22–24, nr. 4 (1875): 30–31.

archives were opened to the public.¹³¹ In his conclusion, Wolf emphasized the importance of archives both for research and for the development of the state. He stressed the need to invest money to train specialized archivists, so that the archives could be usable for historians. He argued that “archives are not luxuries.” Instead, they were a basic foundation of the establishment of the *Rechtsstaat* (literally, state of law, or constitutional state); the public archive, in his view, constituted not just a source of historical data or administrative record, but had an important part to play in the public sphere.¹³²

One peculiar characteristic of the emerging genre of local history or “*Heimatgeschichte*” of the middle and late nineteenth century was the form in which authors presented historical sources to their readers, directly and often in full. Rather than summarize, paraphrase, and cite where the original could be found, authors like Lindo, Mannheimer, and Schaab provided the full sources inline. The result was rather dry. R. G. Collingwood coined the phrase “scissors-and-paste history” for the practice of gluing together “raw data,” and he ridiculed those who merely reproduced others’ testimonies without considering their trustworthiness, repeating historical inaccuracies.¹³³ The Jewish scholars of the mid-nineteenth century consciously sought a heightened level of criticism, but they produced a different kind of “scissors-and-paste history” when they literally pasted full transcriptions of their sources, spanning pages upon pages with the editors’ commentary and analysis serving as glue, constituting a small part of the overall work. In Gerson Wolf’s successive histories of the Jewish community in Vienna, published in 1861, 1866, and 1876, he provided extensive excerpts of archival and manuscript sources, often retaining antiquated spellings and errors. In the introduction to the 1876 edition, Wolf justified

¹³¹ Wolf, *Geschichte der k.k. Archive*, 1. See Philipp Müller, “Archives and History.”

¹³² Wolf, *Geschichte der k.k. Archive*, 202–203.

¹³³ R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1943), 257–261.

the publication of yet another history of the Jews of Vienna. In the decade that had passed since his last work on the subject, Wolf had conducted additional archival research and wanted to publish the new material to “fill in the blanks,” leaving out the previously published sources.¹³⁴ Karl Anton Schaab’s *Diplomatische Geschichte der Juden zu Mainz* (1855) is another example of such “scissors-and-paste” history. Over the course of five hundred pages, over two-thirds of the text is contained within a block-quote.¹³⁵ If scholars did not provide the sources inline, they often printed them in an appendix. Gerson Wolf’s appendices were especially enormous, often matching the historical study itself in girth. In Wolf’s 1862 study of the Jews of Worms, the appendices were eighty-four pages long in comparison to a twenty-eight-page history. The same can be said of Wolf’s discussion of Ferdinand II and the Jews, whose appendix exceeded the historical introduction by a third.¹³⁶

Coupled with a growing interest in archival sources were demands for a higher documentary burden of proof. Of course, the matter of proof in history was not at all a novel phenomenon, the debates of which can be traced all the way back to Herodotus and Thucydides. As Donald Kelley has remarked, Thucydides coined the term “mythistoria” to ridicule Herodotus’ inclusions of myths and legends in his *Histories*.¹³⁷ Kelley and Joseph Mali have argued that the modern discipline of history was based just as much on myth as events “wie es eigentlich gewesen;” historical study and its philological building blocks sought to reconstruct a mythic “*Urzeit*,” whether national (golden ages), regional (proto-languages), or otherwise.¹³⁸ But

¹³⁴ Wolf, *Geschichte der Juden in Wien*, 1156–1876 (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1876), iii–iv.

¹³⁵ Schaab, *Diplomatische Geschichte*, see esp. pp. 134–383 where it is over eighty percent quoted material.

¹³⁶ Wolf, *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Worms und des deutschen Städtewesens* (1862), *Ferdinand II und die Juden* (1859).

¹³⁷ Donald Kelley, “Mythistory in the Age of Ranke,” *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline*, 6.

¹³⁸ Kelley, “Mythistory;” Kelley, *Faces of History: Historical Inquiry from Herodotus to Herder* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 1–19; and Joseph Mali, *Mythistory: The Making of Modern Historiography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

even if moderns could not escape myth in their aim for rationality, empiricism, and positivism, scholars were exceedingly vocal in such aspirations. The first *Wissenschaft* scholars' critiques of Basnage and Adams had expressed a sharp sense of the need for historical proof; later Jewish scholars like Wolf demanded proof all the more so. For example, Jost declared that a particular episode of persecution in Muslim Spain reported by Basnage was unlikely because "it happened without historical testimony (*geschichtliche Zeugnisse*)."¹³⁹ But whereas Jost demanded historical witnesses, which could include human eye-witnesses (*Augenzeugen*), later scholars increasingly demanded documentary and written evidence. A rising generation of scholars of Jewish history not only sought to bring archival resources to bear, but also became more constant in a greater emphasis not on critical analysis or cross-examination, but instead on documents themselves as purveyors and arbiters of proof.

In 1842, Josef Wertheimer placed great emphasis upon the way in which documents brought proof for specific historical facts in his *Die Juden in Österreich*.¹⁴⁰ But in the same breath, he explained that one can find great meaning in "fables and musings."¹⁴¹ That same year, Moses Mannheimer presented a similar sort of cognitive dissonance on the nature of historical knowledge in his *Die Juden in Worms*. On one hand, he sought "authentic proof" of the Jews' settlement in Worms in late antiquity, looking to the sources to "shed light" on their history.¹⁴² But in the absence of proof, he wrote that "we must be satisfied with that which is likely," and launched into the many myths and fables about the settlement of the Jews in Worms.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Jost, *Geschichte*, VI:141.

¹⁴⁰ See Wertheimer, *Die Juden in Österreich* (Leipzig: Mayer und Wigand, 1842), I:47, 55, among others.

¹⁴¹ Wertheimer, I:20–21.

¹⁴² Mannheimer, 2.

¹⁴³ Mannheimer, 1.

In contrast, a series of archival scholars of Jewish studies articulated their enthusiasm for documentation as the source of historical knowledge. Karl Anton Schaab, whose *Diplomatische Geschichte* was a prime example of “scissors-and-paste” history, explained that “What I say, I prove with documents; through them speak the events and within them lie before our eyes the historical truth.”¹⁴⁴ In Gerson Wolf’s 1862 treatise on the Jews of Worms, he stressed that “We are in the position to bring proof.” “If it requires proof,” he wrote in one case, discussing the powerlessness of the Holy Roman Emperors, “it will be fully produced through the attached sources.”¹⁴⁵ Likewise, Morris Wiener explained the importance of the sources, writing that “one can approach a true depiction of historical events only through a broad study of documentary testimony.”¹⁴⁶ In the search for the early settlements of the Jews, scholars pointed to the first “documented” sources for these settlements. Moritz Stern pointed to the first “*urkundlich*” (documentary) proof of the Jews’ residence in Regensburg in an 1887 article, and two years later he wrote about how “around the turn of the twelfth century, for the first time the Jews are *documentarily provable* in Dortmund.”¹⁴⁷ And Louis Neustadt wrote in his *Eine Blutbeschuldigung in Frankfurt a.M. im Jahre 1504* (1892) that he provided the sources as an appendix in order to enable his readers to know that he was telling the truth, to give “proof.”¹⁴⁸

In 1892, a full fifty years after Moses Mannheimer and Samson Wertheimer had written that documentary proof was preferable but myths would do to fill in the details, Gerson Wolf testified to the growing centrality of archives and the documentary sources contained in them in

¹⁴⁴ Schaab, *xiv*.

¹⁴⁵ Wolf, *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Worms und des deutschen Städtewesens* (Breslau: Schletter’schen Buchhandlung, 1862), 14.

¹⁴⁶ Wiener, *Regesten der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland während des Mittelalters* (Hannover: Hahn’sche Hofbuchhandlung, 1862), *iii*.

¹⁴⁷ Moritz Stern, “Zur Geschichte der Juden im Großherzogthum Baden,” *ZGJD* 1 (1887): 383; Stern, “König Albrecht I. für die Juden in Dortmund (1299),” *ZGJD* 3 (1889): 243.

¹⁴⁸ Louis Neustadt, *Josef Steblicki. Ein Proselyt unter Friedrich dem Großen* (Breslau: Th. Schatzky, 1894), 4.

a brief article titled “Ein archivalisches Curiosum.” Wolf explained that history has been called “une fable convenue,” but it is not the stuff of myths and fables: Historians, according to Wolf, had learned to study the original sources. To provide an example, Wolf explained that many people believed that Samuel Oppenheimer, the famed seventeenth-century Vienna court Jew, had founded the Jewish hospital in Vienna, but that “we have had the opportunity to check [*nachzuweisen*] what exists in the files and archives of the Ministry of the Interior,” and according to this, it was the Jewish community and not Oppenheimer personally who established the hospital.¹⁴⁹ Thus, for Wolf, the resolution of the problem of the fable in history was to look in the archives where one could prove one way or another the historical truth.

Altogether, these years witnessed the rise of a new breed of Jewish historical scholarship characterized by an increase in archival research and a new burden of proof. From a certain perspective, the new archival histories, especially those of the “scissors-and-paste” variety, with a focus upon the presentation of documents (and the exclusion of those presented in prior editions) and not historical narrative, may not seem to be histories at all. But they fall within the frame of, and evidence the enduring gravity of, the long tradition of antiquarian studies, continuing an antiquary tradition of providing documentary appendices of “proofs.”¹⁵⁰ In one instance with which nineteenth-century Jewish historians would have been familiar, as it was an important early study of the history of the Jews in England, the jurist De Blossier Tovey provided extensive sources in the text of his *Anglia Judaica* (1738). In a sort of preemptive strike against readers who might think the inclusion of such sources to be “unnecessary,” Tovey called upon his predecessors, the antiquarians William Nicholson and Thomas Madox, whose histories

¹⁴⁹ Gerson Wolf, *Kleine historische Schriften* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1892), 226.

¹⁵⁰ See Arnaldo Momigliano, “The Rise of Antiquarian Research,” in *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 54–79; Anthony Grafton, “The Footnote from De Thou to Ranke.”

of England and the Exchequer had been fundamentally based on archives; as Madox had argued:

It is to be wished, that the Histories of a Countrey [sic]...should be grounded throughout (as far as is practicable) on proper Vouchers. And for my own part, I cannot look upon the History of England to be compleatly [sic] written, till it shall come to be written in That manner. Upon consideration of this matter, I must make a request of the gentle Reader: to wit, That when he peruseth this Book, he will please to read not only the Narration or Text, but also the Testimonies couched in the Margin: For They are, in my opinion, the most Valuable part of the Work, and by consequence the most Worthy to be read.¹⁵¹

Both Tovey and the Jewish archival historians of the nineteenth century presented the “vouchers” of history as the all-important proof, no less crucial than any synthesis. As such, nineteenth-century Jewish scholars carried on the antiquarian tradition, placing the sources, not the historical narrative, at the center of their work. However, at the same time, they marked the constantly transforming relationship between scholars, readers, and their sources. For if the “scissors-and-paste” scholars sought to provide raw sources as proof, they reflected a reality in which readers would not be able to check the sources themselves. Providing sources, then, was a response to the limitations of research whereby archival access was restricted and few scholars could travel for research.

Networks of Sources: Collecting, Bibliography, and History

In 1860, Mayer Kayserling praised the “care and exactness” with which archival documents were increasingly being published.¹⁵² At this time, and through the end of the nineteenth century, archival historians like Gerson Wolf opened a new era in Jewish historical research with their emphasis upon the use of archives and their efforts to make these sources widely available, auguring the emerging of a new archive-based historiography in Jewish studies. The turn to archival studies, however, masked the harsh reality of Jewish studies scholars given voice by Moritz Stern in 1888, when he reflected that “not everyone who busies himself with the

¹⁵¹ Madox, *History of the Exchequer of the Kings of England*, 1711, v.

¹⁵² Mayer Kayserling, “Notiz,” *MWGJ* 9 (1860): 362.

history of the Jews in Germany can make use of a large and well cared for library.”¹⁵³ As it turns out, gaining access to original sources and books for study and analysis was an ever-present challenge. Graetz’s extensive use of privately-held documents and manuscripts in his *Geschichte* was in fact an exception that proves the general rule, that most Jewish historians at that time were generally restricted to materials published in journals and source books, or held at local archives. The rise of local histories, then, grew out of Jews’ attempts to prove a historic bond with the places in which they lived and also was historically contingent upon the sources available, making the use of archives—as historical materials close at hand—less unexpected. Moritz Güdemann’s oeuvre is illustrative. His history of the Jews of Magdeburg, making extensive use of the local state archives, first appeared in 1865, while Güdemann was still serving as rabbi in that city (1862–66). It was in Vienna, where Güdemann lived from 1866 to 1914, that he had access to a broader network of lenders and wrote his magnum opus: In his four volumes on the history of Jewish education (1873–1888), Güdemann made use of a broad selection of manuscripts, primarily provided by his Vienna colleague Adolf Jelinek and the Bielitz collector Salomon Halberstamm, in addition to archival documents.¹⁵⁴ In an 1891 documentary history of Jewish education, Güdemann’s frequent and detailed citations further indicate the strands that bound together the network of scholars sharing and publishing material in the late nineteenth century. Güdemann reprinted sources that appeared in journals like Naftali Kellner’s *Bikkurim* (1864–65) and *Ha-maggid* (1856–1903).¹⁵⁵ Even more revealing is the long list of scholars who lent him material. Güdemann noted that the *minhag* or ritual of the Jewish

¹⁵³ Moritz Stern, *Quellenkunde zur Geschichte der deutschen Juden* (Kiel: H. Fiencke, 1892), I:1.

¹⁵⁴ Güdemann’s *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens* appeared in three volumes in 1880, 1884, and 1888, but arguably he began the project in 1873 with his *Das jüdische Unterrichtswesen während der spanisch-arabischen Periode*.

¹⁵⁵ Güdemann, *Quellenschriften zur Geschichte des Unterrichts und der Erziehung bei den deutschen Juden* (Berlin: A. Hofmann & Comp., 1891), 139, 194.

community of Worms, which he published, was to be found in Oxford's Bodleian library, but Adolf Neubauer had lent him a copy.¹⁵⁶ He thanked Josef Perles (Munich) and Phillip Bloch (Posen) for sending excerpts from the statutes of the Posen community and F.H. Wetstein (Krakau) for the protocol book of the "Talmud-Thora-Verein" of that city.¹⁵⁷ He also published the statutes of the community in Nikolsburg (Mikulov) that a certain Rabbi Dr. Glaser in Lipnik-Bialin had "kindly allowed me to use," as well as sources held by Moritz Stern, then in Kiel.¹⁵⁸ Altogether, we can piece together what it was like to work as a scholar of Jewish history at this time: One could perhaps gain access to local archives or the files of the Jewish community, but scholars relied on a network of colleagues and private dealers for access to sources and manuscripts.

The typical experience of scholars working in the nineteenth century was one in which the sources for Jewish history were held in private hands. Zunz, working in Berlin, relied heavily on the collections of Heimann Joseph Michael in Hamburg and Samuel David Luzzatto in Padua. Graetz, as discussed, made extensive use of sources both published and also borrowed, making careful indications as to which manuscripts came from others' collections. Sometimes, scholars drew upon materials they had personally gathered, as Karl Anton Schaab frequently indicated.¹⁵⁹ But more frequently, the sources were given to them to study. When Perles published the *Memorbuch* of the Jewish community in Posen, it came, in part, from a copy that was privately owned, and Abraham Berliner's 1868 article, intended to complement Perles' studies, was based on two eighteenth-century documents found under the bookplates of a volume in private hands.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Güdemann, *Quellenschriften*, 218.

¹⁵⁷ Güdemann, *Quellenschriften*, 224, 232.

¹⁵⁸ Güdemann, *Quellenschriften*, 255, 295, 303.

¹⁵⁹ See Schaab, 204, 214, 280, 282, 283, 285, 291–294, 302, 303, 309, etc.

¹⁶⁰ Perles, "Urkunden," *MGWJ* 16 (1867); Berliner, "Zur Geschichte der Juden in Posen," *MGWJ* 17 (1868):174–181. In describing the discovery of sources in book bindings, they refer to a phenomenon now examined as part of the "Italian Genizah" project and its siblings, looking for documents reused to produce new books, but where the

Graetz also published a sixteenth-century document in 1875 that he reported came from a private dealer.¹⁶¹ Simon Dubnow's well-known call for the Jews of eastern Europe to collect and send him historical documents in 1891 and 1892 has often been cited as an example of an initiative to make historical work a public activity. But in light of the wider situation, it is clear that Dubnow's appeal reflected the prevailing condition at that time, when the majority of Jewish historical material was to be found in private hands—and an impulse to change that status quo.¹⁶²

Alongside the rise in the use of archival sources in the second half of the nineteenth century came changes in how scholars went about their work. Most archival scholars used materials close at hand, as did Markus Brann and Gerson Wolf in Breslau and Vienna respectively. Brann's work on the *Gesellschaft der Brüder* (1880) was based on the *Königliches Archiv* in Breslau, and his *Geschichte des Landrabbinats in Schlesien* (1887) depended on that archive as well as the Rats-Archiv zu Breslau and the community's files.¹⁶³ And in many cases archival materials were sent to them. In 1877, both Heinrich Graetz and Samuel Back published documents in the *Monatsschrift* they received from David Podiebrad.¹⁶⁴ And in one infamous case, David Kaufmann received a collection of minute books from London's Hambro' synagogue,

original fragment can still be recovered as a kind of palimpsest. See Mauro Perani, "'The Italian Genizah': Hebrew Manuscript Fragments in Italian Archives and Libraries," *Mada'e Yahadut* 34 (1994): 39–54; Josef Oesch, "Genizat Austria: The 'Hebrew Manuscripts and Fragments in Austrian Libraries' Project," in *Genizat Germania—Hebrew and Aramaic Binding Fragments from Germany in Context* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 317–328; Simcha Emanuel, "'Genizat eropah' u-terumatah le-mada'e ha-yahadut," *Mada'e ha-yahadut* 35 (1994–1995): 5–30.

¹⁶¹ Graetz, "Aktenstücke zur Confiscation der jüdischen Schriften in Frankfurt a.M. unter Kaiser Maximilian," *MGWJ*, 2nd ser., 7 (1875): 289–300.

¹⁶² Marek Web, "Dubnov and Jewish Archives: An Introduction to his Papers at the YIVO Institute," in *A Missionary for History: Essays in Honor of Simon Dubnow* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis, 1998), 87–92; Laura Jockusch, "Introductory Remarks on Simon Dubnow's *Let us Seek and Investigate*," *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* VII (2008): 343–352.

¹⁶³ See specifically Brann, *Geschichte der Gesellschaft der Brüder* (Breslau: S. Schottlaender, 1880), 38. Note that although Brann made use of communal files, the *Gemeindearchiv* was not officially established until 1924.

¹⁶⁴ Heinrich Graetz, "Ezechiel Landau's Gesuch an Maria Theresa"; Samuel Back, "Aufgefundene Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Frankisten in Offenbach," *MGWJ*, 2nd ser., 9 (1877): 189–192, 232–240, 410–420.

but never returned them.¹⁶⁵ Increasingly, a few privileged scholars were able to travel, as was the case of Louis Neustadt, the Breslau historian and businessman who founded the *Jüdische Volkszeitung* in 1895, and E.H. Lindo, who published a large number of files held in Spanish archives. If Neustadt's first historical works in the 1880s were based on his research in the Breslau communal archives, after his first trips to the Munich Reichsarchiv in 1885 and later to the Geheimes Staatsarchiv in Berlin, he would make extensive use of these source collections.¹⁶⁶

Over time, historical sources, at least in theory, increasingly exited the private realm into that of the public. The transformation of the scholarly landscape took place on two levels: the contents of the sources themselves, which were published, and their location. Early scholars such as Moses Mannheimer and Isaak Markus Jost frequently explained that a source came from a “manuscript” without saying which one or which person or library owned it.¹⁶⁷ The *Gesammelten Schriften* of Moses Mendelssohn printed a collection of the philosopher's correspondence, but like many other source collections published in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, it did not indicate where the originals were held.¹⁶⁸ By contrast, Moritz Güdemann and Marcus Brann went to great efforts to detail the location of their sources, with footnotes indicating not only the archives and libraries from which their sources originated but also the specific files.¹⁶⁹ In this manner, scholars demonstrated a growing interest in the sources themselves rather than simply the information contained therein.

¹⁶⁵ Cecil Roth, “Archives of the United Synagogue: Report and Catalogue,” 1930, 15. Also see Israel Solomons, “The United Synagogue and its Synagogal Properties: Serious Allegations,” *The Jewish Chronicle* 15 Jan. 1909, 27; he wrote that “The early minute books of the Hambro Synagogue would have been an “exhibit” of peculiar interest... But they were not to be found. Some months later I learned that the volumes had been borrowed by a Jewish savant [likely Kaufmann] and never returned.”

¹⁶⁶ Louis Neustadt, *Die letzte Vertreibung der Juden in Schlesien* (Breslau: Th. Schatzky, 1893), 4

¹⁶⁷ See Jost, *Geschichte*, VII:273, where he discusses the reports of the “Jewish synods” but does not say where the reader could locate them; also Mannheimer, *Die Juden in Worms*, 50, 55.

¹⁶⁸ See Mendelssohn, *Moses Mendelssohn's gesammelten Schriften* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1843–45), esp. vol. 5.

¹⁶⁹ On the wider history of this practice, see Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History*.

The increasing citation of sources' physical location by late nineteenth-century scholars like Güdemann and Brann, instead of simply mentioning that they had used them, means that they considered *where* the sources were. This points towards another broad movement within nineteenth-century Jewish scholarship, the bibliographic tendency. Beginning with Zunz's "Statistik" in 1823, Jewish scholars had been focused on mining libraries to publish catalogues of material. Zunz not only produced groundbreaking scholarship but a number of important bibliographies. His introductory essay to the 1840 publication of the itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela focused on the range of geographical literature about the Jews.¹⁷⁰ Zunz's *Zur Geschichte und Literatur* (1845) was primarily a bibliographic exercise as well.¹⁷¹ In 1864, Zunz hoped that with the unification of Italy, that country's manuscripts might be available to researchers.¹⁷² Steinschneider, too, focused on identifying and publishing catalogues of manuscripts and other books in the libraries of Munich, Oxford, and elsewhere.¹⁷³ Adolf Neubauer and Albert Harkavy sought to publicize sources available in the libraries of St. Petersburg, just as Aaron Freimann did in Frankfurt am Main.¹⁷⁴ David Kaufmann's 1896 publication of the memoirs of the seventeenth-century businesswoman Glückl of Hameln also sought to make public a work that had been intended for particularly private use; he traced the book's "chain of transmission" from Glückl and her children to the library of rabbi and banker Abraham Merzebacher.¹⁷⁵ When

¹⁷⁰ Zunz, "An Essay on the Geographical Literature of the Jews, from the Remotest Times, to the Year 1841," in *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela* (London: A. Asher & Co., 1841), II:230–317.

¹⁷¹ Zunz, *Zur Geschichte und Literatur* (Berlin: Veit & Co., 1845).

¹⁷² Zunz, *Die hebräischen Handschriften in Italien* (Berlin: W. Adolf & Co., 1864).

¹⁷³ See, for instance, Steinschneider, "Hebräische Handschriften in München (k. Bibliothek) über arabische Philosophie," *Serapeum* 9 (1867): 136–141; and Steinschneider's monumental work, *Catalogus librorum hebraeorum in bibliotheca Bodleiana* (Berolini: Ad. Friedlaender, 1852–1860).

¹⁷⁴ Adolf Neubauer, *Aus der Petersburger Bibliothek* (1866); Albert Harkavy, "Über eine handschriftliche Responsensammlung in der k. öff. Bibl. in St. Petersburg," *MGWJ*, 2nd ser., 15 (1883): 183–190, 373–378. See Rachel Heuberger, *Aaron Freimann und die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2004).

¹⁷⁵ David Kaufmann, *Die Memoiren der Glückel von Hameln* (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kaufmann, 1896), vii–viii.

Raphael Rabbinovicz published the catalogue to Merzebacher's library in 1888 (*'Ohel 'avraham*), Abraham's son Eugen Merzebacher explained in his introduction that his aim was to take the great collection that his father had amassed, "originally for a private purpose," and make it useful to a broader group of scholars.¹⁷⁶ Publicizing private libraries' catalogues, often in journals such as Abraham Geiger's *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben* (1862–1875), was intended to bring them to light, so that they could be put to good use, either by the public directly or individual scholars and institutions who might be interested in purchasing them.¹⁷⁷

The publishing of source books and gravestone inscriptions, together with a growing practice of presenting readers with increasingly detailed information on the location of their sources, present two moves in the growing publicity of the sources of Jewish history. Strangely, they seem the inverse of each other: the one practice, publishing sources, "antiquarian" in nature, the other, detailed citation, seemingly more "historical," the first intent on presenting critically edited sources that could be reviewed by readers on the spot, the second interested in pointing readers towards the original manuscripts and documents where they could be accessed *in situ*. But in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, these two seemingly contradictory scholarly traditions led the way towards the archival moment whereby scholars expressed a growing interest in the accessibility of sources, whether published or otherwise. For if figures like

Güdemann and Brann cited archival sources in their footnotes instead of providing them in full

¹⁷⁶ Raphael Rabbinovicz, *'Ohel 'avraham. Reshimat ha-sefarim 'asher 'assaf ye-ḳavatz ha-rav ha-muflag ha-gebir ha-yashar be-'adam 'avraham merzebakher z"l* (Munich: 1888), 6.

¹⁷⁷ This was the certainly case for the library of Samuel David Luzzatto; his son Joseph Luzzatto published a brief catalogue of his father's famed library in 1868, three years after the famed scholar's passing in 1865. Joseph's concluding remarks indicated that the library would go to the highest bidder (Joseph Luzzatto, *Catalogue de la bibliothèque de littérature hébraïque et orientale de feu Mr. Samuel David Luzzatto rédigé par son fils Joseph*, 64). Steinschneider's catalogue of the books of Mordechai Ghironi, chief rabbi of Padua, was similarly aimed at the book market, when Ghironi's collection was placed on sale in 1872 by Samuel Schönblum in Lemberg, twenty years after Ghironi's death (Steinschneider, *Catalog hebräischer Handschriften, grössten Theils aus dem Nachlass des Rabb. M.S. Ghironi*, 1872). Geiger expressed his hopes in his *Zeitschrift* in 1872, upon the purchase of a large collection of books by New York's Temple Emanu-El, that the collection could be useful to the public ("Die Bibliothek der Tempelgemeinde Emanuel in New-York," *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben* 10 (1872): 222).

as an appendix, it reflected a certain trust of both readers (that they would believe the authors without the sources as proof) and the archives (that they would remain available to future researchers). Consequently, the footnoted source, as opposed to the published appendix, meant that there was a new need for institutions that would safeguard these sources for posterity.

Publicity, Professionalization, and Pessimism in the Fin de Siècle

In 1886, Louis Neustadt, publishing a collection of Frankfurt am Main family trees, remarked that “unfortunately a great portion [of the files] are still in the possession of private individuals.” Along with a cadre of other scholars at the turn of the twentieth century, Neustadt despaired of the inability of private persons and communities to care for historical material in their possession. He proceeded to explain that it would be preferable if they were placed in a central location, organized in a rational manner, administered by a trained scholar, and made available to the public—in other words, the creation of an archive.¹⁷⁸ This call for the establishment of an archive, however hidden in an obscure monograph, was the earliest proposal of its type. Along similar lines, Simon Dubnow painted a dismal picture in his well-known 1892 appeal to the Jews of eastern Europe, “Naḥpesah ve-Naḥkorah” (“Let Us Search and Investigate,” a reference to Lamentations 3:40), in which Dubnow famously implored the Jewish public to search out and send him historical materials for his research.¹⁷⁹ He complained that the old record books and files were not given proper respect. More often than not, Dubnow explained, they “have lain for centuries in some corner, in the attics of houses, in cellars, in among many torn ‘shemot,’ pages and old unwanted sheets of paper,” and those that had been well-preserved

¹⁷⁸ Neustadt, *Stammtafeln der von Liebmann Schwarzschild in Frankfurt A.M. (1555-1594) abstammenden Familien*, 6.

¹⁷⁹ Dubnow initially published his essay as “Iz izucheniia istorii russkikh evreev i uchrezhdenii istoricheskogo obshchestva,” *Voskhod* 4–9 (April–September, 1891): 1–91; the next year it appeared as “Naḥpesah ve-naḥkorah: ḳol ḳore’ et ha-nevonim ba-‘am ha-mitnadvim le-’esof ḥomer le-binyan toldot bene yisra’el be-polin ve-rusyah,” *Ha-Pardes* 1 (1892): 221–242; see an English translation and introduction in Laura Jockusch, “Introductory Remarks on Simon Dubnow’s *Let us Seek and Investigate*,” in *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* VII (2008): 343–382.

were inaccessible as they were held in private hands.¹⁸⁰ Broadly speaking, Jewish scholars aimed to make both archival sources and manuscripts available to the scholarly public by publishing them and also to frame them in new structures, seemingly more “modern” and “professional.” This move was predicated by new attitudes towards the nature of the sources of Jewish history and also their future, expressed in fears that files would soon be destroyed if they remained in their current state. Such attitudes represented a revolt against the network of private collectors so central to nineteenth-century scholarly activity. It also reflected a rejection of traditional modes of collecting such as the Genizah, the Jewish practice of disposing papers and documents in an unordered storeroom in a synagogue, providing ammunition for the move to seemingly more modern institutions for the management of historical material, like libraries and archives.¹⁸¹

The transfer of the Cairo Genizah to Cambridge is a useful example that highlights these tendencies with a telling dose of Orientalism.¹⁸² At the Ben Ezra synagogue in Cairo, Jews stored fragments of books and other documents in their Genizah storeroom since at least the eleventh century. Over time, the Genizah grew to include vast piles of holy books and also non-religious documents written in Hebrew characters; instead of periodically emptying the Genizah, as was customary, the Cairo Jews left it mostly undisturbed, and it was preserved in the arid climate. Its “discovery” at the end of the nineteenth century, when Solomon Schechter carted off most of it to Cambridge, marked a scholarly watershed, leading it to be the most well-known Genizah,

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 372.

¹⁸¹ On Genizah practices, see A.M. Luncz, “Hotsa’ot ha-genizah,” in *Yerushalayim* (Vienna: Georg Brög, 1882), I:15–16; Malachi Bet-Arié, “Genizot: Depositories of Consumed Books as Disposing Procedure in Jewish Society,” *Scriptorium* 50, no. 2 (1996): 407–414; Joseph Sadan, “Genizah and Genizah-like Practices in Islamic and Jewish Traditions,” *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 43, no. 1–2 (1986): 36–58. Also S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Genizah* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), I:1–2.

¹⁸² See recent works: Adina Hoffman and Peter Cole, *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza* (New York: Schocken, 2011); Mark Glickman, *Sacred Treasure—The Cairo Genizah: The Amazing Discoveries of Forgotten Jewish History in an Egyptian Synagogue* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2011); Stefan Reif, *A Jewish Archive in Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University’s Genizah Collection* (Curzon, 2000).

synonymous with the general idea although in actuality it was an exceptional case.¹⁸³ It contained not only rich sources of Jewish literature and intellectual history—among others, the Genizah held fragments in the hand of the twelfth-century sage Maimonides—but also opened up whole new fields of research: The community’s policy to store anything written in Hebrew, regardless of its religious or secular nature, meant that the Genizah contained a wide range of business and personal records that could uncover the quotidian world of Jewish life under Muslim rule, reaching a pinnacle with S.D. Goitein’s six-volume *A Mediterranean Society* (1967–1993).¹⁸⁴ A century after its discovery, the Genizah has been scattered, with its fragments held at Cambridge, Oxford, New York, Philadelphia, and elsewhere.¹⁸⁵ The well-known story of the Genizah, however, reflects a wider frame of the transformation of the sources of Jewish history and the way in which Jewish scholars sought to bring them under their control.

In the late 1890s, when Solomon Schechter and Elkan Adler published their first accounts of their experiences in the “battlefield of books” of the Cairo Genizah and some of the astounding documents they found there, they hinted at their disdain for the state of the Genizah, suggesting that they saved the material from its benevolent but essentially naïve Oriental owners.¹⁸⁶ In Schechter’s telling, the local rabbi and the synagogue beadles were perhaps too trusting and innocent, unaware of the great treasure they held and too quick to give it up. Upon arriving in

¹⁸³ Schechter was by no means the first Western scholar to see these materials. Travelers described the cache as early as the eighteenth century, and some manuscript fragments made their way to the libraries of Europe, which caught the attention of Schechter and others. See, for instance, Jacob Saphir, *’Even safir* (Lyck: L. Silbermann, 1866), 21–22.

¹⁸⁴ See S.D. Goitein, “The Cairo Geniza as a Source for the History of Muslim Civilisation,” *Studia Islamica* 3 (1955): 75–91. For more recent consideration of the possibilities and limits of Genizah research, see: Stefan Reif, “A Centennial Assessment of Genizah Studies,” in *The Cambridge Genizah Collections: Their Contents and Significance*, ed. Stefan Reif (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–35; Jessica Goldberg, “The Use and Abuse of Commercial Letters from the Cairo Geniza,” *Journal of Medieval History* 38, no. 2 (2012): 127–154.

¹⁸⁵ See Glickman, *Sacred Treasure*, 179–220, esp. 211, with a list of where Genizah fragments are kept.

¹⁸⁶ See Schechter, “A Hoard of Hebrew Manuscripts,” *The Times of London*, Aug. 3, 1897, also in *Studies in Judaism* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1908), 1–30; Elkan N. Adler, “An Eleventh Century Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: Being a Fragment from the Sepher ha-Ittim of Rabbi Judah ben Barzilai of Barcelona,” *JQR* 9, no. 4 (Jul. 1897): 669–716.

Cairo, he was immediately escorted to the Ben Ezra synagogue, where he met its rabbi, to whom the synagogue was vested “for the time being.”¹⁸⁷ The rabbi introduced Schechter to the keepers of the Genizah, “and authorised me to take from it what, and as much as, I liked. Now, as a matter of fact, I liked all.”¹⁸⁸ “I have constantly to bakeshish [sic] them,” he wrote in 1897, complaining that the “infernal scoundrels” continued to sell priceless items to dealers.¹⁸⁹ Schechter intimated that the synagogue beadles did not understand the value of the Genizah, liberally giving access to Schechter and also document peddlers who tried to sell him documents at absurd prices. Twenty years later, Alexander Marx, librarian of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, voiced the same outlook, discrediting the capability of communities to handle their own history. He noted that, usually, manuscripts should be studied by those who hold the material, but he explained that “These Genizah MSS... were—fortunately—carried away from the places of the past of which they reveal to us.” He continued: “We cannot depend on Egyptian Jewry, not to speak of communities long ago destroyed like that of Kairovan [Kairouan, Tunisia], to take up this task.”¹⁹⁰ In his view, western Jewish communities could be counted on to study themselves, but not so the eastern Jews.

Such depictions paint the Genizah, at least as it was perceived, as a creature of the corrupt East, its keepers naïve, unaware that what they were selling for petty cash was of great historical value. Portraying the fate of the Genizah as historical salvage—as Adler put it, “ransack[ing] of the Genizah, ... return[ing] home to Cambridge with the spoils of the Egyptians”—scholars rejected the role of local communities, private collectors, and dealers in the scholarly ecosystem.¹⁹¹ Bringing the Genizah to Cambridge, like Dubnow’s call to collect historical documents, was part

¹⁸⁷ Schechter, “A Hoard of Hebrew Manuscripts,” in *Studies in Judaism*, 5.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁸⁹ Schechter to Francis Jenkinson, 12 January 1897, CUL ADD.6463(e)3416.

¹⁹⁰ Marx, “Aims and Tasks of Jewish Historiography,” 22.

¹⁹¹ Adler, “An Eleventh Century Introduction to the Hebrew Bible,” 673.

of the broader process of making far-away sources, kept by private individuals untrained in the preservation and use of historical sources, available for study by professionals. Consequently, the well-known tale of the Cairo Genizah has broad implications. It was not a singular story of a unique “salvage operation,” but instead reflected a general character of the effort to extract sources from their owners, and also a certain Orientalism that underlay the project of Jewish archive-making at large, in both geographical and cultural terms. For instance, when the leaders of the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden gathered archives, they mostly looked to the Jewish communities of east Prussia and the Baltics. Increased interest in the location of documents and in their preservation illustrates a growing movement at the end of the nineteenth century. Their project would no longer simply be to place the sources of history under the light of scholarship and public use but to resituate them to facilitate their use by a wide group of scholars, not simply the individuals who lived nearby, and preserve them for posterity.

Neustadt, Dubnow, and Schechter all presented their hopes for a renewed preservation of materials via their professional management, often by removing them from private hands; David Kaufman presented a tragic case. Writing in 1887, Kaufmann lamented what he saw as an apparent disregard for communal records, historical material, and monuments by the Jewish public.¹⁹² He claimed that Amsterdam Jews once sent all their communal record books (*pinkasim*), enough to fill three boats, to be pulped. If the storied Jews of Amsterdam could destroy their records, he reasoned, then what could one hope from other communities? When they were ready to start a new *pinkas*, Kaufmann reported, Jews were quick to place the old ones in a Genizah and then promptly forget that they were there. The following year, Kaufmann again railed against the communities for neglecting the sources of history; enlightened nations, he wrote, established

¹⁹² Kaufmann, “Meqorot le-korot bene yisra’el,” 2 pts., *Otsrot ha-sifrut* 2 (1887): 88–118; 3 (1888): 1–24.

archives and historical societies to maintain the monuments and documents of the past, but “in the communities of our people ... the annihilation and loss of our precious beautiful objects and the treasures of our memories rules generally.”¹⁹³ Ironically, when Kaufmann received—and never returned—the minute books of London’s Hambro’ synagogue, he was responsible for their loss.¹⁹⁴ Perhaps the fact that he did not return them indicates a broader view that the old minute books and sources would be better off in the hands of scholars than the communities that created them.

If the middle decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a growing interest in archival sources, in the waning years of that century there appeared a shift in the tone and discourse of Jewish studies: the rise of a distinctive attitude towards the sources of the Jewish past. This new outlook reflected a broader *fin de siècle* shift from progress and positivism to degeneration and devolution. Accordingly, Jewish scholars turned their attention, or at least their powers of hyperbole, to the problem of the peril of the very foundation of the study of Judaism, documentary sources and manuscripts, and the need to collect and preserve them.

The bibliographic project of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, describing and documenting the vast sea of sources, sheds light on early attitudes towards sources based in a fundamental optimism, in contrast to what might be termed the *Quellenpessimismus* of the late nineteenth century.¹⁹⁵ Zunz’s *Zur Geschichte und Literatur* (1845) dealt primarily though not exclusively with bibliography, detailing a wide array of Hebrew manuscripts and also where one might find them. Moritz Steinschneider’s catalogues of manuscripts in libraries across Europe, not to mention his long-running journal *Hebräische Bibliographie* (1858–1882), together with works

¹⁹³ Kaufmann, “Meqorot le-qorot bene yisra’el,” 2nd pt. (1888), 1.

¹⁹⁴ See supra, n. 165.

¹⁹⁵ See Stephen Kalberg, “The Origin and Expansion of *Kulturpessimismus*: The Relationship Between Public and Private Spheres in Early Twentieth Century Germany,” *Sociological Theory* 5, no. 2 (1987): 150–164.

such as Julius Fürst's *Bibliotheca Judaica* (1861–63), further point to an emphasis upon the discovery of sources.¹⁹⁶ For instance, Zunz's introduction to the catalogue of Heimann Michael's library emphasized the collection's expansiveness.¹⁹⁷ And his 1858 article on the Zurich *Semag* (*Sefer mitsvot ha-gadol*, the work of Moshe ben Jacob of Coucy, the twelfth-century Tosafist), indicated that many people have talked about the text for hundreds of years but did not know where it was or even that it existed. In fact, Zunz catalogued how it was to be found in libraries across Europe, from Oxford and London to Vienna and the Vatican.¹⁹⁸

Zunz's perspective on the great potential of Jewish studies and its expansive sources can be seen among other leading nineteenth-century scholars. For example, Isaak Markus Jost remarked in the introduction to the eighth volume of his *Geschichte der Israeliten* (1820–1828) that he had received many notes from readers indicating how earlier volumes could be improved; he freely offered that his work provided a path to future research and was not intended to be entirely definitive. "One must understand," he argued, "that the enormous abundance of sources, which are so diverse, belong to so many different sciences, languages, and times, cannot be so soon exhausted by a single worker, and the first attempt at a limiting of the choices, which still leaves something good behind, must give rise to some misunderstanding."¹⁹⁹ In Jost's view, historical work was a process of the accumulation of knowledge as more sources were discovered and examined, and he recognized the limits of his era in that there were so many more sources to be found. And Gerson Wolf, writing in 1864 of the "rich and expansive treasures" of the Austrian state archives, explained "already after many years of the study of these [treasures], I must

¹⁹⁶ On Steinschneider's difficult relationship with Fürst, see Arndt Engelhardt, "Moritz Steinschneider's Notion of Encyclopedias," in *Studies on Steinschneider: Moritz Steinschneider and the Emergence of the Science of Judaism in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, ed. Reimund Leicht and Gad Freudenthal (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 109–136.

¹⁹⁷ Moritz Steinschneider, *Otzrot Chajim: Katalog der Michael'schen Bibliothek* (Hamburg; J. J. Halberstadt, 1848).

¹⁹⁸ Leopold Zunz, "Der Zürcher Semak," *Hebräische Bibliographie* 1, no. 4 (July–August 1858): 83.

¹⁹⁹ Jost, *Geschichte*, VIII:iv.

dedicate still more time to this study” in order to write an effective history.²⁰⁰

Similarly, many of the scholars working on the publication of sources commented on the plethora of material to be utilized. In *Die Urkunden zur Geschichte der Juden*, printed in 1844, Julius Fürst, the German-Jewish Orientalist, wrote that prominent scholars of Jewish history such as Jacques Basnage and, more recently, Jost, had been limited due to a lack of sources at their disposal. For Fürst, the challenge was not the lack of sources to be studied, or the state of the files themselves, which was the essence of the discourse of the decline of archives that became prominent in the late nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, but rather the sheer mass of material and the difficulty of sifting through it. In Fürst’s view, critical source collections were necessary due to the great mass of sources that were dispersed throughout Europe. The field of research was so large that to appropriately study the sources, Fürst listed a dizzying array of European and Semitic languages that one should acquire. In this respect, Fürst, like others who published collections of sources and bibliographic references in this period, emphasized the vast quantity of material available for research.²⁰¹ Morris Wiener, in his *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland während des Mittelalters* (1862), similarly reflected on the dispersed state of the sources of Jewish history, “scattered across a thousand different places.” But Wiener emphasized not the danger to the files, as later scholars did; instead, he wrote of the “richness” of the material and the necessity to provide sources to scholars so they would not need to be both “historical writers” and “historical researchers”—the implication being, as Jost had written a generation before, that the work was beyond the scope of any one individual.²⁰² Otto Stobbe, in his introduction to the magisterial collection *Die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland während*

²⁰⁰ Gerson Wolf, *Die Juden in der Leopoldstadt im 17. Jahrhundert in Wien* (Vienna: Hersfeld & Bauer, 1864), ii.

²⁰¹ Julius Fürst, *Urkunden zur Geschichte der Juden* (Leipzig: Heinrich Hunger, 1844), iv, x.

²⁰² Wiener, *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*, iv.

des Mittelalters (1866), also commented on this fact, stating that he recognized as a young scholar “how numerous [are the] sources we possess on the German Jews.”²⁰³ The sources were to be found everywhere: “As soon as we begin to study German history according to the documents,” Stobbe remarked, “we also meet the Jews.”²⁰⁴ For these scholars, the thrust of their effort to collect the sources of Jewish studies was framed in the context of helping other scholars cope with an expansive and dispersed set of sources, rather than saving them from certain destruction.

If the general perspective of Jewish studies scholars for much of the nineteenth century towards the prolific nature of their sources was somewhat sanguine, for a rising generation of Jewish scholars and especially archivists who emerged at the turn of the twentieth century and who would play an important role in the explosion of archival and collecting activity during the decades that followed, the prevailing sensibility of the continued discovery and accumulation of sources that had underlain the development of modern Jewish studies was tempered with a new pessimism. The despair of the sources mirrored a broader declinist narrative of Jewish studies.²⁰⁵

At the basis of the new outlook was the idea that its sources could be lost. It was certainly not an entirely novel impulse. The mid-century publication of gravestones, as Ludwig August Frankl put it, were intended “to rescue [the past] from the storms of the present.”²⁰⁶ Just as nineteenth-century German scholars developed what has been termed a “rhetoric of saving” for cultural monuments in the post-Napoleonic era, Jewish scholars in the *fin de siècle* emphasized

²⁰³ Otto Stobbe, *Die Juden in Deutschland während des Mittelalters in politischer, sozialer und rechtlicher Beziehung* (Braunschweig: C.A. Schwetschke und Sohn, 1866), v.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁰⁵ As Solomon Schechter reported in a 1910 lecture, a group of Jewish studies scholars expressed the feeling that “Our libraries have already been explored; our manuscripts have already been examined; our catalogues have already been compiled; our history has already been written; our liturgy has already been described, and the greatest part of the Talmud and the Midrashim have already been scientifically edited. The records of the past are now a matter of the past. The future affords little scope for learned research.” (Solomon Schechter, “The Beginnings of Jewish *Wissenschaft*,” in *Seminary Addresses and Other Papers* (Cincinnati: Ark Publishing Co., 1915), 173–193).

²⁰⁶ Ludwig August Frankl, *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien*, 2nd ed. (1853), iii.

dangers facing the sources of history and the need to protect them.²⁰⁷ In 1903, when Ezechiel Zivier moved for the establishment of an archive of the German Jews, formed in 1905 in Berlin as the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden*, he echoed the sentiments of Dubnow and Kaufmann. Zivier explained that Jews had neglected their history, and for this reason the sources of Jewish history were in danger. “We have the obligation,” he declared, “to rescue what can be saved, before it is too late.”²⁰⁸ The Strasbourg rabbi Moïse Ginsburger, who founded the *Société pour l’histoire des israélites d’Alsace et de Lorraine* in 1905, which competed with the *Gesamtarchiv* by seeking to create a regional archive for the Jews of Alsace and Lorraine, expressed a similar vision of a clock ticking down to the demise of historical sources when he explained that files must be saved “before their destruction.”²⁰⁹ Such fear of potential loss became a Leitmotif for Jewish scholars and archivists well into the twentieth century, manifested across the globe. In 1934, the Canadian Jewish Congress resolved to establish a “Canadian Jewish Archives” due to the “great danger of this valuable material becoming lost or destroyed.”²¹⁰ Altogether, this new trend represented a distinctive development, a departure from earlier scholars whose focus had been on the great mass of unexplored sources.

Such rising despair was expressed with a surprisingly coherent set of themes through which scholars and archivists presented a broad argument for the extraction of sources from private owners and traditional structures towards new public, scientific institutions. In the view of scholars writing at this time, Jews did not realize the importance of historical material and left them lying about like common trash. As Ezechiel Zivier related in a 1907 lecture in Königshütte

²⁰⁷ Susan A. Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth Century Germany*, 38–44.

²⁰⁸ “Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *Mitteilungen von Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebund* 61 (1903): 8.

²⁰⁹ *Bericht über die Gesellschaft für die Geschichte der Israeliten in Elsaß-Lothringen* (Gebweiler: J. Dreyfus, 1908).

²¹⁰ David Rome, “The Development of National Archives for Canadian Jews,” The Archives Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Montreal, April 1939.

(Chorzów): “The files of self-administration of the Jewish communities have until now been given absolutely no importance not only by scholars but also by communities themselves. Most have been lost....”²¹¹ That year, Eugen Täubler, the director of the Gesamtarchiv, wrote that “One of the tasks of a modern community administration is the obligation to care for preservation of the files of the past,” implying that in the past (and even in the present day) Jewish communities did not fulfill this task.²¹² Siegfried Guggenheim, a lawyer in Offenbach am Main and one of the Gesamtarchiv’s most active collectors, reported that in Seligenstadt, “the first director [of the Jewish community] is an old man, who has no idea of the importance of an archive.”²¹³ Similarly, Moïse Ginsburger complained in a 1904 compendium of gravestone inscriptions that the cemetery was in shambles, as a result of “part carelessness, part vandalism.”²¹⁴

These scholars, archivists, and collectors did not deny that Jews had a long history of keeping records. Zivier detailed Jewish archival activities as far back as the time of Jeremiah and Josephus.²¹⁵ But across the board, they decried what they saw as neglect and disorganization. In 1934, the genealogist and ophthalmologist Adolf Czellitzer wrote that “in almost all Jewish communities files are kept, but only in exceptional cases was there an orderly archive.” These files, Czellitzer instructed, could be for the most part found “lying around on the floor of the community’s common room or in the basement.”²¹⁶ In a letter later that year to Bernhard Brillung, a Jewish archivist in Breslau, Czellitzer reported that the communal files in Posen were

²¹¹ Ezechiël Zivier, *Vortrag des Fürstl. Archivars Dr. Zivier-Pleiß gehalten auf der Hauptversammlung in Königshütte O.S. am 27. Oktober 1907* (Königshütte O.S.: R. Giebler, 1907), 1.

²¹² “Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden,” *Mitteilungen vom Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebund*, Dec. 1907, 25.

²¹³ Siegfried Guggenheim to Gesamtarchiv, 20 April 1907, CAHJP, M5/14.

²¹⁴ Ginsburger, *Der Israelitische Friedhof in Jungholz*, 5.

²¹⁵ Zivier, “Ein allgemeines Archiv der Juden Deutschlands,” *Bericht der Grossloge für Deutschland*, Mar. 1903, 36–38.

²¹⁶ Arthur Czellitzer, *Mein Stammbaum: Eine genealogische Anleitung für deutsche Juden* (Berlin: Philo Verlag, 1934), 18.

“lying unorganized and in chaos in the basement of the community building.”²¹⁷ The image of files in the basement among other unneeded things is ever present: In 1908, Moïse Ginsburger called on communities, whose files and ritual objects he described as “rotting in an attic or in the basement,” to send them to his historical society for safekeeping.²¹⁸ Martin Philippon, the chairman of the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden, characterized communal files as being stored “in the basement or among assorted junk.”²¹⁹ Jacob Jacobson, the Gesamtarchiv’s director from 1920 until his deportation to Theresienstadt in 1943, wrote in 1925 that communal files “are sleeping—often quite forgotten—in cupboards and chests, in basements and cellars.”²²⁰ The constant recourse to basements and cellars, molding and rotting, forgetfulness and destruction, lends a portrait of communities that did not respect the historical materials in their possession, thereby requiring a program of extraction to a centralized, professionally-managed institution.

Whereas Zunz, to provide one example, repeatedly criticized scholars (both Jews and non-Jews) for ignoring Judaism as a topic for research, later scholars such as David Kaufmann and Simon Dubnow broadened the recipients of their ire.²²¹ Kaufmann’s wrath fell upon communal leaders and average Jews who, in his view, were not only disinterested in history but wantonly destroyed and neglected the sources of history, allowing records to decay and gravestones to sink into the earth. And Dubnow’s plea was not intended solely for the leaders of the *kehilla* or community but for everyday Jews who could search for historical sources.

Correspondingly, one of the pronounced goals of the Gesamtarchiv, the first modern Jewish

²¹⁷ Arthur Czellitzer to Bernhard Brilling, 15 Oct. 1934, JMF SB0683.

²¹⁸ “Wochenschau,” *SIW*, 9 Apr. 1908.

²¹⁹ “Berichte über die Tätigkeit des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden,” *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden* 3 (1911–12): 58.

²²⁰ Jacob Jacobson, “Jüdisches Geschichtsaltertümer in Deutschland,” 1 March 1925, CJ 1. 75 G Ce 2.

²²¹ See, among others, *Die hebräischen Handschriften in Italien*: “Wie viele Menschenfreunde kümmert das Geschick, wie viele Historiker die Geschichte der Juden? welcher Jurist studiert talmudischen Civilrecht? wie viele Mitglieder von Akademien können hebräisch lesen, wie viele Professoren hebräisch schreiben?” (3)

archive, was to spread the knowledge and appreciation of archives to the wider Jewish public. At the same time, scholars now aimed to extract sources from traditional sites of storage such as a *Genizah* or from the local communities where files had been kept for centuries, now removed to a centralized archive. In addition to the example of the Cairo Genizah, one can look to Dubnow's famous 1892 essay, in which he complained of the travesty to scholarship when private people preserve books but do not let others see them. He referred to it negatively as an "*Genizah muhletet*," roughly translatable as absolute secrecy, comparable to Josef Meisl's 1939 description of the files hidden (*genuzot*) in state archives that Moritz Stern had copied and thereby saved.²²² Dubnow's peculiar terminology provides insight into his views of the Genizah. For Dubnow, both Genizah and archive (inasmuch as he complained of sources "consigned to the archive") were places for the squirreling away of sources, where documents remained inaccessible to scholars. Dubnow's disapproval of private libraries departed from earlier scholars, who often drew upon the private libraries of Samuel David Luzzatto, Heimann Michael, and others to get access to important sources. In short, this new attitude towards sources was geared towards bringing sources to light and making them accessible to scholars, which often meant taking them from their owners or otherwise removing them from traditional holding structures. This process, which we will consider in the remainder of the present study, was by no means simple or "scientific." Instead, it was one which was fundamentally rupturous, removing historical materials from their original context and creating new frames, making them part of history.

Conclusion: A Research Revolution in Historical Perspective

If Leopold Zunz's call to collect information and for the opening of state archives

²²² Simon Dubnow, "Naḥpesah ye-naḥkorah," 234. Cf. Josef Meisl, "Tazkir 'al 'arkhiyono shel ha-hiṣṭoriyon d'r moshe shtern z"l," 1939, CAHJP P28/6/33.

displayed an early archival impulse, by the turn of the twentieth century the archival drive hit a fever pitch.²²³ Over the course of the nineteenth century, the growing centrality of archives represented an overarching reorientation of the way in which Jewish scholarship was produced, moving from a network of private collectors to the favoring of centralized preservation and from an optimistic sensibility of the tremendous scale of sources to be studied and yet to be discovered to a type of pessimism toward the future of the sources of history. Nowhere was the gravity of the archive more present than in changing visions of Heinrich Graetz, who—despite his own lack of archival research—acts as a mirror on a research revolution. In one striking example, David Kaufmann wrote of Graetz in 1891, just days after the great master’s passing:

The greatness of [Graetz’s] achievement ... will only truly be recognized by he who keeps in mind the singular difficulties of Jewish history-writing. If for universal historians, history is a field of the corpses of the past, of whom the stones speak and the inscriptions shine, thus do Jewish historians stare at a cemetery, in which the graves have deteriorated, the monuments sunken down [into the ground], the markings extinguished.²²⁴

A generation later, in 1917, Kaufmann’s colleague and collaborator Markus Brann neatly lifted the passage for his own consideration of Graetz, with a subtle but significant alteration. “If the stones speak to the universal historians,” explained Brann, “*the inscriptions of all archives standing at attention*, thus do Jewish historians stare at a cemetery...”²²⁵ What is most interesting here is not what Brann stole, but rather what he did not. Both authors wrote of the challenges of

²²³ See supra, pp. 4–5.

²²⁴ “Aber die Größe der Leistung, die mehr als dreitausendjährige Geschichte der Juden von ihren Ursprüngen an erhellt zu haben, wird doch nur derjenige wahrhaft zu würdigen vermögen, der sich die eigentümlichen Schwierigkeiten der jüdischen Geschichtsschreibung vor Augen hält. Wenn für den Universalhistoriker die Geschichte das Leichenfeld der Vergangenheit ist, auf dem die Steine reden und die Inschriften leuchten, so starrt dem jüdischen Geschichtsschreiber ein Gottesacker entgegen, auf dem die Gräber verfallen, die Denkmäler zusammengesunken, die Schriftzeichen erblindet und erloschen sind.” David Kaufmann, “H. Graetz,” in *GS*, ed. Markus Brann (Frankfurt a.M.: Kommissions-Verlag von J. Kauffmann, 1908), I:273; orig. *Pester Lloyd*, 10 Sept. 1891.

²²⁵ My emphasis. The quote, with copied sections emphasized: “Die Größe dieser Leistung vermag man nur zu würdigen, wenn man sich die Schwierigkeiten der jüdischen Geschichtsschreibung vor Augen hält. Wenn dem Universalhistoriker die Steine reden, die Inschriften aller Archive zu Gebote stehen, starrt dem jüdischen Geschichtsschreiber ein Gottesacker entgegen, auf dem die Gräber verfallen, die Denkmäler zusammengesunken, die Schriftzeichen verloschen sind.” Markus Brann, “Heinrich Graetz,” *MGWJ*, 3rd ser., 25 (1917): 337.

scholars facing the “graveyard” of Jewish history. But a novel turn of phrase indicates a shift between Kaufmann writing in 1891 and Brann twenty-six years later. Whereas Kaufmann wrote that “if for universal historians, history is a field of the corpses of the past, of whom the stones speak and the inscriptions shine,” Brann’s configuration emphasized that these stones speaking are “the inscriptions of all archives standing at attention.” Whereas Kaufmann complained that Jews did not have historical societies, universities, and other historical institutions, Brann lamented that the Jews’ “restless wandering” had not afforded them the “leisure to establish well-ordered archives and preserve [historical] sources.”²²⁶ In short, such differences give voice to an increased centrality of archives in the field of Jewish studies.

Brann’s insertion of the archive in Kaufmann’s language is one indication of a burgeoning archival moment in Jewish scholarship at the turn of the twentieth century, when historical archives became a fundamental tool for the study of the Jewish past and also, to an ever-growing extent, a broader phenomenon with the widespread creation of archives for Jewish history. In another example, Ismar Elbogen in 1930 commented that in the decades since Graetz’s heyday Jewish studies had undergone a radical methodological shift—as he put it, “a turning away from subjective sources and hypotheses [towards] intensive exhaustion of archives and philological treatments of documents.”²²⁷ From David Kaufmann’s metaphor of Jewish historians facing a “cemetery” of history to Markus Brann’s reflections written in 1917, on the centenary of the nineteenth-century master’s birth, in which the stones represented the “inscriptions of all archives,” the archive had unmistakably taken center stage in the writing of Jewish history.

When Simon Dubnow, the Diaspora nationalist ideologue and historian, published his ten-volume *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes* (1925–1929), he did so without the subtitle

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Elbogen, “Von Graetz bis Dubnow,” 23.

proclaiming the work prepared “on the basis of archival sources” or “unprinted sources,” which had been conspicuous in nineteenth-century scholarship. By now, that one would use archives had become a basic assumption of scholarly professionalism. Eugen Täubler, the scholar of Judaism in antiquity who was director of the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden from its founding in 1905 until he left in 1918 to establish the Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, provides an excellent example of the crystallization of such assumptions.²²⁸ At the Akademie, Täubler emphasized archival sources, proposing the creation of a “Talmud archive” and a “photographic manuscript archive” alongside intensive study of archives in all fields of Jewish studies.²²⁹ Under Täubler’s direction, Fritz Baer delved into the Spanish archives, concluding that archives were indispensable to the serious scholar. In 1923, he declared that “one will not be able to write the chronicles of Israel in Spain unless one has drawn for many years from the sources that gush from the archives of Spain,”²³⁰ and in the introduction to the first volume (1929) of his *Die Juden in christlichen Spanien*, he explained that when he began the project it was immediately apparent to him that the “elimination of unhistorical perspectives” would come about only through “a new consideration on the basis of... archival materials.”²³¹ The Akademie’s publication of books like Baer’s *Die Juden in christlichen Spanien* and Selma Stern’s two volumes of *Der Preußische Staat und die Juden* (1925), in the main consisting of critically edited sources, may appear to be a return to mid-nineteenth century erudite history. But their distinctiveness brings the archival moment into sharp focus. Whereas Gerson Wolf and his

²²⁸ See David N. Myers, “The Fall and Rise of Jewish Historicism: The Evolution of the Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums (1919–1934),” *HUCA* 63 (1992): 107–144; Myers, “Eugen Täubler: The Personification of ‘Judaism as Tragic Existence,’” *LBIYB* 39 (1994): 131–150. Also Heike Scharbaum, *Zwischen zwei Welten: Wissenschaft und Lebenswelt am Beispiel des Deutsch-jüdischen Historikers Eugen Täubler, 1879–1953* (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 2000).

²²⁹ Täubler, “Das Forschungs-Institut für die Wissenschaft des Judentums: Organisation und Arbeitsplan,” *Korrespondenzblatt des Vereins zur Gründung und Erhaltung einer Akademie für Wissenschaft des Judentums* 1 (1920): 10–18.

²³⁰ Fritz Baer, “Sefarim u-mekorot ḥadashim le-toldot ha-yehudim bi-sefarad,” *Devir* 2 (1923): 310.

²³¹ Baer, *Die Juden im christlichen Spanien*, I:v-vi.

contemporaries had presented sources as an appendix following a brief introduction, Baer and Stern printed the sources before their historical narrative, turning the tables of historical priorities, more directly demonstrating the centrality of the sources.

The research revolution in Jewish studies led to the effort to create archives to support the new era of archival studies, at an archival moment when the archive became an indispensable and yet contested tool for research. It reflected a certain “archive fever,” an impulse to document. But it was a unique one reflecting the specificity of the Jewish history being documented. The remark of Ezechiel Zivier, the German-Jewish archivist for the duchy of Pleß (today Pszczyna in southwestern Poland), who proposed that the German Jews create their Gesamtarchiv because “all great peoples have an archive of their antiquities,” was more than a catchphrase.²³² It represented a philosophy that privileged collecting activities and the creation of archives, as archives became a preferred mode for broadly organizing knowledge. The creation of the Gesamtarchiv in Berlin in 1905 and the many archive projects that followed it in Europe, the United States, and Palestine/Israel all reflected a burgeoning archival moment. Scholars’ preferences for archives and a professionalizing impulse, which looked with disapproval on private collectors and communal safekeepers of documents, converged with the expanding appeal of archives as an organizing principle to forge a new archival synthesis.

²³² “Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Dec. 1903, 8.

Chapter 2

Archival Totality in the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden

At the turn of the twentieth century, scholars increasingly turned to archives as the primary source of Jewish history and lamented the failure of Jewish communities and individuals to preserve the materials of the Jewish past. The establishment of the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden (Total Archive of the German Jews) in Berlin in 1905 marked an archival moment, opening a new era as Jews the world over worked to preserve their past with rapidly-multiplying archive efforts. Certainly, archives were not entirely novel in Jewish life. Jews in Vienna and Worms, to provide just two prominent examples, organized archives in the nineteenth century, and Jews long relied on record keeping in communal self-administration.¹ If the Gesamtarchiv was not the first Jewish archive, it was the first of its kind: It was the first centralized archive for Jewish history, preserving the files of communities in Germany with the most recent “scientific” methods.² It was the first Jewish archival undertaking of the twentieth century, which would witness the proliferation of Jewish archives in Europe, the United States, and Israel/Palestine.

¹ Ludwig August Frankl to *Vertreter der Israelitischen Gemeinde*, 2 Sept. 1841, CAHJP AW/1704; Frankl, *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien*, 2nd ed. (Vienna: Verlag J. P. Sollinger’s Witwe, 1853), v-vi; Samson Rothschild, “Das jüdische Museum in Worms,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 11 Jun. 1925; Rothschild, “Das Archiv der jüdischen Gemeinde von Worms,” *Allgemeinen Zeitung in München*, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 68; Rothschild, *Aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart der israelitische Gemeinde Worms* (1905, 28; 1909, 22). Also see below, pp. 365–367 (Worms archives) and 423 (Vienna). On medieval record-keeping, see De Blossier Tovey, who describes twelfth-century Jewish practices in *Anglia Judaica* (1738), 30–31.

² There have been a handful of essays related to the Gesamtarchiv, but there has not yet been a systematic study based on available archival materials. See the comment of Kerstin von der Krone, Mirjam Thulin, “Wissenschaft in Context: A Research Essay on the Wissenschaft des Judentums,” *LBIYB* 58 (2013): 277, n. 182; Barbara Welker, “Das Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden. Zentralisierungsbemühungen in einem föderalen Staat,” in *Jüdisches Archivwesen*, ed. Frank M. Bischoff, Peter Honigmann (Marburg: Archivschule Marburg, 2007), 39–74; Welker, “Das Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,” in *Tuet auf den Pforten. Die Neue Synagoge 1866–1995* (Berlin: Stiftung Neue Synagoge Berlin–Centrum Judaicum, 1995), 227–234; Elisabeth Brachmann-Teubner, “Geschichte und Aufgaben des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Pommerns,” in *Halte fern dem ganzen Lande jedes Verderben...* *Geschichte und Kultur der Juden in Pommern*, ed. Margaret Heitmann, et al (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1995), 487–498; Peter Honigmann, “Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,” in *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler), II:434–437.

And, as we shall see, the Gesamtarchiv encapsulated the archival explosion of the early years of the last century and the rise of monumental archives for Jewish history following World War II. Partisans and opponents of centralization in Berlin all advocated for archives, and Jews both before and after the Second World War looked to the Gesamtarchiv as a guide. Its model of centralization and comprehensiveness—given voice in its name, the Gesamtarchiv or “total” archive—would be an enduring paradigm for a cohort of Jewish archivists who looked to the Gesamtarchiv for inspiration. And the struggles between archival centralizers in Berlin and “local patriots” in the provinces foreshadowed the conflicts erupting from those who followed its model. More than a chronological point of origin, the Gesamtarchiv lent shape and contour to the history of Jewish archives and shines light upon aporias in the very act of bringing files together.

The Gesamtarchiv was driven by an expansive and ambitious vision. Both Eugen Täubler, the archive’s director from 1905 to 1919, and Jacob Jacobson, who led it from 1920 until its 1943 dissolution by the Nazis, aimed for completeness: It would represent “*all* of the Jewish communities of Germany,” Täubler wrote in 1907, and contain “all historical documents of German Jewry.”³ When Jacobson penned a thirteen-part series on the Gesamtarchiv in 1927, he opened with a sober discussion of archives’ administrative purpose, but quickly waxed poetic, asserting that archives document life “from cradle to grave.” They reflect the entirety of human existence, Jacobson continued, providing respite from forgetfulness or even death; he who is recorded in the archive achieves a sort of eternal life.⁴ He matched such zeal with an imperial

³ Orig. emphasis, “Vom Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,” *Bericht der Grossloge für Deutschland U.O.B.B. VIII* [hereafter cited as *Bericht der Grossloge*], Oct. 1907, 8–9.

⁴ Jacobson used the phrase “vom der Wiege bis zum Grabe” both in the title (“Dokumente ‘vom der Wiege bis zum Grabe,’” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 12 May 1925, 588) and also in the opening to the second installment (“[Archive] geleiten das Leben des Juden verschiedenen Zeitperioden von der Wiege bis zum Grabe...”), “Aus dem Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 2 June 1925, 606. Cf. Jacob Rader Marcus, “Sources of Jewish History,” 11 Oct. 1955, AJA MS-210 22/15. Marcus, who studied with Jacobson while a doctoral student in Berlin, appealed to his students to collect documents in similar terms: “I will be deeply grateful, I will remember you in my will if you do that. And you will achieve immortality for my will will ultimately be deposited here in the archives.”

vision of archival totality, finding its expression in a proverb of Roman law, “Quod non in actis, non est in mundo”—that which is not found in the files, is not in the world.⁵ Michel Foucault spoke of the archive as the sum of all possible knowledge, Thomas Richards wrote of the “field of projected total knowledge” in the context of Victorian England’s attempt to maintain empire through collected knowledge, and recently some have termed Cold War and twenty-first century efforts at accumulating data as “total archives” following a “fantasy of total information.”⁶ The Gesamtarchiv concretized such concepts of the possibility of files as “comprehensive recording devices,” as Cornelia Vismann put it.⁷ With the twin images of the archive as the fullest representation of life in all its aspects, and the archive as the horizon of human knowing, Jacobson gestured at the fundamental possibilities of archival knowledge at the base of the Gesamtarchiv’s concept, activities, and even its name: an aspiration to be a “total archive” of German-Jewish history. Instead of a discursive framework, the product of world empire, or a result of technologies of automated gathering and surveillance, the Gesamtarchiv presented the total archive as institutional realism, a means for the production of total knowledge of the past.

Jacobson’s 1927 claim that archives chronicle life “from cradle to grave” reflected a vision of archival completeness. And from a certain perspective, it also proved prophetic. The Gesamtarchiv aimed to document German Jewry from its earliest settlements and ended up collecting well into the years of the Holocaust. As a result, one might say that the archive recorded German Jewish history “from cradle to grave.” The Gesamtarchiv not only stored the texts of the Jewish past, but also “archived” its own historical context. James Clifford writes of

⁵ Jacobson, “Aus dem Gesamtarchiv,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 12 May 1925, 589.

⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 129; Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive* (London: Verso, 1993), 11; Boris Jordine, Christopher Kelley, “The Total Archive,” *Limn* 6 (2015), available online: <<http://limn.it/preface-the-total-archive/>>; Rebecca Lemov, *Database of Dreams: The Lost Quest to Catalog Humanity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 258.

⁷ Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 10.

ethnographic collecting as a process of self-definition vis-à-vis the other.⁸ The Gesamtarchiv defined German Jewry by collecting historical material, through which it gave form to a communal imaginary and helped thereby to negotiate the complex questions of memory in German Jewish life.⁹ It served the aims of its sponsors, who sought to construct supercommunal infrastructure and express a synthesis of *Deutschtum* and *Judentum*, Germanness and Jewishness. Its environment indelibly imprinted itself upon the Gesamtarchiv, which consequently became a repository of its cultural context, constituting a “total archive” not just of German Jewry’s past but also of its present. This example thereby highlights complexities that cut through the history of Jewish archive-making in the twentieth century, which constituted not just acts of gathering fragments of the past but also of creating their contexts from the forges of the present.

The Gesamtarchiv was called into existence in 1903 when Ezechiel Zivier proposed the formation of an archive of the German Jews. Two years later, it emerged under the aegis of the Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund (Union of German Jewish Communities) and the Unabhängige Orden Bne-Briss (Independent Order of the B’nai B’rith), the German district of the Jewish fraternal order. Under Eugen Täubler, the archive amassed files from hundreds of Jewish communities, soon finding itself limited by space. In April 1910, the archive relocated to the Oranienburgerstraße offices of the Berlin Jewish community.¹⁰ They also encountered resistance from those who, like Moïse Ginsburger’s Société pour l’histoire des Israélites d’Alsace et de Lorraine, opposed centralization in Berlin. On the one hand, such tensions reflected a general competition between Jews who wanted to demonstrate the dominance of

⁸ James Clifford, “Objects and Selves,” in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, ed. George W. Stocking, Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 237.

⁹ On the wide landscape of German Jewish communal memory in the *fin de siècle*, see Jacques Ehrenfreund, *Mémoire juive et nationalité allemande. Les juifs berlinois à la Belle Époque* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2000).

¹⁰ On its wider geographic and institutional context, see Maren Krüger and Regina Rahmlow, “Das Leben im Umfeld der Neuen Synagoge: Jüdische Einrichtungen 1826–1943,” in *Tuet auf den Pforten*, 165–217.

Berlin and those who wanted local control, but on the other, it turns out that the Gesamtarchiv's opponents were responding to the same archival impulses that drove the Gesamtarchiv: Their hopes to create their own local archives reflected the expansiveness of the archival spirit to which we will turn in the next chapter. After Täubler's 1919 departure to direct the Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, Jacob Jacobson led the archive through the financial hardships of the Weimar years. Under the Nazis the archive found itself part of a bizarre renaissance of Jewish culture. Increasingly, the Nazis took control of the archive and integrated it into the Reichssippenamt, the department of racial research. In May 1943, the Geheimes Staatsarchiv (Privy State Archives) confiscated the archive and Jacobson was deported to Theresienstadt.

This chapter examines the history and significance of the Gesamtarchiv as a bearer of *Leitmotive* in the history of Jewish archives in the twentieth century. From 1903 to 1943, the Gesamtarchiv set the standard for Jewish archival activity. Even after it ceased to exist, the Berlin archive presented Jewish scholars with a model of what a professional archive should be. The modern Jewish archive would be “total” or comprehensive (*gesamt*). The modern Jewish archive would be centralized, and its seat held great symbolic value. Being in Berlin—as opposed to Frankfurt am Main, to provide one example, whose Jewish community also offered to host the collection—represented that city's place as the epicenter of German Jewry, just as gathering archives in Jerusalem, New York City, or Cincinnati reflected specific visions of the Jewish past and future. The modern Jewish archive would seek to educate laypeople about the importance of preserving historical material. But once everyone wants an archive of their own, the “complete” archive becomes ever more difficult to achieve. Consequently, the Gesamtarchiv met with opposition due to the fundamental nature of centralized collecting. This chapter will conclude by considering how the Gesamtarchiv's concept was translated and transformed in new

environments. As Jewish archivists sought to duplicate this model—both from within, for example Täubler’s hope that the Gesamtarchiv would be replicated in other countries, and without, as was the case in Vienna and Jerusalem—the inner contradictions of the Gesamtarchiv and its vision of the “total archive,” reflective of the cultural and political context of twentieth-century German Jewry, became fundamental to the project of Jewish archiving.

“Every Great People Has an Archive”

In the spring of 1903, Ezechiel Zivier appealed to the Lessing Lodge of the B’nai B’rith in Breslau to create what he termed an “Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” or General Archive of the German Jews.¹¹ “Every great people has an archive of its antiquities,” he began, “with which it provides for historical, legal, cultural, social and other research.”¹² Zivier, as archivist for the duchy of Pleß (Pszczyna), was one in a small cohort of Jews serving in German state and local archives.¹³ He explained that German Jews must protect their legacy and promote the ideal of historical preservation, and argued that in an age of emancipation, Jews had failed to properly respect their past: In the absence of a need to hold physical documents for communal and personal protection, as had long been the case with the charters and Privilegia of the Middle

¹¹ Barbara Kalinowska-Wójcik, “Ezechiel Zivier: życie i działalności archiwisty i historyka na Górnym Śląsku na przełomie XIX i XX wieku,” *Szkice archiwalno-historyczne* 4 (2008): 37–47; Kalinowska-Wójcik, *Między Wschodem i Zachodem: Ezechiel Zivier (1868–1925), Historyk i Archiwista* (Kattowitz: 2015); Gotthold Rhode, “Jüdische Historiker als Geschichtsschreiber Ostmitteleuropa: Joseph Caro, Adolf Warschauer, Ezechiel Zivier,” in *Juden in Ostmitteleuropa von der Emanzipation bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Marburg: J. G. Herder-Institut, 1989), 99–114.

¹² “Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Dec. 1903, 8; Gustav Karpeles, “Ein Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *AZdJ*, 8 Jan. 1904. Also see Louis Maretzki, *Geschichte des Ordens Bnei Briss in Deutschland, 1882–1907* (Berlin: Max Cohn, 1910), 162–164, which prints what appears to be Zivier’s speech.

¹³ Pleß is now Pszczyna in southwestern Poland, about 200 kilometers southeast of Breslau, where Zivier resided at the time. Almost immediately after Zivier completed his dissertation on the eleventh-century Church Slavonic manuscript Codex Suprasliensis at the University of Breslau in 1892 (Zivier, *Studien über den Codex Suprasliensis*, July 1892), Zivier began serving the Duchy of Pleß on a part-time basis, primarily translating documents and conducting research on mining and other industrial activities in the region. In April 1903, shortly after Zivier proposed the formation of his “Allgemeines Archiv,” he was hired on a full-time basis and moved with his family to Pleß. See Kalinowska-Wójcik, “Ezechiel Zivier,” 37–41. Besides Zivier, other notable Jewish figures who served in German and especially Prussian archives include Adolf Warschauer (1855–1930) and later Alex Bein (1903–1988). Other German archival figures with a Jewish background include Hans Goldschmidt and Ernst Posner.

Ages, Jews had let their archives fall to ruin. “So it has come [to pass],” he lamented, “that the Jews have kept no written documents generated of their active and passive existence through the passage of time.”¹⁴ He hoped to awaken the “archival sense” in the Jews, who would save material for historical and genealogical study, to bring the importance of archives to the attention of Jewish leaders. Eugen Täubler later expanded on this pedagogical impulse in his introduction to the inaugural issue of the *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden* (1908), explaining the “propagandistic” aim “to awaken the archival interests” of communal leaders.¹⁵ Zivier’s proposal resonated with the *fin de siècle* archival moment. Like Simon Dubnow and David Kaufmann, Zivier deplored what he perceived as the decaying state of Jewish archival material.¹⁶ As we have seen, this perception of the sad state of Jewish archives reflected ideological and professionalizing tendencies. But whereas Kaufmann and Dubnow wanted to collect archives for their own research, Zivier hoped to remedy the situation by creating a professionally managed institution.

Zivier looked for inspiration to the archive of the Verein für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen (Society for the History of the Germans in Bohemia), established in Prague in 1861.¹⁷ Like so many other local and regional historical societies of the second half of the nineteenth century, the Verein für Geschichte hoped to develop historical consciousness and collect antiquities. When founded, the Prague society aimed to create an archive, an “antiquarium,” and a library, and published historical articles in their *Mitteilungen*.¹⁸ Zivier presented the Prague archive as a precedent both in purpose and form: Like the Prague archive, the German Jewish

¹⁴ “Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Dec. 1903, 8.

¹⁵ Täubler, “Zur Einführung,” *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 1 (1908): 8.

¹⁶ See ch. 1, 74–76.

¹⁷ The Prague archive was mentioned in all three of Zivier’s announcements: “Ein allgemeines Archiv der Juden Deutschlands,” *Bericht der Grossloge für Deutschland*, Mar. 1903, 37; *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Dec. 1903, 9; Gustav Karpeles, “Ein allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *AZdJ*, 8 Jan. 1904, 2.

¹⁸ “Statuten des Vereines für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen,” *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen* 1 (1862): 13.

archive would similarly require an “official trained in archives” (*archivalisch gebildeter Beamter*). And Zivier’s archive was not to be an end in itself, but a means towards the spread of a broader historical consciousness of the German Jews and a particular historical framing that stressed the deep ties between Germanness and Jewishness, just as the Prague archive did not collect for any intrinsic value but as a part of a broader historical program.¹⁹

Both projects stressed their founding groups’ affiliation with German cultural interests with a particularly eastward gaze. The Prague society sought to demonstrate the long history of ethnic German settlement in eastern Europe. The Berlin archive, similarly, was to be a monument to the Jews’ historical connection with Germany, and a large part of its collecting efforts would be in the east, reflecting both the region from which most of its leaders hailed as well as their particular cultural orientation; Zivier and Adolf Warschauer, another longtime board member, served as archivists in Germany’s Polish regions and were associated with what Warschauer termed “German cultural work in the East.”²⁰ In a 1907 speech advocating for the Gesamtarchiv, Zivier argued that Jews first settled in central Europe alongside the early Germans.²¹ Connecting the Jews to the *Völkerwanderung*, he tied the Jews to an important myth of German ethnic origins and provided a historical argument for bonds between Germanness and Jewishness. Zivier’s use of the historical society of the *Germans* in Bohemia as a model further indicates this outlook. Of note, both initiatives represented groups that were increasingly marginalized. The Prague archive was created in an era of rising Czech nationalism, and immediately followed the 1861 elections in which the Prague city council was dominated by Czechs; similarly, the Gesamtarchiv was the

¹⁹ Gustav Karpeles, “Ein allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *AZdJ*, 8 Jan. 1904, 2.

²⁰ Cf. Warschauer, *Deutsche Kulturarbeit in der Ostmark: Erinnerungen aus vier Jahrzehnten* (Berlin: Reimar Hobbing, 1926), and Kalinowska-Wójcik, *Miedzy Wschodem i Zachodem*, 25–30, discussing Zivier’s background.

²¹ See Zivier, *Vortrag des Fürstl. Archivars Dr. Zivier-Pleß gehalten auf der Hauptversammlung in Königshütte-O.S. am 27. Oktober 1907* (Königshütte, Oberschlesien: R. Giebler, 1907).

product of a group asserting its identity when it was in many respects on the defensive.²²

It was no mistake that the Berlin archive was called the “Gesamtarchiv der *deutschen Juden*” or, in Zivier’s initial formulation, the “Allgemeines Archiv der *deutschen Juden*” (the archive of the German Jews), as opposed to the name imposed by the Nazis, the “Gesamtarchiv der *Juden in Deutschland*” (the archive of the Jews in Germany).²³ The archive was created by Jewish public personalities and scholars who closely identified with the cultural symbiosis and synthesis of *Deutschtum und Judentum*, of Germanness and Jewishness, and with the project of the integration of Jews into German society and German history. When the Gemeindebund formed the Historischen Commission zur Erforschung der Geschichte der deutschen Juden in 1885, its leaders repeatedly emphasized that its work in Jewish history was “a branch of general German history,” establishing a board with both Jews and non-Jews, and declaring that it would use the latest professional methods of modern historical study.²⁴ Two decades later, the Gesamtarchiv’s leaders again stressed the unity of German and Jewish history. Ezechiel Zivier’s 1892 dissertation on a Slavonic manuscript framed a historical outlook that focused on cultural ties between Jews and Gentiles, as he argued for the Hebrew origins of Polish words.²⁵ Eugen Täubler repeatedly stated that the history of the German Jews should be placed in the framework of German history as a whole—as he termed it, the “*Gesamtgeschichte*”—just as much as it is part of the “general

²² Gary Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861–1914* (Purdue University Press, 2006).

²³ According to Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, the last use of the term “Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden” was in Jacobson’s “Jüdische Friedhöfe in der Mark” (*Gemeindeblatt der Jüdischen Gemeinde zu Berlin*, 30 Jun. 1935). However, in Nov. 1935 he wrote of the Gesamtarchiv “der deutschen Juden” in the badly-censored “50 [sic] Jahre Gesamtarchiv” (*Ibid.*, 3 Nov. 1935). Ismar Freund wrote of the “Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden” in a 4 Jan. 1937 letter to the *Großen Rat des Preußischen Landesverbandes* (CAHJP P2/414). See Jersch-Wenzel and Thomas Jersch, “Jacob Jacobson—Deutscher Jude und Archivar (1888–1968),” in *Archive und Gedächtnis*, ed. Friedrich Beck, et al (Potsdam: 2005), 554, n. 33.

²⁴ The board consisted of Otto Stobbe, Wilhelm Wattenbath, Julius Weizsäcker, Harry Breslau, Ludwig Geiger, Zacharias Bärwald, Samuel Kristeller, Heymann Steinthal, and Moritz Lazarus, notably excluding Heinrich Graetz. See Prof. H. Breslau, “Historische Commission für Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland,” Apr. 1887, CAHJP M1/24; letter to Prof. Lazarus, 4 Oct. 1885, CAHJP M1/23; DIGB Circular, 2 Oct. 1885, CAHJP M1/24.

²⁵ Zivier, *Studien über den Codex Suprasliensis*, 28.

Jewish history.”²⁶ Georg Herlitz, Täubler’s assistant, noted in his memoirs tenets he had learned from his mentor: that the history of the Jews in the Diaspora emerged from the same factors and forces as history in general, like politics, rights, administration, economics, and spiritual life; and that the history of the Jews was a part of the history of the peoples among whom they dwell. Täubler believed the history of the Jews must be written on the basis of the history of the regions in which they dwelt.²⁷ In an October 1912 lecture, Täubler again explained the necessity to view Jewish history “from the viewpoint of general scientific history.”²⁸ Consequently, Täubler assumed that the state was the organizing principle of world history, evidenced in a 1920 plan for the creation of a “Gesamtarchiv” for each country of Jewish settlement.²⁹ Martin Philippson, the archive’s chair and Gemeindebund leader, similarly declared the archive’s purpose to express the connection between Jews and the German body politic (*Volkskörper*).³⁰

“Every great people has an archive,” Zivier stressed in his 1903 proposal. This catchphrase already indicated internal tensions. On one hand, the Gesamtarchiv was intended to signal integration—that the Jews, like all other peoples, would have an archive. On the other hand, it was an instrument for self-definition, asserting that the Jews were a people, or at least a distinctive minority, deserving of their own archival institution. The Gesamtarchiv leaders’ historical approach presented a similar paradox, as they insisted that Jewish history was a part of “general history” while creating a *separate* Jewish archive. Such dissonances gesture at how the project

²⁶ Eugen Täubler, “Zur Einführung,” 2; “Rede des Dr. E. Täubler,” *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1911–12): 75; and “Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden,” *Bericht der Grossloge*, Oct. 1908, 119–121.

²⁷ Herlitz, *Mein Weg nach Jerusalem: Erinnerungen eines Zionistischen Beamter* (Jerusalem: Verlag Rubin Mass, 1964), 87.

²⁸ Eugen Täubler, “Jüdische Geschichte und allgemeine Geschichtswissenschaft,” 27 Oct. 1912, CAHJP P28/11/60; also published as “Antrittsvorlesung von Dr. Eugen Täubler 27. Oktober 1912,” *Einunddreissigster Bericht der Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin* (Berlin: H. Itzowski, 1913), 47–56.

²⁹ Eugen Täubler, “Das Forschungs-Institut für die Wissenschaft des Judentums: Organisation und Arbeitsplan,” in *Aufsätze zur Problematik jüdischer Geschichtsschreibung*, 32–43.

³⁰ “Rede des Professor Dr. M. Philippson,” *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1911–1912): 63.

was rife with complications in its very conception.

Zivier's proposal was widely circulated. It appeared in the newsletters of the German B'nai B'rith and the Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund, as well as the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*. In December 1903, the B'nai B'rith and Gemeindebund officially came together to support the project.³¹ At the first meeting of its board of directors (Kuratorium), on September 27, 1904, they directed Zivier to investigate the state of Jewish archives in Germany.³² From October 30 to December 1, 1904, Zivier conducted his "Archivalische Informationsreise" (archival information trip), visiting twenty communities in southern Germany over the course of thirty-three days.³³ His was the first of a series of expeditions that he and other Gesamtarchiv representatives conducted to survey communities and advocate on the archive's behalf.³⁴ By the time Eugen Täubler—then a twenty-six year old scholar of antiquity, newly minted with his doctorate on Josephus—was selected to be the archive's director in 1905, it had already received files from twenty Jewish communities across Germany.³⁵ The archive was already on its way towards fulfilling its goal, as Täubler put it in his initial working plan for the archive: "initially, the collection, protection, and methodical organization [*Repertorisierung*], for scientific and practical purposes, of all worthy original sources and files of Jewish communities, corporations, organizations, and foundations within the present political borders of Germany."³⁶

³¹ "97. Sitzung des General-Comités," *Bericht der Grossloge*, Nov. 1903, 109; "Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden," *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Dec. 1903, 8.

³² "Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden," *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Dec. 1904, 13; see also Zivier, *Eine Archivalische Informationsreise* (Pressburg: Adolf Alkalay, 1905), 3–5.

³³ Zivier, *Eine Archivalische Informationsreise*, 5; Marezki, *Geschichte des Ordens Bnei Briss*, 164, claims Zivier's trip took place in Nov. and Dec. 1905, which is unlikely as his report appeared in the April 1905 edition of *MGWJ*, 209–254.

³⁴ See Zivier, *Königshütte*; CAHJP M5/12 (correspondence, Aron Heppner); and Jacobson's reports, CAHJP M5.

³⁵ Eugen Täubler to *Kuratorium*, 6 Mar. 1906, CJ, 1. 75 C Ge 2, S. 0162.

³⁶ Eugen Täubler, "Arbeitsplan Nr. 1," CAHJP M5/1, UB Basel NL 76 B/2.

The Gesamtarchiv Between Past and Present

The Prague society and the German-Jewish archive were both established with a program of instrumentalized history. Constantin Höfler, writing of the Verein für Geschichte in 1862, stressed that “the *clarification of the present* [is] the practical goal of history.”³⁷ Zivier, too, insisted that his planned archive was not solely scholarly, but would serve to educate the public.³⁸ Eugen Täubler certainly held a presentist outlook, placing the study of Jewish history within a broader matrix of intellectual and communal endeavors.³⁹ By contrast, Georg Herlitz, later the founding director of the Zionist Central Archives, reflected in his memoirs:

The “Gesamtarchiv” was a purely scientific institute, whose work was not tied to the day, never forced to work with great speed, under the pressure of immediate requirements. Completely different in the Zionist central office in Berlin! It was obviously a political office, part of an organism, which created the Jewish world politics.⁴⁰

Herlitz worked as an assistant at the Gesamtarchiv for nearly five years, from 1910 until he was drafted into the German army in the fall of 1915. But his assessment of the Gesamtarchiv was inaccurate. Like the Prague archive on which it was modeled, the Gesamtarchiv was not a “purely scientific institute.” Instead, it was the result of and reflected a continued negotiation of identity. The Gesamtarchiv was closely bound up in the political and communal discourse of German Jewry and to the outlook and interests of the institutions that jointly established it, the Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund and the Unabhängige Orden Bne-Briss.

In practical terms, the Gemeindebund supported the Gesamtarchiv because it served an

³⁷ Orig. emphasis; Höfler, “Festrede,” *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen* 1 (1862): 5–12.

³⁸ Karpeles, “Ein allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *AZdJ*, 8 Jan. 1904.

³⁹ Täubler once explained that his interest in Jewish history developed from a sense that he did not understand the position of Jewish life in the modern world (“Project for the creation of a ‘Research Institute of Jewish History’ in America,” UB Basel NL 76 B/2 #12), which brings to mind a statement by his wife, Selma Stern-Täubler: “[German history] did not give me full satisfaction and I was interested in Jewish religious and political problems, [so] I began to study the history of my people hoping to find a way to understand his [sic] fate, thereby to understand myself.” (Selma Stern-Täubler to Simon Federbusch, 18 April 1957, UB Basel NL 120 F/14).

⁴⁰ Herlitz, *Mein Weg nach Jerusalem*, 118.

administrative purpose of the “discovery of cases of precedent in communal administration” and the unification of German Jewry in general.⁴¹ As a result, one should not see the Gesamtarchiv as a purely intellectual project created in a political and cultural vacuum. Instead, it was intended to further the Gemeindebund’s vision of a centralized German Jewish community. The Gemeindebund and B’nai B’rith not only provided the Gesamtarchiv with funding but also an institutional and cultural context that bring forward the stimuli that shaped the Gesamtarchiv, its mission, and place in the communal landscape of early twentieth century German Jewry.

The B’nai B’rith was founded in New York in 1843 by the German-Jewish immigrant Henry Jones (Heinrich Jonas) as a fraternal order along the lines of the Freemasons and Odd-Fellows Lodges. It espoused universal brotherhood, charity, and humanitarian progress, but limited membership to Jews. Consequently, the fraternity served cultural cross-purposes. In America, the B’nai B’rith served as a forum for the merging of Americanism and Judaism, but it was based on the affirmation of distinctive Jewishness via the very existence of a separate Jewish fraternity.⁴² The German district of the B’nai B’rith order, established in 1882 as the “Grossloge” or Great Lodge, was also aimed at the synthesis of Germanness and Jewishness.⁴³ The German lodges’ names reflected this outlook, including the likes of the Humboldt-Loge in Neisse, Kant-Loge in Königsberg, and Lessing-Loge in Breslau.⁴⁴ And yet the German B’nai B’rith also sought to

⁴¹ “Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden,” *Bericht der Grossloge*, Oct. 1908, 119–121.

⁴² Cornelia Wilhelm, *The Independent Orders of B’nai B’rith and True Sisters: Pioneers of a New Jewish Identity, 1843–1914* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011). Alfred Goldschmidt, writing in 1923, argued the group was not founded due to the exclusion of Jews from the Freemasons, but instead as a kind of *Landsmannschaft* for German Jewish immigrants. (*Der deutsche Distrikt des Ordens Bne Briss U.O.B.B.* Berlin: Verlag der Großloge, 1923, 14.)

⁴³ They often published articles on cultural issues, such as Gustav Karpeles, “Was ist uns Herder?” *Beilage zum Bericht des Grossloge* 14, no. 1 (Jan. 1904): 1–6. B’nai B’rith activities often had nods to patriotism, such as toasts to the Kaiser (Eugen Beer, “Bericht über die Installation der Saar-Loge,” *Bericht der Grossloge*, Jan. 1903, 9–10).

⁴⁴ Of the 43 lodges in 1903, many were named for ideas and figures that represented their ideals: *Bildung* and *Aufklärung* (Humboldt-Loge in Neisse, Kant-Loge in Königsberg), Germanness (Germania-Loge in Halle, Allemania-Loge in Stettin, Kaiser-Friedrich-Loge in Bremen), universalism and truth (Humanitas-Loge in Gleiwitz, Veritas-Loge in Hindenberg, Freiheit-Loge in Oppeln, Toleranz-Loge in Landsberg), integration (Lessing-Loge in Breslau, Mendelssohn-Loge in

spread *Jewish* knowledge.⁴⁵ The B'nai B'rith's cultural balancing act between integration and distinctive Jewishness also embodied the Gesamtarchiv, whose leaders declared the unity of German and Jewish history but formed a distinctive Jewish archive.

Like the B'nai B'rith, the Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund was founded with a spirit of optimism. Emil Lehmann's 1869 book *Höre Israel* (Hear O Israel), which called for a synod of Jewish community leaders and led to the founding of the Gemeindebund, opened with a declaration of *Shehehianu*, proclaiming an intense hope for the standing of Jews in Germany in the age of emancipation.⁴⁶ The circular letter announcing the formation of the Gemeindebund declared, in essence, that the period of persecution had come to a close.⁴⁷ That June, Moritz Kohner called an "Israelitische Synode" in Leipzig, creating a union of Jewish communities along the lines of the Alliance Israélite Universelle or the British Board of Deputies.⁴⁸ The Gemeindebund was initially concerned with practical matters of communal administration, such as the creation of a pension system for communal professionals. Its aim, articulated in 1872, was to be an umbrella for German Jewish communities, to assist in administration, education, and

Magdeburg), as well as Jewishness (Hillel-Loge in Hildesheim, Sinai-Loge in Cassel, Maimonides-Loge in Nuremberg). Some lodges were named for intellectual greats of German Jewry like Hermann Cohen (Frankfurt am Main), Heinrich Graetz (Breslau), and Leopold Zunz (Braunschweig). See Andreas Reinke, "Ethnic Solidarity and National Allegiance: B'nai B'rith in Germany," *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* I (2002): 321–342. For a full list of the lodges, see Goldschmidt, 79–81, and statistical data, "Jahresbericht des Sekretärs der Grossloge" in *Bericht der Grossloge*.

⁴⁵ See Reinke, 325, which quotes the 1898 report of Louis Maretzki, then president of the German B'nai B'rith: "It is the task of our Order to revive the awareness of the history of our people, to awaken the forgotten songs of our poets and to spread the knowledge of past great deeds. A people that cherishes and preserves its history will cleave to its fellows, remain loyal to its faith and rise up on the great ladder of human progress." On the distinctive nature of the B'nai B'rith in Central Europe in comparison to America, see Kateřina Čapková, "Jewish Elites in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. The B'nai B'rith Order in Central Europe," *Judaica Bohemia* 36 (2000): 119–142.

⁴⁶ Emil Lehmann, *Höre Israel. Aufruf an die deutschen Glaubensgenossen* (Dresden: L. Wolf, 1869).

⁴⁷ "An die deutsch-israelitischen Religionsgemeinden," 1869, CAHJP M1/2; also see Wilhelm Neumann, "Zum 50jährigen Jubiläum des Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebundes," *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 26 June 1919, which begins with a quote from Schiller and a statement of the "Leitmotif" of the Gemeindebund: "Die Ghettomauern sind gefallen, wir sind gleichberechtigte Bürger eines freien Vaterlandes, wir wollen alle Pflichten mit den neu gewonnenen Rechten freudig übernehmen zum Wohle unseres Volkes, des deutschen Volkes, von dem wir in nichts als in unserem Glauben, unserm althehrwürdigen, schlackenreinen Glauben, unterschieden sind!"

⁴⁸ "Circular," 22 Apr. 1869, CAHJP P2/197; "An die deutsch-israelitischen Religionsgemeinden," CAHJP M1/2.

support for the needy.⁴⁹ A decade later, the Gemeindebund added the “broadening of correct knowledge on the essence and history of Judaism” to its educational activities.⁵⁰ Under this framework, in 1885 it founded the Historische Commission zur Erforschung der Geschichte der deutschen Juden (Historical Commission for the Study of the History of the German Jews) to publish historical material and articles.⁵¹ In 1899 its added “the collection and preparation of statistical material” on the communities to its objectives, and by 1914 the very first item on this list of goals was the collection of the experiences of Jewish community administration.⁵² The Gesamtarchiv, therefore, fit into the Gemeindebund’s expanding mission for furthering Jewish education and centralizing communal administration. In 1904, the Gemeindebund declared that the new archive would serve as a “public source” for Jewish communal administration, and Martin Philippon declared in 1910 that the archive was intended “to create a consistency of the practicalities of administration in the communities through the evidence of cases of precedent.”⁵³ In this way, the Gesamtarchiv was created to serve as one element of the super-communal infrastructure that Gemeindebund sought to establish for German Jewry.

The Gemeindebund and B’nai Brith were not simply the founders and funders of the Gesamtarchiv. These institutions played an active role in the archive’s administration, and the archive’s leaders were prominent members of these two prominent German Jewish organizations.

⁴⁹ “Statuten des Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebunds festgestellt vom constituirenden Gemeindegtag,” 14 Apr. 1872, CAHJP M1/1a.

⁵⁰ “Revidirte Statuten des Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebundes angenommen durch den außerordentlichen Gemeindegtag zu Berlin am 21. Februar 1882,” CAHJP M1/1c.

⁵¹ “Neue Satzungen des Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebundes bestätigt durch Allerhöchsten Erlaß vom 13. Februar 1899,” CAHJP M1/1d.

⁵² “Was ist, will und leistet der Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund?” (1914), CAHJP P2/477.

⁵³ “Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, May 1904, 2; *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1912): 59. In 1909, Martin Philippon declared: “Es [das Gesamtarchiv] soll diese Einrichtung dazu dienen, nicht nur dem Historiker und Kulturhistoriker, den Juristen und anderen wissenschaftlichen Persönlichkeiten Material zu bieten, sondern es soll auch dazu dienen, daß die jüdischen Gemeinden in zweifelhaften Fällen Präzedenzen und Anleitungen finden können.” (Emphasis added; *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, 74, Sept. 1909, 7.)

This included Gesamtarchiv board members such as Martin Philippon, Berthold Timendorfer, head of the German B'nai B'rith, and the German Jewish historian Ismar Elbogen, not to mention Eugen Täubler and his assistants Georg Herlitz and Jacob Jacobson (later director of the Gesamtarchiv). In addition, the Gemeindebund and B'nai Brith represented forces underlying the activities and perspectives of the first modern Jewish archive, which shaped the archive as it strove to find its own path. The B'nai B'rith, on the one hand, presented a sense of a German cultural identity not bounded by a state (indeed, it was a product of the German-Jewish diaspora) alongside a universalistic perspective. On the other hand, the Gemeindebund quickly aligned itself with the German state and was interested in issues that concerned the administration and well-being of the Jewish community. These contours of German-Jewish life, potentially at odds with one another, signal the conflicted nature of the Gesamtarchiv, which struggled to define the boundaries of German-Jewishness and to navigate the relations between Jewish history and “general history.”

Becoming the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden

During his tenure as director of the Gesamtarchiv from 1905 to 1919, Eugen Täubler repeatedly explained that the archive's name carried great weight. In 1909, he called on communities to send to the archive their historical files “and thus to contribute to providing substance to the name ‘Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,’ which still embodies more program than fact.”⁵⁴ At the December 1910 dedication of the Gesamtarchiv's offices, Täubler again stressed the name's significance. “The name of the archive designates the end goal [lit. *das Ende*], which will become a Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,” he explained. “In another sense, the name [represents] the beginning, for in the beginning there was nothing but the Word.” The archive, he continued, had not been established on the basis of a collection but a program. Its

⁵⁴ *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 1 (1909): 8.

new, more spacious offices, he hoped, would enable the archive to achieve fully the collection of a total archive of the German Jews, so that its programmatic aspirations would be realized.⁵⁵

We should recall that when Zivier called for an archive of the German Jews in 1903, he had termed it the “Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” or the General Archive of the German Jews. It would be, in Zivier’s vision, “one archive for the entire Reich,” which would collect files that Jewish communities no longer needed for day-to-day administration.⁵⁶ Those who wished to retain their files, he explained, could submit a detailed list of their materials. Zivier was also ambivalent about the archive’s seat; he suggested Breslau, where he was based, as well as Frankfurt am Main and Berlin as possibilities. But as the archive moved from conception to implementation, Zivier’s vision was transposed into a sharper key. The archive’s changing name, first to the “Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden”⁵⁷ (perhaps translatable as the “collected archive” of the German Jews) and then to the more modern spelling “Gesamtarchiv” in May 1904,⁵⁸ was not merely a stylistic matter. It reflected the archive’s transformation from a broadly devised central archive to a “total” archive or “*Gesamtarchiv*.”

Zivier’s early activism for the archive, his 1904 archival expedition, collecting activities, and longstanding involvement on the archive’s board of directors led Ismar Elbogen to call him the Gesamtarchiv’s “spiritual father.”⁵⁹ But other than presenting the initial proposal for the archive, Zivier was not a central figure in the archive’s development. The Gesamtarchiv’s path

⁵⁵ “Rede des Dr. Täubler,” *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1912): 64–65.

⁵⁶ Emphasis in original; Zivier, “Ein allgemeines Archiv der Juden Deutschlands,” *Bericht der Grossloge*, Mar. 1903, 36–38; “Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Dec. 1903, 9; Karpeles, “Ein allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *AZdJ*, 8 Jan. 1904.

⁵⁷ “Aus dem Bureau des Grossloge,” *Bericht der Grossloge*, Mar. 1904, 43–44.

⁵⁸ *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, May 1904; when Karpeles published Zivier’s proposal, it talked of the “planned Gesamtarchiv” but the article was still titled “Ein allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden” (*AZdJ*, 8 Jan. 1904, 1).

⁵⁹ See Ezechiel Zivier, “Vortrag des Fürstl. Archivar Dr. Zivier,” and Ismar Elbogen, “Ezechiel Zivier, geb. 22.9.1868, gest. 22.8.1925,” *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden* 6 (1926): 113–114; Jacob Jacobson, “Zum Gedächtnis von Dr. Ezechiel Zivier (Pleß),” *C.V.-Zeitung*, 4 Sept. 1925, 600.

and purpose were primarily determined by leaders in Berlin like Eugen Täubler and Martin Philippon. Deeply involved in the day-to-day activities of the archive, they wielded more influence than collectors in the field. Central management in Berlin, where board meetings often convened without members from other cities, led to feelings of exclusion. In 1920, the Breslau historian and Gesamtarchiv board member Markus Brann wrote angrily that Philippon and the board in Berlin made decisions without including those outside the capital. Apparently Brann only heard that Jacob Jacobson had been selected as Täubler's successor as the archive's director from second-hand sources. "The Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden is a scientific institution that was called to life for the entirety (*Gesamtheit*) of German Jewry," he complained.⁶⁰ Here, Brann harked back to the Gesamtarchiv's name to argue that the archive should represent all German Jews—and take into account more than just the views of those board members living in Berlin.

Brann's evocation of the archive's name calls forth competing meanings of the "gesamt" archive, which existed along the spectrum of comprehensiveness, inclusive togetherness, and coercive totality—all tied to the Gesamtarchiv's all-encompassing vision of the total archive, the Gemeindebund's plan for the creation of a "Gesamtorganisation," and the emerging conception of the comprehensive collection in archival science. In Brann's view, the Gesamtarchiv should act in the interests of German Jewry at large rather than a single subgroup. Further, he saw the exclusion of non-Berlin board members as a betrayal of German Jewish unity.⁶¹ On the other side, Täubler had long argued that the archive was "gesamt" not due to its representation of general interests or a democratic ideal of inclusiveness, but because it would contain the files of

⁶⁰ Markus Brann to *Kuratorium des Gesamtarchivs*, 16 May 1920, NLI ARC Ms. Var. 308 Nr. 01–98.

⁶¹ Ismar Elbogen, another board member, wrote of the "Gesamtorganismus" of Jewry as a whole, referencing an idea of Jewish peoplehood based on worldwide inclusiveness (though, he argued, with German Jewry as its "beating heart"). Elbogen, "Die Juden Deutschlands in der jüdischen Kulturgeschichte," *Bericht der Grossloge*, Oct. 1921, 88–92: "Deutschland ist durch Moses Mendelssohn die Herzkammer des Judentums geworden, die dem Gesamtorganismus das Blut und die Lebenskraft zuführt." (92) Moïse Ginsburger's *Straßburger Israelitische Wochenschrift* also looked to the "gesamten Interessen des Judentums," referring to those things of interest to all Jews.

all the Jewish communities in Germany. In 1907, Täubler emphasized the vision to “complete ... a *Gesamtarchiv* of all the Jewish communities of Germany.”⁶² Consequently the concept can also be construed as somewhat imperial; as we shall see, the *Gesamtarchiv* repeatedly sought to undermine regional and local archive projects. In reality, the inclusiveness of the archive as an idea masked the forced inclusion of groups in a constructed community of German Jewry.

This new concept of the *Gesamtarchiv* represented an intensification of Zivier’s initial vision of centralization. A 1904 *Gemeindebund* pamphlet explained that the “Allgemeines Archiv” was to be a collection of “the most important public and private documents of the communities.”⁶³ But rather than collecting the “most important” material, *Gesamtarchiv* leaders now emphasized the importance of collecting *all* files. As Täubler explained in a 1906 report, their ideal was “that all historical documents of German Jewry be unified in a single location.”⁶⁴ Täubler also hoped that their network of collectors would not only gather historical archives but also “die gesamte lokalgeschichtliche Literatur (incl. Zeitungen),” the collected local historical literature; “gesamt” here indicated something approaching comprehensiveness and holism.⁶⁵

A series of scholars in America and Israel/Palestine translated “*Gesamtarchiv*” as “general archive” or “arkhiyon kelali” in Hebrew.⁶⁶ However, in light of the decision the *Gesamtarchiv*’s founders not to use the term “allgemeines,” it must not be confused with a “general archive.”

⁶² Orig. emphasis; “Vom *Gesamtarchiv* der deutschen Juden,” *Bericht der Grossloge*, Oct. 1907, 98–99.

⁶³ “Was ist, will und leistet der Deutsch-Israelitische *Gemeindebund*?,” 1904, 8.

⁶⁴ “Mitteilung über das *Gesamtarchiv* der deutschen Juden,” *MGWJ*, 3rd ser., 14 (1906): 246–247.

⁶⁵ “*Gesamtarchiv*: Arbeitsplan Nr. 1,” 20 Oct. 1906, CAHJP M5/1, UB Basel NL 76 B/2 #1.

⁶⁶ See Alexander Marx, “Societies for the Promotion of the Study of Jewish History,” *PAJHS* 20 (1911): 5; Georg Herlitz to Judah Magnes, 1 Feb. 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.2; Josef Meisl to Ismar Freund, 8 Dec. 1946, CAHJP P2/477; Yitshak Baer, “Eugen Täubler,” *Zion* 19, no. 1–2 (1954): 71; Alex Bein, “The State of Jewish Archives in Israel and Abroad,” 27 Jul. 1961, CZA P64/163a; Jacob Rader Marcus, Biographical Sketch, AJA Jacob Rader Marcus Nearprint File. Recent scholars have also preferred to translate it as a “general” or “central” archive. See Nils Roemer, “Between the Provinces and the City: Mapping German-Jewish Memories,” *LBIYB* 51 (2006): 68; Silvia Schenkolwski-Kroll, “Jewish Archives and Archival Documents: Israel and the Diaspora,” *Archival Science* 16 (2016): 312.

Moreover, “general” does not provide the linguistic latitude to fully comprehend the name’s meaning. Closest, perhaps, is Täubler’s use of the Russian term *obshchiĭ* in an entry on the Gesamtarchiv in the 1906 *Evreĭskaĭa entsiklopedĭia*, meaning not just “general” but also common or communal (reflecting the archive’s focus on communal files) as well as “total.”⁶⁷ With this in mind, a proper translation should be as a “total archive,” along the lines of the “Gesamtkunstwerk” or total work of art.⁶⁸ Here, the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden parted from other archives that used the term, which generally applied to local and regional “Gesamtarchive” like in Dessau, Weimar, and Braunschweig and Lüneburg.⁶⁹ At the same time, it echoed the use of the term for German nationalistic aims, as in one 1820 review of the *Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, the precursor to the *Monumenta germaniae historica*, which lamented that “Germany has no capital, no Gesammtarchiv [sic], no central library...”⁷⁰ Consequently, the Gesamtarchiv reflected both a certain idea of nationalism and centralization and also a novel notion of the possibility of totality. Like the Gesamtkunstwerk, the Gesamtarchiv was a distinctively modern project, intended to constitute all of German Jewish history as a holistic physical corpus. It thus gave voice to a fundamental dream of completeness: the complete archive, the complete collection, the study of the complete corpus of an individual, topic, or field, which can be traced from the early modern “bibliotheca universalis” to the present day.⁷¹ The Gesamtarchiv aimed to be a total archive of the German Jews, with the hope of centralizing all related material. The total

⁶⁷ Eugen Täubler, “Arkhiy evreĭskikh” obshchin” b” Germanĭi,” *Evreĭskaĭa entsiklopedĭia: vod” znanĭ o evreĭcty” i ego kul’tury b” proshlom” i nastoiashchem*, vol. 3 (St. Petersburg: Brokgauz–Efron”, 1906), 226–233.

⁶⁸ See Matthew Wilson Smith, *The Total Work of Art: From Bayreuth to Cyberspace* (Routledge: 2007).

⁶⁹ See, for instance, Max Bär, “Das Braunschweig-Lüneburgische Gesammtarchiv,” in *Geschichte des Königlichen Staatsarchivs zu Hannover* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900), 81–82.

⁷⁰ SF, Review, “Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde zur Beförderung einer Geasmmtausgabe der Quellenschriften deutscher Geschichten des Mittelalters,” *Ergänzungsblätter zur Jenaischen Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung* 95 (1820): 372.

⁷¹ Helmut Zedelmaier, *Bibliotheca universalis und Bibliotheca selecta. Das Problem der Ordnung des gelehrten Wissens in der frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1992); Jordine and Kelley, “The Total Archive.”

archive thus becomes coeval with history itself, the manifestation of the historical field it delineates. In point of fact, the total archive sets the boundaries for study by determining what is included in the archive and what is not. In doing so, it followed from visions of total knowledge rooted in the nineteenth-century origins of modern Jewish studies, the historic context of German Jewry, and also *fin die siècle* professional archival practice.

One may recall that themes of all-encompassing knowledge can be traced to the earliest pioneers of Jewish *Wissenschaft* in the 1820s, when Immanuel Wolf and Leopold Zunz framed their “science” as the study of the totality of Jewish history, religion, and culture.⁷² The Gesamtarchiv continued this vision of total knowledge. Masterful nineteenth-century historians of the Jews such as Isaak Markus Jost and Heinrich Graetz had attempted to synthesize Jewish history “from earliest times to the present,” but the weighty task proved less attractive and certainly more daunting to later scholars.⁷³ With the notable exceptions of Simon Dubnow, who constantly rewrote his total history of the Jews, and Salo Baron, who never completed the task, twentieth-century scholars shied away from sweeping monumental histories and instead sought to make more circumscribed contributions. But the ideal of the singular, total history of the Jews still proved attractive.⁷⁴ Despite the trend towards smaller scale work like local histories, the publication of individual sources, and biographical studies, the continual editing of Heinrich Graetz’s *Geschichte der Juden*—which for more than twenty years after the author’s death in

⁷² See ch. 1, 24–25.

⁷³ Arguably, Jost began his synthesis of Jewish history (*Die Geschichte der Israeliten*, 9 vols. 1820–1828) not from “the beginning”—that is, from the Biblical period—but from the time of the Maccabees. But neither did Graetz begin the writing of his *Geschichte der Juden* with the Bible; the first volume he published, in 1854, began with the destruction of the Second Temple and he only treated the Biblical period in the last three tomes to appear from 1873 to 1876 (volumes 1 and 2, the latter which was split to two parts). But what set them apart was that they each saw their history as standing alone, as opposed to Jacques Basnage’s *Histoire des Juifs*, which was intended as a *continuation* of Josephus’ history of the Jews.

⁷⁴ This was particularly true in the vision of the founders of the Leo Baeck Institute to create what they termed a “Gesamtgeschichte” of the German Jews (“A Memorial for the Jews of Germany,” 1954, LBI DM223 17/15, “Leo Baeck Institute: Outline of Work and Research Programme,” LBI DM223 14/16).

1891 was not replaced but rather updated with “improved and supplemented” editions—indicates the continued popularity of Graetz’s work. Nevertheless, it also points to the sustained dream of a comprehensive and canonical history of the Jews, constituting all accumulated knowledge.⁷⁵

The Gesamtarchiv or “total archive” carried forward the dream of total history, and it is not surprising that Georg Herlitz would later edit the *Jüdisches Lexikon*, one in a series of early twentieth-century encyclopedias that reflected the desire to bind together Jewish knowledge.⁷⁶

If the Gesamtarchiv represented a longstanding vision of scholarly comprehensiveness, its idea of totality also emerged from the environs of Wilhelmine Germany in which centralization was a powerful imperative in many aspects of life. The Gesamtarchiv clearly arose out of the Gemeindebund’s attempts in the early twentieth century to establish a “Gesamtorganisation,” a sort of legal representative body of German Jewry. At this time, German-Jewish leaders constantly spoke in such terms. In 1902, Philippson wrote of the “Gesammtinteressen der deutschen Judenheit,” and at the 1905 meeting of the Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund, a Dr. Blau from Frankfurt (who later sat on the Gesamtarchiv’s board, though he did not attend any of the meetings in Berlin) referenced his hope that the Gemeindebund would serve as the “Gesamtvertretung” of the German Jews, working for “jüdische[] Gesamtheit.”⁷⁷ Heinrich Rosin, outlining his plan for a

⁷⁵ From 1896 to 1911, Graetz’s *Geschichte* was reissued in revised form; Markus Brann edited volumes 1–3, 10–11; S. Horowitz edited vol. 4; S. Eppstein, edited vol. 5; and Julius Guttmann edited volume 7.

⁷⁶ Herlitz’s *Jüdisches Lexikon* (5 vols., Jüdischer Verlag: 1927–1930) followed in a series of encyclopedias, including Ahad Ha-‘am’s planned “‘Otsar ha-yahadut,” *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (12 vols., Funk & Wagnalls: 1905–1906), *Evreïškaia entsiklopediia* (16 vols., St. Petersburg: Brokgauz–Efron”, 1906–1913) *Encyclopaedica Judaica: Das Judentum in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (ed. Jacob Klatzkin, Ismar Elbogen, 10 vols., 1928–1934), and others. See Arndt Engelhardt, *Arsenale jüdischen Wissens: Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der “Encyclopaedia Judaica”* (Leipzig: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011); Adam Rubin, “Jewish Nationalism and the Encyclopaedic Imagination: The Failure (and Success) of Ahad Ha-‘am’s Otsar Hayahadut,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 3, no. 3 (Nov. 2004): 247–267; Shuly Rubin Schwartz, *The Emergence of Jewish Scholarship in America: The Publication of the Jewish Encyclopedia* (Cincinnati: Hebrew University College Press, 1991).

⁷⁷ Martin Philippson, circular, 25 March 1902, CAHJP M1/8b; *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Oct. 1905, 5.

Gesamtorganization, spoke of the communities' "Gesamtwille."⁷⁸ The Gesamtarchiv reflected a complex of issues surrounding the Gemeindebund's broader initiative—the hope for a renewed German Jewry as body politic, the idea of German Jewry as a cohesive community, and the problematics of a community fraught by religious and political fractures, especially in light of Wilhelmine ideals of centralization and unity in the face of continued opposition to unification. Moreover, at the turn of the twentieth century, the Gemeindebund and the German Jewry that it sought to organize and represent found themselves in a time of radical flux. Like Wilhelmine Germany in general, Jews struggled with social and political changes like urbanization, centralization, the inclusion of and relationship with new regions such as the annexed Alsace and Lorraine, and their place within a new political system that saw the development of political parties, mass movements, lobbying and public interest groups.⁷⁹ In this context, the Gemeindebund sought to recreate a sense of community among German Jews at a time that less and less bound them together, an effort that, we will see, found particular expression in the Gesamtarchiv, whose effort to gather communal archives reflected hope to reconstitute community at a time of increasing atomization and a sense of the rise of *Gesellschaft* over *Gemeinschaft*.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Oct. 1905, 7.

⁷⁹ Political changes manifested in the new mass politics (as Carl Schorske put it in reference to Vienna, in a "sharper key") and also the creation of political activist groups. This phenomenon was especially prevalent though not exclusive to the rise of the right-leaning interest groups in Imperial Germany such as the Pan-German League and German Navy League. One can also see German Jewish groups like the Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus and even the Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund, Unabhängige Orden Bne-Briss, and Central-Verein Deutscher Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens as ethnic political groups. See Dirk Stegmann, *Die Erben Bismarcks: Parteien und Verbände in die Spätphase des Wilhelminischen Deutschlands. Sammlungs-Politik 1897–1918*; Geoff Eley, *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change After Bismarck*; Barbara Suchy, "The Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus: From Its Beginnings to the First World War," *LBIYB* 28 (1983), 205–239.

⁸⁰ The distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society), which proved so powerful and has been leveraged across the social sciences, was famously introduced by Ferdinand Tönnies in *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft: Abhandlung des Communismus und des Socialismus als empirischer Culturformen* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag, 1887). For a history of the concept, see Arthur Mitzman, "Tönnies and German Society, 1887–1914: From Cultural Pessimism to Celebration of the *Volksgemeinschaft*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 32, no. 4 (Oct.–Dec. 1971): 507–524. Robert Thomas Schechtman, "Community and Utopia: The Discourse of *Gemeinschaft* and the Search for a New Modernity in Germany" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California–Berkeley, 2008), 23–63, discusses the concept of "community" in terms of German social thought and especially the impact of Tönnies' work

When the Gemeindebund was formed in 1869, the Prussian law of 1847—which created a framework of Jewish communities as public corporations and obliged Jews to belong to them based on their locale—was still in force.⁸¹ The social and political situation radically changed with the formation of Imperial Germany and the Prussian “secession laws” of 1876 and 1878, which enabled Jews to break away and form alternate religious communities, the most famous case being Samson Raphael Hirsch’s neo-orthodox Israelitische Religionsgemeinschaft in Frankfurt am Main.⁸² This complicated not only the relationship between Jews and the state but also between and within communities themselves. A more voluntaristic view of Judaism in a state that still maintained officially sanctioned religious confessions threatened the Gemeindebund’s vision of a unified German Jewry. Beginning in 1898, the Gemeindebund began what would be a decades-long effort to establish a “Gesamtorganisation” which would once again legally bind together the Jewish communities of Germany and establish the Gemeindebund as a lobbying group and representative body.⁸³ In 1906 and again in 1909, lawyers Heinrich Rosen and Heinrich Machol presented proposals to abolish the secession law and establish local, regional, and national Jewish communal bodies to which all Jews would belong but which would be organized based on a free voting system.⁸⁴ It was rejected, especially by neo-orthodox Jews who

⁸¹ For the text of the “Gesetz über die Verhältnisse der Juden” (23 July 1847), see Ismar Freund, *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preußen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Gesetzes vom 11. März 1812* (Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1912), II:501–520.

⁸² This law, of 28 July 1876, amended the 1847 Prussian law governing Jewish communities. The text of the secession law is in Ismar Freund, *Die Rechtstellung der Synagogengemeinden in Preußen und die Reichsverfassung* (Berlin: Philo-Verlag, 1926), 39–42. See Adam Ferziger, *Exclusion and Hierarchy*, 114–132; Matthias Morgenstern, *From Frankfurt to Jerusalem: Isaac Breuer and the History of the Secession Dispute in Modern Jewish Orthodoxy* (Boston: Leiden, 2002); Robert Liberles, *Religious Conflict in Social Context: The Resurgence of Orthodox Judaism in Frankfurt am Main* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 165–226; cf. Peter Honigmann, *Die Austritte aus der Jüdischen Gemeinde Berlin* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988). In *Modernity Within Tradition: The Social History of Orthodox Judaism in Imperial Germany*, Mordechai Breuer argues that the secession laws enabled the creation of Orthodox schools and other separate cultural institutions (see esp. ch. 3).

⁸³ Philippon, “Bedürfen die deutschen Juden einer Gesamtorganisation?” *Ost und West*, 1, no. 2 (Feb. 1901): 82–92.

⁸⁴ Heinrich Rosin, “Entwurf eines Gesetzes über die Organisation der israelitischen Religionsgemeinschaften in Preußen, nebst Einleitung, Begründung und Schluß,” 1906, and Heinrich Machol, “Gesetzentwurf für das jüdische

believed the broader Jewish community to be too religiously lax, perceived the Gemeindebund as a tool for radical religious reform, and argued that the totality of the proposed “Gesamtheit” of German Jewry would not protect individuals’ right to religious liberty.⁸⁵ The official separation of church and state in the Weimar republic, establishing full freedom of religion, further challenged the Gemeindebund to find a new organizing principle for German Jewry.⁸⁶ Ismar Freund was tapped to formulate a third proposal, which was accepted in 1921, creating a Jewish constituent body but avoiding the problem of legally binding Jews to their communities.⁸⁷

In a series of articles in the *Israelitisches Familienblatt* in 1920, Ismar Freund argued that the Gemeindebund had aspired to form such a “Gesamtorganisation” since its inception.⁸⁸ To promote the idea, Freund cast the Gemeindebund’s founders’ work in terms of this vision, though they had created their organization within a radically different environment and were primarily interested in Jewish education. Nevertheless, under Martin Philippson, who led the Gemeindebund beginning in 1896, for nearly a quarter century the Gemeindebund had continuously sought to transform itself into a “Gesamtorganisation.” Philippson explained that the archive was one of a set of German Jewish “Gesamt-Institutionen,” and no doubt the archive’s name emerged from this discourse.⁸⁹ This “Gesamtorganisation” was not simply a framework to impose a top-down framework on German Jewry, but expressed the Gemeindebund leaders’ closely-held notion that the communal union should represent all the

Gemeindewesen in Preußen,” CAHJP M1/10.

⁸⁵ Freie Vereinigung für die Interessen des Orthodoxen Judentums, *Der Organisationsplan des Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebundes* (Frankfurt a/M: Buchdruck L. Kolbe, 1905).

⁸⁶ Article 137 of the Weimar constitution declared that Germany had no state religion but also that religious communities had the right to organize as they saw fit, including the right to levy taxes upon their members.

⁸⁷ See Wilhelm Neumann, “Die Gesamtorganisation des deutschen Judentums,” *Bericht der Grossloge*, Jan. 1921, 7–8.

⁸⁸ Ismar Freund, “Gesamtorganisation des deutschen Judentums,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 19 Feb. 1920, 26 Feb. 1920, 4 March 1920; see also Ismar Freund, “Gesamtorganisation durch Umwandlung des Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebundes,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 30 Dec. 1920.

⁸⁹ *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1912): 60.

German Jews, their collective interest and their collective will. This idea of collectiveness, inclusiveness, one might even call it completeness, was reflected in the vision for the Gesamtarchiv, which would contain the files of all the German Jewish communities.

If the Gesamtarchiv represented notions of totality in Jewish studies as well as German Jewish institutional life, it also spoke to far-reaching concepts within modern archival practice. Curiously, in 1910 Eugen Täubler asserted that “the unification of all Jewish sources and files in an archive” would not only be rejected by “local patriots,” opposed to centralization in general, but also by professional archivists, who disapproved of the removal of archival files from their historical context due to the principles of provenance.⁹⁰ In fact, the Gesamtarchiv actually gave expression to the latest trends in the development of archival science. It was also located in a strange no-mans-land, both giving voice to fundamental philosophies of archival work—which aspired to total collecting—and pushing against the archival principle of *respect des fonds*.

Zivier had always intended his proposed archive to be administered by professionals.⁹¹ The opening of the Gesamtarchiv was delayed from October 1905 to October 1906 so that Täubler could train at the Geheimes Staatsarchiv with its director, Reinhold Koser, who was also invited to join the Gesamtarchiv’s board of directors, though he ultimately declined to do so.⁹² And they sought to operate the Gesamtarchiv according to the most recent best practices, as codified in the 1898 archival manual of Samuel Muller, Johan Adriaan Feith, and Robert Fruin,

⁹⁰ “Rede des Dr. E. Täubler,” *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1911–12): 70.

⁹¹ Along with Adolf Warschauer, another member of the Gesamtarchiv’s board, Zivier was one of a handful of German Jews who worked in German state archives at the turn of the twentieth century.

⁹² “Bericht des Grosspräsident für 1908 u. 1909,” *Bericht der Grossloge*, May 1910, 88. This is why some sources claim the Gesamtarchiv opened in 1905 (Philippson, *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 [1912], 60), and others in 1906 (Gesamtarchiv to *Grossherzogl. Hess. Ministerium des Innern* [Darmstadt], 26 March 1911, CJ 1, 75 C Ge 2, and Eugen Täubler’s first working plan for the archive, 20 Oct. 1906, CAHJP M5/1). Eugen Täubler, “Volontariatszeugnis des Geheimen Staatsarchivs,” UB Basel NL 76; Warschauer, *Deutsche Kulturarbeit in der Ostmark*, 242.

Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven (Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives). This “Dutch Manual,” so-called because it codified the archival standards of the Netherlands Archival Association, reflected contemporary archival methods and was soon translated into a wide range of languages, including German.⁹³ Georg Herlitz recalled that on his first day of work at the Gesamtarchiv, he received a copy of the “Dutch Manual” and was instructed to promptly read it cover to cover.⁹⁴

The Dutch Manual has been derided for being overly focused on minutiae and rules. “A boring and small-minded book!” remarked Hans Kaiser, the manual’s translator to German.⁹⁵ But the manual’s idealized vision of archive and archivist frames a broad philosophy closely related to the Gesamtarchiv’s operating principles.⁹⁶ A close reading of the manual and its precepts reveals that the Gesamtarchiv’s “total archive” derives directly from the conceptual framework of archival science that repeatedly stressed the nature of archival collections as organic and complete. And yet, the archival vision of *respect des fonds* dictated that files remain in their original order and locale. As a result, one can identify competing impulses at the foundation of modern archival science: on the one hand to keep files where they are, and on the other to “reconstitute” the “total archive.” This demonstrates that despite the idealistic early

⁹³ Muller, et al., “Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven,” in *Tekst en context van de Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven van 1898*, ed. P.J. Horsman, et al (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), 1–160; S. Müller, et al, *Anleitung zum Ordnen und Beschreiben von Archiven*, trans. Hans Kaiser (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1905); also the recent republication by the Society of American Archivists: Muller, et al., *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, trans. Arthur H. Leavitt (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003), and “Introduction to the 2003 Reissue,” *ibid.*, v–xxxiv. On the “Dutch Manual,” see Eric Ketelaar, “Archival Theory and the Dutch Manual,” *Archivaria* 41 (Spring 1996): 31–40; Peter Horsman, Eric Ketelaar, Theo Thomassen, “New Respect for the Old Order: The Context of the Dutch Manual,” *American Archivist* 66, no. 2 (2003): 249–270; Marjorie Rabe Barritt, “Coming to America: Dutch Archivistic and American Archival Practice,” *Archival Issues* 18, no. 1 (1993): 43–54; John Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of Archival Theory* (Duluth: Litwin Books, 2009), 21–40.

⁹⁴ Georg Herlitz, *Mein Weg nach Jerusalem*, 82.

⁹⁵ S. Muller, J. A. Feith, R. Fruin, *Anleitung zum Ordnen und Beschreiben von Archiven*, trans. Hans Kaiser (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1905), viii.

⁹⁶ Eric Ketelaar, “Archival Theory and the Dutch Manual,” *Archivaria* 41 (Spring 1996): 31–40.

twentieth-century vision of archival objectivity, it was fundamentally based on the archivists' vision of the "proper" owners of files. And thus, we can begin to perceive how the Gesamtarchiv, which both sought a "total" archive and "disrespected" *fonds* by advocating that they be brought to Berlin, held the seeds of fundamental contradictions within archival practice.

The Dutch Manual argued that the archive directly corresponds to an administrative body—it defined the "official collection" as the files produced or received in an official capacity—and emerges "organically" and naturally out of the body's constant secretion of paper; the collection is complete inasmuch as it reflects the totality of that group's activity. The ideal archive maintained its "complete" collection as an organic, indivisible whole. "An archival collection is an organic whole," the authors stressed. The archive is not simply a ragtag collection of files but represents the entirety of an organization's institutional life—"an organic whole, a living organism, which grows, takes shape, and undergoes changes in accordance with fixed rules," that is, that everything be saved.⁹⁷ The German edition first appeared in translation in 1905, and would have been the edition that Täubler and Herlitz studied. It rendered the archive as an "organic whole" (*het geheel*) as "die Gesamtheit."⁹⁸ An archive could be considered "a whole" (*eine Gesamtheit*) as long as it is not a "part" (*Teil*), that is there are not other "parts" that exist. "If they do exist," the Dutch archivists wrote, "it is desirable in one way or another to reconstitute a whole out of these parts"—in the German, "aus diesen Teilen wieder eine Gesamtheit zu bilden."⁹⁹ The "Gesamtarchiv," in Kaiser's 1905 translation, referred to the

⁹⁷ Muller, et al., "Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven," in *Tekst en context van de Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven van 1898*, ed. P.J. Horsman, F.C.J. Ketelaar, T.H.P.M. Thomassen (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), 5 (§ 2); also Muller, et al., *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, trans. Arthur H. Leavitt (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003), 19.

⁹⁸ Muller, et al., *Anleitung zum Ordnen und Beschreiben von Archiven*, 1.

⁹⁹ Muller, et al., "Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven," 5; Muller, et al., *Anleitung zum Ordnen und Beschreiben von Archiven*, 1–2.

“whole collection,” to the entirety of the materials in a collection. Clearly, the Dutch Manual’s framework served as the basis of an archival worldview that stressed the organic, complete (Gesamt) archive, mirroring the Gemeindebund’s overall mission, which similarly sought to “reconstitute a whole,” or *Gesamtheit*, of German Jewry.

The Dutch archivists also considered the problem of splitting up archival collections, which related to their idea of the archive as a complete entity. With few exceptions, they looked down upon the division of archives. The principle of *respect des fonds* or provenance dictated that files remain in the same order and context in which they were produced. In spite of nineteenth-century tendencies to “organize” files into a more logical order by category or chronology—which one can perhaps associate either with the revolutionary tendency to deface and vandalize the archives of the *ancien régime* or even what is perhaps a frequently overdrawn but here useful dichotomy of the Enlightenment ideal of logical organization as opposed to the Romanticist respect for local diversity—the concept of provenance was a longtime principle of archival practice.¹⁰⁰ By the turn of the twentieth century, for the Dutch archivists, the principle of the “original order” was nearly the word of God.¹⁰¹ This principle of provenance, however, should

¹⁰⁰ See Ernst Posner, “Some Aspects of Archival Development Since the French Revolution,” *American Archivist* 3, no. 3 (1940): 159–172; Judith Panitch, “Liberty, Equality, Posterity? Some Archival Lessons from the Case of the French Revolution,” *American Archivist* 59, no. 1 (1996): 30–47.

¹⁰¹ Scholars have constantly referenced earlier inventions of the concept. Ernst Posner pointed to Max Lehmann’s 1881 teaching of the “respect for every original order” as the genesis of the “provenance principle.” Others have looked for its origin to the French archivist Natalis de Wailly’s 1841 definition of *respect des fonds*, or even the development of Diplomatics in the late seventeenth-century. Clearly, the archival teaching of provenance developed independently in many places, and was an important cornerstone of archival science nearly everywhere except perhaps the United Kingdom where, apparently, Hilary Jenkinson set the principle for the Public Records Office only in the early twentieth century. See Posner, “Max Lehmann and the Genesis of the Principle of Provenance,” in *Archives and the Public Interest*; Michel Duchéin, “The History of European Archives and the Development of the Archival Profession in Europe,” *American Archivist* 55, no. 1 (1992): 14–25; Shelley Sweeney, “The Ambiguous Origins of the Archival Principle of ‘Provenance,’” *Libraries and the Cultural Record* 43, no. 2 (2008): 193–213; Nancy Bartlett, “*Respect des Fonds*: The Origins of the Modern Archival Principle of Provenance,” *Primary Sources & Original Works* 1, no. 1–2 (1992): 107–115; Michael Roper, “The Development of the Principles of Provenance and Respect for Original Order in the Public Record Office,” in *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh Taylor*, ed. Barbara Craig (Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), 134–154.

not be spared the critical eye. Instead of a manifestation of the supposed objectivity of archival science, it reflects a fundamental idea about archives and their possibility of “completeness.” The only acceptable exception for breaking up an archive, the Dutch archivists argued, was when the objectives or rights of one organization or body were split among multiple successors in which case the files relating to the specific functions, territories, or rights-holders would go to the proper successor. The archive, in fact is a “reflection of those functions or rights,” and thus would be passed on to the successor organizations. As a result, they continued to stress the possibility of completeness: “When an archival collection is complete,” they began one section, inferring the possibility of completeness.¹⁰² “It is desirable,” they explained again, “to reassemble archival collections which have been split up,” expressing the desire to return archives to their original, “complete” and organic status.¹⁰³ As Eric Ketelaar has noted, Theodor van Riemsdijk, the General State Archivist of the Netherlands from 1887 to 1912 who called together the Dutch archivists to codify their practices, had long taught the principle of *respect des fonds*; but instead of simply having a practical importance, as a means of archiving not only documents but the structure of institutions that created them, van Riemsdijk viewed *respect des fonds* as crucial due to the interconnection of the documents to one another, and their relation to each other within the entirety of the collection, was necessary for the “evidential capacity of the archives.”¹⁰⁴

These impulses and concepts provided an important foundation for the Gesamtarchiv’s activities. The Berlin archive’s vision of totality, expressed in its name, gave voice to its communal context and “scientific” bona fides. The “total archive” emerged on the one side from the specific German-Jewish context: the vision of a Gesamtorganisation, the concomitant dream

¹⁰² Muller, et al., “Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven,” 17 (§ 10).

¹⁰³ Ibid., 19 (§ 11).

¹⁰⁴ Ketelaar, “Archival Theory and the Dutch Manual,” 34.

of German Jewry as a united whole, and the unity of Jewish history with the state together constituted a constellation favoring the formation of a comprehensive archive. Simultaneously, both through selecting the archive's specific name and through their words and actions, leaders of the Gesamtarchiv signaled truths about the archival act, which is fundamentally about capturing the totality of a historic corpus. When Eugen Täubler and Martin Philippson spoke about collecting files from "all" German-Jewish communities, or Jacob Jacobson spoke about the nature of collecting "from cradle to grave," they spoke to the total nature of collecting which was their archive's occupation, and perhaps all others as well. Consequently, the Gesamtarchiv emerged out of both its historical context and concretized general archival principles, both exoteric and esoteric. As a result, the Gesamtarchiv presented a model that would prove attractive to Jewish leaders the world over who would seek to create their own total archives. Neither should we be surprised that it left much room for interpretation and contention from all sides, by stakeholders such as Markus Brann who held differing idea of what a "Gesamt" archive should be, not to mention from those who opposed the centralizing project as a whole.

Constructing Geographies of Germanness and Jewishness

In October 1906, after Täubler had completed his training at the Geheimes Staatsarchiv in Berlin, the Gesamtarchiv officially opened. As a result of a network of "Vertrauensmänner" (perhaps best translated, though awkwardly, as "trusties"), the Gesamtarchiv rapidly received historical material from Jewish communities across Germany.¹⁰⁵ By November of that year, Täubler counted fourteen such representatives, mostly local rabbis.¹⁰⁶ Täubler believed their task

¹⁰⁵ See Gary Cohen, 43.

¹⁰⁶ Eugen Täubler to Martin Philippson, 1 Nov. 1906, CAHJP M5/1.

constituted the archive's crucial work, face-to-face advocacy and negotiations.¹⁰⁷ When the Offenbach lawyer Simon Guggenheim reached out to the Gesamtarchiv, he was instructed to visit communities in his region and keep the Gesamtarchiv informed of his plans, so they could send information about the archive and a deposit agreement to each community in advance of his visits. He was to collect materials owned by the community as well as in private hands, and to send any historical literature that he could procure.¹⁰⁸ A June 1906 report detailed Täubler's visit to northern Germany and the work of the rabbi Aron Heppner, "one of the most diligent patrons of the archive," who was sending individual documents from Silesia. At the time, mostly due to Heppner's efforts, the Gesamtarchiv held materials from twenty-two communities.¹⁰⁹ The following May, they held files from eighty-eight communities, and in December 1907, just seven months later, the Gesamtarchiv boasted that 166 locales had contributed to their collections.¹¹⁰

In his 1906 plan, Eugen Täubler specified that the Gesamtarchiv was specifically interested in communal archives within the "present borders of Germany," and in 1909 he reiterated it in the opening of the first issue of the *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs*: "The Gesamtarchiv ... is appointed to unify the documents and files which are no longer required for continued administration of the Jewish communities, organizations, and foundations *within the current political boundaries of the German Reich*."¹¹¹ Examining the lists of communities who deposited their files with the Gesamtarchiv, it is clear that it hewed to this objective. In fact, the archive followed the state's boundaries closely, thereby establishing a geographical framework

¹⁰⁷ *Mitteilungen* 1911/12, 65 ("Der Weg, der am schnellsten und verhältnismäßig am sichersten zum Ziele führt, ist die mündliche Unterhandlung.")

¹⁰⁸ Gesamtarchiv to Guggenheim, 1 Nov. 1906, CAHJP M5/14.

¹⁰⁹ *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, June 1906, 14; Heppner to DIGB Berlin, 10 Jan. 1906, CAHJP M5/12.

¹¹⁰ *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, May 1907; *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Dec. 1907..

¹¹¹ Emphasis added; "Zur Einführung," *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 1 (1909): 1.

of German Jewishness. If the communities are plotted on a map (see appendix, p. 436), the historical frontiers of Imperial Germany can be seen, clearly superimposed on today's Europe. This is to say, the Gesamtarchiv's collecting activities reflected a vision of German Jewry as perceived by those who were included in the Gesamtarchiv, or left out. The absence of certain regions points to areas where Jews (as well as non-Jews) may have felt that their relationship with the Wilhelmine state, with Berlin at its center, was problematic at best.

In its first years, the Gesamtarchiv primarily collected from the eastern provinces (Silesia, Posen, Pomerania, West and East Prussia) and also Hessen and the Rhineland. To some extent, this simply reveals the most active collectors, like Aron Heppner (at that time, Koschmin; later in Breslau) and Siegfried Guggenheim (Offenbach), as well as the historic geography of central European Jewry.¹¹² The Rhineland was a region of ancient Jewish settlement, and the eastern communities followed Germany's political boundaries, reflecting both dense Jewish population and the hometowns of Gesamtarchiv leaders like Eugen Täubler (Gostyn/Gostyń), Georg Herlitz (Oppeln/Opole), and Ismar Elbogen (Schildberg/Ostrzeszów). Conspicuously missing were communities in south Germany, particularly Bavaria, where as we shall see there was opposition to the centralization of material in Berlin. On the whole, the Gesamtarchiv focused its collecting in border regions, often contested ones. It would only be after World War I that the archive began collecting more heavily in central Germany. The collections reflect the archive as an institution that was in the business of drawing borders, in its case those of German Jewry.

Zivier's proposed archive was to be a single, centralized institution, but he did not specifically indicate a preference for where it would be based. He mentioned Berlin, Breslau, or Frankfurt am Main. Each presented a realistic possibility as well as different structural narratives

¹¹² In January 1920 the province of Posen was ceded to Poland, and Heppner moved to Breslau, where he would establish the Jewish communal archive in that city in 1924.

of Jewish and German history: as major centers of Jewish life, Berlin as the German capital, Breslau as the site of the Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar and a major center of Jewish historical scholarship, and Frankfurt as another major Jewish community and center of neo-orthodoxy. In January 1904, Frankfurt's Jewish community offered the orthodox Börneplatz synagogue as the seat of the archive.¹¹³ The tenth Gemeindebund synod, or *Gemeindetag*, was held in Frankfurt in June 1905, which might lead one to think the city was becoming increasingly significant in the geographic politics of German Jewry. Indeed, Martin Philippson noted the importance of holding the meeting in the south German city. For Philippson, the convocation in Frankfurt represented the fact that the Gemeindebund was now a national organization, inclusive of and representative of all German Jews; he remarked that it did not, "as often has been said, represent and concern itself with the issues and interests of northern Germany."¹¹⁴

In the end, the Gesamtarchiv was situated in Berlin. In part, it was a matter of efficacy: From the beginning, Berliners dominated the Gesamtarchiv's board of directors, consisting of six of its fifteen initial members. The Gemeindebund was also based in Berlin, and the Berlin Jewish community offered a significant subvention—more than the Gemeindebund and B'nai B'rith's backing combined.¹¹⁵ But despite Philippson's conciliatory remarks in 1905, he later stated that the archive was based in Berlin for more than mere practicality: "The board," he explained in 1910, "was of the opinion that, even considering the magnificent offer of the Frankfurt community, the archive belonged not in a place so far-flung from the center of Germany, but in the

¹¹³ "Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden," *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, May 1904, 2; Notably, the Israelitische Gemeinde zu Frankfurt offered to host the archive, not the neo-orthodox Israelitische Religionsgemeinschaft.

¹¹⁴ *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Oct. 1905, 4.

¹¹⁵ "Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden," *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Dec. 1904, 13; *Ibid.*, 65 (Oct. 1905), 109; note that the B'nai Brith and Gemeindebund jointly pledged 3,500 Marks annually (1,750 each), and the Berlin *Gemeinde* offered 2,500 annually. In practice, the Gemeindebund and B'nai B'rith each provided just over 1,000M each year. ("Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden," *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, May 1907, 8.)

capital city of the Reich ... where all Jewish communities in Germany place great importance.”¹¹⁶ Philippon’s characterization of Frankfurt as a “far-flung” locale, alongside his 1905 remarks on the importance of south Germany, highlight the Gemeindebund’s internal discord as it sought to be inclusive of all German Jews but also held Berlin, without question, as its focal point. The same could be said of the Gesamtarchiv, whose leaders looked to the provinces as sources of Jewish history and memory, which they worked to centralize and control from the imperial capital. Their work, thus, reflected the city’s tenuous place in the cultural matrix of Germany regardless of its relatively newfound political importance alongside the demographic reality of German-Jewish life, which was increasingly concentrated in Berlin—by 1910, a city was home to nearly thirty percent of all German Jews.¹¹⁷

The choice of Berlin as seat of the Gesamtarchiv had everything to do with the perceived map of German and Jewish geography that centered Berlin as the capital of the German Reich and thus the capital of German Jewry. It represented the culmination of a decades-long trend among leading German Jewish institutions and the Gemeindebund in particular towards the acceptance of the political modes of Imperial Germany. When the Gemeindebund was founded in 1869, it sought a union of German Jewish communities “including the German-Austrian ones.”¹¹⁸ But within a decade the group’s bylaws were amended to reframe the Gemeindebund from what can be termed a *Großdeutsch* to a *Kleindeutsch* orientation, from a sense of Germanness that included all Germans (including Austria) to one that was focused on the emerging Prussian

¹¹⁶ *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1912): 59.

¹¹⁷ See Jeffrey Willis Grooms, “Forging the Heart of a Frankensteinian Monster: Urbanization and Modernization in Pre-Imperial Berlin, 1860–1871,” *Ozark Historical Review* 37 (Spr. 2008): 39–60; Jacob Borut, “The Province versus Berlin? Relations Between Berlin and the Other Communities as a Factor in German Jewish Organizational History at the End of the Nineteenth Century,” *LBIYB* 44 (1999): 127–142.

¹¹⁸ “Statuten des Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebunds festgestellt vom constituirenden Gemeindegtag,” Leipzig, 14. Apr. 1872, CAHJP M1/1a. Its committee was chaired by Kohner (Leipzig) and included a member from Prague; its secretary, from Berlin, was listed last. (“An die deutsch-israelitischen Religionsgemeinden,” 1869, CAHJP M1/2.

state and then Wilhelmine Germany. In 1877, the Gemeindebund excluded Jewish communities in Austria, and in 1882, the group explicitly stated that it was only an association of communities within the Reich.¹¹⁹ That same year, the Gemeindebund's headquarters moved from Leipzig to Berlin.¹²⁰ The creation of the Gesamtarchiv and the debates around it further indicate the group's allegiance to the imperial idea, both in the Gesamtarchiv's opposition to regional archives and its centering of Berlin as capital of the Jewish community. By selecting Berlin as the archive's seat, its leaders made a powerful statement not only about the nature of the Jewish present in Wilhelmine Germany, but about the Jewish and German past.¹²¹ It emphasized a Prussian-centered framework as opposed to one drawing its roots from the Frankfurt parliament and other attempts at creating a unified German state. It reflected, thereby, a paradigm of German Jewish history with Berlin as its epicenter, as opposed to Königsberg, center of the Haskalah or Jewish Enlightenment, Frankfurt, the epicenter of neo-orthodoxy and the 1848 parliament, or Habsburg Vienna. This scheme of German Jewishness as reflected in the Gesamtarchiv, then, was not about the nature of German Jewry's history but instead the contemporary political environment.

Despite the public rhetoric, the history and development of the Gesamtarchiv indicate a different kind of outlook for these German Jewish communal institutions which worked to further the centrality of Berlin as capital not only a unified and centralized German Reich but also a unified and centralized German Jewry, and not simply for the support of the small communities but for their domination. However, not all the Jewish communities saw things the

¹¹⁹ "Revidirte Statuten des Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebundes angenommen durch den außerordentlichen Gemeindegtag zu Leipzig," 19 Sept. 1877, CAHJP M1/1b; "Revidirte Statuten des Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebundes angenommen durch den außerordentlichen Gemeindegtag zu Berlin," 21 Feb. 1882, CAHJP M1/1c.

¹²⁰ Wilhelm Neumann, "Zum 50jährigen Jubiläum des Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebundes," *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 26 June 1919, CAHJP P2/197.

¹²¹ It is notable that the Gesamtarchiv had a distinctive approach, in this respect, from *Germania Judaica*, the encyclopedic history of German Jewry that included entries on Jewish communities in regions that fell under the Holy Roman Empire. See *Germania Judaica*, Vol. 1, A–L, eds. Markus Brann and Aron Freimann, Frankfurt A. M.: J. Kaufmann, 1917; Vol. 2, M–Z, eds. Ismar Elbogen, Aron Freimann, H. Tykocinski, Breslau: M. & H. Marcus, 1934.

same way. The creation of the central archive in Berlin might serve as a model for some but it also was a point of contention, especially for those on the margins.

The Gesamtarchiv and its Discontents

In 1907, the Gesamtarchiv boasted that it held the files of eighty-eight Jewish communities from around Germany, and in 1910 its collections had ballooned to nearly three times the size, with the files of around 250 communities.¹²² The archive grew so quickly that it soon ran out of space. In March 1910, the Gesamtarchiv moved into the new building of the Berlin Jewish community at Oranienburgerstraße 28.¹²³ The offices were specially constructed with the archive in mind, with reinforced and fireproof storage facilities, separate offices, and a reading room. In its new home, the Gesamtarchiv declared itself a modern scientific institution, using the latest Prussian archival methods.¹²⁴ In November 1910, Täubler reported that now that they had a larger space, the archive would recommence intensive collecting activities even in the face of opposition from communities such as those in Alsace-Lorraine, Hannover, and Bavaria who sought to create their own regional archives.¹²⁵ The following month, on December 28, 1910, the fourth night of Chanukah, the Gesamtarchiv publicly dedicated its new offices. Martin Philippson, Eugen Täubler, Berthold Timendorfer (representing the Berlin Jewish community), and Reinhold

¹²² For these figures, see “Rede des Professor Dr. M. Philippson,” *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1911): 60. In 1905, the Gemeindebund listed 254 communities represented at its *Gemeindetag*, indicating that perhaps the Gesamtarchiv had gained historical relevant files from most German Jewish communities. (“Liste der vertretenen Gemeinden,” *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Oct. 1905, 1–2.) However, it is difficult to assess the Gesamtarchiv’s success in gaining the files of “all” the German Jewish communities, due to the challenge of defining metrics like an individual “community.” Generally, the Gesamtarchiv listed *locales* from which historical materials were received, whereas most contemporary attempts to quantify German Jewry focused on demographic statistics at large, or on the number of synagogues. For instance, Jacob Thon accounted for 1,855 synagogues throughout Germany in 1906 but many locales contained numerous synagogues (Thon, *Die jüdischen Gemeinden und Vereine in Deutschland* (Berlin: Verlag des Bureaus für Statistik der Juden, 1906), 5). Also see Erich Rosenthal, “Trends of Jewish Population in Germany, 1910–39,” *JSS* 6, no. 3 (Jul. 1944): 233–274.

¹²³ See “Das Leben im Umfeld der Neuen Synagoge,” in *Tuet auf den Pforten*, 165–217.

¹²⁴ “Vom Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,” *Bericht der Grossloge*, Apr. 1910, 68–69.

¹²⁵ “VII. Sitzung des Kuratoriums für das Gesamtarchiv der Deutschen Juden,” 6 Nov. 1910, CAHJP P17/11.

Koser, director of the Prussian state archives, detailed the archive's history, mission, and role in public life. Koser's endorsement followed his March 1910 decision to transfer materials relating to Jewish matters from Prussian state archives to the Gesamtarchiv.¹²⁶ This was just one in a series of developments marking the archive's maturation from a one-man shop to a bonafide institution of the Berlin Jewish community: the new offices, the hiring of assistants (N. M. Nathan, Jacob Jacobson, who would direct the archive after World War I, and Georg Herlitz), and the publication of a journal, the *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden*.¹²⁷

At the December 1910 dedication of the archive's permanent offices, Eugen Täubler and Martin Philippson spoke openly not only of their success but also of challenges confronting the archive, primarily the somewhat vexing problem of those opposed to the centralized collection of historical material. Philippson complained that people did not understand the importance of archives, and alternately that communities, especially larger ones, refused to contribute to the Gesamtarchiv due to "particularism and local consciousness (*Selbstbewusstsein*)."¹²⁸ Täubler echoed Philippson's language, grumbling of "local patriotism" and "particularism." He realized the stakes: Both the Gesamtarchiv and local archives represented matters of allegiance, sites of struggle between the capital and the provinces.¹²⁹ Täubler and Philippson hoped that the Jewish communities of Germany would look past their local interests and accept a new, more statist, form of patriotism, allying themselves with the "Gesamt-institutions" of German Jewry and thus with the German state itself. But this situation only underlined a more significant problem facing

¹²⁶ Generaldirektor der Staatsarchiv to Königliche Staatsarchiv in Posen, 5 Mar. 1910, GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/1152; Announcement, 11 Mar. 1910, CAHJP M5/1; Gesamtarchiv to Dr. Kosen, 11 Mar. 1910, CAHJP M5/20.

¹²⁷ *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden* is now available in yearly volumes, but it appeared biannually in 1909, 1910, 1911, 1913, 1914, and 1926. According to Bernhard Brillling, a seventh volume was prepared in the 1930s but Nazi censors did not allow its publication (Brillling, "Jacob Jacobson," *Der Archivar*, May 1969, 234–236).

¹²⁸ "Rede des Professor Dr. Philippson," *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1911–12): 60.

¹²⁹ See Borut, "The Province versus Berlin?"

the Gesamtarchiv: Either local Jews did not care about archives at all, and thus disregarded their materials and did not think about contributing them to the Berlin archive, or they cared about their archives too much, refusing to participate in any centralizing activity.¹³⁰

The Gesamtarchiv was meeting with continued resistance to their collecting efforts. Philippson claimed in December 1910 that 250 communities had submitted their files, and that in the coming spring another 150 communities would follow suit.¹³¹ But in the last Gesamtarchiv report to appear before World War I, published in 1913, it appears that only twenty new communities had deposited files, a total of 270—far below Philippson’s boastful forecast.¹³² Täubler explained the reduced pace of acquisition in part as a result of the fact that since they had collected so much material, they now needed to shift their focus to organizing it.¹³³ More likely, it was also due to communities who were refusing to hand over their archives. As a result of the Gesamtarchiv’s inability to obtain original medieval documents, Täubler announced in 1913 that in addition to the Gesamtarchiv’s longstanding project to make inventories of files relating to Jewish history in state and municipal archives, they now wanted to transcribe and translate medieval sources.¹³⁴ The new project to publish sources was indicative of the Gesamtarchiv’s longstanding interest in the Middle Ages, their acceptance of copies or duplicates of documents, and the increasing resistance they came up against.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ “Rede des Dr. Täubler,” *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1911–12), 65.

¹³¹ “Rede des Professor Dr. Philippson,” *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1911–12): 60.

¹³² The 1914 issue of *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs*, the last printed before the war, in 1914, did not include a report on the activities of the archive.

¹³³ *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1913): 187.

¹³⁴ It is notable that the Gesamtarchiv’s editorial project was distinct from the Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaft des Judentums’s *Germania Judaica*, which was conceived of in 1906 (see Leopold Lucas, “Die Wissenschaft des Judentums und die Weg zu ihrer Förderung,” Berlin: 1906). See *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 4 (1913): 1; also see “Protokoll der Sitzung des Kuratoriums des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden,” 5 Oct. 1913, CAHJP P17/11, where the publication of the Gesamtarchiv’s sourcebook was the third item on the agenda.

¹³⁵ *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Oct. 1905.

The Gesamtarchiv, like the notion of a “Gesamtorganisation,” was seen in certain circles as a challenge to local autonomy. But whereas much opposition to the Gesamtorganisation came from neo-orthodox circles who sought continued separation from overarching communal structures, a number of communities such as the Jews of Hamburg, Alsace-Lorraine, and Bavaria—all regions that were either contested or had a long tradition of independence or autonomy—balked at sending their files to the Gesamtarchiv in spite of the fact that the standard Gesamtarchiv deposit contract stated that the files would remain the property of the community or organization that donated them.¹³⁶ The Jews in Hamburg had reservations about sending their files to Berlin, but Ismar Elbogen pressed them to set an example for the smaller communities. Instead of submitting their files, they eventually made a financial contribution to support the project.¹³⁷ In another case, the Jewish community of Darmstadt was blocked from sending its archives to Berlin as a result of a regional law limiting the export of antiquities. The community was allowed to submit their files only following an extensive correspondence with the Gesamtarchiv, where the board tried to show that the Jewish archive was run by professional archival standards and that they could manage the material better, being equipped to process and organize records in Hebrew and Yiddish.¹³⁸ And in April 1906, the Jewish community of Worms asked for their files back when they realized that the Gesamtarchiv would hold on to the materials permanently instead of simply photographing or transcribing them.¹³⁹

The Historical Society of the Jews in Alsace-Lorraine (Gesellschaft für die Geschichte der Israeliten in Elsass-Lothringen; Société pour l’histoire d’Israélites d’Alsace et de Lorraine),

¹³⁶ Gesamtarchiv, Depositral-Vertrag, CAHJP M5/11. On opposition by Orthodox Jews, see an exemplary anti-DIGB pamphlet, *Der Organisationsplan des Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindegewerks* (Frankfurt: Louis Golde, 1905).

¹³⁷ Levin Lion to Curatorium des Gesamtarchivs, 14 March 1906; Ismar Elbogen to Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeinde zu Hamburg, 20 April 1906; Lion to Gesamtarchiv, 2 Oct. 1906; Philippson to Lion, 10 Oct. 1906, CAHJP AHW/326a-b.

¹³⁸ Gesamtarchiv to Grossherzogl. Hess. Ministerium des Innern, Darmstadt, 26 March 1911, CJ C Ge 2.

¹³⁹ “Sitzung des Curatoriums des Gesamtarchivs im Bureau des D.I.G.B.,” 1 Apr. 1906, CAHJP AHW/326/a-b.

founded in 1905 by the rabbi Moïse Ginsburger, was particularly vehement in its opposition to the Gesamtarchiv.¹⁴⁰ Writing in 1931, Ginsburger explained that when he became aware of the Gesamtarchiv, “I immediately perceived the danger that threatened our region, since documents preserved in Berlin would be forever lost to Alsace and Lorraine.”¹⁴¹ Like Ezechiel Zivier, Ginsburger had long been interested in collecting and preserving historical materials. In 1891, when Ginsburger took up the position of rabbi in Sülz (Soultz) in upper Alsace, he occupied his free time with the study of local history and the collection of historical materials and gravestone inscriptions.¹⁴² Ginsburger proposed the creation of a historical society in 1904, and it was officially formed in January 1905 with the purpose of “collecting, inventorying, and protecting documents and monuments [i.e. gravestones] related to the history of the Jews of Alsace and Lorraine.”¹⁴³ In Ginsburger’s speech to the society’s first meeting, he called for the creation of a “collecting point” for historical materials, and in March 1905 Ginsburger began writing to local rabbis about the creation of an archive of the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine.¹⁴⁴ As a result, Ginsburger resisted the call to send materials to Berlin. Instead, after lengthy negotiations Ginsburger set up his archive at the Elsässisches Museum in Strasbourg alongside a religious and cultural exhibit.¹⁴⁵ In 1908, Ginsburger wrote that the communal archives and antiquities should not be

¹⁴⁰ For one recent overview of this episode, see Peter Honigmann, “Nichtstaatliches Schriftgut einer Grenzregion am Beispiel der Archivaliensammlung der Gesellschaft für die Geschichte der Israeliten in Elsass-Lothringen,” in *Archive in zusammenwachsenden Europa*, ed. Diether Degreif, et al (Siegburg: Verlag Schmitt, 2000), 131–140.

¹⁴¹ Moses Ginsburger, “La Société pour l’Histoire des Israélites d’Alsace et de Lorraine,” *Souvenir et Science* 2, no. 3 (Summer 1931): 1–5.

¹⁴² Moïse Ginsburger, *Der Israelitische Friedhof in Jungholz* (Mülhausen: C. Ehrmann, 1904), 5; “Moïse Ginsburger,” AD Bas-Rhin 65J/9.

¹⁴³ “Statuten der Gesellschaft für die Geschichte der Israeliten in Elsass-Lothringen,” 2 March 1905, AD Bas-Rhin 64J/15 G. 28; From the very start, Ginsburger sought to create an archive: the rabbi Adolphe Ury wrote to Ginsburger in November 1904 that “I approve... the founding of these historical archives.” (Ury to M. Ginsburger, 29 Nov. 1904, AD Bas-Rhin 64J/15 G. 82)

¹⁴⁴ Ginsburger, “Manuskript einer Rede auf der Gründungsversammlung der Gesellschaft,” AD Bas-Rhin 64J/15 G. 53; M. Ginsburger to Rabbi [Armand] Bloch, 20 Mar. 1905, AD Bas-Rhin 64J/15 G. 120.

¹⁴⁵ The exhibit initially consisted of two rooms, one representing a synagogue and the other a Jewish apartment,

“swallowed up by a Jewish museum or Gesamtarchiv” but should remain “close to their homeland.”¹⁴⁶ In July of that year, he published an article on the Gesamtarchiv in which he argued against the founding of a Gesamtarchiv and for the creation of a provincial archive, because the files could be best utilized “where they originated,” where present and future scholars of the material were to be found.¹⁴⁷ And in 1913 the *Straßburger Israelitische Wochenschrift*, which Ginsburger edited, reported on attempts to catalogue the antiquities of the Jews in Bavaria. When the author noted that the group had decided that historical materials should remain in the region in which they were found and specifically should not be sent to the Gesamtarchiv, Ginsburger inserted a Prussian “Jawohl!”¹⁴⁸

Although Ginsburger opposed sending historical material from the border regions of Alsace and Lorraine to Berlin, he and the Gesamtarchiv had a great deal in common. Ginsburger, too, was concerned with the smallest communities, which he perceived to be in danger, and along with them the historical records of their existence. Ginsburger’s call for a historical society opened with this specific anxiety: “It is surely also known to you, that the Jewish communities of the small locales in Alsace-Lorraine are in the grasp of a process of attrition. The majority of Alsace-Lorraine Jews, who currently live in our large cities and abroad, originate in these small communities. It is therefore of special importance and highest interest that the sources ... be protected.”¹⁴⁹ Ginsburger’s collectors often sent reports on material from communities that were

which included various ritual and cultural objects (“Das Jüdische Museum für Elsass-Lothringen,” *Straßburger Israelitische Wochenschrift* [hereafter cited as *SIW*], 17 Sept. 1908). Later, a third room was added to represent a *heder* and to serve as the store room for the archive (“Von der Gesellschaft für die Geschichte der Israeliten in Elsass-Lothringen,” *SIW*, 1 Jul. 1909, 5; see also Ginsburger’s speech which explained the storage of the archive in “Von der Gesellschaft für die Geschichte der Israeliten in Elsass-Lothringen,” *SIW*, 18 Nov. 1909, 5–7).

¹⁴⁶ Moïse Ginsburger, “Unser jüdisches Museum,” *SIW*, 1 Feb. 1908.

¹⁴⁷ Moïse Ginsburger, “Das Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,” *SIW*, 2 Jul. 1908.

¹⁴⁸ Rosenfeld, “Inventarisierung jüdischer Altertümer in Bayern,” *SIW*, 6 Mar. 1913.

¹⁴⁹ Circular, AD Bas-Rhin 64J/15 G. 82.

approaching dissolution, and Ginsburger wrote about the problem of what would happen to the files and cultural property of communities that ceased to exist.¹⁵⁰ Ginsburger, it seems, was opposed to the creation of a central archive in Berlin, but he was still responding to the same stimuli that prompted the Gesamtarchiv's founders to take action: a fear that everyday people, unaware of the historical importance of records and archives, would damage or destroy them, and that the processes of urbanization and immigration would decimate communities. Thus, Ginsburger's Historical Society and the Gesamtarchiv can be perceived as being a product of the same archival impulse that emerged at this time in Jewish life.

Ginsburger's project to create historical archives both opposed and paralleled the project of constructing a community of German Jewry. In opposing to transfer of the documents of Jewish life to Berlin, Ginsburger made a powerful statement refuting the claim that Alsace-Lorraine, with its complicated relations with Germany, fell within the cultural boundaries of German Jewry.¹⁵¹ The activities of the historical society demonstrated a continued affinity to France: The society primarily published articles and monographs relating to the history of French Jews. Although written in German, the *Straßburger Israelitische Wochenschrift*, supported by the historical society and edited by Ginsburger, displayed a pro-French slant in subject and reporting, with in-depth analyses of the Dreyfus case and the history of the Jews in the French Revolution. Alfred Dreyfus, of course, was born in Alsace, and the Dreyfus case was of interest to Jews around the world; being interested in local history, the historical society would for clear reasons focus on the history of local Jews in the period prior to the German occupation. But Ginsburger also wrote—in German!—that the Jews of Alsace remained “true Frenchmen” and

¹⁵⁰ “Wochenschau,” *SIW*, 21 Nov. 1907; “Unser jüdisches Museum,” *SIW*, 1 Feb. 1908.

¹⁵¹ See Vicki Caron, *Between France and Germany: The Jews of Alsace-Lorraine, 1871–1918* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

still felt an attachment to their “French fatherland.”¹⁵² With this being said, in creating the historical society, Ginsburger paralleled the Gesamtarchiv. Ginsburger’s work was also the product of a particular mood that privileged archives and collecting and feared the destruction of historical documents in a period of rapid societal transformation. Just as the Gesamtarchiv presented and endorsed a geography of German Jewry, Ginsburger carved out an alternative Jewish *Kulturbereich* outside the framework of imperial Germany. Even though it was termed the historical society for the Jews of Alsace and Lorraine, Ginsburger’s society was not intended only for the Jews of that region but also France and Switzerland, specifically Basel, where an important founder of the society, Achilles Nordmann, was based.¹⁵³ Ginsburger published Nordmann’s work on the Jews of Basel, and Nordmann sent many contributions to Ginsburger’s archive.¹⁵⁴ Examining the lists of members of the society, a not small number hailed from Paris, Basel, Zürich, and Bern.¹⁵⁵ Thus, the historical society that Ginsburger called to life in 1904 was not simply opposed to the Gesamtarchiv. While focused on local history and identity rather than an overarching German Jewishness, it paralleled the Gesamtarchiv’s effort to construct German Jewish identity when it presenting a distinctive model of Jewish life in the borderlands, a cultural and linguistic hybridity of Alsace-Lorraine and Switzerland.

In a similar fashion, Jews in Hannover and Bavaria attempted to create regional repositories that mirrored the Berlin archive. Täubler expressed his disapproval, noting in November 1910 that regional archives in Alsace-Lorraine and Hannover were creating difficulties for his

¹⁵² “Die Juden und Deutschtum in Elsaß-Lothringen,” *SIW*, 26 Nov. 1908.

¹⁵³ “Auszug aus der ‘Strassburger Israelitischen Wochenschrift,’” 1905, *Strasbourg bibliothèque nationale et universitaire* M. 33235; it is important to note that the years 1904–1906 of *SIW* are lost.

¹⁵⁴ Nordmann, “Über den Judenfriedhof in Zwingen und Judenniederlassung im Fürstbistum Basel”; also see “Von der Gesellschaft für die Geschichte der Israeliten in Elsass-Lothringen,” *SIW*, 15 July 1909, 4.

¹⁵⁵ AD Bas-Rhin 64J/15, G. 136, G. 139, 167.

collecting efforts.¹⁵⁶ In 1909, the Landesverein Jüdischen Gemeinde Bayern discussed creating a regional archive. The Gesamtarchiv wrote a scathing letter to the Landesverein, arguing that their archive was to be a “Reichsarchiv” and regional archives were thus not necessary. They also explained that the Gesamtarchiv’s professionally trained archivists would maintain the Bavarian files in a “scientific” manner, as opposed to a local archive which would be operated by laypeople. Finally, they explained that for one interested in making use of the archives, travelling to an archival center in Bavaria was no different from travelling to Berlin.¹⁵⁷

Regional and local archives challenged the Gesamtarchiv’s hegemony as the central collecting point for the archives of the German Jews, and simultaneously—and seemingly paradoxically—affirmed its success in spreading appreciation for archives to the masses. Those creating regional and local archives espoused a political or cultural framework distinctive from that of the Gesamtarchiv’s focus on the centrality of Berlin, but their archival activities demonstrate the spreading impulse of creating archives. In other words, opposition to the Gesamtarchiv was not simply one-sided, but also reflected the institution’s successes. Martin Philippon tacitly acknowledged this when he remarked that communities either did not realize the importance of their files, or they held on to them so tightly that they would not let them out of their sight.¹⁵⁸ With this, we turn to the Gesamtarchiv’s essential paradox: the program to centralize archives was dependent on the continuation of the existing situation whereby communities did value their historical documents. The successful completion of their goal to increase German Jews’ historical consciousness naturally impeded their ability to achieve their centralizing mission. And thus, the Gesamtarchiv’s successes can be measured not only in the

¹⁵⁶ “VII. Sitzung des Kuratoriums für das Gesamtarchiv der Deutschen Juden,” 6 Nov. 1910, CAHJP P17/11.

¹⁵⁷ Gesamtarchiv to Bayerisches Landesverband, 17 May 1909, CAHJP M5/1.

¹⁵⁸ *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1911–12): 65ff.

collecting of archives for their own files or the publication of a journal, but also in the ways those seeking to create their own archives simultaneously seized upon the Gesamtarchiv as a model while viewing it as a challenge to local autonomy.

The question of where the files would be best utilized—in a central archive in Berlin, in a regional archive, or kept at the local level—is a common thread drawn throughout the debates over centralizing Jewish archives in the first half of the twentieth century. It shows the ties between opposition to the Gesamtarchiv and its opponents' acceptance of the basic theoretical foundations upon which the centralization project was based. Moïse Ginsburger's argument—that the files of the Alsace-Lorraine Jewish communities should remain close at hand because the scholars who he envisioned would use it were locals interested in genealogy and regional history—differed from the Gesamtarchiv's argument for centralization only in its particulars. Both believed that individuals and communities, if left to their own devices, would discard important historical documentation and that archival sources needed to be centralized in an institution of some kind. Both wanted the files to be where they would be most useful, but disagreed about where that might be, and what the context of the broader collection should be in which the documents should be stored and studied. The Gesamtarchiv thus provided an opening move in the activity for the centralization of archives, as the first attempt to create a centralized archive for Jewish history, mirrored even by attempts to resist centralization. When the Gesamtarchiv began trying to collect communal and organizational archives, it opened a debate that would continue in some ways to the present day, about where archives could be best preserved and prepared for use. In the Gesamtarchiv's view, the clear answer was a center where they would be administered by professionals. From another side it may be said that the archives are best utilized close to the place where they originated, as Ginsburger argued. What cannot be disputed is that

with the attempt to create centralized archives—whether in Berlin for all of the German Jews, or in Strasbourg for the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine, Luxembourg, and Switzerland, or in Munich for Bavarian Jewry—one always needs to remove documents from their original context. In doing so, ironically, the act of constituting the archive itself violated the principle of *respect des fonds*; the process of creating archives is not merely one of gathering but of creating new contexts. The only question is where they can be best utilized, and in which context. By creating archives, one creates the context through which the files are studied and perceived; moving files to Berlin would mark them as German, and a part of the history of the Jews in Germany, as opposed to another framework which is not tied to that particular state.

The Gesamtarchiv in Weimar Germany

In the fall of 1915, both Eugen Täubler and his assistant Georg Herlitz were drafted in the German army and the archive temporarily closed its doors.¹⁵⁹ After the war, both Täubler and Herlitz left for new enterprises. In 1919, Täubler took up the leadership of the Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, and in June of that year with the support of Zionist functionary Arthur Hantke, Herlitz established the Zionistisches Zentralarchiv, the archive of the Zionist Organization.¹⁶⁰ In October 1919, Herlitz explained to board member Moritz Stern that he did not assume Täubler's position at the Gesamtarchiv because it had not been offered to him, and he had other opportunities with the Zionist Organization.¹⁶¹ As a result, the board turned to Jacob Jacobson, a scholar of Prussian Jewry who had worked at the Gesamtarchiv for a short period in

¹⁵⁹ Gesamtarchiv to DIGB, 27 Sept. 1915, CAHJP M5/1; Herlitz, *Mein Weg nach Jerusalem*, 93; Georg Herlitz, "Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden," *Bericht der Grossloge*, Feb. 1916, declared that due to Täubler's drafting the archive must "be closed for the duration of the war."

¹⁶⁰ On Täubler, see Myers, "Fall and Rise of Jewish Historicism," 117–123. For the founding of the Zionist Archives, see Georg Herlitz to Gesamtarchiv, 18 Jun. 1919, CZA L33/1, Georg Herlitz, "Die Verbesserung der Registratur des Zentralbureaus," 20 Jun. 1919, CZA L33/81.

¹⁶¹ Georg Herlitz to Moritz Stern, 16 Oct. 1919, NLI ARC 4° 1568/89.

the winter of 1910–11.¹⁶² On April 1, 1920, Jacobson commenced his work at the Gesamtarchiv, which would only conclude in May 1943 with his deportation to Theresienstadt.¹⁶³

The early 1920s were a trying time for the Gesamtarchiv. Jacobson continued to receive new files, but the archive found itself with limited financial means at the height of the hyperinflation of 1923 and 1924. In the absence of aid from the Joint Distribution Committee, as Jacobson later noted, the Gesamtarchiv would have been forced to close permanently.¹⁶⁴ For the most part, few scholars made use of the archive. From October 1920 to March 1921, Jacobson reported that five scholars had visited the archive over 39 days. In a similar period a year later eight people visited over 24 days, and from April to October 1922, the archive was only visited on 16 days by four people.¹⁶⁵ Jacob Rader Marcus, who later founded the American Jewish Archives, detailed his close relationships with Ismar Elbogen and Jacob Jacobson during his doctoral studies at the University of Berlin from 1922 to 1925; as he wrote in his diary, they took him in, fed him, and helped him practice German and Latin. But only once did Marcus report visiting the “Jewish Archiv Library.”¹⁶⁶ And whereas the Gesamtarchiv had been able to stop

¹⁶² “Rede des Dr. E. Täubler,” *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 3 (1911–1912): 64–75; “Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Archivs,” 5 Oct. 1919, CAHJP P17/11.

¹⁶³ “Dienstweisung für den Verwalter des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden, entworfen von Archivdirektor Geheimrat Prof. Dr. Warschauer und Bibliothekar Dr. Stern,” 1 Apr. 1920, CAHJP M5/1; “Protokoll der Sitzung des Kuratoriums des Gesamtarchivs,” 18 May 1920, CAHJP M5/1.

¹⁶⁴ Jacobson, “Vom Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,” *C.V.-Zeitung* II, no. 19 (12 May 1923): 153–154; Jacobson, “Aus dem Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 28 Jul. 1927. Curiously, the JDC aid packages for German Jewish cultural institutions do not list the Gesamtarchiv. However, Ismar Elbogen, who was board member one to suggest that the Gesamtarchiv turn to America for financial assistance, had already been in touch with the JDC about emergency funding for the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums. (“Protokoll der Sitzung des Kuratoriums des Gesamtarchivs,” 12 Oct. 1922, CAHJP AHW/326a-b, p. 22, CAHJP P17/11, p. 15, in which Elbogen suggests turning to the United States; “Proposal for the Distribution of \$35,000 amongst the Jewish Cultural Institutions of Germany,” 21 Jan. 1923 JDC / NY AR192132 / 4 / 15 / 3 / 205; Cyrus Adler to Ismar Elbogen, 6 Dec. 1922, JDC / NY AR192132 / 4 / 15 / 3 / 205, JDC / NY AR192132 / 4 / 15 / 3 / 206).

¹⁶⁵ Jacob Jacobson, “Tätigkeitsbericht des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden,” 31 Mar. 1921, CAHJP M5/1; “Tätigkeitsbericht des Gesamtarchivs,” 9 Apr. 1922, “Protokoll der Sitzung des Kuratoriums des Gesamtarchivs,” 12 Oct. 1922, CAHJP AHW/326a-b.

¹⁶⁶ Jacob Rader Marcus, Diary Entry, 19 Nov. 1922, AJA MS-210 14/4.

regional archives from coming into existence in the years before World War I, at this time a number of archive projects appeared that challenged the Gesamtarchiv's singular centrality. In 1924, Aron Heppner, formerly one of the most prolific contributors to the Berlin archive, formed the archive of the Breslau Jewish community. Together with Bernhard Brillung, a young rabbinical student at the Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar, he developed it into a regional archive for the Jews of Silesia.¹⁶⁷ The following year, in 1925, the rabbis Ephraim Sonnenschein (Bydgoszcz) and Jacob Freimann (Posen) called for the creation of what they termed "an archive for the lost Posen communities" without considering the possibility of the Gesamtarchiv.¹⁶⁸ On the whole, the Weimar years represented an interregnum between the Berlin archive's early years of manic collection and a curious institutional revival under the Nazi regime.

Täubler and Philippson's archive had been intended to reflect the "current borders" of Germany; they even once called it a "Reichsarchiv."¹⁶⁹ But when those borders changed, the Gesamtarchiv's collections did not. In fact, following the First World War, collecting activities intensified in what had been eastern Germany, but now had become Poland. This reflected the Gesamtarchiv's, and German Jewry's, continued fixation upon the *Ostjuden*, heightened by German Jewish soldiers' encounter with their brethren on the eastern front.¹⁷⁰ Jews had suffered tremendously in the war, being pushed from their homes multiple times, and a violent wave of pogroms in Ukraine in 1919 (which itself spawned an archive effort, Elias Tcherikower's

¹⁶⁷ Bernhard Brillung, "Zum 10jährigen Bestehen des Breslauer jüdischen Gemeindearchivs am 1. August 1934," JMF SB1607; Bernhard Brillung, "Das Archiv der Breslauer jüdischen Gemeinde," *Jahrbuch der Schlesischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Breslau* 18 (1973): 258–284.

¹⁶⁸ "Ein Archiv der untergegangenen Posener Gemeinden," *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 23 Apr. 1925.

¹⁶⁹ Gesamtarchiv to Bayerisches Landesverband, 17 May 1909, CAHJP M5/1.

¹⁷⁰ See Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

Ostjüdisches Historisches Archiv) pushed Jews westward.¹⁷¹ The question of refugees quickly became a pressing issue for German Jews. In November 1919, the *Israelitisches Familienblatt* published a special report on immigration from the east that emphasized that the German Jewish community must cope with the influx of the poor, the hungry, and the homeless, which opened the floodgates of debate about the scale of the problem, how to serve the needy, and problems to be faced.¹⁷² Some, such as the Jewish Emigration Organization, wrote that the immigrants were no different from other Jews who came to Germany from the east, while others saw it as a catastrophe, to be compared with the flight of the Spanish Jews.¹⁷³ For a certain Dr. Gelles, the flood of refugees from Poland affirmed not the danger that Jews sought to escape but their continued sense of Germanness. “Those who were suddenly placed outside of Germany,” Gelles argued, “will continue to show their love of German culture, their loyalty to their homeland”—by immigrating to Germany.¹⁷⁴ The German Jews, it seems, were acutely afraid of the prospect of the complete depopulation of the small communities, and it became a powerful animating force for the project of collecting archives. In a January 1921 circular, the Gesamtarchiv appealed to communities in Upper Silesia in advance of the plebiscite to determine whether it should remain a part of Weimar Germany or be annexed to Poland. They feared that if the territory no longer were a part of Germany, the Jewish communities, like those in Posen, would “atrophy,” and instructed them to send archives to Berlin to protect them from “disregard and destruction.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ See Erich Lohr, “The Russian Army and the Jews: Mass Deportation, Hostages, and Violence during World War I,” *Russian Review* 60, no. 3 (July 2001): 404–419.

¹⁷² “Die Organisation der ostjüdischen Auswanderung,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 13 Nov. 1919.

¹⁷³ Heinrich Silbergleft, “Das Problem der Ostjuden,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 2 Jan. 1920; Jacques Abler, “Die Ostjudenfrage in unseren Großgemeinden,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 29 Jan. 1920.

¹⁷⁴ Dr. Gelles, “Die ehemals preußischen Gemeinden der Republik Polen,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 1 July 1920.

¹⁷⁵ Gesamtarchiv to the Board of the Community [Circular], Jan. 1921, CAHJP M5/1; in the end, the Gesamtarchiv received little material from these communities, as they reported in Jacob Jacobson, “Tätigkeitsbericht des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden,” 31 Mar. 1921, CAHJP M5/1.

Under Jacob Jacobson, the Gesamtarchiv continued its prewar emphasis on collecting in eastern regions, especially due to the supposed danger of depopulation. In response to Ephraim Sonnenschein and Jacob Freimann's 1925 call for the creation of "an archive for the lost Posen communities," Jacobson responded that it was not necessary to establish a new archive. The Berlin archive, he argued, had collected material from many of these communities before World War I, and afterwards continued to gather files from those regions no longer a part of Germany.¹⁷⁶ In a report titled "On the death of border Jewry, a sentimental travelogue," Jacobson described the mass migration that had devastated Jewish communities in the east and the decline of locales like Brätz (Brocje), where a community of 200 no longer existed and even the graveyard was no longer tended. "A synagogue without a synagogue-community—this is not unusual in our days," he remarked.¹⁷⁷ Jacobson felt it was most important to collect from these border regions, whose Jewish communities he claimed had been mostly depopulated, and made it a point to survey the files of cities no longer part of Germany, such as Gdansk.¹⁷⁸ Under Jacobson, the archive specifically sought to collect from the smallest Jewish communities. In Jacobson's trips to survey archives, synagogues, and other monuments, which he took as frequently as he could afford (both in terms of his schedule and the Gesamtarchiv's meager budget), he specifically visited the east.¹⁷⁹ In a 1931 report, Jacobson remarked that "the downfall ... of the communities, especially in those parts which previously belonged to the province of Posen, is quite depressing."¹⁸⁰ Most of the Jews of Vietz (Witnica), he reported, had abandoned the town, and only four Jewish

¹⁷⁶ Jacob Jacobson, "Akten der posenschen Judengemeinden," *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 16 July 1925.

¹⁷⁷ Jacobson, "Vom Sterben des Grenzmarkjudentums. Ein sentimentaler Reisebericht," 1927, CAHJP P126/26.

¹⁷⁸ "Rettung jüdischer Gemeinde-Akten aus der Grenzmark," *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 28 April 1927; Jacob Jacobson, "Bericht über meine Reise nach Danzig," 19 Feb. 1929, CAHJP AJHW/326a-b.

¹⁷⁹ Jacob Jacobson, "Tätigkeitsbericht des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden für die Zeit vom 1.4.1931–9.11.1932," CAHJP P17/11, where Jacobson advocates for such trips.

¹⁸⁰ Jacob Jacobson to Kulturdenkmälerkommission des Preussischen Landesverbandes jüdischer Gemeinden, 13 Oct. 1931, CAHJP M5/8.

families remained; Jacobson described communities as shells of their former selves, and which could not care for their files, necessitating their transfer to Berlin. It seems that the German Jewish identity of the collectors, forged before the war, proved more resilient than Germany's hold on its eastern territory. By continuing to collect from these eastern communities, the Gesamtarchiv's leaders affirmed their own identities and those of the communities they felt still belonged, at least in spirit, to German Jewry. These activities also highlight the Gesamtarchiv leaders' continued affiliation with a certain strain of political conservatism in Germany, a type of homeland nationalism concerned with so-called *Auslandsdeutschen*, ethnic Germans living outside the borders of Germany, and their hope to place now-Polish Jews in this framework and affirm their historical Germanness by placing them within a German Jewish archive.¹⁸¹

The Gesamtarchiv and National Socialism

Somewhat ironically, the rise to power of the Nazi party and the concomitant exclusion of Jews from public life led to a strengthening of Jewish communal institutions. The Gesamtarchiv provides one example of a trend that stretched from orchestras and operas to schools and synagogues, when German Jews simultaneously turned inward and towards the past as a mechanism for coping with the present and reminding themselves of good times gone by.¹⁸² In part, the Gesamtarchiv's renaissance resulted from a June 1935 decree that restricted Jewish

¹⁸¹ See Winson Chu, *The German Minority in Interwar Poland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 21–114; Howard Sargent, “Diasporic Citizens: Germans Abroad in the Framing of German Citizenship Law,” in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, ed. Krista O’Donnell, et al (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 17–39; Nancy Reagin, “German Brigadoon? Domesticity and Metropolitan Germans’ Perceptions of *Auslandsdeutschen* in Southwest Africa and Eastern Europe,” in *ibid.*, 248–266; Philipp Nielsen, “Between Promised Land and Broken Promise: Jews, the Right, and the States in Germany Between 1873 and 1935” (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2012).

¹⁸² At this time there was a marked increase in the number of historical articles published in journals such as the *Israelitisches Familienblatt* and *Gemeindeblatt der Jüdische Gemeinde zu Berlin*, with a focus on figures such as Maimonides and Moses Mendelssohn.

use of state archives.¹⁸³ However, the archive's higher profile was not limited to scholars. Since at least 1911, the Gesamtarchiv had a genealogical department, but the requirements of the Nazi racialist regime increased the Berlin archive's prominence to unknown levels.¹⁸⁴ As both Jews and non-Jews sought documentation of their racial status, public use of the archive grew geometrically.¹⁸⁵ The archive received 1,812 inquiries in 1932, 3,107 in 1933, and 6,553 in 1934.¹⁸⁶ By 1937 and 1938, between 50 and 100 people came every day.¹⁸⁷

The rapidly changing environment of National Socialist Germany also led to a shift in the Gesamtarchiv's collecting activity. In the 1920s, the Gesamtarchiv had collected from eastern communities, but under the Nazi regime, these regions lost their appeal as the Gesamtarchiv took on a wholly different role in German Jewish life. Now, the Gesamtarchiv shifted its focus from the small eastern communities and collected nearly exclusively from within the boundaries of Nazi Germany, showing an internal focus emerging from contemporary requirements to serve as a resource for both German Jews as well as the Nazis. Although the archive's collective gaze shifted, Jacobson's emphasis on the importance of small communities remained. In a June 1938 article published in the Zionist *Jüdische Rundschau* as well as a number of Jewish communal newspapers, Jacobson called on readers to "protect your archival material!" In particular, he emphasized the Gesamtarchiv's part in collecting material from Jewish communities that in their

¹⁸³ "Benutzung der Preußischen Staatsarchiv für die Geschichte des Judenthums," 15 Jun. 1935, BArch Lichterfelde R1506/1102.

¹⁸⁴ Martin Philippson, Invitation to *VII. Sitzung des Kuratoriums für das Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden*, 21 Oct. 1910, CAHJP M5/1, puts the founding of a genealogical department on the agenda. At that meeting (6 Nov. 1910, CAHJP P17/11), it was decided to create a publication to help families research their history before 1800.

¹⁸⁵ On the racial regime, see Deborah Hertz, "The Genealogy Bureaucracy in the Third Reich," *Jewish History* 11, no. 2 (1997): 53–78; Götz Aly and Karl Heinz Roth, *The Nazi Census: Identification and Control in the Third Reich* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004); Eric Ehrenreich, *The Nazi Ancestral Proof: Genealogy, Racial Science, and the Final Solution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

¹⁸⁶ Jacob Jacobson, "Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Gesamtarchivs ... für die Zeit vom 10. November 1932–25. März 1935," CAHJP AHW/326a-b.

¹⁸⁷ Rosi Regensburger, "Das Gesamtarchiv der Juden in Deutschland nach 1933," CAHJP M5/17.

day and age no longer existed. He stressed that such “dwarf communities” (*Zwerggemeinden*) were still in great danger of disappearing and were populated by people without the proper understanding of the value of archival material. Jacobson called on community leaders to give their files to the Gesamtarchiv for genealogical research before their communities were fully dissolved. Jacobson exhorted “The community leader who quite recently, before he emigrated to America, transferred the archival material of his community to the Gesamtarchiv unbidden” as one who “understood the signs of the time... he should serve as a model.”¹⁸⁸

In 1939, the archive was incorporated into the Reichssippenamt, the Nazi department of racial research. In part, it resulted from the Nazis’ increasing interest in the study of Jewish history. Years before the 1940 formation of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, which infamously brought together looted Jewish historical and cultural material in Frankfurt am Main, Nazi leaders grew interested in Jewish records. As early as 1936, the Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands inquired into the possibility of bringing together all Jewish historical materials so that they could use them for the study of the Jews.¹⁸⁹ In preparation for Kristallnacht, Reinhard Heydrich specifically ordered that Jewish archives be spared, and in the aftermath of the “November pogrom” the Gestapo confiscated Jewish archives across Germany.¹⁹⁰ In January 1939, Gestapo leaders met to discuss the fate of the seized archives; they all agreed that Jewish files all should be brought together under Gestapo administration to be used for

¹⁸⁸ Jacobson, “Schützt euer Archivgut!” *Gemeindeblatt der Jüdischen Gemeinde zu Berlin*, 26 June 1938.

¹⁸⁹ *Präsident der Reichsinstituts für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands*, “Generalrepertorium über Judaica-Bestände in deutschen Archiven,” 22 Dec. 1926, GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/1152.

¹⁹⁰ Reinhard Heydrich, “Massnahmen gegen Juden in der heutigen Nacht,” 10 Nov. 1938, published in Wolf-Arno Kropat, *Reichskristallnacht: Der Judenpogrom vom 7. bis November 1938—Urheber, Täter, Hintergründe: mit ausgewählten Dokumenten* (Wiesbaden: Kommission für die Geschichte der Juden in Hessen, 1997), 214–216. Also see Ernst Zipfel to Generaldirektor der Staatsarchiv, 28 Nov. 1938, BArch Lichterfelde R1506/7 and the attached “Verordnung zur Sicherheit des Schrift- und Archivguts der Juden in Deutschland,” and Geheimes Staatsarchiv an alle Staatsarchive, 4 Jan. 1940, GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/1153.

political purposes.¹⁹¹ That March, the Gestapo took over two of the Gesamtarchiv's rooms and installed an officer to monitor the archive.¹⁹² Jacobson was provided with certain "advantages"—for example, he was not forced to wear the six-pointed star and was given opportunities to spare friends from deportation—but he became, in effect, a prisoner of the Gestapo. His wife and son were permitted to emigrate to Britain in 1939, but Jacobson's exit visa was denied, likely due to Jacobson's "usefulness" for his archival knowledge.¹⁹³ Jacobson was forced to work as an "expert" for the Reichssippenamt, translating the Gesamtarchiv's Hebrew documents.¹⁹⁴ In the years and months preceding his May 1943 deportation, the Reichssippenamt's office gradually occupied more space in the offices of the Berlin Jewish community, eventually taking over the whole library. Jacobson was forced to help to organize the Nazis' archival collections on the Jews while his staff was gradually deported.¹⁹⁵ Even though Jewish communities in southern Germany continued to send files, he knew that the end was near.¹⁹⁶ In May 1943, the Geheimes Staatsarchiv finally confiscated the whole archive. "With my arrest on May 12, 1943," as Jacobson later recalled, "the Gesamtarchiv was entirely finished."¹⁹⁷ But he still was able to salvage some material. After his arrest, Jacobson was allowed to peruse the Gesamtarchiv and

¹⁹¹ "Niederschrift über die Besprechung über jüdische Archive," 27 Jan. 1939, GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/1152.

¹⁹² Leiter Reichsstelle für Sippenforschung an den Reichsminister des Innern, "Zentralstelle für jüdische Personenstandsregister," 31 Mar. 1939, BArch Lichterfelde R1506/7. On the Gestapo's takeover of the Gesamtarchiv and Jacobson's role, see: Diana Schule, "Oranienburger Strass 28–31," in *Jews in Nazi Berlin: From Kristallnacht to Liberation*, ed. Beate Meyer, et al (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 365–376.

¹⁹³ Jacob Jacobson, "Bruchstücke 1939–1945," 2–4, 16, LBI ME 329. Also see Ernst G. Lowenthal, "Muster eines Jüdischen Archivars: Jacob Jacobson," 30 Oct. 1953, CAHJP M5/17.

¹⁹⁴ Jacob Jacobson, "Curriculum Vitae," 4 July 1943, CAHJP P136/40. In a 2 June 1948 letter, Eugen Täubler asserted that Jacobson stayed in Germany of his own accord: "To prove his devotion to these Jewish interests may still be mentioned here that when his [Jacobson's] wife and his son found refuge in England in 1939, he did not accompany them but remained [sic] at his post to continue his work for which he really was indispensable, until [sic] he was deported as already mentioned." (Eugen Täubler to JTS, 2 June 1948, UB Basel NL 76 E1 #353, 2–3.)

¹⁹⁵ Jacobson, "Bruchstücke 1939–1945," 23, LBI ME 329.

¹⁹⁶ Jacobson, "Bruchstücke 1939–1945," 24.

¹⁹⁷ Jacob Jacobson to Kreuzberger, 12 Oct. 1965, LBI ME 329.

bring some files to Theresienstadt under the premise of continuing his “research” for the Reichssippenamt, which ensured that Jacobson was provided with his own room, a typewriter, and even an assistant.¹⁹⁸ Eugen Täubler later reflected that Jacobson’s “collaboration” presented him with the opportunity to save valuable historic material and to use the archives for the purpose of helping Jews in distress.¹⁹⁹

The bitter irony of German Jewry under National Socialism was that the Nazi policies of isolating the German Jews led to the achievement of certain goals long pursued by segments of the German Jewish community. The Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland (Reich Representation of the Jews in Germany, formed in September 1933) and the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland (Reich Union of the Jews in Germany, established in February 1939), respectively a representative group of the German Jews and a unified communal body, reflected the fruition of German Jewish leaders’ hopes to form a unified body of all of the German Jews stretching back to the Gemeindebund’s vision of a Gesamtorganisation. The Nazis’ policies of emigration certainly were in line with the general aims of the Zionist Organization to extract Jewish people and capital from Europe to Palestine. And from its origins, the Gesamtarchiv’s leaders had hoped to make archives a priority for the Jewish community. The growing utilization of the archive and the Nazi-controlled Jewish press’ constant publication of Jacob Jacobson’s call to “protect your archival material!” reflected not a new collaboration under duress, but a continuation of the Gesamtarchiv’s well-established ties with the German state. As early as 1910

¹⁹⁸ Jacobson, “Curriculum Vitae,” 4 Jul. 1943, CAHJP P136/40. Cf. Jacobson, “Terezin: The Daily Life, 1943–1945,” 1946, LBI DM 83: “Jewish Science, too, had its place in Theresienstadt: in a small villa, outside the town, valuable and sometimes very old Hebraica collected from various Jewish libraries in the occupied territories had to be catalogued.” (9)

¹⁹⁹ “Besides the scientific activity that Dr. Jacobson carried through during these 23 years, he proved true in a specific way as an upright and courageous [sic] Jew in the Nazi-time: by rescuing large stocks of archives of Jewish communities that were not yet deposited into [sic] the Gesamtarchiv, and by utilizing these documents not only in scholastic interests but also for thousands of Jews who needed informations [sic] for the sake of their emigration.” (Eugen Täubler to JTS, 2 Jun. 1948, UB Basel NL 76 E1 #353, 2)

the Gesamtarchiv had sought to work with the state to achieve its goals of creating a total archive of the German Jewish past by serving as a repository for historical material on Jews found in state archives. The activities of the Gesamtarchiv present only one example by which anti-Jewish policies led to the paradoxical fruition of enduring but long unattained Jewish aims enabled by working together with Nazi functionaries and state officials.²⁰⁰

Conclusion: The “Gesamt” Archiv and its Legacy

In 1943, the Gesamtarchiv was absorbed into the collections of the Geheimes Staatsarchiv in Dahlem. In the final two years of the Second World War, the archive’s collections were divided. In part, this resulted from German archivists’ general efforts to secure materials in danger from Allied bombing campaigns.²⁰¹ In the early years of the war, German archivists had been tasked with administering the files of occupied regions.²⁰² Now, they worked to remove these archives from the dangers of the front or easily-targeted archival centers. As the German Wehrmacht retreated, so too did the archives, leading to some confusion as to what was where.²⁰³ After the war’s end, the Gesamtarchiv’s files appeared at the Zentralarchiv in Potsdam, the collecting

²⁰⁰ See Jacob Jacobson, “Schützt euer Archivgut!” *Gemeindeblatt der Jüdischen Gemeinde zu Berlin*, 26 June 1938; *Jüdische Rundschau*, 10 June 1938 (JMF SB1609); *Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt für Oberschlesien*, 23 June 1938 (JMF SB1678); Jacob Jacobson, “Schützt Euer Archivgut!” *Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt für die Synagogen-Gemeinden in Preußen/Norddeutschland* 1 Sept. 1938 (CAHJP M5/17).

²⁰¹ Ernst Hickmann, “Schutz des wichtigen Schriftgutes der Wirtschaft im Kriege mit den Richtlinien zur Sicherung des wertvollen Schriftgutes gegen Luftangriffe und bei Altpapiersammlungen,” 1944, Georg Winter, “Bericht,” 14 Feb. 1944, GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/37; “Luftschutzmäßige Sicherung judenkundlicher Quellen,” *Mitteilungsblatt der preußischen Archivverwaltung*, 20 Jul. 1944, GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/1153; “Baulicher Zustand des Preußischen Geheimen Staatsarchivs. Berichte des Geh. Staatsarchiv vom 28. Juni und 3. Juli 1945,” GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/51.

²⁰² “Neuorganisation der Archivverwaltung in der Ostmark,” *Mitteilungsblatt der preußischen Archivverwaltung*, 19 Feb. 1940, “Einsatz deutscher Archivare im westlichen Operationsgebiet,” *Mitteilungsblatt der preußischen Archivverwaltung*, 12. Oct. 1940, “Ost- und Westprogramm,” *Mitteilungsblatt der preußischen Archivverwaltung*, 20 Mar. 1941, in GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/63; “Sonderreferat ‘Archivwesen’ im Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete,” *Mitteilungsblatt der preußischen Archivverwaltung*, 4. Jul. 1942, in GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/64. Also see the extensive discussion of case studies in Poland, Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium, and the Netherlands in *Das deutsche Archivwesen und der Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Robert Kretschmar, et al (Essen: Klartext, 2007), 166–272.

²⁰³ “Archivalientransporte trotz Verkehrssperre,” *Mitteilungsblatt der preußischen Archivverwaltung*, 27 Jan. 1945, in GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/67, “Schließung des Staatsarchiv Kattowitz,” 22 Jan. 1945, GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/54.

points at Schönebeck an der Elbe (in the Soviet zone of occupation), and perhaps even partially ended up in Russia as what has been termed “twice-looted” archives, taken first by the Nazis and then by Soviet “trophy brigades.”²⁰⁴

The Berlin archive long held a central place in the development of Jewish archives, not just as the first Jewish archive of the twentieth century but also as a model for others. In 1905, Sigmund Husserl, the director of the archives of the Vienna Jewish community, suggested the establishment of an “Allgemeines Archiv der österreichisch-jüdische Kultus-Gemeinden” (General Archive of the Austrian Jewish Religious Communities). Not only did he follow the originally proposed name of the Gesamtarchiv (the “Allgemeines Archiv”), but he specifically referred to Zivier’s proposal as a starting point for the centralization of the Jewish community archives in Austria.²⁰⁵ In 1937, when discussing the creation of an archive in Jerusalem, Simcha Assaf suggested the Gesamtarchiv as a model.²⁰⁶ Isidore Meyer, librarian of the American Jewish Historical Society, wrote in a report in 1941 on preserving Jewish war records that “Serious thought must be given to build up a ‘Gesamt-Archiv’ of every phase of American Jewish history.”²⁰⁷ Two years later, he again called for “a Gesamtarchiv of the American Jewish community.”²⁰⁸ What is more, as one will recall, the Gesamtarchiv also spurred its opponents to create archives of their own, as did Moïse Ginsburger, responding to the challenge of the Berlin

²⁰⁴ “Confidential Report: Cultural Property in Berlin and the Soviet Zone” (JCR Field Report Nr. 6), 8 Apr. 1949, CAHJP JRSO/NY/923a; “Notes from the Meeting with Dr. Jacob Robinson” (Institute of Jewish Affairs, New York), 31 Mar. 1947, CAHJP IHS/8. On “twice-looted archives,” see Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, “From Nazi Plunder to Russian Restitution,” in *Returned from Russia: Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues*, ed. Grimsted, et al (Builth Wells, UK: Institute of Art and Law, 2007), 3–134.

²⁰⁵ “Archiv der oesterreichisch-jüd. Kultus-Gemeinden,” *Antrag des Präsidiums betreffend die Gründung eines ‘Zentral-Archivs der oester-jüd. Kultus-Gemeinden,’* CAHJP AW/1706; “Aus anderen Distrikten unseres Ordens,” *Bericht der Grossloge*, May 1905, 47–50, which describes the proposal to create an Austrian archive.

²⁰⁶ “Zikhron devarim mi-yeshiva mukdeshet le-ba‘ayot ha-historyah ha-‘ivrit,” 27 Apr. 1937, CZA P64/148/1/1.

²⁰⁷ Meyer, “Memorandum on the Preservation of the American Jewish War Records,” 6 June 1941, AJHS I-1, 125/1.

²⁰⁸ Meyer, “The American Jewish Historical Society,” *Journal of Jewish Bibliography* 4, no. 1–2 (1943): 6–24.

archive with the formation of his archive in its mirror image. And, as we will see in the coming chapters, the Gesamtarchiv provided a kind of template; indeed, projects like the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem and the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati can be characterized as variations on the theme of the Gesamtarchiv's "total archive."

Somewhat unsurprisingly, Eugen Täubler vocalized the idea of the Gesamtarchiv as a model archive most passionately. When Täubler resigned from his post as the Gesamtarchiv's director in 1919 in order to create and direct what would become the Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin, he saw the Gesamtarchiv as a model which others could borrow or even duplicate.²⁰⁹ In drafting a proposal for this academy, he not only called for the creation of Talmudic and photograph archives, but also explicitly stated that the Gesamtarchiv should be replicated. "The study of history is so very dependent upon records and files," he explained in a 1917 draft, "that the establishment of a Gesamtarchiv, at this time only existing in Germany, must be transferred to other countries, for the centralization of communal files, for the collection of material from state, municipal, castle, village, church, and guild archives."²¹⁰ In the final version of the proposal from 1920, he again called for the spread of the Gesamtarchiv vision, explaining that its "objectives and methods" should be spread to other countries.²¹¹ Täubler thought that the Gesamtarchiv could be duplicated as a model for other countries, which would need their own archives. In the context of the broad history of Jewish archives, what becomes apparent, however, is that Täubler's Gesamtarchiv was not simply an example that others sought to follow, but a lasting standard for the collection of Jewish archives.

It might be expected that contemporaries in Vienna, who, like Moïse Ginsburger, were

²⁰⁹ On the Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, see Myers, "The Fall and Rise of Jewish Historicism."

²¹⁰ Täubler, "Plan zur Begründung eines Instituts für jüdische Geschichtsforschung," 1917, UB Basel NL 76 B/2 #4.

²¹¹ Eugen Täubler, "Das Forschungs-Institut für die Wissenschaft des Judentums: Organisation und Arbeitsplan," in *Aufsätze zur Problematik jüdischer Geschichtsschreibung 1908–1950* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1977), 39.

responding to a particular Zeitgeist, or Täubler himself, who directed the Gesamtarchiv for nearly thirteen years and would later call it his life's work, would think that the Berlin archive's model was widely applicable.²¹² But even after the destruction of European Jewry, the Gesamtarchiv retained its position in the pantheon of Jewish archives. From the very beginning of the postwar era, it was an important symbol in the struggle for Jewish archives. Scholars sought out the Gesamtarchiv's remains, hoping to reconstitute it as a whole. Eugen Täubler wanted to recreate the archive, not in Cincinnati where he had fled with his wife Selma Stern in 1940, but in London, where Jacobson settled after the war.²¹³ And Bernhard Brillung, a rabbi and formerly Jewish archivist in Breslau who fled to Palestine in 1939 but returned to Germany in 1957, hoped to but ultimately failed in his aim to create a new German Jewish archive as a continuation of the Gesamtarchiv.²¹⁴ In 1951, a part of the Berlin archive ended up at the Historical Society of Israel's Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem following a series of negotiations between the Jewish community in Berlin, Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, and Israeli representatives such as Alex Bein, Israel's first state archivist. The rest of the archive remained in Potsdam until the establishment of Centrum Judaicum in Berlin in 1988.²¹⁵

The major Jewish archives of the postwar era also all had ties to the Gesamtarchiv. Josef Meisl, a close colleague of Jacob Jacobson's and the former librarian of the Berlin Jewish community whose office was down the hall from the Gesamtarchiv, founded the Jewish Historical

²¹² Eugen Täubler to Herman Muller, 5 May 1949, UB Basel NL 76 E4 #027.3.

²¹³ Eugen Täubler to Jewish Theological Seminary, 2 June 1948, UB Basel NL 76 E1 #353; Eugen Täubler to Herman Muller, 5 May 1949, UB Basel NL 76 E4 #027, 3.

²¹⁴ Bernhard Brillung, "Ein Archiv für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, als eine Forderung der Wiedergutmachung," 24 Jan. 1956, JMF SB1676.

²¹⁵ Hannah Arendt to Dr. Ernst Gottfried Lowenthal, 25 Sept. 1950, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/189; "Yeshivat va'ad ha-ḥevrah," 14 Nov. 1950, CAHJP IHS/10. On the transfer of Gesamtarchiv materials to Centrum Judaicum, see: Eberhard Gönner to Ministerium des Innern (DDR), 22 Oct. 1987, Helmut Eschwege to Hermann Simon, 26 Oct. 1987, "Herkunft und Zusammensetzung des Archivguts," 11 Aug. 1988, "Besuch des Präsidenten des Verbandes der Jüdischen Gemeinde in der DDR im Zentralen Staatsarchiv," 4 Nov. 1988, BArch Lichterfelde DO4/1348.

General Archives in Jerusalem in 1939. Ben Zion Dinaburg, another important figure in the Jerusalem archives, was a student of Täubler's at the *Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Georg Herlitz, Täubler's assistant at the *Gesamtarchiv*, went on to establish the Zionist Central Archives in Berlin in 1919, which relocated to Jerusalem in 1934. Herlitz later played a major part in the development of archives in Israel/Palestine as an instructor in the first classes for professional archivists and as an elder statesman, honorary president of the Union of Israel Archives.²¹⁶ Jacob Rader Marcus, the founder of the American Jewish Archives, studied in Berlin in the 1920s and hired Selma Stern-Täubler, a prominent scholar of German Jewry and Eugen Täubler's wife, to serve as his archivist. And Bernhard Brillung was in close contact with Jacobson for years. In all, a network of twentieth-century Jewish archival activity originated with the *Gesamtarchiv*, demonstrating the importance of this cohort of scholars and archivists within the development of Jewish archives as well as the *Gesamtarchiv*'s specific place at its center.

Finally, the *Gesamtarchiv* presented a powerful and enduring vision of the total archive which reached its apex following the Holocaust. The Berlin archive's vision of centralized, comprehensive, and "total" collecting, as we have seen, hinged upon a series of internal contradictions and cut against its parallel aim to spread an archival ideal: Collecting historical material in Berlin, in a way, was dependent upon local Jewish communities not having a "proper appreciation" for the value of their archives. For once everyone wants to have their own "archive of their antiquities," they began fighting over control of historical material. The *Gesamtarchiv* did amass a large collection of historical material in the period prior to World War I, but they were never able to fully realize their program. The Weimar years represented a period of great energy, but little centralization. At that time, as we shall see in the coming chapter, Jews in

²¹⁶ "Kurs le-hakhsharat 'arkhiona'im mada'im," 13 Oct. 1952, CZA A198/13; also see *Zion* 20, no. 3–4 (1955): 192, which describes Herlitz as "vatik ha-'arkhiyona'im ba-'arets" ("the veteran archivist in the land [of Israel]").

Germany and elsewhere looked to create their own local and regional archives instead depositing files at a central location. And in the 1930s, the Gesamtarchiv's pendulum swung back towards centralization, but under the shadow of the Nazi party's coopting of Jewish institutions as a means of social control. For this reason, the notion of archival comprehensiveness embedded in the Gesamtarchiv's name and program remained an ideal that would find its most radical realization following the Second World War, especially in the activities of the Jewish Historical General Archives, since 1969 known as the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People.

The Gesamtarchiv operated on multiple levels. It manifested specific elements of Jewish life in Germany as well as universal aspects of archival activity in modern times, not to mention internal paradoxes embedded within each. A child of its German Jewish cultural and institutional context, one might say that the archive "archived" its environment as well as historic documents. The Gesamtarchiv was imprinted by dreams of synthesis between *Deutschtum und Judentum* and of the constitution of German Jewry as a unified whole—together with the problems inherent in each of these projects. At the same time, its program spoke to the nature of archiving. The name Gesamtarchiv, or "total archive," was not merely fortuitous in the way in which it encapsulated the archive's specific vision. It gave voice to a general philosophy of archival work, a dream of comprehensive totality. Simultaneously, the Gesamtarchiv's focus on archival advocacy lent itself to the tensions between centralization and the impulse to create many local archives. In doing so, the Gesamtarchiv presents an epicenter of the blossoming twentieth-century archival moment in Jewish life. Even if the Gesamtarchiv was unable to fully realize its total vision, its institutional context—as we shall see in the coming chapter—encapsulated the forces driving Jews around the world at this time, and it presented a paradigm for postwar "total archives."

With the proliferation of the Gesamtarchiv model in early twentieth century Jewish

archival practice, the seemingly universal (but problematic) concept of the “total” archive spread alongside the inner contradictions of the Gesamtarchiv. Thus, from a certain perspective the archive did indeed track German Jewish history, as Jacobson claimed, “from cradle to grave.” Not only did it document Jewish life in Germany from its medieval origins to its seeming conclusion in the Holocaust, but Jacobson’s claim that archives provide those inscribed within with a kind of eternal life also rings true: The Gesamtarchiv’s “archiving” of its German context, alongside its historic role as paradigm for those projects which followed in its wake, creates a curious historical conjuncture. The internal contradictions and even the German Jewish cultural context embedded within the Gesamtarchiv were exported to the other Jewish archives that followed in its wake and translated the idea of this “total archive” to new environs, as did the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem and the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati. Consequently, the tensions that characterized the history of the Gesamtarchiv present *Leitmotive* for the history of Jewish archives during the twentieth century as a whole, opening an era of archival proliferation and serving as a model for historical institutions which served as sites for the negotiation of complex identities and the construction of imagined (and often conflicting) communities of Jewishness. Perhaps unknowingly, they also picked up the internal issues of the German Jewish community and spread them to other places after World War II by patterning the Gesamtarchiv model of the “total archive.”

Chapter 3

Archive Fever A Proliferation of Jewish Archives

In December 1927, Bernhard Brillung jotted some notes on “the importance of a Jewish communal archive.” The twenty-one-year-old rabbinical student at the Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar in Breslau had begun working as an assistant at the Breslau Gemeindecarchiv that year. It clearly left a strong impression. “An archive is no superfluous luxury,” he wrote, “but rather an absolute necessity.”¹ Brillung’s youthful earnestness did not simply reflect the beginnings of a lifelong passion for archives, a driving factor in Brillung’s career as rabbi, historian, and archivist from then until his death in 1987.² He also expressed a certain archival impulse, mirroring the *cri de cœur* of Ezechiel Zivier a quarter-century prior, who in 1903 called for an archive for German Jewry by declaring that “every great people has an archive of their antiquities.”³ A generation apart, Zivier and Brillung evoked a shared spirit of archival universalism, that everyone should have archives of their own. In the intervening time, Jewish archive activities had exploded.

If the nineteenth century saw a “turn to history” in Jewish life, the twentieth century witnessed a turn to archives as Jews created a multitude of archives both large and small, and took up the archive as an organizing principle for a wide range of collecting projects.⁴ This archival moment opened with the founding of the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden in Berlin; it would be at the center of a network of twentieth-century archivists and archives, and it gave voice to a

¹ Bernhard Brillung, 1 Dec. 1927, JMF SB1607.

² On Brillung, see ch. 6, pp. 405–416; Helmut Richter, “Bernhard Brillung zum Gedenken,” in *Gedenkschrift für Bernhard Brillung*, ed. Peter Freimark, et al (Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1988), 9–13; Brillung, *Vita*, 21 Apr. 1932, JMF SB0657/1; Brillung, *Vita*, 4 July 1938, JMF SB0644; Brillung to Saul Kagan, 11 Oct. 1955, JMF SB1680.

³ “Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Dec. 1903, 8.

⁴ Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Brandeis University Press, 1994).

new archival spirit and embodied some of the fundamental aspects of the archival impulse that animated it. This manic archival activity was a veritable documania. Everyone, it seemed, was creating an archive of his or her own. Whether emulating the Gesamtarchiv's centralized model, as in Vienna, or opposing it, as in Strasbourg, Hamburg, and Hannover—Jews turned to archives: When the American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) was established in 1892, creating an archive was not at the top of the agenda, and neither did Simon Dubnow look too positively upon archives when he penned a now-famous call for the Jews of eastern Europe to send him historical documents that same year. A half-century later, the AJHS not only amassed a strong collection of historical documents but also looked to the Gesamtarchiv as its model. Meanwhile, Dubnow placed archives at the center of his effort with his Historical and Ethnographic Society in St. Petersburg (1909). Later, the YIVO or Yiddish Scientific Institute (1925), which took its cues from Dubnow's efforts, formed an array of archives the world over, and not just in Vilnius, where it was centered, but also in Berlin, New York, Buenos Aires, and Paris.⁵ In these years, communal and regional archives like the Breslau Gemeindearchiv (1924) arose at the same time as genealogical societies and archives of professional associations. Such archival expansion reflected both a rising historical consciousness and also intensive cultural activity in the form of gathering Jewish culture, increasingly under the banner of the archive.

Yet if one queried Jewish scholars and archivists in these years, they might have painted a bleaker picture. In 1907, Zivier had complained that Jewish communities afforded “absolutely no importance” to their files, and Eugen Täubler commented similarly of Jews’ “indifference” to archives.⁶ In 1930, when the United Synagogue called on Cecil Roth to assess Jewish archives in

⁵ See “Bulletin of the Central Jewish Library and Press Archives,” Jan.–Mar. 1939, YIVO Office Archives, and “Argentinian YIVO-Yedies: YIVO, Central Library and Archive in Buenos Aires,” 1 (Jan. 1942), YIVO Office Archives.

⁶ Zivier, *Vortrag des Fürstl. Archivars Dr. Zivier–Pleiß gehalten auf der Hauptversammlung in Königshütte O.S. am 27. Okt. 1907* (Königshütte: R. Giebler, 1908); Täubler, “Arkhiy evreiskikh” obshchin” b” Germanii,” in *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*:

Britain, he laid fault on Jewish leaders for the destruction of their archives.⁷ In 1949, Salo Baron lamented that not only had American Jews long neglected historical files, but that also in the present day “many important documents... are being destroyed daily, and no one cares.”⁸ And Alex Bein complained—in 1961, speaking at the World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, and again in 1963, before the American Jewish Historical Society—that any Jewish historical archive had avoided destruction over the centuries “only by the ignorance of its existence on the part of those in charge.”⁹ Of course, such views were not limited to Jews; in one well-known case, Alexis de Tocqueville criticized the young American republic for a lack of interest in the historical sources of the future.¹⁰ It seems this narrative of archival danger and disrepair was particularly prevalent among Jewish scholars in the first half of the twentieth century, but the fact is that at the same time scholars like Bein polemicized about what they perceived as historical archives in disarray, a tremendous movement was afoot, a dynamic proliferation of Jewish archives.

This chapter seeks to understand the inherent tensions between the stance taken by Jewish archivists, that archives were in decay, alongside a rising archive fever. We thereby endeavor to comprehend the scope, nature, and contours of the twentieth-century archival explosion in Jewish life. A series of cases in the United States, Europe, and Palestine/Israel allow us to capture an impression of an archival age in Jewish life and the spirit that animated it, a growing importance of the written trace of the past, and the *archive* as its particular gathering point. From 1892 to 1942, we see a sea change in Jewish approaches to archives, as archives became more prevalent

vod" znanī o evreīty" i ego kul'tury b" proshlom" i nastoiashchem" (St. Petersburg: *Brokgauz"-Efron*", 1906), III:226–233.

⁷ Cecil Roth, “Archives of the United Synagogue: Report and Catalogue” (London: 1930), 5.

⁸ Salo Baron, “American Jewish History: Problems and Methods,” in *Steeled by Adversity: Essays and Addresses on American Jewish Life* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1971), 26–73, also in *PAJHS* 39 (1950), 207–266.

⁹ Bein, “Matsav ha-’arkhiyonim ha-yehudim ba-tefutsot u-ba-’arets,” 27 Jul. 1961 CZA P64/163a; cf. the identical speech presented at the annual meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society, Apr. 1963, CZA P64/164.

¹⁰ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Da la Démocratie en Amérique* (Paris: Charles Gosselin, 1840), II:62. Cf. Ernst Posner, “What, Then, Is the American Archivist, This New Man?” *American Archivist* 20, no. 1 (1957): 3–11.

in historical societies and in Jewish life at large. By then, archives are to be found everywhere in Jewish life, in the realms of “official” records stressed by archival professionals and far beyond. YIVO’s “theater archive” (actually a museum), the “archives” of wartime ghettos documenting Nazi atrocities, and the formation of “art archives” (more accurately galleries) gesture at the increasing use of the language of archives to describe collections of all kinds, reflecting a cultural cachet ascribed to archives. Alongside the appearance of a new class of Jews trained as archive professionals, this archival phenomenon reflected the meaning of archives for everyday people. It emerged from a series of varied social stimuli, reflecting the diverse environments of Jewish life. The two most important, perhaps, were a sense of impending doom, and the bureaucratization of communal and institutional life. As was the case for the Gesamtarchiv, Jews found a powerful archival impulse in a sense of the disrepair of historical records alongside the decay of traditional social settings supporting collective memory, together with a hope to ease administration and to find historical and cultural legitimacy by holding archives. Ultimately, when Jews of opposing political and ideological stripes turned to archives, whether in Berlin and Strasbourg at the opening of the twentieth century or in Jerusalem and Vilnius in the 1920s and 1930s, we see the scale of this archival moment in Jewish history. Moreover, the proliferation of archives in Jewish life and the use of the terminology of archives to describe diverse collecting activities reflected the rising place of the archival record as a repository of memory—what Pierre Nora termed “archival” memory, dependent on “exterior scaffolding and outward signs” as opposed to lived experience, or Jacques Derrida’s notion of the archival “prosthesis” as a replacement for memory—which marked archives as sites of cultural value and set the stage for struggles over control of the Jewish past that only gained greater urgency after the Second World War.¹¹

¹¹ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 13. Cf. Jacques Derrida, “Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,” *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 22.

An Archival Turn in Jewish Life, 1892–1942

Over the nineteenth century, Jewish scholarship experienced a revolution in its approach to historical sources, highlighted as one will recall by the shift from Moses Mannheimer's recourse to "fables" in 1842 to Gershon Wolf's 1892 declaration of the archive as a standard of historical authenticity.¹² In the first half of the twentieth century, a sea change of similar magnitude occurred regarding the place of archives in Jewish life at large. In the *fin de siècle*, Jews organized historical societies as part of a tradition of diverse local, ethnic, and religious historical societies; one can point to the Société des études juives in Paris (1880), the Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund's Historische Commission (1885), the American Jewish Historical Society (1892), and the Jewish Historical Society of England (1893), among others.¹³ For the most part, though, these scholarly enterprises did not create archive collections of their own. But what we witness is not merely a story of delayed archive-making, as when the Gemeindebund's Historische Commission was followed two decades later by the Gesamtarchiv; or, in a similar case, when Yosef Hazanovitch founded the Sifriyah Abravanel in 1892 in Jerusalem—what would later become the National and University Library—but its archives and manuscript division was only established in 1924.¹⁴ Instead, the archival proliferation of the early twentieth century can be seen as a remarkable cultural transformation. Archives were of course sites to store administrative records no longer in

¹² Cf. pp. 69–71.

¹³ See Alexander Marx, "Societies for the Promotion of the Study of Jewish History," *PAJHS* 20 (1911): 1–9; Josef Meisl, "Ha-ya'adah ha-historit le-toldot ha-yehudim ba-germanyah," *Zion* 19, no. 3–4 (1954): 171–172; Uffa Jensen, *Gebildete Doppelgänger. Bürgerliche Juden und Protestanten im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhöck & Ruprecht, 2005), 261ff; Georges Weill, "'Sciences, judaïsme, patrie.' La fondation de la Société des études juives (1879–1884)," in *Les revues scientifiques d'études juives: passé et avenir*, ed. Simon C. Mimouni, et al (Paris: 2002), 37–60; also Simon Schwarzfuchs, "Deux revues et une science: La *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* et la *Revue des Études Juives*," in *ibid.*, 137–164. On historical societies in Germany, see GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/1162, 178/1163, which detail societies across Germany; Susan A. Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 81–93; Abigail Green, *Fatherlands: State-Building and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 102–111; John J. Appel, *Immigrant Historical Societies in the United States, 1880–1950* (New York: 1980).

¹⁴ See Dov Schidorsky, "Shmu'el Hugo Bergman u-me'om be-'itsuv beit-ha-sefarim ha-le'umi ye-ha-'universita'i," *Katedrah: Le-toldot 'erets yisra'el ye-yishuvah* 76 (July 1996): 116–146.

use by businesses, institutions, or governments—a distinction between the “working archive” and “historical archive” emphasized by Alex Bein in his efforts to professionalize archival work in Palestine in the 1930s.¹⁵ Moreover, the archive came to represent a broader category of cultural activity in Jewish life, which can be illustrated by examples of transforming archival traditions in the United States and Eastern Europe, punctuated by parallel histories from 1892 to 1942 that provide an impression of a cultural atmosphere that framed an era of tremendous archival activity.

In 1891 and 1892, Simon Dubnow called on eastern European Jews to “search and investigate” their past, asking “zamlers” (lit., collectors) send him historical documents for study and safekeeping. Dubnow’s appeal represents one origin of an eastern European Jewish tradition of collecting, a rubric under which we can place S. An-sky’s ethnographic expeditions alongside YIVO’s *zamlers* in the 1920s and 1930s and the thievery of Zosa Szajkowski in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁶ However, Dubnow’s call to collect was primarily intended to serve his own research, and he did not aim to form a publicly-accessible archive. In fact, he depicted archives as places where history was hidden away, complaining of sources “consigned to the archive.”¹⁷ By 1909, Dubnow’s historical society in St. Petersburg placed the archive at the center of his new enterprise. Of its two flagship publications, one was to be a “Russian-Jewish Archive” and he also called for the formation of a “Central Archive and Museum.”¹⁸ YIVO, founded in 1925 in the image of

¹⁵ See Bein, “Registraturah–’Arkhiyon–Historyah,” 1937, 1942, CZA P64/148/2.

¹⁶ A sense of the unity of this tradition is presented in Marek Web, “Dubnov and Jewish Archives: An Introduction to his Papers at the YIVO Institute,” in *A Missionary for History: Essays in Honor of Simon Dubnow* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis, 1998), 87–92. Also see *Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. An-sky’s Ethnographic Expeditions*, ed. Eugen M. Avrutin (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2009); Nathaniel Deutsch, *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), and Fruma Mohrer, Marek Web, *Guide to the YIVO Archives* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), *xii–xiii*; Lisa Leff indicates in *The Archive Thief* that Szajkowski saw his thefts as part of the “zamlers” tradition.

¹⁷ Dubnow, “Let us Seek and Investigate,” 372. For publication history, see ch. 1, n. 179.

¹⁸ Simon Dubnow, “Ychreditel’noe sobranie i publichnyia zaciédaniia Evreiskago Istoriko-Èthnograficheskago Obshchestva,” *Evreiskaia Starina* 1 (1909): 154–158. On the of Dubnow’s 1909 historical society, see Jeffrey

Dubnow's vision of collaborative research, also looked to the archive, a case we will consider at length later in this chapter.¹⁹ By the years of the Holocaust, Jews in eastern Europe turned to the archive as a framework for efforts to document Nazi atrocities. In Warsaw, Emanuel Ringelblum's Oyneg Shabes (Joy of the Sabbath) project termed itself an archive, one in a series of ghetto "archives" in Białystok, Łódź, and Vilna.²⁰ These efforts at documentation and salvage—as Jews tried as best they could to keep a record of the Nazis' crimes and to rescue fragments of Jewish culture through "paper brigades," as did Avraham Sutzkever and others who the Nazis tasked with sorting through YIVO's archive and library and who smuggled out whatever materials they could—were not archives in any official sense, as defined by the emerging professional archive practices of the early twentieth century which emphasized the transfer of administrative documents to professionally-managed historical archives.²¹ Instead, and what is most striking, calling these acts of resistance "archives" reflected a profound new cultural prestige afforded to the idea of the archive distinct from Dubnow's contempt for archives a half-century before.

An even more striking example of such a shift in these same years might be the history of

Veidlinger, "The Historical and Ethnographic Construction of Russian Jewry," *Ab Imperio* 4, no. 3 (2003): 165–184.

¹⁹ See below, pp. 211–217.

²⁰ On the Warsaw archive, see Samuel Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); Kassow, "Politics and History: Emanuel Ringelblum and the Oyneg Shabes Archive," in *European Jews and Jewish Europeans between the Two World Wars*, ed. Raya Cohen (Tel Aviv: Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, 2004), 51–80; Emanuel Ringelblum, *Notisen fun varshever geto* (Warsaw: Yidish bukh, 1952), esp. 317–344. Also Lucy Dawidowicz, *A Holocaust Reader* (New York: Behrman House, 1976), 4–7; Bronia Klibanski, "The Underground Archives of the Białystok Ghetto," *Yad Vashem Studies* II (1958): 295–329; Sarah Bender, "'Arkhiyon ha-mahteret be-Białystok,'" in *Mi-genizah le-tsiyune derekh historiyyim*, ed. Yisrael Gutman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1997), 121–131; Michal Unger, "Ha-ti'ud ha-yehudi mi-geto Lodz," in *ibid.*, 141–150; Yitzhak Arad, "Ha-'arkhiyon ha-mehtarti shel geto Vilna," in *ibid.*, 151–160; Bronka Klibanski, "'Al Mordecai ye-'al 'arkhiyono,'" in *Dapim min ha-deleqah: Pirke yoman, mikhtavim, ma'amarim* (Jerusalem: 1984), 204–215; *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944*, ed. Lucjan Dobroszycki (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), ix–lxviii; Karsten Wilke, "Das 'Archiv der Białystoker Judenrats'—Selbstbilder jüdischer Akteure in den Quellen des geheimen Ghettoarchivs 1941–1943," in *Archiv-Macht-Wissen. Organisation und Konstruktion von Wissen und Wirklichkeit in Archiven*, ed. Anja Horstmann, Vanina Kopp (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2010), 207–220.

²¹ On the "paper brigades," see David Fishman, *Embers Plucked from the Fire: The Rescue of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Vilna* (New York: YIVO, 1996); Jan Schwarz, "After the Destruction of Vilna: Abraham Sutzkever's Poetry, Testimony, and Cultural Rescue Work, 1944–46," *East European Jewish Affairs* 35, no. 2 (2005): 209–224.

the American Jewish Historical Society, from its founding in 1892 to a new archival interest at the height of the Second World War. In 1886, Abram S. Isaacs set in motion the formation of the AJHS when he called for “a complete history of the Israelites in America.”²² But if Isaacs, publisher of the *Jewish Messenger* in New York City, had hoped that “several rabbinical organizations” might take the matter in hand, Cyrus Adler, professor of Semitics at Johns Hopkins University, insisted that the first step must be the “careful painstaking collection of the ‘sources’ of history,” which he envisioned to be undertaken by professional historians.²³ Two years later, when Rabbi Bernard Felsenthal of Chicago again urged Adler to establish a historical society, the focus was once more on the sources of history. As Felsenthal explained:

In the Archives in Washington, and in the capitals of the older colonies and states, also in the records of the older Jewish congregations of our country... interesting documents might be found, and if not in extenso, at least digests of these should be published... The researches should be made in some systematic manner, by men who know what a scientific method is, and what is to be understood by the term *objective Geschichtsschreibung*.²⁴

For Felsenthal, such a “scientific method” was clearly tied to sources found in archives, as well as to an example of German historical methods, neither of which is surprising considering the turn to archives as a source of Jewish history and the influence of German ideas of history in the development of historical training in the United States, begun at Johns Hopkins in 1870.²⁵ But when the AJHS came into existence, there was little mention of archives. When Adler announced a meeting to form a historical society in 1892, he avoided the archive, instead describing the

²² Abram Isaacs, “America’s Discovery,” in *Jewish Messenger*, 12 Nov. 1886.

²³ Cyrus Adler, “A History of the Jews in America,” *Jewish Messenger*, 3 Dec. 1886. Cf. Henry Morais, “A History of the Jews in America,” *ibid.*, 19 Nov. 1886, Robert Weil, “A History of the Jews in America,” *ibid.*, 26 Nov. 1886.

²⁴ Bernard Felsenthal to Cyrus Adler, 1888, quoted in “The Sources of American Jewish History,” AJHS P16, Box 2, and Adler “Sources of American Jewish History,” *The Menorah Monthly*, Sept. 1888, 191–193. Also see “Organization of the American Jewish Historical Society,” 6–7 June 1892, AJHS I-1 109/30, 2–3, where Adler extensively quoted passages of Felsenthal’s letter; the original does not appear in Adler’s files. Also see Isidore S. Meyer, “The American Jewish Historical Society,” in *Journal of Jewish Bibliography* 4, no. 1–2 (1943).

²⁵ See Robert B. Townsend, *History’s Babel: Scholarship, Professionalization, and the Historical Enterprise in the United States, 1880–1940* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013), 13–36.

effort as “an organized attempt at collecting, preserving and publishing data having reference to the settlement and history of Jews on the American continent.”²⁶ In another announcement, he again echoed the language of the “preservation and publication of data,” rather than documents, records, or archives.²⁷ It characterized the AJHS founders’ dilemma, where they looked to archives as a source of history—of a particular history that emphasized Jews’ contribution to America—alongside but their own disinterest in creating a distinctive archive of their own.

This dilemma was clear at the AJHS’ inaugural meeting of June 6 and 7, 1892.²⁸ Charles Gross, professor of history at Harvard, suggested that the AJHS produce “what the Germans call a Register,” an index or summary of historical sources, and they could occasionally publish documents in full. But the AJHS should focus on publishing scholarly output, he argued, at least “until we get better acquainted with the material.”²⁹ As Marcus Jastrow, Jr., put it, a challenge of central importance was simply to “find out what there is.”³⁰ He stressed that writing history without sources was impossible. “It is our purpose to encourage the collection of materials,” Jastrow explained, “and it is the purpose of every historical society to do that.”³¹ But alongside Cyrus L. Sulzberger and Cyrus Adler, Jastrow advocated the publication of sources rather than

²⁶ Emphasis added. Cyrus Adler, “American Jewish Historical Society,” AJHS P16 Box 2.

²⁷ Cyrus Adler, circular letter, 25 May 1892, AJHS I-1 109/25.

²⁸ “American Jewish Historical Society: Report of Organization, Abstract from the Minutes” (AJHS: 1892); also see the stenographic notes, “Organization of the American Jewish Historical Society,” 6–7 June 1892, AJHS I-1 109/30 (hereafter “Organization of the AJHS”).

²⁹ “Organization of the AJHS,” 16–17. The next day, Kaufmann Kohler, the Reform rabbi who would serve as president of Hebrew Union College from 1903 to 1921, again argued for publishing articles and not sources (31). On the history of the Register, see Thea Miller, “The German Registry: The Evolution of a Recordkeeping Model,” *Archival Science* 3, no. 1 (Mar. 2003): 43–63.

³⁰ “Organization of the AJHS,” 24–26. He is not to be confused with his father, Morris Jastrow, Sr., the editor of the Talmudic dictionary. Both father and son attended the inaugural meeting. The younger Jastrow’s comments are designated in the notes as “Prof. Jastrow,” as opposed to “Rev. Dr. Jastrow” which would refer to his father.

³¹ “Organization of the AJHS,” 44, 45.

gathering them.³² A lone voice, Moritz Ellinger, editor of the B'nai B'rith's *Menorah* journal, spoke of something like an archive when he suggested the formation of "a permanent central body for the purpose of registering all the material" and later a "library" to contain it all.³³

None of this is to say that they were unaware of archives, or disinterested in them. As we will recall, Felsenthal had written of archives.³⁴ At the group's 1892 meeting, Henry Leipziger spoke of "the knowledge derived from the archives of past history" and Jastrow repeatedly gestured at sources found "in archives and newspapers and in private histories of families" as the first of many possible sources of history.³⁵ Adler suggested setting aside funds for "the actual prosecution of research," by which he meant travel to examine sources throughout the Americas.³⁶ In the ensuing years, the AJHS moved to promote the use of foreign archives. In 1895, Oscar Strauss spoke of sending researchers to examine sources in sites of early Jewish settlement throughout the Americas, particularly in the former Dutch colonies where Jews had established their first communities in the seventeenth century.³⁷ The AJHS' Executive Council returned to the possibility of sending scholars abroad to examine and copy documents, first in December 1894 and later in 1896, when they authorized a search for scholars in Holland and Portugal to conduct research on their behalf.³⁸ But the matter would only again appear on the agenda in February 1914, when a \$250 subvention for copying files held in foreign archives was approved,

³² Ibid., 44–49.

³³ Ibid., 18–19.

³⁴ See above, n. 24.

³⁵ "Organization of the AJHS," 24, 26.

³⁶ Ibid., 24, 26, 34.

³⁷ Oscar S. Strauss, "Address of the President," *PAJHS* 3 (1895): 1–5.

³⁸ Meeting Minutes, AJHS Executive Council, 26 Dec. 1894, AJHS I-1 110/12; Meeting Minutes, AJHS Executive Council, 28 Nov. 1896, AJHS I-1 110/15. Also see Meeting Minutes, AJHS Executive Council, 28 Jan. 1897, AJHS I-1 110/17, which makes reference to Dr. Hollander's report "in regard to investigations in the Dutch archives."

a project that withered with the opening of the First World War.³⁹

It seems that for the founders of the AJHS, archives were a means for research, not an end to pursue by creating their own. In the AJHS' first two decades, its collection of historical materials grew but modestly.⁴⁰ In 1901, Cyrus Adler reported that they held a few items: "a few manuscripts, a few rare pamphlets and books, and a few portraits." Their collections, he continued, would not grow until they found a proper storage place and hired a curator.⁴¹ It would only be in 1904 that the AJHS secured rooms at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City and hired a curator, Leon Hühner, to develop and administer its collections.⁴²

When the AJHS was founded in 1892, the group—whose object was "to collect and publish material bearing upon the history of our country" and whose leaders used archival sources—was not interested in creating archives.⁴³ A half-century later, much had changed. The Society now faced severe problems of storing its growing collections, as the librarian Isidore S. Meyer repeatedly emphasized. Meyer now called for "a 'Gesamt-Archiv' of every phase of American Jewish history" in 1941 and again in 1943.⁴⁴ It was also a time when Jews in the

³⁹ Meeting Minutes, AJHS Executive Council, 23 Feb. 1914, AJHS I-1 110/32. Cf. Albert M. Friedenberg, "Report of the Foreign Archives Committee," *PAJHS* 23 (1915): 91–103, which details a preliminary evaluation of foreign archives via the examination of a series of guides to European archives published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, particularly Charles M. Andrews, *Guide to the Materials for American History, to 1783, in the Public Record Office of Great Britain* (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1912), Marion Dexter Learned, *Guide to the Manuscript Materials Relating to American History in the German State Archives* (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1912), and Carl Russel Fish, *Guide to the Materials for American History in Roman and other Italian Archives* (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1911).

⁴⁰ The largest portion of its early collections consisted of recently published materials, often received in exchange with state and local historical societies. In the AJHS' first decade, they reported on gifts received in *PAJHS* 1 (1893), 123–124, 2 (1894), 182–184, 4 (1896), 227–228, 5 (1897), 209–215, 6 (1897), 160–163.

⁴¹ Cyrus Adler, "Address of the President," *PAJHS* 9 (1901): 9–11.

⁴² Cyrus Adler, "Address of the President," *PAJHS* 12 (1904): 2; "Curator's Report," *PAJHS* 13 (1906): *xiii–xvii*; "Report of the Curator," *PAJHS* 18 (1909): *xv–xxi*. Also see Jonathan Sarna, "The Archives of the American Jewish Historical Society," 16 May 1985, AJHS I-1 287/12.

⁴³ "Objects," *PAJHS* 1 (1893): *iii*.

⁴⁴ Isidore S. Meyer, "Memorandum on the Preservation of the American Jewish War Records," 6 June 1941, AJHS I-1 125/1; Meyer, "The American Jewish Historical Society," *Journal of Jewish Bibliography* 4, no. 1–2 (Jan.–Apr. 1943): 6–24, esp. 6, 21, where he called for "the formation of a Gesamtarchiv of the American Jewish community."

United States spoke of the need to document Jewish life in general, when Jacob Rader Marcus began his collecting efforts, which would culminate in the formation of the American Jewish Archives at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati in 1947.⁴⁵ In 1941, the World Jewish Congress spoke of a “Central Jewish War Archives” to document Jewish participation in the Second World War.⁴⁶ Of course, Jews in the United States and elsewhere had long sought to demonstrate their patriotism by documenting their place in the soldiers’ ranks—as Simon Wolf put it as “patriot, soldier, and citizen”—a tradition in the United States ranging from the veneration of Haym Salomon in the Revolutionary War to the American Jewish Committee’s “Office of Jewish War Records” in the First World War.⁴⁷ But whereas the AJC had looked to archives and official records as sources for statistical data during World War I, a generation later the World Jewish Congress spoke of creating an archive of its own to house these documents as well as general information on the activities of Jews in the war. It represented an important shift in how Jews approached the project of collecting, now under the banner of the archive.

The two disparate contexts of the United States and eastern Europe illustrate a cultural shift in the place and meaning of archives in Jewish life. In the former, we see an instance of a Jewish historical society placing archives, once primarily an external site of research, at the center of their own endeavors. And the latter demonstrates a shift in the archive’s meaning and significance, from Dubnow’s disdain to an organizing principle of gathering culture. The same can be seen in other contexts, with scholars initially ambivalent towards archives as an organizing principle and growing closer to it over time. For instance, Solomon Schechter never

⁴⁵ See Chapter 5 for a discussion of Marcus’ collecting activities.

⁴⁶ “Jacob Robinson’s Plan for Central Jewish War Archives,” Aug. 1941, AJA MS-361 C2/2.

⁴⁷ Simon Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier, and Citizen* (Philadelphia: Levytype, 1895).

termed the Cairo Genizah an “archive,” instead referring to it as a “battlefield of books.”⁴⁸ And Gotthard Deutsch’s early twentieth-century plan for a comprehensive catalogue of knowledge refused to hew to the shape or form of the archive. This professor of history at Hebrew Union College, well-known for his nearly-disastrous philo-Germanism during World War I, is also important for inculcating a veneration for “facts” that lived on into the late twentieth century through his disciple Jacob Rader Marcus, who established the American Jewish Archives in 1947.⁴⁹ But if Marcus turned to the archive as the form of his historical collecting project, Deutsch looked to the library. Deutsch’s 1906 “Plan for Co-Operative Work in Collecting Material for Encyclopedic Studies in Jewish History and Literature” outlined a project for the collaborative production of “facts” about contemporaneous events and new research. Most notably, the project was to take the form of a detailed card catalogue, not a collection of newspaper clippings, documents, and scholarly publications themselves.⁵⁰

In the early twentieth century, Jewish archives became ubiquitous. If archives were not where one might expect to find them in 1892 (that is, organized by a society whose stated goal was to collect historical sources), by 1942 the archive appeared in places one might not expect. In this time, the archive framed collecting projects beyond the bounds a professionalizing field of archival science, which at the turn of the twentieth century increasingly viewed archives as a collection of official documents.⁵¹ In 1913, Karl Schwarz formed what he called the

⁴⁸ Solomon Schechter, “A Hoard of Hebrew Manuscripts,” in *Studies in Judaism* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1908), 6.

⁴⁹ See G. A. Dobbert, “The Ordeal of Gotthard Deutsch,” *AJAJ* 20, no. 2 (1968): 129–155. Deutsch believed that an understanding of history began with the ascertaining of the facts; his “Philosophy of Jewish History” began with an explanation that “History requires an inductive method. From individual facts one ascends to principles. Facts have to be arranged in a systematic manner.” (Gotthard Deutsch, “Philosophy of Jewish History,” in *Scrolls* (Cincinnati: 1917), I:77–99). On Marcus’ relationship with his mentor and his idea of facts, see ch. 5, pp. 339–340.

⁵⁰ Gotthard Deutsch, “A Plan for Co-Operative Work in Collecting Material for Encyclopedic Studies in Jewish History and Literature,” *CCARYB* 16 (1906): 241–250; Deutsch, “Supplementary Explanations to the Plan for Co-Operative Work in Collecting Material for Encyclopedic Studies in Jewish History,” *CCARYB* 17 (1907): 259–270.

⁵¹ See pp. 191–196.

“Kunstarchiv,” a collection of artwork attached to the Gesamtarchiv, which he hoped would be the basis for a museum.⁵² Robert Stricker formed the “Jüdisches Kriegsarchiv” in Vienna in 1915, and Moshe Shalit and Zemah Szabad in Vilnius called for a “Jewish archive of our times” in the summer of 1917.⁵³ Shalit and Szabad’s *Vilner Zamlbukh* also included an article entitled “Fun historishn arkhiv,” which could be described more accurately as a chronicle of the experiences of Jews in the first years of the war.⁵⁴ Two years later, a group of scholars in Kiev led by Elias Tcherikower created what would become the “Mizrakh-yidisher historisher arkhiv,” a collection of testimonies on the wave of pogroms committed in Ukraine.⁵⁵ In 1915, Alter Druyanow and the *Ya‘ad le-yishuv ’erets-yisra’el* in Odessa began gathering historical material on the founding of the Hibbat Zion movement in the 1880s. Inspired by the call of Ahad Ha-‘am (Asher Ginzberg) to collect these early records, starting in 1919 Druyanow published a series of volumes based on the personal archives of Hibbat Zion leaders such as Leon Pinsker, Moshe Leib Lilienblum, and Shaul Pinhas Rabinowitz.⁵⁶ When he immigrated to Palestine, Druyanow brought most of the sources with him. He later hoped to give his archive to the group Brit ha-rishonim in Tel Aviv, who planned a central archive on the history of Jewish settlement in Palestine in 1929. When that archive did not materialize, Druyanow donated the collection to the

⁵² See “Statuten des Jüdischen Kunstarchiv in Berlin,” *Archiv für jüdische Familienforschung* 1 (1913), 42; Eugen Täubler to Curatorium des Gesamtarchivs, NLI ARC Ms Var 308, Nr. 01 98.

⁵³ Eleonore Lappin, “Zwischen den Fronten: Das Wiener Jüdische Archiv. Mitteilungen des Komitees ‘Jüdisches Kriegsarchiv’ 1915–1917,” in *Deutsch-jüdische Presse und jüdische Geschichte: Dokumente, Darstellung, Wechselbeziehungen*, ed. Eleonore Lappin, Michael Nagel (Bremen: Edition Lumière, 2008), I:224–246; “Chronik,” *Vilner Zamlbukh* II:255–256.

⁵⁴ Ben-Zoma, “Fun historishn arkhiv: Der ershter yar milkhoma,” in Shalit and Szabad, eds., *Vilner Zamlbukh*, II:271–308.

⁵⁵ See below, pp. 177–182.

⁵⁶ See Ahad Ha-‘am, “Sh’elot ’erets yisra’el: Ha-yishuv ye-’epitroposayv,” in *‘Al parashat derakhim (Am Scheidewege. Gesammelte Schriften von Achad-Haam)*, (Berlin: Tsvi hirsh bar’ yitshak ’ituskavski, 1904), II:203–283, esp. 260–261; *Ketavim le-toldot hibbat tsiyon ye-yishuv ’erets yisra’el*, ed. Alter Druyanow (Odessa: ’Omanut, 1918), I:V–X; Alter Druyanow to Josef Meisl, 24 Feb. 1914 (8 Adar 5674), CAHJP P35/53.

Zionist Archives in 1935.⁵⁷ Jewish genealogical societies in Berlin and Tel Aviv, under the respective leadership of Arthur Czellitzer and Hugo Eckstein, also created genealogical archives to store family trees, documents, and memoirs.⁵⁸ In 1930, Shmuel Niger wrote of YIVO's "theater archive," more accurately described as a museum.⁵⁹ Altogether, we can see how the archive became a broad frame, which can help us to comprehend the context in which the Gesamtarchiv and the projects that followed in its wake came into being.

Why Create Archives? Comprehending an Archival Turn

Jacques Derrida famously coined the phrase "mal d'archive," describing an archival drive at the basis of the human psyche. Derrida argued that the impulse to record and archive was a universal response to the act of being, a response to Freud's notion of the "death drive." Moreover, he traced a history of the archive as a site of power to antiquity, looking to its etymological origin in the "archon" or magistrate's abode.⁶⁰ "Archive Fever" is an eminently useful exercise in universalizing the archive, but one can identify more precise contexts to situate the Jewish archival turn. Such archiving did not simply arise from an ever-present human urge, and neither was it the simple byproduct of historical research. Instead, it represented specific responses to modernity and its particular challenges. For instance, Max Weber presented archives as an important aspect

⁵⁷ Alter Druyanow finding aid, CZA A9. Also see Alex Bein, "Hier kannst Du nicht jeden grüßen." *Erinnerungen und Betrachtungen*, 276–277, Herlitz, *Mein Weg nach Jerusalem*, 170.

⁵⁸ "Vereinigung von Freunden jüdischer Familienforschung," Sep. 1924, JMF SB0683, sets the object of the Berlin society: "Gründung eines ARCHIVES [sic], in das sämtliche vorhandenen Familiengeschichten, Chroniken, alte Urkunden und Dokumente ... vereinigt werden sollen." Also Arthur Czellitzer, "Zum Geleit!" *Jüdische Familien-Forschung* 1, no. 1 (1924), and "Arbeitsplan," in *ibid.* (re-published in *Jüdische Familien-Forschung* 1, no. 3: 71–72; 1, no. 4: 95–96). On the society in Tel Aviv, see: "Protokoll der Gründungsversammlung der Gesellschaft für jüd. Familienforschung," 24 Mar. 1941, JMF SB0682; Bernhard Brillling, "betr. Sicherstellung wichtiger Archivarrien," May 1941, JMF SB0684,1; Statutes of the Historical Genealogical Society, 21 May 1941, JMF SB0682.

⁵⁹ Shmuel Niger, "Erinerungen vegn yidisher teater," 1930, YIVO RG 360, folder 1589.

⁶⁰ Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever," 9.

of bureaucracy.⁶¹ In this framework, archival growth was both a result of the centralized political state, as well as its enabler.⁶² In the late nineteenth century, with European society in the throes of technological and bureaucratic change, archives served simultaneously as effect *and* cause of mountains of paperwork. Just as the typewriter increased throughput and improved legibility, so too did the archive provide a storage facility reflecting the growing scope of social administration as well as an effective tool for the control and expansion of such resources and processes.⁶³

Pierre Nora's theses on the *lieux de mémoire* present another compelling theoretical pillar for the field of modern Jewish archives, and collecting in general. Nora wrote of the turn towards "archival memory" in light of the decay of traditional social frameworks that once supported collective memory, much as Derrida would write of the "instant of archivization" in which living memory gives way to an archival prosthesis.⁶⁴ Mass migration, expulsions and pogroms, religious and political change, a sense of neglect for historical sources and monuments: all fostered a sense of impending loss that motivated scholars—not just historians and archivists but also sociologists, ethnographers, rabbis, and other intellectuals—to try to preserve the data of the Jewish past and present, including historical data, personal memories, and cultural practices. Some scholars have described *kinus* (gathering) as a practice of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jewish collecting, analogous to what Penelope Papailias termed "historical common sense," a

⁶¹ Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie* (Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1964), II:703–738.

⁶² Robert-Henri Bautier, "La phase cruciale de l'histoire des archives: la constitution des dépôts d'archives et la naissance de l'archivistique (XVI^e–début du XIX^e siècle)," *Archivum* XVIII (1968): 139–149. Alternately, it can be traced to an even earlier period, with one case particularly beloved by archivists: early Norman England. See Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066–1307* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979). On Clanchy's reception, see James O'Toole, "The Symbolic Significance of Archives," *American Archivist* 56, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 237; O'Toole, "Toward a Useable Archival Past: Recent Studies in the History of Literacy," *American Archivist* 58, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 86–99.

⁶³ James R. Beniger, *The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986), esp. 280–281, 390–425.

⁶⁴ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History," 13. Cf. Derrida, "Archive Fever," 22.

kind of archival and historical consciousness among laypeople reflecting innate interest in their own history and the need to document it.⁶⁵ Collections of folk songs, encyclopedias, source books, libraries, ethnographic expeditions utilizing the latest photographic and phonographic equipment, creating archives: all of these, it seems, were part of a process of simultaneously bringing together and preserving Jewish history, culture, and knowledge as well as distilling and refashioning it at a time of social transformation and in light of what they perceived as the disappearing of or weakening of social structures such as the traditional Jewish community and extended family.⁶⁶

These two impulses, one a forward-facing force of institutional growth, the other looking backwards with fear of the loss of something precious, might appear contradictory at first glance. But this pair of social forces served as the engine of a powerful archival drive, one which is well-illustrated by the now-familiar case of the Gesamtarchiv and the cohort of projects that arose alongside it. Martin Philippon spoke in the same breath of the Berlin archive's ability to provide "precedents" for standardizing Jewish communal administration and to "salvage" the documents of communities shrinking under forces of urbanization and emigration. It was for this reason that Philippon and the Gemeindebund spoke of easing the challenges facing "*Kleingemeinden*," and later Jacob Jacobson feared for the future of their files.⁶⁷ Moïse Ginsburger, himself an

⁶⁵ Penelope Papailias, *Genres of Recollection: Archival Poetics and Modern Greece* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), xiv. Israel Bartal in particular has articulated a vision of *Kinuzim* which is applied not only to Zionist collectors such as Ben Zion Dinaburg and Hayim Nachman Bialik but also to the visions of figures as early as Leopold Zunz. See Bartal, "Mif'al ha-kinuz: Mada'e ha-yahadut ve-'itsuv 'tarbut le'umit' ba-'erets-yisra'el," in *Ye-zo't la-yehudah: Mehkarim be-toldot 'erets-yisra'el ve-yishuvah*, ed. Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, Elhanan Reiner (Jerusalem: Yad Yitshak Ben-Tsvi, 2003), 520–529; Bartal, "The Kinnus Project: *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the Fashioning of a 'National Culture' in Palestine," in *Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality, and Cultural Diffusion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 310–323.

⁶⁶ On encyclopedic projects, see above, ch. 2, n. 76. Also see Anke Hilbrenner, "Invention of a Vanished World: Photographs of Religious Jews in the Russian Pale of Settlement," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 57 (2009): 173–188; *Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. An-sky's Ethnographic Expeditions*, ed. Eugen M. Avrutin (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2009); Nathaniel Deutsch, *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), among others.

⁶⁷ See ch. 2, p. 145; also Heinrich Rosin, "Entwurf eines Gesetzes über die Organisation der israelitischen Religionsgemeinschaften in Preußen," 1906, CAHJP M1/10, which outlines the Gemeindebund's focus on the "*Kleingemeinden*;"

opponent of archival centralization in Berlin, similarly lamented the decline of rural communities as a justification for the creation of his own archive, and Arthur Czellitzer spoke of the challenges of living in the “big city” as a factor in a turn to genealogy, urging Jews to create family archives in response to the dispersion of the extended family.⁶⁸ But not only were rural Jewish communities in Germany transforming demographically. Traditional ties that bound Jews together—both those of community and family—seemed to be fading, and projects like the Gesamtarchiv and others that sought to bring together archives of Jewish communities may be seen as one reflection of a search for *Gemeinschaft* in a *gesellschaftliche* society.⁶⁹

These instincts, of rising bureaucratization and a sense of loss, also encapsulated the anxieties of the growing class of professional Jewish archivists who constantly complained of the sad state in which Jewish archives were to be found and who looked to bring the latest standards of archival practice to Jewish institutions. When one looks to Alex Bein in Israel/Palestine, for instance, it is plain to see how he understood archives’ bureaucratic function—he advocated strongly for the implementation of archives as a means to develop the yishuv, or Jewish settlement in Palestine—and simultaneously decried the loss of the past. But the sense of the declining communities, whose archives needed saving, also reflected a more universal framing of Jewish existence. Simon Rawidowicz wrote of the Jews as an “ever-dying people.”⁷⁰ The fears of leaders like Philippson, Jacobson, Ginsburger, and Czellitzer all reflected a sense held by Jews

and Neumann to Eugen Täubler, 4 Mar. 1907, CAHJP M5/1, explaining “how important it is, that the smallest Jewish communities give all of their files, insofar as they are no longer necessary for current business” (orig. emphasis).

⁶⁸ Moïse Ginsburger, “Unser jüdisches Museum,” *SIW*, 1 Feb. 1908; Ginsburger to Israelitische Consistorium des Unter-Elsass, 24 Nov. 1909, AD Bas-Rhin 64J/15 G. 16; Arthur Czellitzer, “Jüdische Familienforschung,” *Breslauer Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt*, 22 Nov. 1924, 44–45. Leo Baeck made a similar argument to Czellitzer, explaining challenges facing Jewish life in the big cities in “Gemeinde in der Großstadt,” *Der Morgen* 5 (1929–30): 583–589.

⁶⁹ See above, p. 117.

⁷⁰ Simon Rawidowicz, “Israel: The Ever-Dying People,” in *State of Israel, Diaspora, and Jewish Continuity*, ed. Benjamin Ravid (London: Brandeis University Press, 1998), 53–64.

throughout the ages that theirs would be the last generation. Just as the prophecy of an “ever-dying people” in every generation served paradoxically as an engine for cultural and religious renewal and innovation, fears of the end of old Jewish communities led to archival rebirth. And so, these archival impulses can be illustrated by considering two Jewish archival efforts, both of which emerged in 1919, one as a response to loss, and the other as a bureaucratic exercise.

Abstract fears of the consequences of social transformation or general neglect on historical sources were only further catalyzed by specific crises, which turned those otherwise focused on collecting the source of history to the data of the present. With the outbreak of World War I, Jews in eastern Europe immediately worked to document wartime experiences.⁷¹ Perhaps the most significant such project was launched in the aftermath of a series of bloody pogroms in Ukraine in the winter of 1918–19 committed by the battling armies of Symon Petliura and Antonin Denikin. In May 1919, a group of Jews in Kiev led by the historian Elias Tcherikower formed a committee to document the atrocities, the “Redaktions-kolegie oyf tsu zamlen un farefntlikhn di materialn vegn di pogromen in ukraine” (Editorial Board to Collect and Publish the Material about the Pogroms in Ukraine), later known as the “Mizrakh-yidishn historishn arkhiv” or Ostjüdisches Historisches Archiv.⁷² “A terrible curse of pogroms has befallen the Jewish towns and villages,” they announced. “And the world knows nothing... It must not be kept quiet!”⁷³ Tcherikower and his committee called on Jews to send reports of what they had

⁷¹ As Laura Jockusch has noted, Y. L. Peretz, S. An-sky, and Yankev Dinezon in 1914 called for Jews to send them materials in Warsaw, and a historical commission under the leadership of Moshe Shalit and Zemah Szabad in Vilnius called for the creation of a “Jewish archive of our times” in the summer of 1917. See Jockusch, *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 24–27. Though she claims that the political bureau of YKOPO (the Jewish Committee for the Relief of War Victims) aimed for the creation of a “war archive,” citing Simon Dubnow’s autobiography (*Dos bukh mayn lebn* II, 180), there is little evidence that such a “war archive” was created in those specific *archival* terms, besides the effort to collect material.

⁷² “Di geshikhte fun der pogrom-bevegung in ukraine,” Feb. 1923, CAHJP P10a/I/8.

⁷³ *Mizrakh-yidishn historishn arkhiv*, May 1919, published in Zosa Szajkowski, “Di geshikhte fun dem itstikn

witnessed to their central office in Kiev. The group's aim, as the name clearly indicates, was to use the collected materials to produce a history of the pogroms; their initial meetings were dedicated to organizing the editorial committee as well as the reading and discussion of reports, subsequently placed "in the archive of the editorial board."⁷⁴

Tcherikower's initiative was only one link in a chain of those who worked to document pogroms and other atrocities in eastern Europe in modern times. The waves of pogroms that swept through the Pale of Settlement in 1881 led the group Heye 'im pefiot to document the destruction with the aim of alerting the outside world to the plight of eastern European Jewry.⁷⁵ Twenty years later, in the aftermath of the pogrom in Kishinev in April 1903, Jews across the world responded by seeking to document it.⁷⁶ In March 1904, Cyrus Adler, president of the AJHS, argued that the group should not only turn its collective gaze to the materials of the past, but also should document contemporary events—not of the pogrom itself, but of the public response in America.⁷⁷ Perhaps most well-known is the work of Simon Dubnow's Odessa-based "information bureau," which deputized Hayim Nahman Bialik to visit Kishinev and survey survivors, collecting testimony for a planned "Sefer Kishinev."⁷⁸ Tcherikower's initiative thus

bukh," in Eliyahu Tcherikower, *Di ukrainer pogromen in yar 1919* (New York: YIVO, 1965), 333–349, with a photograph of the original (334). Szajkowski claimed that an original copy of the document was stored in the YIVO archives, but did not specify where; it is not found in the files of Elias Tcherikower.

⁷⁴ "Ershte zitsung," 25 May 1919, "Ferte zitsung," 2 Jun. 1919, "Zikste zitsung," 16 Jun. 1919, "Zibete zitsung," 19 Jun. 1919, in "Protokol-bukh fun der redaktions-kolegie," YIVO RG80/665.

⁷⁵ CAHJP Inv. 9544; Ya'akov ha-levi Lifshits, *Zikhron Ya'akov: Histori yisra'elit me-haye ha-yehudim be-rusyah' u-polin hemshekh me-helek sheni mishnat tr"m-trn"u* (Israel: 1948), III:22–54, 166–176.

⁷⁶ On Kishinev, see Monty Noam Penkower, "The Kishinev Pogrom of 1903: A Turning Point in Jewish History," *Modern Judaism* 24, no. 3 (Oct. 2004): 187–225; also Edward H. Judge, *Easter in Kishinev: Anatomy of a Pogrom* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), among many other discussions.

⁷⁷ Cyrus Adler, "Address of the President," *PAJHS* 12 (1904): 2.

⁷⁸ See Laura Jockusch, "Chroniclers of Catastrophe: History Writing as a Jewish Response to Persecution Before and After the Holocaust," in *Holocaust Historiography in Context: Emerging Challenges, Polemics & Achievements*, ed. David Bankier, Dan Michman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008), 135–166. Also Sophia Dubnova-Erlich, *The Life and Work of S.M. Dubnov* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 18–19; Simon Dubnow, *Dos bukh fun mayn lebn*, I:376–381.

emerged from a culture of documentation, heightened during World War I, which would perhaps find its apex just over two decades later in the form of Emanuel Ringelblum's Oyneg Shabes, the most well-known of a series of groups that collected reports on Nazi crimes.⁷⁹

Both Heye 'im pefiot and Ringelblum's Oyneg Shabes were primarily dedicated to collecting and disseminating reports; Ringelblum celebrated Oyneg Shabes' triumph when he received word that the British were broadcasting reports of Nazi crimes.⁸⁰ Tcherikower and his colleagues also initially aimed to publicize the pogroms. But as time went on, Tcherikower's group did not only aim to inform the world but also, as Simon Dubnow later put it, "to immortalize the crime in history."⁸¹ Tcherikower still wanted to produce a comprehensive history of the pogroms in Ukraine, but their work quickly shifted to focus on documentation.⁸² In the end, the "Redaktions-kolegie" only realized a small portion of an ambitious publishing agenda, which would have consisted of seven books in Russian, Yiddish, and an abridged English version.⁸³

Notably, Tcherikower's committee framed its collecting effort as an archive. By contrast, Heye 'im pefiot collected testimonies and framed its initiative in religious terms, taking its name from a liturgical poem.⁸⁴ Dubnow's Kishinev inquiry was conducted as a survey, similar to the

⁷⁹ See supra, n. 20.

⁸⁰ Emanuel Ringelblum, *Notisen fun varshever geto* (Warsaw: Yidish bukh, 1952), 239.

⁸¹ In the introduction to Tcherikower's *Antisemitizm un pogromen in ukraine*, Simon Dubnow noted that "Our own revenge is to immortalize the crime in history" (Elias Tcherikower, *Antisemitizm un pogromen in ukraine, 1917–1918*, Berlin: Mizrakh–yidishn historishn arkhiv, 1923, 15). Also see Efim Melamed, "Immortalizing the Crime in History...": The Activities of the Ostjüdisches Historisches Archiv (Kiev–Berlin–Paris, 1920–1940)," in *The Russian Jewish Diaspora and European Culture, 1917–1937*, ed. Jörg Schulte, et al (Boston: Brill, 2012), 373–386.

⁸² "Di geshikhte fun der pogrom-bevegung in ukraine in di yarn 1917–1921," Feb. 1923, CAHJP P10a/1/8, Nr. 27.

⁸³ Only the first of a planned four volumes and seven books would appear, *Antisemitizm un pogromen in ukraine, 1917–1918* (1923) and a collection of memoirs, *In der tekufa fun revalutsiye: memoarn, material, dokumentn* (1924). After Tcherikower's death, in 1965 YIVO published another volume on the pogroms in 1919. See letter to Rabbi Cohen (Ukrainian Relief Fund, Sydney), 6 Jul. 1923, and similar letters sent to the Ukrainian Relief Fund, Melbourne, YIVO RG80, file 690; "The Scheme for the promulgation of records about the pogroms in Ukraine and White Russia (1917–1921)," YIVO RG80, file 697. On the planned volumes, see *Antisemitizm un pogromen*, 7.

⁸⁴ The group's circulars began with the epigram "Heye 'im pefiot sheluhe 'amkha bet yisra'el," a reference to an anonymous *piut* (liturgical poem) traditionally recited in the *Rosh Hashanah Mussaf* service.

later ethnographic expeditions of S. An-sky. And Bialik's findings were not used to immortalize Kishinev in history, but rather in literature, composing the epic lament "Ba-'ir he-haregah" (In the City of Slaughter).⁸⁵ Additionally, Tcherikower acted out of a sense of the fragile state of historical information both concrete and intangible. In the introduction to a 1924 collection of memoirs, Tcherikower argued that the persecutions must be recorded: "There is a serious danger," he wrote, "that the archive-materials will be lost and the memories will evaporate." Many documents had already been lost from the World War, but he believed the pogrom materials could be saved.⁸⁶ And the group had a deep belief not just in the documents' importance but the need to keep them physically safe; they decided that the files should be copied in triplicate for security.⁸⁷

Soon, they found that Kiev was too dangerous. Tcherikower sent some of the materials to Danzig in 1920, but the following year they moved the entire collection out of the country.⁸⁸ In September 1921, the archive was smuggled out of Kiev via Moscow and Kovno to Berlin.⁸⁹ In the German capital, the group was reconstituted in February 1922 as the "Ostjüdisches Historisches Archiv" (Mizrakh-yidishn historishn arkhiv in Yiddish).⁹⁰ The German economy presented a unique opportunity for those who, like Tcherikower, wished to publish. Hyperinflation provided a strange economic benefit for those arriving with capital in foreign currency, and so publishing

⁸⁵ Among others, see Alan Mintz, *Hurban: Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), as well as more recent work including Sara Feinstein, *Sunshine, Blossoms, and Blood: H.N. Bialik in his Time, a Literary Biography* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005), 91–114; Na'ama Rokem, *Prosaic Conditions: Heinrich Heine and the Spaces of Zionist Literature* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 102–118; Olga Litvak, "The Poet in Hell: H.N. Bialik and the Cultural Genealogy of the Kishinev Pogrom," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (2005): 101–128; and *Prooftexts* 25, 1–2 (Winter/Spring 2005).

⁸⁶ Tcherikower, *In der tekufa fun revalutsiye*, vii.

⁸⁷ "Finfte zitsung," 9 Jun. 1919, YIVO RG80/665.

⁸⁸ Elias Tcherikower to Joint (Warsaw), 5 Sept. 1921, YIVO RG80, file 690.

⁸⁹ "Protokol fun der zitsung fun der redaktions-kolegie oyf zamlen un farefentlikhn di material vegn di pogromen in ukraine," 20 May 1921, YIVO RG 80/665; Zosa Szajkowski, "Di geshikhte fun dem itstikn bukh," in *Ukrainer pogromen in yar 1919* (1965), and manuscript copy in YIVO RG80, file 660.

⁹⁰ "Satzungen des Vereins 'Ostjüdisches Historisches Archiv,' e.V.," 4 Feb. 1922, YIVO RG80, file 668.

was relatively cheap. As a result, in the early 1920s Berlin emerged as not only a safe haven for eastern European Jewish refugees but as a center of Hebrew and Yiddish culture and publishing.⁹¹

The first volume appeared in 1923, but it did not turn a profit. As a result, no further volumes were produced, and in April 1924 Tcherikower began to speak of the potential liquidation of the archive on financial grounds.⁹² Nevertheless, he continued to collect historical material, especially relating to the question of Jewish self-defense.⁹³ In Berlin, safely away from political and ethnic strife, the archive was able to gather materials from various relief organizations.⁹⁴ Now, its mission expanded to deal with the history of eastern European Jewry in general, growing beyond its initial aim to collect and publish material on the pogroms.⁹⁵ Instead of simply speaking of their archive as one component of the group, its archive became increasingly central to its activities. This archive's public role culminated in 1927, after Scholem Schwartzbard assassinated Symon Petliura at a Paris café. When Schwartzbard was brought to trial, Tcherikower's archival documents were brought to bear as evidence for Petliura's crimes.⁹⁶ The collection remained in Tcherikower's possession; he later brought it with him in 1930 when he

⁹¹ Shachar Pinsker, *Literary Passports: The Making of Modernist Hebrew Fiction in Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 109–111; Gennady Estraikh, "Vilna on the Spree: Yiddish in Weimar Berlin," *Aschkenas: Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der Juden* 16 (2006): 103–127, notes that "in the early 1920s Berlin was a publisher's paradise, guaranteeing an ideal combination of low prices, high quality, and lax censorship" (109–110).

⁹² Letter to Rabbi Cohen, 6 Jul. 1923 YIVO RG80/690; Tcherikower to Y. Grinboim, 4 Apr. 1924, Tcherikower to Sh. Goldenberg, 11 Apr. 1924, YIVO RG80/688; Letter to National-rat (Kovno), 20 May 1924, YIVO RG80/692; "Ostjüdisches Historisches Archiv," 1924, CAHJP P10a/I/8, Nr. 28.

⁹³ Letter to H. Traaub, 15 Feb. 1922, letter to M. Sigel, 18 Feb. 1922, YIVO RG80/692; Letter to H. Ben-Adir, 28 Feb. 1922, YIVO RG80/687.

⁹⁴ These included ORT (Society for Handicraft and Agricultural Work among the Jews of Russia, or *Obshchestvo remeslennago i zemledelecheskago truda sredi evreev v rossii*), OPE (Society for the Promotion of Culture among the Jews of Russia, or *Obshchestva dlia rasprostraneniia prosveshcheniia mezhdru evreiami v rossii*), and OSE (Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population, or *Obschestvo zdravookhraneniia evreev*). See letter to B. Bogen, New York, 17 Feb. 1922, YIVO RG80/690.

⁹⁵ "Satzungen des Vereins 'Ostjüdisches Historisches Archiv,' e.V.," 4 Feb. 1922, YIVO RG80/668.

⁹⁶ "Der Schwarzbart-Prozeß und die jüdische Öffentlichkeit," 14 Oct. 1927, YIVO RG87, 1008. Also "Pariser Sensation: Randbemerkungen zum Prozeß Schwartzbard-Petljura," *Neue Badische Landeszeitung*, 26 Oct. 1927, CAHJP P18a/V/2, Nr. 542, which recounts Tcherikower's testimony. On Schwartzbard, see Kelly Johnson, "Sholem Schwartzbard: Biography of a Jewish Assassin" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2012).

again moved, this time to Paris, but he maintained it as an institution with a “public character” and it served as a foundation for the archives of YIVO’s historical section.⁹⁷

Tcherikower’s Mizrakh-yidishn historishn arkhiv—like the projects from Heye ‘im pefiot to Ringelblum’s Oyneg Shabes—was formed to document anti-Jewish violence. But Jews also sought to collect evidence of Jewish activities in wartime more generally. From 1915 to 1917, Robert Stricker and Nathan Birnbaum in Vienna published the journal *Jüdisches Archiv: Mitteilungen des Komitees “Jüdisches Kriegsarchiv.”*⁹⁸ Stricker and his committee aimed to document Jewish experiences under occupation as well as Jews’ participation in the German and Austrian war effort. They argued that they must document such honors so that enemies of the Jews could not claim that the Jews had not fought for their country, and called on readers to send press clippings and personal reports to their Vienna office.⁹⁹ This effort both reflects the persistence of the journal as archive and also a long Jewish tradition of seeking to document war activity as a measure of patriotism. With a similar aim, in 1941 Isidore Meyer of the AJHS proposed creating an archive to document American Jews’ participation in the Second World War.¹⁰⁰ These initiatives were not an entirely new phenomenon. For Jews seeking acceptance by their surrounding cultures, military service, even if involuntary, had long served as a litmus test of dual loyalties (as in Napoleonic France) and a mechanism for gaining rights and status (as in Imperial Russia).¹⁰¹ But just like Tcherikower, those who sought to collect data on Jewish

⁹⁷ “Verlag M.A. Warmann, Frankfurt,” 30 May 1924, YIVO RG80/691, describes it as “kein privat—sondern eine gesellschaftliche Institution”; and the letter to Rabbi Cohen, 6 Jul. 1923, YIVO RG80/690, speaks of their wish to “preserve the *public* character of the archives” [emphasis in original].

⁹⁸ See Eleonore Lappin, “Zwischen den Fronten: Das Wiener Jüdische Archiv; Mitteilungen des Komitees ‘Jüdisches Kriegsarchiv’ 1915–1918,” in *Deutsch-jüdische Presse und jüdische Geschichte*, ed. Eleonore Lappin, Michael Nagel (Bremen: Edition lumière, 2008), 229–246.

⁹⁹ “An die Leser!” *Jüdisches Archiv: Mitteilungen des Komitees ‘Jüdisches Kriegsarchiv’* 1 (May 1915).

¹⁰⁰ Isidore S. Meyer, “Memorandum on the Preservation of the American Jewish War Records,” 6 Jun. 1941, AJHS I-1, 125/1.

¹⁰¹ See Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of

military service consistently chose to frame their activities with the archive.

Archives like these were established out of a pessimistic perspective on the future and the crises of the present. The daily march to the future heralded not historical progress or the production of new historical studies, but the destruction of sources, the decline of Jewish communities, and violent times that required documenting. At the same time, we can witness archives that emerged out of the varied efforts to make Jewish communal and organizational administration more “modern.” The earliest Jewish communal collections explicitly designated as archives were mandated by the state. In 1816, the Jews of Vienna were instructed to establish an archive, and under the regime of “state rabbis” in Imperial Russia, a kind of archive emerged in which state rabbis were commissioned to record all Jewish births, deaths, marriages, and divorces.¹⁰² And in 1919—the same year that Tcherikower began collecting material for his archive of the Ukrainian pogroms—the Zionist Archives illustrate this second aspect.

The first origins of the Zionist archive can be traced to 1899, when Zionist leaders in Vienna aimed to establish two archives “in order that the future historian of our movement may have at his command all the necessary documents.”¹⁰³ One was to be in Vienna, then the Zionist

California Press, 2002), 46–79; Ronald Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715–1815* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 172–173; H.D. Schmidt, “The Terms of Emancipation, 1781–1812: The Public Debate in German and its Effect on the Mentality and Ideas of German Jewry,” *LBIYB* 1 (1956): 28–47.

¹⁰² Notably, the Vienna archive did not bear fruit until it came under the administration of Ludwig August Frankl in the 1840s, in part due to financial constraints. On the history of the Vienna archives, see Susanne Belovari, “An Archival Information Tour: 1816–1905–2007,” *N.E.A. Newsletter* 35, no. 4 (October 2008): 4–8; Leopold Thaler, “Besuch im Wiener jüdische Gemeindecarchiv,” *Wiener Morgenzeitung*, 27 Feb. 1926; Ludwig August Frankl, *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien*, second ed. (1853), V–VI. ChaeRan Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2002), 95–109. Similarly, Joseph II’s edict of tolerance for the Jews in Galicia of May 1789 indicated that while the army would, as usual, maintain a census of the population for conscription purposes, the Jews were also required to keep their own register of members of their community. See “Patent. Kraft welchen den Juden alle Begünstigungen und Rechte der übrigen Unterthanen gewährt sind,” in *Edicta et Mandata Universalia Regnis Galiciæ et Lodomeriæ* vol. 17 (1789), 90–100, §30.

¹⁰³ Federation of American Zionists, Circular No. 7, Oct. 1899, CZA Z1/407.

movement's headquarters, and the other in Basel, at that time the seat of the Zionist Congress.¹⁰⁴ However, little came from this initiative: It would be two more decades before the Zionistische Zentralarchiv (Zionist Central Archives) was established in Berlin in 1919 under the management of Georg Herlitz. In the interim, the Zionist Organization's chief executive body, the Engeres Actions-Comité (Inner Action Committee), repeatedly moved to create an archive—in 1909, 1913, and again in 1914—indicating its place on the agenda and that it remained unrealized.¹⁰⁵ The intention was to use the archive as a mechanism of control over a movement that was in fact quite sprawling despite the appearance of central management with highly choreographed Congresses, revenues from the Shekel poll-tax, organs for propaganda like Herzl's weekly *Die Welt*, a concentrated region for organized colonial activity in Palestine. In 1909, an archive was proposed when Jacobus Kann complained that the Zionistische Zentralbureau, then based in Cologne, was uninformed about the doings of the various Zionist federations and organizations.¹⁰⁶ After the 1911 transfer of the Zionist Organization's central offices to Berlin, the EAC aimed to form an archive again when in November 1913 and June 1914 Nahum Sokolow, Martin Rosenblüth, and the Gesamtarchiv's Eugen Täubler suggested that they create an archive not just to bring together documents relating to the founding of the Zionist movement, but also to collect newspaper clippings and gather information on Zionist activities around the world.¹⁰⁷

The creation of an archive for the Zionist offices in Berlin was again delayed by the

¹⁰⁴ The first three Zionist Congresses (August 1897, August 1898, and August 1899) were all held in Basel. The following year, the Congress was convened in London, being the first not in Basel. And so, at the time of the publication of this announcement, Basel was the sole location of the Zionist Congresses, where the congress would return many times over the ensuing decades. See Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁵ "Beschluss des Engeren Actons-Comités betreffend Gründung eines Archivs," 2 May 1909, "Beschluss des Engeren Actions-Comités betreffend Begründung eines Archivs," 17 Nov. 1913, "Beschluss des Engeren Actions-Comités betr. Schaffung einer Bibliothek und eines zionistischen Archivs," 10 Jun. 1914, CZA L33/1870.

¹⁰⁶ "Beschluss des Engeren Actons-Comités betreffend Gründung eines Archivs," 2 May 1909, CZA L33/1870.

¹⁰⁷ "Beschluss des Engeren Actions-Comités," 17 Nov. 1913, "Beschluss des Engeren Actions-Comités betr. Schaffung einer Bibliothek und eines zionistischen Archivs," 10 Jun. 1914, CZA L33/1870.

outbreak of World War I. In February 1919, Arthur Hantke offered Georg Herlitz, Täubler's former assistant at the Gesamtarchiv, a position as director of the "Archiv der Zionistischen Organisation."¹⁰⁸ Herlitz initially aimed to assemble a publication archive as well as the files of the Zionist organization's historic central offices.¹⁰⁹ For this reason, Herlitz sought out back issues of Zionist publications like the daily *Jüdische Rundschau*, as well as materials deposited at the Gesamtarchiv.¹¹⁰ He also hoped to bring together historical files from Vienna such as those of the early Zionist leaders Theodor Herzl and David Wolffsohn.¹¹¹ The work proceeded slowly. Herlitz held a wide portfolio, including preparation for the Zionist Congresses as well as publishing official reports from the Zionist executive, and the archive was only one assignment of a self-described "Zionist functionary."¹¹² In September 1920, Herlitz reported that they had "reunified" the files of the previous Zionist central offices in Vienna (1898–1905) and Cologne (1906–1911), bringing together the "Gesamtbestand der Akten der Zionistischen Organisation," but otherwise their success had been "minimal."¹¹³ As for the papers of Theodor Herzl—Hantke's primary item of interest—they would only be received in the late 1930s through the work of Alex Bein, who published a landmark biography of Herzl and would later serve as the Zionist archives' director and the state archivist of Israel.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Herlitz, *Mein Weg nach Jerusalem: Erinnerungen eines Zionistischen Beamten* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1964), 104.

¹⁰⁹ "Aufruf," 26 Aug. 1919, CZA L33/1.

¹¹⁰ Georg Herlitz to Gesamtarchiv, 18 Jun. 1919, CZA L33/1; Gesamtarchiv to Zionistische Zentralbüro, 23 Jun. 1919, "Notiz für die Jüdische Rundschau," 16 Jul. 1919, CZA L33/1.

¹¹¹ Arthur Hantke to Georg Herlitz, Jun. 1919, CZA L33/1.

¹¹² Herlitz, *Mein Weg nach Jerusalem*, 118–131.

¹¹³ "Tätigkeitsbericht des Archivs der Zionistischen Organisation für die Zeit vom 1. Januar bis 30 August 1920," 20 Sept. 1920, CZA L33/2. These collections of the files of the Zionist offices in Vienna, Cologne, and Berlin would form the basis for what remains the core of the Zionist Archives' collections (Z1, Z2, and Z3 respectively).

¹¹⁴ Michael Heymann, "'Arkhiyon Herzl,'" *'Arkhiyon: Mikra'ot le-'arkhiyona'ut u-le-te'ud* 10–11 (1999): 17–41. Also see "Tätigkeitsbericht des Archivs der Zionistischen Organisation für die Zeit vom 1. Januar bis 31. März 1921," 5 Apr. 1921, CZA L33/3, noting that they still did not hold the Herzl or Wolffsohn papers. Cf. Bein, "*Hier kannst Du nicht jeden grüßen*": *Erinnerungen und Betrachtungen* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1996), 284–285.

At the same moment that the German Zionists created their archive, a Zionist archive appeared on the other side of the Atlantic. In October 1919, Rose Zeitlin of the Zionist Organization of America reached out to Herlitz to alert him that they were “attempting to establish a library which shall perform something of the same functions for America that yours is expecting to perform in Germany.”¹¹⁵ This project was short-lived, but two decades later another Zionist archive was established in New York City under the leadership of Sophie Udin in March 1939; yet another initiative to create a Zionist archive appeared in Boston in 1958.¹¹⁶ On the whole, Herlitz was happy to cooperate with his American counterparts. Zeitlin and Herlitz shared materials for their newspaper and publication collections.¹¹⁷ But one should not forget that 1919 and 1920, when the American Zionist archive first appeared, was a moment of intense competition between Zionist leaders in the United States and Europe.¹¹⁸ The war and its political rupture had created a veritable power vacuum in the Zionist Organization. The movement, long centered in Germany, could no longer easily retain its international character as Zionists around the world found themselves on opposing sides of battle.¹¹⁹ The war created openings for Zionist centers in the United States, where rising leaders like David Ben-Gurion were stranded for the duration, as well as London, the home of Chaim Weizmann, and Copenhagen, nominally neutral territory, not to mention Palestine itself. After the war, the archive was a way for the Berlin office to reassert its centrality in the Zionist Organization. When Louis Brandeis and Chaim Weizmann

¹¹⁵ Rose Zeitlin to Georg Herlitz, 6 Oct. 1919, CZA L33/1.

¹¹⁶ Sophie A. Udin to Georg Herlitz, 27 Mar. 1939, CZA L33/291; Fred Monosson to Alex Bein, 12 Jun. 1958, Monosson to Bein, 26 Jun. 1958, CZA L33/863.

¹¹⁷ Rose Zeitlin to Georg Herlitz, 21 Jan. 1920, Zeitlin to Herlitz, 15 Mar. 1920, CZA L33/1.

¹¹⁸ Ben Halpern, *A Clash of Heroes: Brandeis, Weizmann, and American Zionism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

¹¹⁹ On the challenges facing the Zionist movement at this time, see Jay Ticker, “Max I. Bodenheimer: Advocate of Pro-German Zionism at the Beginning of World War I,” *JSS* 43, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 11–30; Jürgen Matthäus, “Deutschtum and Judentum Under Fire: The Impact of The First World War on the Strategies of the Centralverein and the Zionistische Vereinigung,” *LBIYB* 33 (1988): 129–147.

struggled for leadership in the Zionist Organization, the archive was one part of the negotiation of power within the Zionist movement at a time when it was unclear whether the center of gravity for Zionist organizational activity would be in the United States, Europe, or Palestine.

Forming an archive was part of the Zionist Organization's bureaucratic maturation, as well as a site of contestation. One can situate the creation of communal and regional archives such as the Breslau Gemeindecarchiv along the same lines. Founded in August 1924 under the leadership of the rabbi Aron Heppner, the Breslau archive would grow to contain not only the records of the Breslau Jews but also those of surrounding towns. Before World War I, Heppner had collected material from dozens of communities for the Gesamtarchiv. After Koschmin, where Heppner served as a rabbi, was ceded to the reconstituted Poland in the aftermath of World War I, Heppner relocated to Breslau. There, he took the position of community archivist.¹²⁰ It was no coincidence that the archive opened in August 1924, the same month that the *Breslauer Jüdische Gemeindeblatt* commenced publication. In the introduction to the first edition of the community's newspaper, the editors explained that the Jews of Breslau, like other large Jewish communities in Germany, needed to have their own newspaper.¹²¹ Creating an archive at this same moment represented, it seems, another aspect of the building out of Jewish communal infrastructure. Of course, Breslau was long the seat of the Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar, which established it as an important center of Jewish learning. But the archive proved yet another focal point for further establishing Breslau as the capital of the Jews in Silesia.

Although the Gemeindecarchiv was initially envisioned on a limited basis, as the repository for

¹²⁰ On Heppner, see "Gemeindecarchivar Rabb. Dr. Heppner 70 Jahre," *Breslauer Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt*, 17 Jul. 1935, Otto Marcus, "Rabbiner Dr. Aron Heppner, Anlässlich seines 100. Geburtstages: Eine Biographie, dargestellt von seinem Schwiegersohn," JMF SB1610. See Board to Aron Heppner, 21 Jan. 1925, 13 Apr. 1925, JMF SB1610, which confirmed Heppner as communal archivist and set his salary at 600–900 Marks. Also Bernhard Brillung, "Zum 10jährigen Bestehen des Breslauer jüdischen Gemeindecarchivs am 1. August 1934," JMF SB1607.

¹²¹ "Zum Geleit!" *Breslauer Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt*, 8 Aug. 1924. On Jewish communal newspapers, see Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 54–56.

communal files to be managed by Heppner, open for only an hour per day, it was rapidly expanded.¹²² Heppner began collecting historic materials from other cities with the help of regional rabbis such as Nachman Israel Wahrman of Oels, and the archive soon found itself out of space.¹²³ The rabbinical student Bernhard Brillung joined as an assistant in 1927, and together Brillung and Heppner transformed the archive into a regional archive for the Jews of Silesia.¹²⁴

Archives also represented a mechanism for the development of Jewish professions. In May 1926, the *Breslauer Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt* published an announcement of the founding of a “cantor’s archive” of the Allgemeinen Deutschen Kantoren-Verband, the association of cantors in Germany. The archive would bring together copies of synagogue music, traditional melodies (*niggunim*), books and articles, biographies and photographs of famous cantors, as well as liturgical recordings. Theodor Fränkel, a cantor in Nuremberg, was to be the archivist, but they hoped that the archive would be deposited in Berlin or Frankfurt am Main, where there existed cantorial schools.¹²⁵ In a similar fashion, in Berlin in 1913 and separately in Dresden six years later, twin initiatives to create an art archive represent efforts to legitimize the study of Jewish art as a discipline.¹²⁶ In July 1913, Karl Schwarz, an editor of the journal *Ost und West*, formed what he termed the “Jüdisches Kunstarchiv” in coordination with the Gesamtarchiv. Schwartz envisioned his archive as a storehouse for prints and slides of Jewish artwork as well as the papers of famous artists, and intended it to be a research tool as well as the basis for an art

¹²² “Öffnungszeitungen,” *Breslauer Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt*, 23 Feb. 1925.

¹²³ Board of Synagogue-Community to Aron Heppner, 13 Apr. 1925, JMF SB1610, Aron Heppner, “Aus unserem Gemeinde-Archiv,” *Breslauer Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt*, 18 Feb. 1926.

¹²⁴ Brillung, “1. August 1934: Zehn Jahre Gemeinde-Archiv,” *Breslauer Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt*, 30 Jul. 1934.

¹²⁵ “Gründung eines Kantoralen Archivs des Allgemeinen Deutschen Kantoren-Verbandes,” *Breslauer Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt*, 17 May 1926, also in JMF SB1609.

¹²⁶ See Tobias Metzler, “Collecting Community: The Berlin Jewish Museum as Narrator between Past and Present, 1906–1939,” in *Visualizing and Exhibiting Jewish Space and History*, ed. Richard I. Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 55–79, esp. 58–59.

museum.¹²⁷ In 1919, Erich Toeplitz of Dresden again hoped to create a “*Kunstarchiv*.” He argued that such an archive was necessary because Jewish art needed to be studied more intensively and that it needed to be saved. The creation of an art archive, thus, was a part of the broader acknowledgement of Jewish art history as a legitimate subject for study.¹²⁸

Such initiatives indicate both the scope of Jewish archival activity in the first decades of the twentieth century and the complex and intertwined motivations behind such projects, in response to both declensionist and modernizing visions of the future. These archives represented the phenomenon of archival proliferation, when it seemed as if everyone was creating their own archives, as well as the diversity of these projects and the discursive spread of the idea of archiving. The competing *Kunstarchiv* initiatives gesture at the attractiveness of the archive idea and its potential contentiousness. Both Toeplitz and Schwarz hoped to call their art collections “archives,” even though they stretched the boundaries of the concept in ways that figures like Täubler and later Bein might protest. Schwarz was particularly territorial, insisting that Toeplitz had no right to call his collection “*Kunstarchiv*,” suggesting instead that his Leipzig competitor join his Berlin-based project.¹²⁹ In this, too, we can perceive the beginnings of a pendulum swing away from the broad proliferation of disparate archives and towards the centralization that would come to characterize Jewish archival activity in the years after World War II.

“Protectors of Genuine Historiography”? Visions of Jewish Archives

The archival turn in Jewish life—the emergence of a multiplicity of archive projects

¹²⁷ “Statuten des Jüdischen Kunstarchiv in Berlin,” *Archiv für jüdische Familienforschung*, 1, no. 4–6 (1913), 42; Eugen Täubler to Gesamtarchiv, 25 May 1913, NLI ARC Ms. Var. 308, Nr. 01 98; “Vertrag Jüdisches Kunstarchiv mit dem Gesamtarchiv,” 14 Jul. 1913, CJ 1, 75 C Ge 1, Nr. 886.

¹²⁸ “Jüdisches Kunstarchiv,” Feb. 1920, NLI ARC Ms. Var. 308, Nr. 01 293

¹²⁹ Erich Toeplitz to Karl Schwarz, 2 Oct. 1919, 17 Oct. 1919, Schwarz to Toeplitz, 24 Oct. 1919, CJ 1, 75 C Ge 1.

managed by professionals and laypeople alike, and an application of the idea of the archive to a broad set of cultural activities—materialized at a nexus of a new professional “archival science” that took shape at the turn of the twentieth century alongside growing awareness of archives by a broader Jewish public, mirroring the twin impulses of bureaucratization and a foreboding of cultural decay. From Ezechiel Zivier’s 1903 declaration that “all great peoples have an archive” and Bernhard Brillling’s 1927 description of communal archives as “an absolute necessity” one can trace out decades of professional attempts to promote archives, with postwar efforts by figures like Jacob Rader Marcus, who encouraged American synagogues to foster local archives, and Israel’s state archivist Alex Bein who hoped that Jewish organizations and institutions in Palestine/Israel would organize their files and wanted to aid Diaspora Jewish communities in the same. Of course, this is not to suggest that everyday Jews were unaware of archives, as Bein once remarked.¹³⁰ For instance, in 1881, Jacob Nachod, leader of the Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund, submitted an album of photographs “for the archive of the Gemeindebund,” and a number of storied Jewish communities like Vienna, Worms, and Hamburg had established their own community archives.¹³¹ And a century later, in 1985, Philip Slomovitz of the *Detroit Jewish News* wrote effusively of archives, describing archivists as “guardians as well as protectors of genuine historiography” and explaining the importance of archives in preserving the past, in vigilance against “distortion of facts.” Reporting on the formation of archives for the Jewish community of Detroit as well as a number of local synagogues, he declared: “There is no doubting... the importance of creating archives.”¹³² Slomovitz’s enthusiasm represented a

¹³⁰ See supra, n. 9.

¹³¹ Jacob Nachod, Feb. 1881, CAHJP M1/8, CAHJP M1/22. For an extensive consideration of the Vienna and Worms archives, see 365–367, and 423, and also Gerhard Milchram, Christa Prokisch, “Entropie oder: Vom vergeblichen Versuch, Ordnung zu Schaffen,” in *Ordnung muss sein. Das Archiv der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien* (Vienna: Jüdisches Museum Wien, 2007).

¹³² Philip Slomovitz, “Archivists as Protectors of Historical Data,” *Detroit Jewish News* 18 Oct. 1985, 2 (also found

triumph of a century of archival advocacy. But the twentieth-century proliferation of Jewish archives did not result from professionals' pedagogical efforts alone. Indeed, public perception of archives often diverged from such professional visions. Slomovitz's notion of archives as bastions of unfiltered historical truth was, by the 1980s, an increasingly outdated concept among professional archivists and historians, who were coming to realize archives' constructed nature and increasingly questioning the ability to access events "as they really happened." And so, the archival turn in Jewish life was a negotiation of popular and professional archival ideas alongside a growing appreciation for archives, which gained weight as sites of memory.

The archival multiplication considered in this chapter began at a time of increasing archival professionalization and the emergence of a cohort of professionally-trained Jewish archivists. Perhaps the first was Adolf Warschauer, who began his service in the Prussian archives in 1881 and would direct the German archival administration in Danzig and later the entire Generalgouvernement of occupied Poland during World War I.¹³³ Ezechiel Zivier did not have the same pedigree, but he too insisted, as one will recall, that his proposed archive would be led by trained archivists.¹³⁴ A generation later, Alex Bein and Bernhard Brillung represented a new set of professional archivists. Like Warschauer, Bein received on-the-job training at the Reichsarchiv in Potsdam, where he worked from 1927 to 1933; if he initially saw himself as a historian, by the time he immigrated to Palestine following his dismissal in Germany under the

AJA Nearprint file, box 4). The Detroit archives officially opened in 1992 when they found a home at the library of Wayne State University ("Jewish Archives Finds a Home," *Detroit Jewish News*, 10 Jan. 1992, 41).

¹³³ Adolf Warschauer, Vita, 1881, GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/1717; Der Präs. d. St. M. an die Generalstaatskasse, 1 Nov. 1915, GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/1717, among others; Adolf Warschauer, "Aus Warschauer Archiven," *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden* 6 (1926): 5–14; Adolf Warschauer, *Deutsche Kulturarbeit in der Ostmark: Erinnerungen aus vier Jahrzehnten* (Berlin: Verlag von Reimar Hobbing, 1926), esp. 245–318.

¹³⁴ See, among others, Ezechiel Zivier, "Ein allgemeines Archiv der Juden Deutschlands," *Bericht der Grossloge für Deutschland*, Mar. 1903, 36–38.

so-called “Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Beamtentums,” he envisioned his life’s work as the development of archives in the ancient Jewish homeland.¹³⁵ And Bernhard Brillung went from aspiring rabbinical student at Breslau’s Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar to self-proclaimed “archivist of the Breslau synagogue-community,” as he would describe himself in the 1950s.¹³⁶

These Jewish archivists appeared alongside the increasing professionalization of archives, consisting of credentialization, institutionalization, and the standardization of archival principles and definitions. Archival work became an accredited occupation at the French *École des chartes*, founded in 1821, the Institut für Österreichischer Geschichtsforschung in Vienna (1854), and the Institut für Archivwissenschaft in Marburg (1896), which moved to Berlin in 1903.¹³⁷ At the same time, concepts of modern archival theory, like provenance and a notion of archives as “official” documents and transactions, emerged in varied European contexts. But it was at the turn of the twentieth century when archival practice was redefined as a “science” with the national and international archival associations and the production of standardized textbooks such as the 1898 “Dutch manual” of Muller, Feith, and Fruin, and Hilary Jenkinson’s *Manual of Archive Administration* (1922).¹³⁸ These manuals emerged from the institutional bases of archival practice. They did not create new archival practices by fiat or proclamation; instead, they reflected existing consensus among archival professionals.

¹³⁵ Alex Bein, *Hier kannst Du nicht jeden grüßen*, 196.

¹³⁶ Brillung frequently signed his letters with this honorific (“ehemaliger Archivar der Synagogengemeinde Breslau”); see ch. 6, n. 197. At the founding meeting of the Gesellschaft für jüdische Familienforschung in Tel Aviv in March 1941, Brillung’s title “Rabbi” was crossed off, replaced by “archivist.” (“Verein für jüdische Familienforschung, Tel-Aviv,” 4 Mar. 1941, JMF SB0682.)

¹³⁷ Lara Moore, *Restoring Order: The École des chartes and the Organization of Archives and Libraries in France, 1820–1870* (Duluth, MN: Litwin Books, 2008); Ernst Posner, “European Experiences in Training Archivists,” *American Archivist* 4, no. 1 (Jan. 1941): 26–37; Albert Brackmann, “Das Institut für Archivwissenschaft und geschichtswissenschaftliche Fortbildung am Geheimen Staatsarchiv in Berlin-Dahlem. Vortrag gehalten auf dem XXII. Archivtag zu Linz a.D. am 15. September 1930,” *Archivalische Zeitschrift*, 3rd ser., 40 (1931): 1–16.

¹³⁸ Lawrence Geller, Joseph Cuvelier, “Belgian Archival Education and the First International Congress of Archivists, Brussels 1910,” *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983): 26–34; on Jenkinson, see Terry Eastwood, “Jenkinson’s Writings on Some Enduring Archival Themes,” *American Archivist* 67, no. 1 (Spring–Summer 2004): 31–44.

Early twentieth-century codifications of professional archival practice all defined the archive by its official and objective character. The “Dutch Manual” opened with a description of archives as “produced by an administrative body or one of its officials,” and Jenkinson similarly pointed to archival records as essentially “part of an official transaction... preserved for official reference.”¹³⁹ As scholars have noted, these definitions presented a narrow conception of the archive, reflecting what one might characterize as a naïve archival perspective presupposing the primacy of the state and the purportedly “objective” historical perspective of archives and archivists.¹⁴⁰ As Jenkinson would put it, archives “themselves state no opinion, voice no conjecture; they are simply written memorials, authenticated by the fact of their official preservation, of events which actually occurred and of which they themselves formed a part.”¹⁴¹ Jewish archivists like Ezechiel Zivier and Eugen Täubler at the Gesamtarchiv and Georg Herlitz at the Zionist Archives accepted this historical and archival vision. Their archival projects—respectively focused on communal and institutional archives, not to mention Täubler’s vision of a network of Jewish archives for each state where Jews lived—were tied to the idea of the archive’s official nature and its connection to the state.¹⁴² And Ernst Wolff argued that archives presented a fundamental objectivity to Jewish genealogy.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, Michel Foucault’s and

¹³⁹ S. Muller, J. A. Feith, R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, trans. Arthur Leavitt (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003), §1, 13–18; *Tekst en context van de ‘Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven’ van 1898*, ed. P.J. Horsman, F.C.J. Ketelaar, T.H.P.M. Thomassen (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), 1–5; Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration, Including the Problems of War Archives and Archive Making* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), 4.

¹⁴⁰ Terry Cook, “What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift,” *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997), 17–63.

¹⁴¹ Jenkinson, 4; “Introduction,” in *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, xvii–xviii.

¹⁴² See Eugen Täubler, “Jüdische Geschichte und allgemeine Geschichtswissenschaft,” 27 Oct. 1912, CAHJP P28/11/60, and in *Einunddreissigster Bericht der Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin (Berlin: H. Itzkowski, 1913), 47–56; Täubler, “Das Forschungs-Institut für die Wissenschaft des Judentums: Organisation und Arbeitsplan,” in *Aufsätze zur Problematik jüdischer Geschichtsschreibung, 1908–1950*, ed. Selma Stern-Täubler (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1977), 32–43.

¹⁴³ Ernst Wolff, “Vom Wesen des Familienarchives,” *Jüdische Familien-Forschung* 3, no. 3 (Sept. 1927): 250–255.

Jacques Derrida's moves towards a radically expansive vision of the archive, not to mention more critical perspectives on the role of archivists in actively shaping historical collections, cast a deep shadow over the "objectivity" of archive and archivist.¹⁴⁴ And the statist definitions left out other kinds of archives, such as communal and family collections.¹⁴⁵ Such archival visions cannot be easily cast aside as relics of past professional naïveté. They reflected archivists' position as servants of the state, seeing archives through the prism of state power. The truth of the matter is that archives do have a long tradition of ties with the state, the *trésor des chartes* serving as the armory of aristocracy, intimately tied to political, juridical, and economic power.

The image of the archive as simultaneously "objective" alongside its role as agent of political power was but one facet of a professional archival narrative. Jewish archivists also participated in a vision of the archive as an ancient but ultimately western institution, a mark of modernization. When Ezechiel Zivier noted that the Bible attested to the existence of archives and records in the ancient Israelite kingdoms, or Alex Bein pointed out that the so-called "people of the book" long held fast to sacred scrolls and texts, they were not simply pointing out the Jews' long documentary tradition.¹⁴⁶ It was part of a professional viewpoint in which archives were a fundamental part of the human experience. Nietzsche argued that historical thinking separated humans from animals; Bein believed it was archives that marked the distinction:

¹⁴⁴ Joan M. Schwartz, Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2, no. 1 (2002): 1–19; Randall C. Jimerson, "Embracing the Power of Archives," *American Archivist* 69, no. 1 (Spring–Summer 2006): 19–32; Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 129; Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever."

¹⁴⁵ See Papailias, *Genres of Recollection*, 2–10, for a discussion of the exclusion of personal collections from the archival field. David Sabeian makes reference to the formation of family archives in *Kinship in Neckarhausen*, 452.

¹⁴⁶ Zivier, "Ein allgemeines Archiv der Juden Deutschlands," *Bericht der Grossloge für Deutschland*, Mar. 1903, 37. In one example, the discovery of the "Scroll of the Teaching" (*Sefer ha-Torah*) in the Jerusalem Temple during the reign of Josiah (641–609 BCE) points to the ties of scroll hoards to religious and political power. Neither Kings II 22 nor Chron. II 34, which recount the episode, explicitly refer to the source of the scroll as an "archive," but such scroll hoards were afforded a type of legitimacy. Regardless of whether the scroll was, as modern scholars have suggested, a text of the book of Deuteronomy, it provided legitimacy to Josiah's religious reforms. (See Nadav Na'aman, "The 'Discovered Book' and the Legitimation of Josiah's Reform," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 1 [Spring 2011]: 47–62.)

“From the day when writing changed the relations between people,” Bein began an article in the Palestine newspaper *Davar* in October 1936, “we find the archive.”¹⁴⁷ Two decades later, Bein would again argue that civilization was built upon the written document.¹⁴⁸ Bein mirrored the claims of his former colleague Ernst Posner, the German archivist of Jewish extraction who essentially founded archival science as a professional discipline in the United States after fleeing Nazi Germany. Posner referred to the archivist as the “second oldest profession,” a crude manner of articulating the connection which Bein so clearly emphasized between archives, the written word, and the origins of human civilization, as a product of “mankind’s experience in organized living.”¹⁴⁹

At the same time, Jewish scholars painted the archive as western, as opposed to the “oriental” Genizah. In the 1960s, S.D. Goitein opened his discussion of the Cairo Genizah in *A Mediterranean Society* with the claim of the “almost complete absence of archives in Muslim countries,” contrasting it with the files kept in European lands. By contrast, he described the Genizah as a kind of “anti-archive.”¹⁵⁰ For Goitein, an archive was an ordered, purposefully created collection of documents, whereas the Genizah was decidedly not so, the result of random discarding—a historically useful trash heap, not a meticulously crafted collection.¹⁵¹ In the early twentieth century, too, scholars such as Alexander Marx of the Jewish Theological Seminary

¹⁴⁷ Alex Bein, “Sefer she-higi‘ah sha‘ato,” *Davar*, 16 Oct. 1936. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen: Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben* (Leipzig: E.W. Fritzsche, 1874).

¹⁴⁸ Alex Bein, “Tazkir ke-davar heḳmat beit-sefer le-’arkhiyona’ut ‘al yad ha-’universitah ha-‘ivrit,” 26 Jun. 1957, CZA P64/148/8; “Second Meeting of the Israel Archives Association,” 13 Apr. 1959, CZA L33/324.

¹⁴⁹ Meyer H. Fishbein, “Ernst Posner,” *American Archivist* 43, no. 3 (Summer 1980): 426; Ernst Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 1. James O’Toole wrote of “a common joke among archivists... that they were practitioners of the world’s oldest learned profession...” (O’Toole, “Back to the Future: Ernst Posner’s Archives in the Ancient World,” *American Archivist* 67, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2004): 161). Also Rodney A. Ross, “Ernst Posner: The Bridge Between the Old World and the New,” *American Archivist* 44, no. 4 (Fall 1981): 304–312.

¹⁵⁰ See S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, vol. 1, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967, esp. pp. 7–8.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 7–8.

believed that the Genizah must be ordered and catalogued, processed, and prepared.¹⁵² Similarly, Bein identified the first Jewish archives with the emergence of Zionist settlement in Palestine in the 1870s and 1880s, analogous to what he saw as the reentry of Jews into the political realm.¹⁵³ As a result, archivists and scholars delineated archival dichotomies: the ordered archive in opposition to the haphazard Genizah; communal and political life in contrast to Jews seemingly outside the realm of history; western societies with their tools of modern administration as a foil to eastern, underdeveloped, naïve peoples; the disrepair of archives under laypeople versus archival infrastructure under the tutelage of professionally trained archivists, all the while seeing archiving as an ancient human activity.

The proliferation of Jewish archives in the twentieth century appears to follow from the development of the cohort of professional Jewish archivists who worked to create centralized archives, but the archive also held a broader meaning and context. When David Kaufmann eulogized Heinrich Graetz in 1891, he lamented the destruction of archives. However, he argued that the historic spirit of the Jewish people could be found elsewhere: “World literature,” Kaufmann wrote, “has become the archive of Jewish history.”¹⁵⁴ For much of the nineteenth century, an “archive” referred not strictly to a collection of documents; it could just as easily refer to a journal, or to libraries, following from a long tradition of the archive as a metaphor of collecting beyond the official papers of state.¹⁵⁵ Jeremiah Heinemann’s *Allgemeines Archiv des Judentums* (1839–1842) and Samuel Cahen’s *Archives Israélites* (1840–1935) are only two such examples in the Jewish sphere. Perhaps most famously, one can point to the *Archiv der*

¹⁵² Alexander Marx, “Aims and Tasks of Jewish Historiography,” *PAJHS* 26 (1918): 22.

¹⁵³ Bein, “The State of Jewish Archives,” 1961, CZA P64/163a, 5.

¹⁵⁴ David Kaufmann, “H. Graetz,” in *Gesammelten Schriften*, ed. Markus Brann (Frankfurt a.M.: J. Kaufmann), I:274.

¹⁵⁵ Notably, the term “museum” was also used for journals. See Crane, 4–14, and Markus Friedrich, *Die Geburt des Archivs. Eine Wissensgeschichte* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2013), 112–114, 231–233.

Gesellschaft für ältere Deutsche Geschichtskunde (1820–1874), the organ of the *Monumenta germaniae historica*.¹⁵⁶ As early as the 1780s, one can identify the Maskilic journal *Ha-me'assef* (The Collector, published in Königsberg 1784–1811), which collected not documents but *articles*, as an example of the “collecting” nature of journals. In the twentieth century, this trend continued. Josef Lau published a letter in Theodor Herzl’s journal *Die Welt* in May 1901 calling for the creation of a “Palästina-Archiv” to collect the dispersed plans, documents, and reports of the Zionist movement in a journal; a year later, Zygmunt Bychowski proposed a similar plan.¹⁵⁷ The journal *Palästina* proposed that it would become a “Palästina-Archiv” in 1908, meaning that it would publish reports on the settlement activities in the land of Israel.¹⁵⁸ And in 1912, Max Grunwald established the journal *Archiv für jüdische Familienforschung* in Vienna.¹⁵⁹

The archive also stood in for a library, and vice-versa. At the inaugural meeting of the AJHS in May 1892, Moritz Ellinger proposed the creation of a permanent collection of documents, but called for it to be stored at a “library,” and the Jewish Historical Society of England declared its intention to create a “library and museum” to store historic archives.¹⁶⁰ When the Central Conference of American Rabbis discussed their “archive,” they too seemed to be discussing a library.¹⁶¹ As late as 1915, the catalogue of the “archives” held at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati almost entirely consisted of books.¹⁶² In 1906, Aron Heppner of Koschmin,

¹⁵⁶ On the history of MGH, see Harry Bresslau, *Geschichte der Monumenta Germaniae historica im Auftrag ihrer Zentralkommission* (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1921); David Knowles, *Great Historical Enterprises: Problems in Monastic History* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1963), 63–98; Horst Fuhrmann, “Sind eben alles Menschen gewesen”: *Gelehrtenleben im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1996).

¹⁵⁷ Josef Lau, “Ein Palästina-Archiv,” *Die Welt*, 17 May 1901, 2; Zygmunt Bychowski, “Ein ‘Archiv für Zionismus,’ Vorschlag für die Mitglieder der Cultur-Commission,” *Die Welt* 23 May 1902, 6.

¹⁵⁸ “Die Monatsschrift Palästina als Palästina-Archiv,” *Palästina* 5–6 (1908): 1.

¹⁵⁹ *Archiv für jüdische Familienforschung*, ed. Max Grunwald, Vienna, 1912–1913.

¹⁶⁰ “Organization of the AJHS,” AJHS I-1 109/30, 18; “Laws,” *Transactions of the JHSE* 1 (1893–1894): 164–165.

¹⁶¹ *CCARYB* 16 (1906): 41; *CCARYB* 23 (1913): 39.

¹⁶² “Report of the Curators of Archives,” *CCARYB* 25 (1915): 60–62; *CCARYB* 26 (1916): 65, and *CCARYB* 29

an early Gesamtarchiv supporter and later founder of the Breslau Gemeindearchiv, along with Isaak Herzberg of Bromberg, circulated a survey on local historical materials. Meanwhile, Heppner and Herzberg, the editors of the compendium *Aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart der Juden und der jüdischen Gemeinden in den Posener Landen* (1904–1929) placed the matter of archives thirteenth out of fourteen questions in their survey, asking: “Does your community hold Archives (books, files, etc.) from which some information could be extracted?”¹⁶³ And when Samuel Rothschild detailed the archives of the Jewish community of Worms in 1909, he included not just historic documents but also the “*Maaseh-Nisim*’-Buch” or tales of miracles among the archive’s holdings.¹⁶⁴

The original conception of the “archive” as journal or library shows that while archival professionals sought to limit the “archive” to the files of administrative bodies, other visions persisted. And yet, Jews increasingly spoke of the archive in the specific terms of a kind of space and as a repository for documents. In response to Joseph Lau’s 1901 proposal to create a “journal-archive,” Abraham Neufeld wrote that the archive was something much more specific:

Tied with the word ‘archive’ is the following rough picture... old papers and parchments, collected in the course of decades, surely centuries... from time to time some serious scholars are lost in them, rummaging through the extensive materials to find a rogue grain of truth; the whole atmosphere full of dull dusty air, dead calm, reclusiveness, and deeper learning.¹⁶⁵

Hermann Adler and Joseph Jacobs spoke similarly of the researches of Myers Davis and Lucien

(1919): 41, refer to adding copies of the Yearbook to these “archives.”

¹⁶³ Aron Heppner, Isaak Herzberg, “Die Herrn Vorsteher, Rabbiner und Lehrer der mit den Buchstaben G-Z beginnenden jüd. Gemeinden der Prov. Posen werden... gebeten,” CAHJP P40/234. The copy held in Jerusalem is undated, but it was published as the back cover of the 1906 edition of “*Aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart der Juden und der jüdischen Gemeinden in den Posener Landen*.”

¹⁶⁴ Rothschild, Samson, *Aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart der israelitische Gemeinde Worms*, 1909 (4th ed.), 22–25. Also see 1905 (3rd ed.), 28–48, 1913 (5th ed.), 21–24.

¹⁶⁵ Abraham Neufeld, “Zur wirtschaftlichen Erschliessung Palästinas: Zugleich eine Bemerkung zum Artikel ‘Palästina-Archiv’ von Herrn Ober-Ingenieur Lau,” *Die Welt*, 17 May 1901, 2.

Wolf in the “musty and dusty” archives of London.¹⁶⁶ And if Grunwald’s *Archiv für jüdische Familienforschung* was to be a journal, a decade later when the Berlin-based ophthalmologist Adolf Czellitzer established the Gesellschaft für jüdischen Familienforschung, he sought to establish his genealogical archive by collecting historical documents and family trees, and he and his colleagues emphasized the importance of archives for genealogical research.¹⁶⁷

These Jews spoke of the archive as a concrete space, and the emerging class of professional archivists also tried to promulgate a vision of the archive that hewed to their own conception of the archive as an official space. Jacob Jacobson, who led the Berlin archive beginning in 1921, penned articles not only to publicize the Gesamtarchiv, but also to emphasize the importance of archives in general, culminating in a thirteen-part series published in the *Israelitisches Familienblatt* in 1927.¹⁶⁸ Jacobson highlighted their holdings, and also instructed the reader on the nature of an archive: “An archive is no cabinet of rarities,” he began, “and neither a museum parading fineries, but rather a supremely businesslike institute for the storage of correspondence, documents, record books and similar documents originating from a certain administrative sphere.”¹⁶⁹ Jacobson went on to describe technical aspects of archival administration, especially environmental factors such as dust, moisture, and fire which endangered paper documents. For this reason, Jacobson argued, historical files should be stored

¹⁶⁶ Hermann Adler, “A Survey of Anglo-Jewish History,” *Transactions of the JHSE* 3 (1895–1896): 1–17; Joseph Jacobs, “The Typical Character of Anglo-Jewish History,” *Transactions of the JHSE* 3 (1895–1896): 126–143.

¹⁶⁷ “Arbeitsplan,” *Jüdische Familien-Forschung* 1 (Dec. 1924): 23–24.

¹⁶⁸ Jacob Jacobson, “Jüdische Geschichtsaltertümer in Deutschland,” Jan 1925, CAHJP P136/26; Jacobson, “Akten der posenschen Judengemeinden,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 16 Jul. 1925; Jacobson, “Privatbriefe als Quelle der Berliner Gemeindegeschichte,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 6 Jan. 1927, 10–11; Jacobson, “Aus dem Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,” *Aus alter und neuer Zeit: Illustrierte Beilage zum Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 12 May 1927, 588–589, 2 Jun. 1927, 596, 16 Jun. 1927, 606, 30 Jun. 1927, 614, 14 Jul. 1927, 621, 28 Jul. 1927, 628, 11 Aug. 1927, 636, 25 Aug. 1927, 648, 8 Sept. 1927, 653, 22 Sept. 1927, 5, 5 Oct. 1927, 14, 27 Oct. 1927, 29, 29 Dec. 1927, 63.

¹⁶⁹ Jacobson, “Aus dem Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,” 12 May 1927.

at an institution equipped to protect the files such as the Gesamtarchiv.¹⁷⁰

If Jacobson presented a vision of the archive modeled on the professional notion of the “official” archive, others called on Jews to protect personal and other non-official files. Arthur Czellitzer urged his readers to create family archives. Collecting documents from one’s family was of great significance, he argued, since the Gesamtarchiv only reflected the “official” institutional side of Jewish life. Living in a big city, too, had the ability to bear down on traditional family bonds, otherwise kept up through living in close contact. He lamented the great loss when a widow goes through her husband’s writing table, destroying papers seemingly unnecessary or uninteresting. “What is worthy of archiving [*archivreif*]?” he asked. The answer, he explained, was nearly everything: family chronicles, manuscripts, documents of all kinds.¹⁷¹

Jews also portrayed the archive as a space of inherently truthful historical experience. When Leopold Thaler published recollections in the *Wiener Morgenzeitung* on his visit to the Jewish communal archives in 1925, he presented a powerful image of the archive, what it looked like, and what it represented. Calling to mind Neufeld’s image of the archive’s “dusty dull air,” Thaler described how upon entering the archive one encounters “the whiff of dead history” and “the dust of centuries.”¹⁷² But, he continued, “when one fetches individual files, documents, [and] copies and through arduous work the picture comes to life, the feeling of ossified book-wormery yields to the awareness of the ability to know the authentic past.” Through the archive and their documents, Thaler argued, historic figures “come to life” more vividly than through

¹⁷⁰ Jacobson, “Aus dem Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden,” 2 Jun. 1927, 16 Jun. 1927.

¹⁷¹ Arthur Czellitzer, “Jüdische Familienforschung,” 1925, JMF SB0683. Also see Excerpt from *Jüdische Rundschau*, Jan. 1927, JMF SB0683.

¹⁷² Abraham Neufeld, “Zur wirtschaftlichen Erschliessung Palästinas: Zugleich eine Bemerkung zum Artikel ‘Palästina-Archiv’ von Herrn Ober-Ingenieur Lau,” *Die Welt*, 17 May 1901, 2; Leopold Thaler, “Besuch im Wiener jüdische Gemeindearchiv,” *Wiener Morgenzeitung*, 27 Feb. 1926.

lectures and narrative history.¹⁷³ And Ernst Wolff, secretary of Czellitzer's genealogical society, disseminated a similar concept of truth in the archive when he published a series of articles in 1927 and again in 1931 urging readers to form their own family archives. "The archive is the true kernel of all historical and genealogical research," he stressed. But in creating an archive, he explained, one must maintain its objectivity. "Archival truth [*Archivwahrheit*] is the *conditio sine qua non*," Wolff stressed; one must not fall prey to the temptation to muddle the waters of the past "in majorem familiae gloriam."¹⁷⁴ Genealogical research's "scientific" objectivity, he claimed, depended on the archive, which must be guarded against inaccuracies and fabrications. The archive's keeper, he continued, must take responsibility for its objectivity and not seek to influence it and its contents, otherwise "the dependability of the archive is destroyed."¹⁷⁵ Such descriptions of family archives reflected a broader naïveté about the nature of archives as "objective" record of the past, reminiscent of Jenkinson's manual. But it gestures at what Wolff hoped to impart to his readers—not just how to manage their own archive, but an image of what the archive represented in the ideal: an objective, truthful access point to the past.

In the 1930s, such images and appeals continued. Writing in 1935, Jacob Jacobson spoke of the archive as the place where "the past is revived," as a location for communion with the past.¹⁷⁶ In the summer of 1938, Jacobson again pressed Jews to "protect your archival material!" with a series of articles syndicated throughout Germany.¹⁷⁷ Under the Nazi regime, the purpose for collecting and protecting archival materials had shifted—no longer just for the aim of general

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ernst Wolff, "Familienchronik und Familienarchiv," *Jüdische Familien-Forschung* 3, no. 2 (June 1927): 226–227.

¹⁷⁵ Wolff, "Vom Wesen des Familienarchives," *Jüdische Familien-Forschung* 3, no. 3 (Sept. 1927): 250–255.

¹⁷⁶ "Aus dem Papierkorb der Geschichte: Ein Blick in das Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden," 2 May 1935, JMF SB1678.

¹⁷⁷ Jacob Jacobson, "Schützt euer Archivgut!" *Gemeindeblatt der Jüdischen Gemeinde zu Berlin*, 26 Jun. 1938. This article was published in *Jüdische Rundschau*, 10 Jun. 1938, *Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt für Oberschlesien*, 23 Jun. 1938, as well as *Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt für die Synagogen-Gemeinden in Preußen/Norddeutschland*, 1 Sept. 1938.

historical and genealogical research, and neither only because of the fate of the smaller communities, but also because of the necessity to produce documentary proof of racial origin.

After the Second World War, Jews continued to advocate for archives. Jacob Rader Marcus, the founder of the American Jewish Archives, published pamphlets on writing a Jewish communal history and establishing a synagogue archive.¹⁷⁸ Marcus pointed potential local historians to synagogue records, minutes, and files, recommending that they be brought together as an archive. No professional training is required, Marcus insisted, but one should take certain precautions, placing the materials in a fireproof storage room in the synagogue, managed by a historical or “*pinkas*” committee.¹⁷⁹ In Israel, Alex Bein called for a “popular movement” to protect archives, whereby the public would salvage material to submit to a network of so-called public archives.¹⁸⁰ The Zionist Archives also called on readers to assist them “by seeing to it that *your* Zionist Federation maintains its records in good order and will transfer them in due course to the Central Zionist Archives.”¹⁸¹ And the Israel State Archives produced a color broadsheet with a cartoon bureaucrat carting his files to safe harbor at the State Archives.¹⁸²

Such publications and public statements reflected a developing discourse around archives. At first, Jewish archivists and scholars presented images of what archives look like, their purpose, and their role as keeper of historic truths. At the same time, archival figures sought to educate the public and involve them in the process of archiving. Over time, such visions of the

¹⁷⁸ It is notable that Marcus, as a rabbi and working at the Hebrew Union College, stressed the *synagogue* as the unit of Jewish life rather than the community which was the focal point for collecting initiatives such as the Gesamtarchiv.

¹⁷⁹ “How to write the history of an American Jewish community,” 1953, AJA Jacob Rader Marcus Nearprint, box 2; a 1964 version is in AJA Nearprint, box 4; see AJA, “Your Congregational Archives,” 1961, AJA Nearprint, box 4.

¹⁸⁰ “Second Meeting of the Israel Archives Association,” 13 Apr. 1959, CZA L33/324, also CZA P64/115; “D”r Bein kore’ le-hekmat tenu’ah ‘amamit le-shemirat ha-’arkhiyonim,” *Davar*, 15 Apr. 1959, “Homer histori—le-’arkhiyonim tsiboriim!” *Haaretz*, 22 Apr. 1959, also CZA L33/324.

¹⁸¹ Emphasis in original. “The Central Zionist Archives,” 1960, CZA DD1/3237.

¹⁸² “Shmor ’et tiķe ’avodatekha be-tsoṛah tovaḥ u-mesuderet,” 1962, CZA P64/160/4.

archive became embedded in a public consciousness, surfacing as far afield as Michigan. The proliferation of Jewish archives throughout the twentieth century was based on the dialectical relationship between the processes of archival professionalization and of popularization and a sense of archival destruction. On the one hand, archivists worked to create archival infrastructure along professional lines and to educate the public about the nature and importance of archives, spreading expert knowledge to a lay audience. And yet the popularization of archives, resulting from such educational initiatives, did not necessarily entail the acceptance of a strict definition of the archive. A rising tide of collecting in Jewish life—to collect historical files, antiquities, ethnographic expeditions, photographs, and records of contemporary events—alongside a continued broad definition of the “archive” led to archival proliferation. At this time, an explosion of archival activity reflected a growing appreciation for archives among a broad group of Jews, for whom the archive loomed ever larger.

Archives Across the Aisle: Collecting as Common Ground

As we will recall, the Gesamtarchiv appeared alongside challengers who created competing archives. Among others, when the rabbi Moïse Ginsburger formed his Société pour l’histoire des Israélites d’Alsace et de Lorraine in 1904, he objected to the Gesamtarchiv’s centralization of archival material in the German capital. The two groups’ competing visions place them at opposite ends of a spectrum. One was committed to the ideal of centralization, the other to a type of regionalism or even “local patriotism,” to use Martin Philippon’s turn of phrase. They each responded to the migration and urbanization changing the face of small Jewish communities across Europe, which these leaders felt was particularly apparent in *fin de siècle* Germany. Even more, each was a response to the impulse of organizational and communal centralization in Jewish life and broader society in Wilhelmine Germany. If the Gesamtarchiv

was an embodiment of the burgeoning attempts to create a centralized Jewish community, Ginsburger's opposition was a rejection of the developing reality of centralization in Germany. The same fear of the extinction of provincial Jewish communities motivated the Gesamtarchiv's leaders and spurred Ginsburger to action. This one example—of those seemingly at odds with one another who similarly turned to archives as a response to the same social stimuli—represents the competitive nature of archive collecting and also encapsulates the archive fever that gripped the Jewish world, when Jews across the aisle turned to archives.

Two decades later, another odd coupling of nearly-simultaneous historical endeavors, the Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society (PHES) in Jerusalem and the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO) in Vilnius, points the way towards comprehending this archival turn. The PHES was formed in Jerusalem on December 18, 1924 (21 Kislev 5685), only days before the opening of the Institute for Jewish Studies on December 22 of that year at the newly-founded Hebrew University.¹⁸³ The PHES was one of a series of ventures—alongside the Hebrew University, the National and University Library in Jerusalem, and later the Jewish Historical General Archives—intended to foster the study of the Jewish past as part of a national revival and the development of Palestine as a cultural center. Together, they provided infrastructure for the emergence of what some scholars have termed a “Jerusalem school” of nationalist scholarship.¹⁸⁴ A few brief months later, in February 1925, the Berlin-based philologist Nokhem Shtif circulated a thirty-six page pamphlet titled “Vegn a yidishn akademishn institut” (On a Yiddish [Jewish] Academic Institute), that would provide the clarion's call for the formation of the Yiddish Scientific

¹⁸³ See Protocols, 18 Dec. 1924, CAHJP IHS-1, and David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 40–41.

¹⁸⁴ David N. Myers, “Was There a ‘Jerusalem School’? An Inquiry into the First Generation of Historical Researchers at The Hebrew University,” *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 10 (1994): 66–92; Yitshak Conforti, *Zeman 'avar: ha-histroyografyah ha-tsiyonit ye- 'itsuv ha-zikaron ha-le'umi* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2006).

Institute, or YIVO, in Vilnius on March 24, 1925.¹⁸⁵

YIVO and the PHES might seem to be foils, essentially ideological opposites. The founders of PHES were rooted in a Zionist vision of Hebrew culture. YIVO's leaders saw themselves as heirs to the Diaspora nationalist tradition of Simon Dubnow, proponents of a vast eastern European Jewish cultural heartland in which the Yiddish language reigned. The "Jerusalem scholars" aimed to create a scholarly center in Jerusalem as part of the program of a cultural center in Palestine, and YIVO formed a loose network of scholarly circles in Vilnius, Berlin, Warsaw, and later New York City.¹⁸⁶ They appear to reflect divergent conceptions of Jewish life, one based in Yiddish culture, one in Hebrew, one on the basis of a center and periphery in the vision of the Zionist writer Ahad Ha-'am, the other on a network of interconnected centers traversing political boundaries.¹⁸⁷

The PHES and YIVO might seem to represent opposing poles in the development of Jewish scholarship in the twentieth century, but in fact they were two sides of the same coin. Both represented a move towards further collaborative research. Both hoped to follow in the footsteps of Simon Dubnow. YIVO's Historical Section held its first meeting in Dubnow's Berlin apartment in October 1925, and until the 1980s YIVO called on *zamlers* or lay collectors just as Dubnow had done.¹⁸⁸ In Palestine, the PHES' name harked back to Dubnow's Jewish Historical

¹⁸⁵ On the founding of YIVO, see Cecile Kuznitz, *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture: Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

¹⁸⁶ This vision of a network of centers was clear as early as Shtif's February 1925 memorandum, when he wrote that he aimed to form "not an institute in one place; rather a coordinated system of institutions, which work according to one plan with an organizational union." (Orig. emphasis, Nokhem Shtif, "Vegn a yidishn akademishn institute," 2 Feb. 1925, YIVO RG82/2370, 33, hereafter "Vegn") Also see "Di organisatsiye fun der yidishr visnschaft," 1925, YIVO RG82/2372, which reprinted the memorandum alongside the "Vilna Theses" which laid out YIVO's initial program.

¹⁸⁷ See Ahad Ha-'am, "Medinat-Ha-yehudim ye-'tsorat-ha-yehudim'," in *Kol kitve 'Ahad Ha-'am* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1961), 135–149, originally "Le-she'elot ha-yom, 'a," *Ha-shiloah* 3, no. 1 (Tevet Trm"h, Jan. 1898).

¹⁸⁸ Notably, Dubnow did not direct the Historical Section. Instead, it would be Elias Tcherikower who provided the vision of its activities. See "Di 1-te grindungs-zitsung fun der historisher sektsie ba dem yidishn visnschaftlikhn institut," 31 Oct. 1925, YIVO RG82/2238. The meeting may have been held in Dubnow's apartment, and was

and Ethnographic Society, formed in St. Petersburg in 1909. Both groups also presented visions of scholarship in service of a language-based national movement, even if one was Diaspora-based, and the other rooted in a vision of a national homeland. What is more, each rejected nineteenth-century Jewish studies under the banner of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* or the Hebrew *Hokhmat Yisra'el*. Scholars in both Jerusalem and east Europe perceived their predecessors as motivated primarily by the drive towards emancipation and assimilation at the expense of authentic Jewish life. In this, they presented ideals of ideological and methodological distinctiveness reminiscent of the claims of successive generations of the first *Wissenschaft* scholars and Heinrich Graetz, each of whom sought to separate themselves from their predecessors in these terms.¹⁸⁹ But whereas the methodological innovations of nineteenth-century scholars were focused on new types of criticism, both of these two twentieth-century projects would eventually center archives in their historiographical polemic, with both seeking to gather materials in Vilnius, Jerusalem, and later New York City as a means to enable their new “objective” historical projects.

This fundamental opposition to *Wissenschaft des Judentums* has long been identified with the Jerusalem scholars, and perhaps most of all Gershom Scholem.¹⁹⁰ In 1944, Scholem presented his famous polemic that the “European” *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was rooted in apologetics; he argued the political agenda of emancipation impinged upon the possibility of “objective” study of the Jewish past, which he believed was only truly possible in the land of

chaired by him, but the program was presented by Tcherikower. On Zamlers, see Marek Web, “The YIVO Archives: 55 Years of Collecting,” presented at session on Jewish archives at the 44th Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists, Cincinnati, Ohio, October 1, 1980, YIVO Office Collection.

¹⁸⁹ See ch. 1, pp. 33–35.

¹⁹⁰ David Biale, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 171–189; Arthur Hertzberg, “Gershom Scholem as Zionist and Believer,” *Modern Judaism* 5, no. 1 (Feb. 1985): 3–19; David N. Myers, “The Scholem-Kurzweil Debate and Modern Jewish Historiography,” *Modern Judaism* 6, no. 3 (Oct. 1986): 261–286.

Israel.¹⁹¹ This position did not merely reflect Scholem's Zionism, but rather a broader intellectual and cultural constellation within Weimar Germany. A general malaise with the historicism of the nineteenth century and the widespread cultural trope of young Jews shying away from what they perceived as the dry and antiquated approaches to Jewish life and culture of an older generation and towards what appeared a more spirited, vivacious, and authentic Judaism. Scholem's critique of nineteenth-century scholars and a call for historical study in service of the nation harked back to Nietzsche's call for history in the service of life and not the other way around; he argued that that history "as a pure science" amounted to little more than "a kind of conclusion to life and a settling of accounts."¹⁹² Akin to Martin Buber's vision of Hasidism, the search for a new approach to history was only one component of this search for authenticity, which took the form for some of looking to the *Ostjuden*, for others, to a historic homeland.¹⁹³ Thus, one can trace a line from Friedrich Nietzsche and Franz Rosenzweig, who lambasted what they perceived as a desiccated cultural shell in general intellectual and German-Jewish life respectively, to Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem, who would be central to what would become known as a Jerusalem school.

Nokhem Shtif and Elias Tcherikower also found themselves in Berlin at the time of YIVO's founding. As such, although Shtif and Tcherikower hailed from a differing cultural and

¹⁹¹ Gershom Scholem, "Mitokh hirhurim 'al hokhmat yisra'el," *Luah ha-'arets*, 1944/1945, 94–112. Republished in *Peraḳim be-yahadut*, ed. Ezra Spicehandler (Jerusalem: M. Noiman, 1963), 385–403; and in English as "Reflections on Modern Jewish Studies," in *On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism in Our Time and Other Essays*, ed. Avraham Shapira (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997), 51–71.

¹⁹² See Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen: Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben*. Indeed, Leopold Zunz argued that the time was ripe for the study of Jewish religion and culture as the canon of Jewish literature had been closed, and Moritz Steinschneider was quoted that the aim of modern Jewish scholarship was to give Judaism as "decent burial." "Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur," *Zunz GS* I:4; Charles Manekin, "Steinschneider's 'Decent Burial'—A Reappraisal," in *Studies and Knowledge in Jewish Thought*, ed. Howard Kreisel (Be'er Sheva: Ben-Gurion University Press, 2006), 239–251.

¹⁹³ See Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany*, and Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

intellectual background, their vision of YIVO emerged from similar cultural environs. For these reasons and more, it would be a mistake to pigeonhole critiques of nineteenth-century Jewish scholarship to the founders and early faculty of the Hebrew University and the creators of the Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society. Shtif's initial call for a Yiddish Scientific Institute in February 1925 must be read as a parallel critique of nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft*. Shtif held forth a distinctive vision of “*Yiddishn visnshaft*”—one that is reminiscent of Martin Buber's call for a “*Jüdische Wissenschaft*” and Franz Rosenzweig's vision of the merging of teaching and research, but one which tied Jewish studies to the labor movement and socialism and rooted Jewish studies more deeply in Simon Dubnow's notion of the Jews' transformation from the objects to the subjects of history.¹⁹⁴ In 1925, Shtif rejected *Wissenschaft des Judentums* for similar reasons to Scholem's critique two decades later: On the one hand, as Shtif saw it, early modern Christian Hebraists and more recent Bible critics had an unhealthy “monopoly” on the study of the Jews, echoing Solomon Schechter's critiques of “Higher Anti-Semitism.”¹⁹⁵ On the other hand, Shtif echoed Scholem's condemnation of nineteenth-century Jewish scholars, who he claimed were focused on engineering the emancipation and social integration of Jews and who disregarded eastern European Jews and treated Yiddish as a dead language and culture.¹⁹⁶ Shtif called for the creation of a new research program “emancipat[ed] from the ghetto of scientific interests,” with “knowledge [serving] new social and cultural aims”: in Yiddish, focused on issues relevant to the contemporary cultural environment and with a nationalist outlook whereby

¹⁹⁴ Nokhem Shtif, “Vegn,” YIVO RG82/2370, 8; cf. Simon Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte des Jüdisches Volkes* (Berlin: Jüdisches Verlag, 1925), I:XV.

¹⁹⁵ See Schechter, “Higher Criticism—Higher Anti-Semitism,” in *Seminary Addresses and Other Papers* (Cincinnati: Ark Publishing Co., 1915), 35–40.

¹⁹⁶ Shtif, “Vegn,” 2 Feb. 1925, YIVO RG82/2370, 3–4.

scholarship served the purposes of revitalizing the nation.¹⁹⁷

And so, both the YIVO and Jerusalem scholars rejected *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and its supposedly apologetic aims for what seemed to be a less instrumentalized, more “objective” study of the Jewish past, still aimed at a presentist, nationalist objective. Such efforts reflect classical examples of Miroslav Hroch’s theory of the procession of nationalist movements, with scholars in Palestine and eastern Europe both giving institutional form to their scholarly interest in the study of the nation, whether it be the Jewish people as a whole or a Diaspora nationalism rooted in the Yiddish language.¹⁹⁸ Beyond this, and of even more interest for our consideration of the development of Jewish archival activity, we find that both YIVO and the PHES looked to archives and collecting historical data at the center of their projects, if not at the very first, then as a natural outgrowth of their historical development. Their turn to archives, especially the multitude of archives formed by YIVO, both gestures at the proliferation of archives in the interwar period as well as this movement’s transformation after World War II.

When the PHES was established in the winter of 1924–25, its leaders declared a central task to “the formation of “a national archive and antiquarium [*beit nekh ’ot*] for ethnography and folklore” alongside publishing books and creating committees for collaborative research.¹⁹⁹ In spite of its early discussion of archives, the group did not move to immediately create one. Instead, the group’s prime focus was publishing its journal *Me’assef tsiyon* and “*Palästina Judaica*,” an encyclopedic collection of sources paralleling *Germania Judaica* (1917, 1934) or *Gallia Judaica* (1897).²⁰⁰ Under the direction of Simcha Assaf, *Palästina Judaica* would

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 23–24.

¹⁹⁸ Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 23.

¹⁹⁹ “Takanot ha-ḥevrah ’erets-ha-yisraelit le-historiyah ve-’etnografiyah,” *Me’assef Tsiyon* 1 (1925): 129.

²⁰⁰ Cf. *Germania Judaica*, ed. Markus Brann, Aron Freimann (Frankfurt a.M.: Kaufmann, 1917), and Henri Gross,

eventually morph into Dinaburg's and Assaf's *Sefer ha-yishuv*. Even without an actual archive, the group's priority remained the collection of historical material, but in published form. This lent shape to the vision of *kinus* or cultural ingathering, echoed in the very name of its journal, *Me'assef Tsiyon*, and later in the well-known 1935 prolegomenon to the journal's new series, reorganized as the quarterly *Zion*.²⁰¹ This introduction, titled "*Megamatenu*" (Our Mission) and penned by Yitshak (Fritz) Baer and Ben Zion Dinaburg, reiterated the as-yet-unrealized vision of collecting historical sources. Baer and Dinaburg admitted that the journal lacked the space to publish full collections of documents. Though they hoped to spur the collection of archival material, which they complained was not being pursued systematically in many countries, but they placed emphasis on "advance[ing] the gathering [*kinus*] of archival material by publishing inventories of archives and also by publishing important documents."²⁰²

Whereas Baer and Dinaburg hoped to foster the collection of archival material for Jewish history around the world, only a few weeks later Yisra'el Klausner approached the PHES' executive committee when he called on the group to form "a central archive for sources of history of our people in the middle ages and modern times."²⁰³ Klausner was not the first to suggest the creation of an archive in Jerusalem at this time, and one can look to Alex Bein's 1934 proposal to create an archive of the Jewish settlement in Palestine and the concurrent efforts to reconstitute the Zionist Archives, whose materials had recently been transferred from Berlin to Jerusalem.²⁰⁴ Further, there already existed archives in Palestine, such as the Archive

Gallia Judaica. Dictionnaire géographique de la France d'après les sources rabbiniques (Paris: Léopold Cerf, 1897).

²⁰¹ The journal was initially planned as an annual, and was published sporadically between 1925 and 1934; it was reconstituted as the quarterly *Zion* in 1935.

²⁰² "Megamatenu," *Zion* 1, no. 1 (Sept. 1935): 5.

²⁰³ Yisra'el Klausner to PHES, 28 Oct. 1935 (28 Tishre 5696), CAHJP IHS/17d.

²⁰⁴ On the development of archives in Palestine in general and the transfer of the Zionist Archives, see pp. 229–232.

and Museum of the Labor Movement, formed in Tel Aviv in 1933, not to mention the *Hibbat Zion* archives collected by Alter Druyanow.²⁰⁵ Yet the visions of Dinaburg, Bein, and even the founding bylaws of the PHES pointed to the creation of an archive to document Jewish life in the yishuv, not a general archive of the Jewish past. As such, Klausner's proposal presents the first origins of a vision for the creation of a central archive for the history of the Jewish people that would begin to take shape with the founding of the Jewish Historical General Archives in 1939 and receive even more concrete form in the postwar years as the group sought to bring together Jewish historical archives from around the world to Jerusalem. In his October 1935 letter, Klausner stated: "In the time of the *kibbutz galuyot*, in a time of the creation of a spiritual and political center in our historical land—it is necessary for us to bring together [*le-kanes*] all of the sources of the history of our people in the exile, material which will be kept and used for research in history. The historical sources are dispersed in all corners of the world, in every city and state, in which there was a Jewish [*ivri*] community. It is necessary to save pinkasim and documents which remain from destruction."²⁰⁶ This vision would take more concrete form when the JHGA was established in 1939; in 1944 it was incorporated into the PHES, and in February 1947 it officially opened in the basement of the museum of antiquities at the Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus, until the archive moved to the offices of Yad Vashem at Mt. Herzl following the outbreak of the 1947–49 Israel-Arab war.

YIVO presents a similar story. That group's founders also planned to form an archive, but it emerged only slowly. YIVO's leaders in fact exhibited a paradoxical ambivalence to

²⁰⁵ See Sh. Eisenstadt, "Al kinus ha-ḥomer le-toldot ha-tenu'ah," *Yedi'ot 'arkhiyon u-muza'on ha-'avodah* 1 (June–July 1933): 2–8. Alex Bein, "Denkschrift über die Schaffung eines Archiv des Jüdischen Jischuw," CZA P64/48/4, and Archive and Museum of the Jewish Labor Movement to Shmuel Niger, 11 Jul. 1935, YIVO RG 360/564.

²⁰⁶ Yisra'el Klausner to PHES, 28 Oct. 1935 (28 Tishre 5696), CAHJP IHS/17d.

archives alongside flourishing archival activity. In Shtif's 1924 vision, the group would work to collect historical sources alongside ethnographic and linguistic data. Shtif only called explicitly for systematic collection of materials from the press, but he explicitly called on the historical section to create "an archive... to collect various materials and documents... along the lines of the 'Mizrakh yidishn arkhiv'"—referring to the "Redaktions-kolegiye" that he had formed alongside Elias Tcherikower in 1919.²⁰⁷ Here, in Shtif's early vision, he focused on problems in Jewish education and the examination of contemporary Jewish life; when the project was taken up in Vilnius it was by the Vilner bildungs gezelschaft (Vilna Education Society) led by Max Weinreich and Zalman Reisen.²⁰⁸ With YIVO's founders convened in Berlin in August 1925, it was decided that an archive should be created only within the context of the Historical Section, based in Berlin under the leadership of Elias Tcherikower.²⁰⁹ The first edition of the *Yedies fun YIVO* in Vilnius laid out the projects of YIVO: Yiddish education, supporting various cultural organizations, historical, and ethnographic societies, collecting material about economics, emigration, and communal life, organizing a bibliography of items published in Yiddish, as well as surveys of the public. But notably, there was no 'archive' to be found.²¹⁰

Even if archives did not seem, at first, to be a prominent feature of the early YIVO, the Vilnius-based group presents a case in point for the proliferation of Jewish archives at this time. Paradoxically, the *absence* of a central archive served as a catalyst for the development of a multitude of archives, each tied to the sections and their commissions in diverse geographic locations. As such, one cannot truly speak of "the" YIVO archive, but rather a plurality of

²⁰⁷ Shtif, "Vegn a yidishn akademishn institute," 2 Feb. 1925, YIVO RG82/2370, 28.

²⁰⁸ On the founding of YIVO, Shtif's memorandum, and the "Vilna Theses," see Kuznitz, 44–55.

²⁰⁹ "Fun dem organizir-komitet far dem yidishn visnshaftlekhn institut," Aug. 1925, YIVO RG82/2384.

²¹⁰ *Yedies fun YIVO*, 9 Oct. 1925.

archives reflecting YIVO's prolific nature before World War II. As a decentered, worldwide network of scholars both working independently and also collaborating for the furthering of scholarship in Yiddish, a network of archives emerged instead of a centralized collection.

From the beginning, the historical section was tasked with creating an archive. One existed even before YIVO was fully conceived: Elias Tcherikower, as director of the Historical Section based in Berlin, continued to hold the extensive collections relating to the Ukraine pogroms. In Tcherikower's plan for the section, the very first task was a description of private archives.²¹¹ Simon Dubnow, who held the meeting in his apartment, suggested that his personal archive could be described in the first publication of the historical section. In 1929, when Dubnow gave the historical section a large part of this archive, one might think that YIVO would trumpet the acquisition.²¹² But in a letter of November 1929 delineating the historical section's achievements, these archival treasures were only listed as item six of eleven.²¹³

When YIVO commemorated its second anniversary in 1927, they wrote: "The archive and the library of YIVO in the period of a year's time have collected rich treasures... It is enough to say, that the institute is the richest collection of Yiddish publications in the world."²¹⁴ Clearly, they were talking about the press archive, YIVO's second archive, and not its general archive. YIVO's four sections had a series of commissions under them, each with their own independent archive. The philological section in Vilnius, for example, consisted of a bibliographic commission, tasked with cataloguing publications, as well as an ethnographic commission to study Jewish life, customs, and folkways, and a terminological commission for

²¹¹ "Di 1-te grindungs-zitsung fun der historisher seksie ba dem yidishn visnshaftlikhn institut," 31 Oct. 1925, YIVO RG82/2238.

²¹² "Protokol nomer 2 fun der historisher seksie," 21 Nov. 1929, YIVO RG82/2238.

²¹³ "Historishe seksie fun 'YIVO'," 26 Nov. 1929, YIVO RG82/2241.

²¹⁴ "Tsvay yar arbet far dem yidishn visnshaftlekhn institut," YIVO RG1.1, I/3.

the cataloguing of Yiddish vernacular. In one fashion or another, they all worked to collect: The bibliographic commission created the press archive, and the ethnographic commission published a series of surveys for YIVO's *zamlers* to fill out, about topics such as Purim celebrations and burial practices.²¹⁵ In December 1925, the ethnographic commission listed a number of the "legends" they had received, relating, among other topics, the Vilna Gaon and uprisings in nineteenth-century Poland. "If you know other histories, songs, stories about great men," the commission explained, "send them to us."²¹⁶ The following month, the terminological commission published a set of "notes for collectors of terminological material"—that is, how to find out how average people were using the Yiddish language.²¹⁷ Reflective of the absence of centralized organization and control, each section and commission published their own instructions for collectors, and each collection remained distinct.

These developments all evidence the existence of a set of separate archives or collections for each of YIVO's disparate groups. By March 1926, they could even talk about a "library of the ethnographic commission," and increasingly YIVO in Vilnius reported more and more people sending in diverse historical and folklore material.²¹⁸ In April 1926, reporting on the activities of YIVO in its first year, the tasks of the Economic-Statistical section, based in Berlin, included the creation of "a central economic-statistical library and archive."²¹⁹ In June 1926, YIVO combined these into a general archive in Vilnius. "Through the help of friends," the *Yedies* explained, "the institute created the kernel of an important institution: the foundation

²¹⁵ *Yedies fun YIVO*, 26 Jan. 1926; "Yidisher visnshaftlekher institut, Histarische seksie, Ankete num. 1," 25 Feb. 1925, YIVO RG82/2226.

²¹⁶ *Yedies fun YIVO*, 18 Dec. 1925.

²¹⁷ *Yedies fun YIVO*, 8 Jan. 1926.

²¹⁸ *Yedies fun YIVO*, 12 Mar. 1926.

²¹⁹ *Yedies fun YIVO*, Apr. 1926.

stone of an archive.”²²⁰ This combined archive would soon come to take up a very large portion of the *Yedies*, as YIVO reported on more and more material that they received from the collectors or *zamlers*, organized as “*zamlers kreizn*” or collector circles.

YIVO’s archives were created almost by accident. And yet at the same time, there was a broad response to the collecting project by an engaged Jewish public of *zamlers*. In the absence of an articulate programmatic statement of the need to create archives, it seems that creating archives required no explanation or justification. The appearance of multiple archives in the diverse branches of YIVO, including the American branch, which was the seed for the postwar archive, as well as an archive at the YIVO branch in Buenos Aires, indicates the spread of an ideology of archiving.²²¹ All the more so, the terminology of the archive entered the vernacular: In 1927, YIVO created the “Esther-Rachel Kaminski Theater Museum,” but it was repeatedly referred to as the “theater archive.” This internalization of archives, reflected by their proliferation in the interwar era as well as the broad participation in the “*zamlers kreizn*,” of which there were more than one hundred and fifty, mostly in Poland, alongside the ambivalence of YIVO’s leaders towards them, demonstrates the continued archival proliferation.

As we have seen, in Europe YIVO’s archives appeared as a byproduct of its research projects. Likewise, the group maintained a powerful pedagogical imperative, occupying itself with educational initiatives such as its *Aspirantur* or graduate training program, which kept its focus on the present, not the past.²²² This is evidenced by the restructured research plan put forth in 1929 by Max Weinreich, research director of YIVO in Vilnius. A sociologist by training,

²²⁰ *Yedies fun YIVO*, 18 Jun. 1926.

²²¹ “Bulletin of the Central Jewish Library and Press Archives” (New York), 1939, “Argentinian YIVO-Yedies: YIVO, Central Library and Archive in Buenos Aires,” Jan. 1942, YIVO Office Collection.

²²² On the *Aspirantur*, see Kuznitz 153–157, and Zemah Szabad, *Oytobiografies* (Vilna: YIVO, 1935).

Weinreich envisaged a wide range of sources for this new project, not just archives. He considered periodicals, autobiographies, “direct research of different sections of the institute”—that is, surveys—and only last were any archives, especially Elias Tcherikower’s pogrom archive.²²³ But Weinreich was not interested in it for understanding the pattern of the events or their historical context: he saw it as a source for understanding the psychological transformation of eastern European Jewry in the face of modernization and antisemitism.

Such a program reflected the primacy of research projects over archival projects: Research should drive the collecting, and not the other way around. It would only be after YIVO moved to the United States that the archive would take on a more central position as its priorities shifted. Established in 1926, the New York branch remained a bare bones operation thirteen years later, mostly raising money for the cash-strapped Vilnius center.²²⁴ In August 1939, just days before the Soviet-Nazi nonaggression pact was signed that threw the world into war, Max Weinreich found himself in Copenhagen. Six months later, he came to America to manage the New York branch as the new headquarters of YIVO.²²⁵ In this new period of YIVO’s existence, one can now begin to speak of both a new era of archival prominence and the existence of *the* YIVO archives.

The YIVO archive in New York City actually began a few years earlier, in 1936, with the creation of the “Central Jewish Library and Press Archive.” Originally an independent group, it merged with YIVO’s New York branch in 1939.²²⁶ When Weinreich came to America, this Central Library and Archive took on tremendous importance: it provided an illusion of

²²³ Max Weinreich to W. I. Thomas, 5 Jun. 1929, YIVO RG82/2257.

²²⁴ Yedies fun YIVO, 23 Oct. 1925, and many that followed, discussed the New York “Arbeter-ring” which would send financial support.

²²⁵ On the emergence of the New York branch to the central position of YIVO, see Kalman Weiser, “Coming to America: Max Weinreich and the Emergence of YIVO’s American Center,” in *Choosing Yiddish: Frontiers of Language and Culture*, ed. Laura Rabinovitch, et al. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013), 233–252.

²²⁶ “Bulletin of the Central Jewish Library and Press Archives” (NY), 1939, YIVO Office Collection.

continuity.²²⁷ Of course, YIVO hoped to save the library and archive collections in Vilnius, but attempts to send an envoy to Vilnius failed with the German conquest of Denmark in 1940.²²⁸ It would take some time for remnants of the pre-war YIVO archives to come to New York. In 1944, thirty crates of the archives of the Historical Section were discovered in southern France.²²⁹ After the war's conclusion, much of YIVO's Vilnius archives were found in Frankfurt, from whence they were brought to America in 1947.²³⁰

During the war, in the absence of the material previously collected by YIVO in Europe, the New York branch began to build up a new archive and library in America. "We request all friends of Yivo committees and groups throughout the country to set up a system for the methodical collection of materials for the Yivo [sic]," they wrote in 1943. "Send us everything published in your locality—pamphlets, leaflets, materials on community affairs and of local organizations. Send us all documents and papers you have of former times from both this country and overseas."²³¹ But most striking was a shift in YIVO's mission. In 1940, Weinreich scratched

²²⁷ Generally speaking, Weinreich wanted to develop a strong line of continuity between YIVO's headquarters in Vilnius and its new home in New York. We can see this on a number of levels: He sought to re-institute programs that had been flourishing in YIVO in Vilnius immediately before the war, such as the Aspirantur or graduate student training program ("The Yiddish Scientific Institute—YIVO, Inc.," Feb. 1942, YIVO RG584/791; YIVO Report 1944, YIVO RG584/131). Weinreich hired Lucy Schildkret, later Dawidowicz, a Columbia graduate student who studied at the Aspirantur in Vilnius in 1938, as his personal secretary. In her memoirs, Dawidowicz commented that: "When he offered me the job, Weinreich explained that he didn't want me just to be a secretarial assistant. For that he could have hired someone with better skills than mine in Yiddish shorthand and typing. He wanted me because I represented continuity between the YIVO in Vilna and New York, because I understood the YIVO's mission and the spirit that had animated it in Vilna" (Lucy Dawidowicz, *From That Place and Time*, 208).

²²⁸ See Max Weinreich, "Affidavit to State Department," 13 Mar. 1946, AJHS P675, 51/9.

²²⁹ *Yedies fun YIVO*, Dec. 1944.

²³⁰ The fate of the YIVO's press archives and the Strashun Library, somewhat ironically, resulted from the Nazis' looting of these materials; the materials that Alfred Rosenberg looted and to Frankfurt am Main were recovered by YIVO, while those materials that remained in Vilnius were looted for a second time by advancing Soviet forces. See Judah Stampfer, "Script for the 'Golden Chain' radio play," 24 Apr. 1960, YIVO RG584/627; Avraham Sutzkever, "Fun vilner geto," 1946, AJHS P675 51/7; David Fishman, *Embers Plucked from the Fire: The Rescue of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Vilna* (New York: YIVO, 1996); Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "From Nazi Plunder to Russian Restitution," in *Returned from Russia: Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues*, ed. Grimsted, et al (Builth Wells, UK: Institute of Art and Law, 2007), 3–134.

²³¹ *Yedies fun YIVO*, Sept. 1943.

out some notes on “Der YIVO in Amerike,” listing YIVO’s projects and mission in three parts, later detailed in the first edition of the YIVO newsletter published in America in 1943:

Documenting and recording, analysis and research, and finally training.²³² This tripartite program became the cornerstone of YIVO’s new self-representation.²³³ Placing documentation and recording in the *first* place was a radical shift from how YIVO had operated in prewar Europe. They would have said there first analysis and research, then training (especially in the 1930s when they created their graduate program), and only then documentation and recording.

In the case of YIVO and the Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society and later the Jewish Historical General Archives, their founders initially spoke of forming archives, but their centralized archives only came later. That does not diminish the fact that for both projects, which may appear on opposite ends of the political spectrum, their archives increasingly came to be central to their mission. Even if founded without an archive, the archives appear: for YIVO within the span of a few years, and then a proliferation of other archives in New York and Buenos Aires; in Jerusalem it was founded in 1939. But it also demonstrates the growing draw of centralization, as both groups followed a track towards increasingly centralized archives. Whereas the Jerusalem archives were always intended to be centralized, in the case of YIVO we find a transformation from a network of scholarly circles to a new scholarly center in New York City which existed as a hegemonic center. Although YIVO had centers in Chicago and Los Angeles, the New York center emerged dominant, the central point of organization and the only one with an archive of its own. And the Jerusalem archives, to a large degree, were successful in

²³² Max Weinreich, “Der YIVO in Amerike,” YIVO RG584/585b; *Yedies fun YIVO*, Sept. 1943. Also see: Max Weinreich, handwritten note, YIVO RG584/570d.

²³³ See, for example, “Yiddish Scientific Institute—YIVO,” 1. Sept. 1949, “On Establishing the YIVO Graduate School of Jewish Social Science,” 1950, YIVO RG584/64.

gathering together the archives of destroyed Jewish communities under the framework of what they would come to call the “ingathering of the exiles of the past.” Together, these initiatives point the way towards not just the ways in which archival proliferation transgressed political and geographical bounds. Moreover, they also demonstrate how the forces of proliferation, so powerful in the interwar era and epitomized by YIVO’s expansive network of archives, gave way to a centralizing tendency in Jewish life in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust.

Conclusion: Changing Perspectives on Jewish Archives

In a wide-ranging 1981 interview with *Moment* magazine, Jacob Rader Marcus reflected on a lifetime of teaching and scholarship at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and his work at the American Jewish Archives there. Looking back, an eighty-five-year-old Marcus spoke of how much had changed in the decades since he had created the Cincinnati archives in 1947. “People were going to throw all this stuff out,” he explained, pondering the early years, “things nobody had any use for. And their records began to pour in.” If Marcus had been inundated with contributions then, he claimed that “no congregation today sends me minutes.” Jews had donated files out of a sense that their archives were worthless, but now they refused to do in recognition of the files’ great value. Before, Marcus recalled, Jews might have looked at their files and said: “Send it to the College; what do we need it for?” Now, thirty-odd years later, he reported their perspective had changed dramatically. Instead, he explained, people said: ““These are valuable historic documents! We’re not going to give them to you!” It was garbage before that.”²³⁴

Marcus’ experience illustrates the arc of the proliferation of Jewish archives in the twentieth century that this chapter has sought to sketch. Archivists long decried the public’s disregard for archives, but it was this so-called neglect that enabled Jewish archivists to develop

²³⁴ “A Moment Interview with Jacob Rader Marcus,” *Moment*, March 1981, A75–A85.

their own centralizing projects. The growth of Jewish archives manifested itself in a new archival awareness, a kind of “archive fever” as professional and amateur Jewish archivists alike all looked to the archive as a broad framework to organize collecting efforts. This “turn to archives” reflected an increasing reliance on record-keeping by Jewish communal organizations and social services made archives a part of Jewish life. And as the world of the past seemed to slip away—whether it be the life of the immigrant, the tight-knit rural community, or even more radically the destruction of entire Jewish communities at the hands of Nazi genocide—the physical trace or imprint of the missing past came to hold ever greater significance. It was this sense of the importance of archival memory that led groups across the political spectrum and in opposing ideological camps to all look to the archive and to struggle over who could control the past.

Interlude

The early twentieth century was a time of a great archival activity in Jewish life. The Nazis' rise to power led to the devastation of these archives, as in all aspects of Jewish life in Europe. Just like the Nazis enacted cultural policies to suppress so-called "degenerate" art while hoarding the work of great masters, so too did Nazi leaders seek to exterminate European Jewry and also amassed vast collections of priceless manuscripts, archives, and cultural riches in the name of "racial research."¹ In the 1930s, the Gestapo and the Institut für die Geschichte des Neuen Deutschlands in Munich aimed to confiscate archives for political and counter-historical purposes, and the fog of war provided cover for further looting.² Of course, archival spoliation was not limited to Jews: Reorganizing archives was one component of Nazi Germany's effort to shape a "new Europe" in its own image, "proving" the Germanness of annexed regions and laying claim to what they believed to be their cultural patrimony.³ As in 1870 and 1914, during the Second World War the Germans formed archival corps ("Gruppe Archivwesen") to locate and "reclaim" archives that represented Germans' ethnic presence in eastern Europe or that they

¹ The history of Nazi cultural policies and the recovery of looted cultural property has been well documented. Some of the most important accounts include: Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe's Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* (New York: Knopf, 1994), Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), Michael J. Kurtz, *America and the Return of Nazi Contraband: The Recovery of Europe's Cultural Treasures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1–43.

² Broadly speaking, these groups represented only part of a series of initiatives to study the Jews for political purposes. See GStAPK I. HA. 178/1152, 178/1153; Alan Steinweis, *Studying the Jew: Scholarly Antisemitism in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Dieter Schiefelbein, *Das 'Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage Frankfurt am Main': Vorgeschichte und Gründung, 1935–1939* (Frankfurt am Main: 1993). On counterhistory generally, see Amos Funkenstein, "History, Counterhistory, and Narrative," in *Perceptions of Jewish History* 22–49. As for wartime plunder, the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* and its activities have been the focus of tremendous scholarly interest. See Petropoulos, *Art as Politics*, Nicholas, *Rape of Europa*, Grimsted, "From Nazi Plunder to Russian Restitution," in Grimsted, et al (eds.), *Returned from Russia: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues* (Builth Wells, UK: Institute of Art and Law 2007), 65–80; Donald E. Collins, Herbert P. Rothfelder, "The Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg and the Looting of Jewish and Masonic Libraries during World War II," *Journal of Library History* 18, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 21–36.

³ See, for example, BArch Lichterfelde R1506/1047, R1506/1049, R1506/1050, and *Mitteilungsblatt der preußischen Archivverwaltung*, which laid out the German archival programs.

believed to be hidden in Paris.⁴ As such, confiscating Jewish archives was part of a wider program of plunder, falling under both National Socialist racial policy and the envisioned order of German occupation.⁵ Nevertheless, the somewhat paradoxical outcome of the Nazis' perverse fascination with Jewish culture was the survival of many cultural treasures: When the Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg brought hundreds of thousands of Jewish books and manuscripts to Frankfurt am Main for study at his "Hohe Schule," or the Wehrmacht carted archives westward during their retreat from advancing Soviet forces, the result was the concentration of Jewish cultural riches within German borders, which made them available after the war to Jews in England, the United States, and Palestine/Israel who hoped to gain them via restitution for the rebuilding of Jewish cultural life, setting the stage for a new era in the history of Jewish archives.

The practical effect of the looting of Jewish cultural property was analogous to the fate of European Jewry. Just as entire communities were destroyed and the survivors scattered, so too were many archives lost and the remnants dispersed across Europe. Many feared the permanent loss of or irreparable damage to the great libraries and archives of the Jews of Europe, leaving Jewish studies an impoverished field. Instead, what transpired was an archival renaissance: In Jerusalem, scholars gathered historical materials at the Jewish Historical General Archives, the Central Zionist Archives, and Yad Vashem. Led by Alex Bein, they brought the files of hundreds of communities to Jerusalem. In 1947, Jacob Rader Marcus formed the American Jewish Archives at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati as a counterpart to the American Jewish Historical Society

⁴ During the First World War, Adolf Warschauer, a Jewish archivist, was put in charge of the German occupation archives in Poland. See Warschauer, *Deutsche Kulturarbeit in der Ostmark. Erinnerungen aus vier Jahrzehnten* (Berlin: Reimar Hobbing, 1926), 269–318, Warschauer, "Erinnerungen aus Warschau," Jan. 1920, CAHJP P267/10.

⁵ See Astrid M. Eckert, *The Struggle for the Files: The Western Allies and the Return of German Archives After the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 39–41; Robert Kretzschmar, et al, eds., *Das deutsche Archivwesen und der Nationalsozialismus* (Essen: Klartext, 2007), 166–273. On German archives in World War I, see Ernst Posner, "Public Records under Military Occupation," *AHR* 49, no. 2 (1944): 213–227.

in New York, then hamstrung by limited resources.⁶ Similar to the Jerusalem archivists' efforts in Europe, Marcus flew to Curaçao and other Caribbean islands to amass materials on early Jewish settlements in the Americas.⁷ In 1947 the YIVO Institute in New York, under its prewar leader Max Weinreich, secured its Vilnius archive and library and its Historical Section's files from Paris, creating for the first time a central archive.⁸ In 1950, the National Council of Jewish Social Welfare hoped to consolidate Jewish archives in the United States like the AJA, the AJHS, and YIVO, though the dream of a single, central archive proved difficult to realize.⁹ Meanwhile, the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris retrieved its library and organized its archives in advance of its 1960 centenary, German Jews formed the Leo Baeck Institute in 1955 in London, Jerusalem, and New York to memorialize their history and culture, and diverse groups documented and studied the Holocaust.¹⁰ In Germany, too, Bernhard Brillung hoped to establish a new archive. Brillung, formerly the assistant at the Breslau Gemeindearchiv, had fled to Palestine in 1939 but returned to Germany

⁶ On AJHS and its challenges at this time, see Jacob Rader Marcus to Frank L. Weil, 19 Jan. 1949, AJA MS-210 9/1, Isidore S. Meyer, "Memorandum: Housing Needs of the AJHS," 17 May 1949, AJHS I-1 109/17, among others.

⁷ On Marcus' Caribbean expedition, see AJA MS-210 1/5, 8/4, 8/7, MS-687 58/7, 72/23; ch. 5, pp. 334–337; and Frederic Krome, "The Burdman-Levy Archival Expedition of 1962 to Europe," *AJAJ* 55, no. 2 (2003): 32–35.

⁸ Kalman Weiser, "Max Weinreich and the Emergence of YIVO's American Center," in *Choosing Yiddish: Frontiers of Language and Culture*, ed. Laura Rabinovitch et al. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013), 233–253. Also Weinreich to John Slawson, 10 Mar. 1946, AJHS P-675, 51/9; "Tentative draft cable to OMGUS," 31 Oct. 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.2; "YIVO Library is Back Home," *Yedies fun YIVO*, Mar. 1951; Lisa Leff, *The Archive Thief*, 63, 72–74.

⁹ "On the need of a Central Archive for the Preservation of Institutional Records," Jun. 1950, YIVO Mimeographed material, Box 2, Mimeographed material; Isidore S. Meyer, "The Systematic Preservation of Jewish Social Welfare Records: A Desideratum," *Jewish Social Service Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (Jun. 1952): 434–438. Also see YIVO RG 338.

¹⁰ On LBI: Ruth Nattermann, "A Struggle for the Preservation of a German-Jewish Legacy. The Foundation of the Leo Baeck Institute in New York," *European Judaism* 45, no. 2 (2012): 90–102; Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung nach der Shoah: Die Gründungs- und Frühgeschichte des Leo Baeck Institute* (Koblenz: Klartext, 2004); Christhard Hoffman, ed., *Preserving the Legacy of German Jewry: A History of the Leo Baeck Institute, 1955–2005* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 1–58. On the AIU: Jean-Claude Kuperminc, "La reconstruction de la bibliothèque de l'Alliance israélite universelle, 1945–1955," *Archives Juives* 34, no. 1 (2001): 98–124; Georges Weill, "Les archives de l'Alliance israélite universelle et les sources de son œuvre scolaire," in *L'Enseignement français en Méditerranée* (Rennes, 2010), 51–56; Georges Weill, "Les archives juives en France," in *Terres Promises* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2008) 550–563; cf. Edmond Maurice Lévy, "Projet de règlement pour les archives," 7 Nov. 1955, AIU AP 1-58, and AIU PV3. For YIVO: Lucy Dawidowicz, *From that Place and Time* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), 312–326; Col. S. J. Pomrenze, "The Restitution of Jewish Cultural Treasures After the Holocaust," 23 Jun. 2002, Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries. Also Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

in 1955. Despite the support of the Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland, his project sputtered under pressure from the Israelis, who preferred that files be sent to Jerusalem.¹¹ Together, such projects present a small selection of the efforts to rebuild the documentary edifice of Jewish studies.

These efforts marked the opening of a second act in the history of Jewish archives, and spoke to a new era in Jewish history in general. Cecil Roth's August 1945 proclamation—"This is a Time to Gather, not the reverse"—reflected a common dream to reconstitute the scattered archives of Jewish life after the Holocaust. His statement also gestured at a wider impulse to come together after unspeakable tragedy, and thereby gestured at the grand contours of Jewish history unfolding at that time.¹² For hundreds of years, Jewish life had been characterized by diverse and geographically widespread diasporas. Now, European Jewry was destroyed. With the end of these historic centers, the pendulum of Jewish life swung towards consolidation, as Jewish communities in Palestine/Israel and the United States asserted themselves at the expense of smaller centers and especially against those struggling to reestablish Jewish life on Europe's bloodied soil. The efforts to centralize archives which are the focus of the coming chapters reflected and reinforced this tectonic shift, wherein the seemingly total destruction of European Jewry created vast cultural and communal vacuums. Gathering archives was one way to give concrete form to the rise of new hegemonic centers, particularly of the United States and Palestine/Israel, over a diminished periphery, replacing previous geographic frames of Jewish life centered around sites like Berlin and Vilnius and their centralized archives, Breslau's rabbinic seminary and the community's archive of the Jews of Silesia, or epicenters of Jewish culture and memory like Worms and Hamburg. Creating archives allowed Jewish leaders to

¹¹ See ch. 6, pp. 403–414.

¹² Cecil Roth to Judah Magnes, 13 Aug. 1945, CAHJP P3/2056.

perform their prominence by preserving Jewish culture, to project visions of their place in a new geography of Jewish life, and to tangibly place European Jewry into the realm of the past.

The coming chapters explore a series of archive projects in the United States, Palestine/Israel, and Germany, and the ensuing conflicts over who could lay claim to the Jewish past. The Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem (now the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People) and Jacob Rader Marcus' American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, both of which opened in 1947, each aspired to be monumental historical collections representing their vision of their rising position after the Holocaust. But their leaders put forth distinctive visions of what archives, and Jewish life in general, might look like after the Holocaust: Under the banner of the "ingathering of the exiles of the past," archivists in Jerusalem hoped to make a kind of Jewish national archive, reflecting their vision of Israel as the Jewish national home and a successor to the Jewish communities of the Diaspora, particularly those destroyed in the Holocaust. On the other hand, in Marcus' study of American Jewish history and concomitant archival efforts were tied to his notion of the significance of the Diaspora as a positive force in Jewish history and the usefulness of dispersion as an archival principle given the possibility of a nuclear holocaust.

Instead of a break with the past, these efforts to bring together the historical sources of Jewish life constituted an intensification of longstanding visions of centralization and the conflict thereby engendered. The central actors in this archival drama—like Josef Meisl, director of the General Archives in Jerusalem, Georg Herlitz and Alex Bein of the Central Zionist Archives, Jacob Rader Marcus and his colleague Selma Stern-Täubler in Cincinnati, and Bernhard Brillig in postwar Germany—all had personal ties to the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden, and they also carried forth an ideal of comprehensiveness crafted at the Berlin archive. As one will recall, Eugen Täubler's vision of archival totality proved more theoretical than practical; his notion of a

“total archive” of the German Jews was bounded by the frontiers of Wilhelmine Germany, and he proposed a network of similar Jewish archives delineate by the states in which Jews resided.¹³ Now, attempts to create monumental archives in Jerusalem or in Cincinnati, respectively envisioned to encompass the Jewish world as a whole or the Western Hemisphere, reflected an intensified impulse towards totality in the field of Jewish archives. The idea of such “total archives” of previously unimagined scale and scope were both the result of the possibilities of an increasingly consolidated Jewish world, and served to give it further form: Through collecting the documents of the past, archivists in Jerusalem and the “Jerusalem on the Ohio” gave concrete expression to their visions of the Jewish future and their own places at its center.

These dreams of archival totality inevitably led to frictionous conflict, the focus of the final chapter. Legal and political battles over the archives of the Jews of Worms and Hamburg, and Bernhard Brillling’s aborted effort to form a new Gesamtarchiv for postwar Germany, all highlight the hotly-contested questions of remaking the archival landscape of Jewish history after the Holocaust and how varied visions of archive-making reflected diverse visions of the Jewish past and future. The debates, however, were by no means concluded, as demonstrated by the question of the archive of Vienna’s Israelitische Kultusgemeinde. Following the discovery of a previously-unknown archival cache in Vienna in 2000, Jewish community leaders demanded the return of files they had sent to Jerusalem in the 1950s and 1960s. The ensuing court battle and its resolution at Israel’s High Court in 2015 underline the continuing pertinence of the questions that drove archival struggles a half-century before, and the unresolved issue of whether the past can truly be “possessed” and the possibilities (and limitations) of duplication, whether in microfilm or digitally-encoded images, to reconstitute scattered collections and create “total archives.”

¹³ Täubler, “Plan zur Begründung eines Instituts für jüdische Geschichtsforschung,” 1917, UB Basel NL 76 B/2.

Chapter 4

Ingathering the Exiles of the Past? Collecting Jewish Records to Jerusalem

In February 1947, Ben Zion Dinaburg and the Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society welcomed members of the press and the public to the Jewish Historical General Archives (ʿArkhiyon kelali le-toldot yisraʿel) in Jerusalem.¹ It was a moment nearly a decade in the making. The archive had been first established by Josef Meisl in 1939, but had long lacked institutional backing and space to store its collected files and make them available to scholars. Now—with the support of the Hebrew University and the Historical and Ethnographic Society, and advised by Georg Herlitz of the Central Zionist Archives and his assistant Alex Bein—Meisl’s archive had equipped two rooms in the basement of the Museum of Jewish Antiquities on Mt. Scopus in eastern Jerusalem, and was on the threshold of embarking on an ambitious project to centralize Jewish archives in Jerusalem, to collect “all of the documentation for the history of Israel in the Diaspora.”² A year and a half later, Alex Bein traveled to Europe in search of archives. Upon his return, on December 19, 1949, Bein declared the need for an “ingathering of the exiles” of Jewish archives, making reference to the contemporary language of mass immigration rooted in Biblical and Talmudic conceptions of the messianic age of the return of Jews to the Holy Land.³ Nearly a decade later to the day—on December 18, 1959—representatives of the Jewish Trust

¹ The literal English translation is “General Archives of the History of Israel,” but the Jerusalem archive used “Jewish Historical General Archive.” On the Feb. 1947 event, see: Ben Zion Dinur, “Ha-ʿarkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot yisraʿel,” 30 Jan. 1947, CAHJP P28/6/33, also in Dinur, *Ketavim ḥadashim ye-gam yeshanim*, ed. Arielle Rein (Jerusalem: Merkaz Dinur, 2009), 281–284. Note that despite the document’s dating, the event took place on February 3, 1947.

² Ben Zion Dinaburg, Circular, 10 Mar. 1947, CAHJP IHS/25. Also see Ben Zion Dinaburg, Georg Herlitz, “Tazkir ʿel ha-ḵongres ha-tsiyoni ha-k”b be-ʿinyan riḵuz ha-teʿudot le-toldot ha-golah,” 24 Nov. 1946, CAHJP IHS/25, also published in Dinur, *Ketavim ḥadashim ye-gam yeshanim*, 280.

³ Alex Bein, “Din ye-ḥeshbon me-nesiʿati le-ʿeropah be-shlikhut ha-ʿarkhiyon ha-tsiyoni ha-merkazi,” 19 Dec. 1949, CZA L33/1439.

Corporation and the city of Hamburg finalized an agreement to transfer large portions of the archives of the Jewish communities of Hamburg to Jerusalem.⁴ It was the latest in a series of victories for the Jerusalem archives, which had gained some of the most important historical collections of the Jews of central Europe, including large portions of the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden alongside the archives of the Jews of Vienna, Bavaria, Worms, and now Hamburg. And so, Daniel Cohen—Bein’s longtime comrade-in-arms in the search for archives, and since 1957 leader of the General Archives—declared the “ingathering of the exiles of the past” to be concluded, “at least as far as West Germany is concerned.”⁵

“As far as West Germany is concerned”—these words spoke to the Jerusalem archivists’ ambitions in reaching beyond the Jewish communal archives of central Europe. Time and again, Dinaburg, Cohen, and the other leaders of the General Archives spoke of visions of monumental collecting. Their archive, they hoped, would serve as a monument to the destroyed communities of Europe, and gather files on a monumental scale. As they put it again and again, it would be “the central archives for the history of the Jewish people in the Diaspora at all times,” with the goal “to bring together in all possible completeness the sources of Jewish history in the Diaspora and the land [of Israel],” a collection on Jewish history in “all lands and epochs” representing “the entire archival material on the history of Jews.”⁶ The Jerusalem archivists aimed to gather all the files of the Jewish past in the original or microfilm, and create indices to state and municipal archives around the world which held material touching upon Jewish history, in a word, to create

⁴ *Öffentliche Sitzung, Landgericht Hamburg*, 18 Dec. 1959, ISA G-14-12648, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. V.

⁵ “The Transfer of the Hamburg and Königsberg Community Archives (Ten Years’ Project: The Ingathering of the Exiles of our Past completed in Austria and Germany),” 18 Feb. 1960, HZA B. 1/7 241.

⁶ PHES, “Report, Budget and Financial Statement,” 1 Oct. 1947, CAHJP IHS/25; Alex Bein, Yisra’el Halpern to Ben Zion Dinaburg, “Al hatsalat ha-’arkhiyonim ha-yehudim min ha-golah ve-rikuzam ba-’arets,” 29 Oct. 1951, CZA P64/148/1/1; Alex Bein to W. Herzberg, 1 Mar. 1951, CZA L33/1881; Bein to Bellée, 12 Apr. 1951, CAHJP P28/6/37; Alex Bein to Friedrich M. Warburg, 12 Nov. 1954, CZA L33/1311; Daniel Cohen, “Ha-’arkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot yisra’el,” *Zion* 20, no. 3–4 (1955): 182–191; Jewish Historical General Archives to Vorbereitende Comité des Leo Baeck Instituts zur Erforschung der Geschichte der deutschen Judentums (Jerusalem), 5 May 1955, CZA L33/1290.

a total archive. Their vision was given fullest form when the Jewish Historical General Archives was reorganized in 1969 as the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (‘Arkhiyon merkazi le-toldot ha-‘am ha-yehudi). Hadassah Assouline, who succeeded Daniel Cohen as the archive’s director, remarked in 1984 that there was perhaps something “pretentious” about the name, but that it reflected its ultimate ambition to be a “central repository of Jewish historical material in the world,” the only place scholars would need to look for research material.⁷

This chapter seeks to sketch this archive and unpack its leaders’ sweeping vision. When Alex Bein initiated the “ingathering of the exiles of the past,” he and other archival leaders in Jerusalem envisioned the creation of a national archive of the Jewish people. It thereby emerged at the intersection of two intellectual and cultural histories—one nationalist and one archival. On one hand, creating a central archive in Jerusalem reflected clear national aspirations. It was to be the documentary foundation for a new nationalist historical approach to Jewish history, it was to reflect a renewed historical agency, and it was intended to be a symbol of the Jewish state’s place as a cultural center of World Jewry. On the other hand, the archive also took on the mantle of the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden*. The Jerusalem archivists not only named their archive after it; they usually translated “*Gesamtarchiv*” as a “general” archive. They also took up its program, radically exaggerating and refiguring the idea of archival totality for the postwar era’s unforeseen possibilities as well as novel political and ideological conditions, most notably a distinctive nationalist environment and the opportunities presented by the restitution of looted property, which enabled the creation of a “total archive” of unprecedented scale.

The Jewish Historical General Archives held forth sweeping but impossible ambitions. It was riddled with inherent internal tensions rooted in the dream of creating a comprehensive,

⁷ Hadassah Assouline, “Central Archives for Jewish History” (speech). Audio cassette, Hebrew Union College, Klau Library Special Collections (Cincinnati, OH), Cas 452. The cassette itself is undated, but Assouline noted that the archive was founded “forty-five years ago in 1939,” indicating that the lecture took place in 1984.

national archive of the Jewish people: In the 1950s, the General Archives boasted of gathering the archives of hundreds of Jewish communities for the Jerusalem archives. But any triumphalism, like Cohen's 1960 claim that the project had been "completed" in west Germany, masks a history of false starts, drawn-out difficulties, and divisive struggles. Its leaders dreamt of creating an archive of the nation, even a total archive—neither of which was ever quite achieved. A truly comprehensive archive of all Jewish history, needless to say, was and remains a practical impossibility, but it represented the continued allure of the Gesamtarchiv's elusive program in the postwar era as well as the possibilities for conflict over owning the past. Likewise, the Jerusalem archive declared itself a "national archive" without any official sanction, constantly seeking legitimacy in the absence of direct institutional backing from institutions such as the Hebrew University or the State of Israel. In one way, its collection marked it as the most "national" archive of all, encompassing Jewish history in its worldwide scope, but it also remained unrecognized as a national archive in its local context. Instead of an archive which would undo the Jews' exile from Palestine—by an archival "ingathering the exiles" and representing the Jews' "return to history," with archives as a marker of historical agency—it remained an archive of exile in two senses, both documenting Jewish life in the Diaspora and also wandering the city of Jerusalem in search of a permanent home.

Dreaming of Central Jewish Archives in Palestine

On the eve of Ben Zion Dinaburg's immigration from Odessa to Palestine in 1921, he jotted down a list of intellectual and political objectives. Among them, he hoped to prepare a textbook of Jewish history, establish a historical society, publish historical sources and a journal, and create a "central archive in Jerusalem."⁸ When he helped found the Palestine Historical and

⁸ Ben Zion Dinur, *Bi-yeme milhamah u-mahapekhhah: zikhronot ye-reshumot mi-derekh hayim, 1914–1921* (Jerusalem:

Ethnographic Society in 1924, a key component of its program was to establish a “national archive and museum of ethnography and folklore.”⁹ Thirty years later, in 1955, Daniel Cohen looked on the founding of the Historical and Ethnographic Society—since 1951 the Historical Society of Israel—as the Jewish Historical General Archives’ moment of conception.¹⁰ As the Historical Society managed the General Archives beginning in 1944, the PHES’ early ambitions provided a convenient lineage.¹¹ But Dinaburg was just one of many who aimed to form archives to mark Palestine as a center of Jewish culture, serve as a basis for furthering Jewish scholarship, and thereby help construct the yishuv, or Jewish settlement in Palestine. And Dinaburg’s dream was distinct from the national archive the General Archives later aspired to become. At first, Dinaburg and others hoped to create an archive of nationalism; as he wrote in 1921, “first of all it will be necessary to try to collect in this archive all the material that touches upon the history of the national movement and the history of the new yishuv.”¹² Later, scholars in Jerusalem turned abroad, looking to create an archive of the Jewish people in its dispersion. Instead of a direct descendent of Dinaburg’s travel-induced fever dream, the Jewish Historical General Archives and its leaders’ ambition to be a national archive of the Jewish people emerged out of a multitude of competing visions of central archives in Jerusalem and changing winds of history.

The earliest efforts to create a central Jewish archive in Jerusalem focused on bringing the Zionist Organization’s archives from Berlin to Palestine, which the Zionist Executive first

Mossad Bialik, 1960), 517–518. Arielle Rein claims the original document (which Dinur wrote that he still “keeps with [me] today,” and of which Rein published a photograph, in *Ketavim hadashim ye-gam yeshanim*, 220–222) is in the Dinur papers at the CAHJP, but after the collection’s reorganization it was impossible to find the original.

⁹ *Me’assef Tsiyon* 1 (1925): 129

¹⁰ Daniel Cohen, “Ha-’arkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot yisra’el,” *Zion* 20, no. 3–4 (1955): 182. On the Society’s name change, see Protocol, 8 Feb. 1950, “Yeshivah ha-va’ad ha-hevrah,” 15 Mar. 1950, CZA L33/1290.

¹¹ Cf. Arielle Rein, “Histōriyon be-binui ’umah: Tsmiḥato shel ben tsiyon dinur u-mif’alo be-yishuv, 1884–1948” (Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 2001), esp. 178–198. Rein claims Dinaburg’s centrality in the archives, befitting a biographical study, but at the expense of other figures who played key roles.

¹² See n. 8.

proposed to do in 1924.¹³ Shortly thereafter, Hugo Bergmann and then Ben Zion Dinaburg and Simcha 'Assaf called for these files' transfer to the National Library in Jerusalem as part of their plan for an archive for the PHES.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the newly-founded Historical and Ethnographic Society's archival ambitions fell by the wayside as the group—modeled on Simon Dubnow's Jewish Historical-Ethnographic Society in St. Petersburg and the “An-ski committee,” the Vilnius group of the same name—busied itself with ethnographic studies and publishing historical sources.¹⁵ By 1934, the PHES turned to the Hebrew University to realize their dream of a “national archive.”¹⁶ Meanwhile, it proved difficult to bring the archives of the Zionist Organization to Jerusalem. Zionist leaders in London supported sending part of the archive to Palestine, and Georg Herlitz, who had established the archive in Berlin in 1919, approved in theory.¹⁷ But he opposed the transfer on practical grounds: He disliked the idea of dividing the collection, and was concerned that few in Jerusalem would make use of it. Relocating the archive, he feared, would disrupt ongoing scholarly work in Berlin.¹⁸ And he objected to moving the archive—despite the Zionist Executive's repeated resolutions to do so—until an appropriate

¹³ Israel Cohen to Georg Herlitz, 28 Apr. 1924, CZA L33/64.

¹⁴ Hugo Bergmann to Herlitz, 5 Sept. 1924, CZA L33/64; Simhah 'Assaf, Ben Zion Dinaburg, “Tazkir va'ad beit ha-sefarim ha-le'umi bi-yerushalayim,” 19 Feb. 1925, CAHJP P28/6/43, cf. Dinur, *Ketavim hadashim ve-gam yeshanim*, 277–278, CZA L33/9 (German), L33/64 (English). Also: Judah Magnes to Harry Sacher, 5 Feb. 1928, CZA L33/24.

¹⁵ Instead, they focused on ethnographic research in collaboration with the Vilnius group, with whom they were in close contact and from which, to some extent, they took direction; “Protoḳol,” 6 Jun. 1928, “Yeshivat va'ad ha-ḥevrah,” 11 Mar. 1931, CAHJP IHS/2, and “Yedi'ot ha-ḥevrah ha-"y le-hiṣṭoryah ve-'etnografyah,” *Me'assef Tsyion* 3 (1929): 180, which discuss their ethnographic section. Also: Cecile E. Kuznitz, “An-sky's Legacy: The Vilna Historic-Ethnographic Society and the Shaping of Modern Jewish Culture” in *The Worlds of S. An-sky* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 320-345; YIVO RG 29 (S. An-sky Jewish Historical Ethnographic Society). Dinaburg noted in 1955 that they specifically chose their initial name based on Dubnow's group (Dinaburg, “Shloshim shanah le-'tsiyon' u-le-ḥevrah ha-hiṣṭorit ha-yisra'elit,” *Zion* 20, no. 3–4 (1955): 111–116).

¹⁶ “Protoḳol,” 5 Feb. 1928, CAHJP IHS/2; “Yeshivat ha-hanhalah ha-metsumtsemet,” 17 Jul. 1934, CAHJP IHS/4.

¹⁷ Israel Cohen to Herlitz, 28 Apr. 1924, Herlitz to Dinaburg, 16 Mar. 1925, CZA L33/64; Herlitz to Hugo Bergmann, 16 Mar. 1925, CZA L33/10.

¹⁸ On dividing the archive, see Herlitz to Executive of the Zionist Organization, 4 May 1924, Herlitz to Hugo Bergmann, 26 Aug. 1924, CZA L33/64. Bergmann to Herlitz, 5 Sept. 1924, CZA L33/64, insisted that the material would be utilized. As late as 1931, Herlitz insisted that if the files were brought to Palestine, a great many histories “will remain unwritten.” (Herlitz to Felix Rosenbluth, 3 Feb. 1931, CZA L33/40)

space could be secured.¹⁹ It would only be in 1933, following the establishment of an S.S. barracks across the street from the Berlin offices of the *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland*, that Herlitz shipped the materials to Jerusalem.²⁰ In 1935, with the support of the Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society, Herlitz reopened the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem.

Around this time, scholars in Jerusalem turned their attention to a new archival ambition when Yisra'el Klausner called for the gathering of archives from the Diaspora in October 1935. “In the time of the *kibbutz galuyot* [ingathering of the exiles],” he began his appeal to the PHES, “in a time of the creation of a spiritual and political center in our historical land—it is necessary for us to collect all of the sources of the history of our people in the exile, material which will be kept and used for research in history.” Consequently, he called for “a central archive for sources of history of our people in medieval and modern times.”²¹ Still, the PHES’ leaders maintained a limited vision of collecting material: In the 1935 essay “Megamatenu” (Our Purpose), Yitshak Baer and Ben Zion Dinaburg laid out a new program for the Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society and its journal *Zion*. Baer and Dinaburg complained that Jews around the world were not collecting archives, but they refrained from calling on Jews to send archives to Jerusalem. Instead, they expressed the hope that Diaspora Jews might organize their archives themselves, and *Zion* could publish inventories and select documents.²²

¹⁹ This, as it turns out, would continually prove the sticking point. See Herlitz to Berthold Feiwel, 25 Feb. 1925, Herlitz to Arthur Hantke, 22 Mar. 1927, CZA L33/64; A. Avadio to Herlitz, 8 Jan. 1928, Herlitz to Avadio, 12 Jan. 1928, Herlitz, “Vorschlag der Verlegung des zionistischen Archivs nach Palästina,” 29 Feb. 1928, CZA L33/24; Herlitz to B. Locker, 29 Aug. 1932, CZA L33/64. On the Zionist Executive’s decision, see M. Medzini to Herlitz, 17 Aug. 1932, CZA L33/64.

²⁰ See Herlitz, *Mein Weg nach Jerusalem: Erinnerungen eines zionistischen Beamten* (Jerusalem: Verlag Ruben Mass, 1964), 144–152, hereafter cited as *Erinnerungen*. Note that Herlitz also sent twelve crates to England. Cf. “Spensen-Nota für Archiv der Zionistischen Organisation nach Haifa,” 26 Sept. 1933, CZA A198/9.

²¹ Yisra'el Klausner to Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society, 28 Oct. 1935, CAHJP IHS/17d. Yisra'el Klausner (1905–1977) is not to be confused with Joseph Klausner (1874–1958), the scholar of antiquity and professor at Hebrew University, who was his first cousin once-removed.

²² Baer and Dinaburg, “Megamatenu,” *Zion* 1, no. 1 (1935): 5.

Two years later, when leaders of the Historical and Ethnographic Society met in April 1937 to discuss “problems of Jewish history,” creating a central historical archive was first on the agenda. The Columbia professor Salo Baron, who attended as a guest, proposed that material could be photographed and copies made available to protect them from destruction. The Jerusalem scholars insisted that the focal point of this activity must be in Palestine, and Alex Bein argued that the Jerusalem scholars must “provide an example to other countries” by collecting material there.²³ However, they envisioned this archive as one of a series of Jewish archives, not a singular archival center. In April 1939, they returned to these problems when Georg Herlitz convened a “Committee to Form a ‘Central Jewish Archive in Jerusalem’” in April 1939 at the offices of the Central Zionist Archives.²⁴ Dinaburg explained that the Historical and Ethnographic Society had developed a plan for a central archive following their previous meeting, but it had been difficult to gather archives from the Diaspora. In light of recent events which had “given the Jews of the world a lesson”—he probably referred to Kristallnacht and the concomitant confiscation of Jewish archives—he suggested that they could gather materials from areas outside Nazi control, like Italy.²⁵ For this reason, Herlitz spoke of the need to “rescue from destruction the historical documents which touch upon the history of our people,” and Dinaburg moved that they send forth emissaries to bring European archives to Palestine. Such schemes were limited by matters practical. After all, the group consisted of only a handful of scholars and archivists. They would need an institutional home with the requisite budget to finance their

²³ “Zikhron devarim mi-yeshivah mukdeshet le-ba’ayot ha-hiṣṭoryah ha-‘ivrit,” 27 Apr. 1937, CZA P64/148/1/1.

²⁴ “Proṭoḳol mi-yeshivat ha-va’adah ha-yozemet le-yased ’arkhiyon yehudi merkazi bi-yerushalayim,” 14 Apr. 1939, CZA L33/1201, “Tazkir,” n.d. Description CAHJP P28/6/33.

²⁵ Reinhard Heydrich, “Massnahmen gegen Juden in der heutigen Nacht,” 10 Nov. 1938, published in Wolf-Arno Kropat, *Reichskristallnacht: Der Judenpogrom vom 7. bis November 1938—Urheber, Täter, Hintergründe: mit ausgewählten Dokumenten* (Wiesbaden: Kommission für die Geschichte der Juden in Hessen, 1997), 214–216, makes explicit reference to the seizure of Jewish archives. In January 1939, leaders of the Gestapo organized a systematic program to confiscate Jewish community archives; see “Niederschrift über die Besprechung über jüdische Archive,” 27 Jan. 1939, GStAPK HA, Rep. 178/1152.

ambitious plans and space to hold the collected materials.²⁶ They hoped that the Hebrew University might foster the project, but it turned out that neither the National Library nor the Hebrew University's Institute for Jewish Studies could provide the necessary support.²⁷ Their effort, then, remained a private initiative with limited resources, and the war put an end to any plans to send scholars abroad, restricting them to material already found in Palestine.

A number of rich collections had made their way to Palestine shortly before the outbreak of war. Just days after the April 1939 meeting, Josef Meisl reached out to Dinaburg about the historical collection of Moritz Stern, the prolific historian and director of the Berlin Gemeindebibliothek from 1905 to 1932 alongside whom Meisl had served before emigrating to Palestine in 1934.²⁸ Stern had sent his files to his son Josef in Tel Aviv in preparation for his planned emigration to Palestine, but he passed away in February 1939 before making the voyage. Josef Stern wanted his father's files available to the public, and put the material at Meisl's disposal. Meisl discovered a collection based on a lifetime of research, primarily on the history of German and Italian Jewry, and he hoped to procure the material for the planned archive.²⁹ Dinaburg and Herlitz also explored the files of Ismar Freund. As one will recall, Freund had been the architect of the Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund's "Gesamtorganisation" program, and he had consequently conducted extensive research on the legal status of Jews in Germany; he even received permission to continue using the Geheimes Staatsarchiv after the June 1935 Nazi decree

²⁶ "Protoḳol mi-yeshivat ha-va'adah ha-yozemet le-yased 'arkhiyon yehudi merkazi bi-yerushalayim," 14 Apr. 1939, CZA L33/1201; "Tazkir" (another set of notes from same meeting), n.d., CAHJP P28/6/33.

²⁷ "Protoḳol mi-yeshivat ha-va'adah ha-yozemet le-yased 'arkhiyon yehudi merkazi bi-yerushalayim," 23 Jul. 1939, CAHJP P28/6/33.

²⁸ Josef Meisl to Ben Zion Dinaburg, 22 Apr. 1939, CAHJP P28/6/33.

²⁹ Josef Meisl, "Tazkir 'al 'arkhiyono shel ha-hiṣṭoriyon d"r moshe shṭern z"l," 1939, CAHJP P28/6/33, Joseph Stern, *Moritz Stern, Bibliographie seiner Schriften und Aufsätze* (Jerusalem: 1939).

restricting Jewish scholars' access to archives.³⁰ After Freund's imprisonment at Buchenwald following Kristallnacht, he escaped to Palestine in early 1939 with his research materials. Herlitz and Dinaburg believed this material could be "the important foundation of a general Israeli archive in Palestine" [*le-'arkhiyon yisra'eli kelali ba-'arets*]—a curious turn of phrase prefiguring the name of the "Jewish Historical General Archives."³¹ But Freund insisted his files serve as the basis of an institute to study German Jewry and oppose Nazi anti-Jewish propaganda, not as a wider archive.³² For this reason, the Jewish Historical General Archives only acquired Freund's material after his death in 1956.³³ In the meantime, the archive began with Stern's collection.

In its early years, the Jewish Historical General Archives was a "general archive" in the purest sense, with a wide but undefined scope; as Meisl wrote in February 1941, "documentary material for the history of [the people of] Israel in the original or"—as was the case more often than not—"in duplicate."³⁴ In part, this condition resulted from the practicalities of wartime, and Meisl simply gathered whatever he could get his hands on. For instance, in 1943, a group of Jewish refugees from Danzig contributed files related to their former community, and Meisl received materials Yitshak Baer collected on behalf of the *Hitaḥdut 'Ole 'Italyah* (Union of Italian Immigrants).³⁵ The following year, the archive explored partnerships to collect and share historical materials with the Committee on Youth Refugees and the *Gesellschaft für Jüdische*

³⁰ Freund to Preußischen Ministerpräsident, 8 Mar. 1935, to Freund, 28 Jan. 1936, Freund to Geheimes Staatsarchiv, 30 Jan. 1936, Präsident des Reichsinstituts für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands to Preußischer Ministerpräsident, 15 Feb. 1937, Preußischer Ministerpräsident to Generaldirektor des Staatsarchiv, 15 Jun. 1935, GStAPK I. HA. 178/929.

³¹ Emphasis in original. Ben Zion Dinaburg, Georg Herlitz to Werner Senator, 13 Jun. 1939, CAHJP P2/477.

³² Ismar Freund, "Denkschrift betreffend die Schaffung eines Instituts für jüdische Geschichtsforschung," May 1939, Jun. 1942, CAHJP P2/480.

³³ See "Te'udat haḳdashah," 29 Oct. 1951, CAHJP P2/479. However, the General Archives did not report receipt of the material until the 1956 issue of *Zion* ("Ba-'arkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot yisra'el," *Zion* 21, no. 3–4 (1956): 239).

³⁴ Josef Meisl, Herman Mayer, Shmuel Eisenstadt, Circular, 9 Feb. 1941, CAHJP P28/6/34.

³⁵ "Yeshivat ha-ya'ad ha-menahel," 16 Jun. 1943, CAHJP IHS/74b; Meisl to the Editorial Boards, n.d., CAHJP IHS/81.

Familienforschung in Tel Aviv.³⁶ Meisl's eclectic collection, however, was also symptomatic of an archive floundering in the absence of a programmatic outlook and institutional backing. Indeed, it remained a tiny operation. As late as April 1943, they did not even have a bank account.³⁷ That September, Meisl reported that they had just two cabinets of organized materials, and complained that due to a lack of space the files remained strewn "across the floor."³⁸ The following April, he again noted that the collection primarily consisted of copies of documents.³⁹

In September 1944, the archive's steering committee recognized that they lacked the ability to "ensure the development of the institution as it deserves," and unanimously decided to join the Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society.⁴⁰ Their incorporation into the Historical and Ethnographic Society represented the possibility of opening a new chapter for the archive, both in the institutional sense and in terms of an increasingly defined mission. Under the aegis of the Historical Society, the archive was provided space in the basement of the Museum of Jewish Antiquities on Mt. Scopus.⁴¹ Such support could stand for a growing legitimacy and the practical basis for operations. With the war approaching its end, the group held forth hope that they might collect historical material in Europe. In February 1945, the archive committee decided that it was time to search for archives abroad.⁴² That May, Meisl spoke of broadening their mission to also collect material on Jewish life in contemporary times, and the group began framing their project

³⁶ "Yeshivat ha-ya'adah le-ḥibur 'al redifut ha-no'ar ba-germanyah u-ba-'artsot ha-kibush," 24 May 1944, CAHJP IHS/74b; "Aufzeichnung über das Ergebnis der Unterhaltung zwischen Dr. Meisl und Dr. Ball," 21 Jul. 1944, JMF SB0681.

³⁷ "Yeshivat ha-ya'ad ha-menahel," 1 Apr. 1943, 29 Apr. 1943, CAHJP IHS/74a.

³⁸ Josef Meisl to Herlitz, 22 Sept. 1943, CZA L33/609.

³⁹ Josef Meisl to Georg Herlitz, Alex Bein, Yisra'el Klausner, 17 Apr. 1944, CZA L33/1201

⁴⁰ Hanhalat ha-'arkhiyon to Ḥevre 'agudat ha-'arkhiyon, 5 Sept. 1944, CAHJP IHS/21a; "Yeshivat ha-ya'ad ha-menahel," 13 Sept. 1944, "Ha-'asifah ha-kelalit shel ha-'arkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot yisra'el," 13 Sept. 1944, CAHJP IHS/74b, JHGA, PHEs, "Zikhron devarim," 21 Sept. 1944, CAHJP IHS/21a.

⁴¹ "Yeshivat ha-ya'ad ha-menahel," 9 May 1944, CAHJP IHS/74b; Ha-hanhala to Ḥevre ha-ya'ad ha-menahel, 9 May 1944, CZA L33/608; A.L. Suknik to PHEs, 12 May 1945, CAHJP IHS/21a.

⁴² "Yeshivat ya'adat ha-'arkhiyon," 14 Feb. 1945, CAHJP IHS/74b

in terms of “a need to save documents and archives from Germany and the occupied lands.”⁴³

When Meisl wrote of the archive in 1942, he qualified its ambitions when he noted that if the Jewish communities of Europe could be reestablished, gathering their archives to Jerusalem would be superfluous. “In any case,” he remarked then, “the archive can become the center for the Near East,” making particular mention of efforts to collect material relating to Persian Jewry.⁴⁴ Such statements gesture at an early vision of an archive of world Jewry alongside a hesitation to declare European Jewry lost. As the destruction of European Jewry came into view, the archive’s leaders, and Dinaburg especially, began forcefully expressing an emboldened program to create an “archive of the communities of Israel,” as Dinaburg put it around the time of the archive’s 1944 incorporation into the Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society.⁴⁵ When Dinaburg addressed the first World Congress of Jewish Studies at Hebrew University in 1947, he spoke of “broaden[ing] the ‘Jewish Historical General Archives’” to contain documents, photographs, and inventories of material touching on Jewish history in state archives; alongside the “systematic collection of manuscripts” in the National Library and the cataloguing of archaeological and ethnographic material in museums around the world, the archive would enable scholars in Palestine to study Jewish history in the Diaspora on the basis of primary sources.⁴⁶ Archive leaders like Alex Bein and later Daniel Cohen spoke of the General Archives in similar terms when they stressed that a new Jewish historiography could only be built upon the centralization

⁴³ “Yeshivat ya‘adat ha-’arkhiyon,” 10 May 1945, CAHJP IHS/74b; “Protoḳol yeshivat ya‘ad ha-ḥevrah ha-”y le-historyah ye-’etnografyah,” 15 Oct. 1945, CAHJP IHS/7.

⁴⁴ Josef Meisl, Memorandum, 25 Dec. 1942, printed in Robert Jütte, *Die Emigration der deutschsprachigen “Wissenschaft des Judentums”* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991), 96.

⁴⁵ Dinaburg to Yitshak Grinboym 31 Jul. 1944, CAHJP IHS/21a; Dinaburg, “Ha-’arkhiyon ha-kelali le-ḳehillot yisra’el,” undated (most likely September 1944), CAHJP P28/6/33.

⁴⁶ Ben Zion Dinaburg, “Avodah meshutefet u-mif‘alim meshutafim be-mada‘e ha-yahadut u-derakhim le-’irgunam,” in *Ha-kinus ha-’olami le-mada‘e ha-yahadut, ḳayits tsh”z* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1952), I:30–42.

of Jewish archives.⁴⁷ At the public dedication of the General Archives in February 1947, Dinaburg made a similar point when he underlined the importance of the “professional, modern tools” of research—by which he meant the General Archives—for the creation of this historiographic center and contrasted their focus on archive collecting with what he identified as an ambivalence towards archives among the pioneers of modern Jewish studies, echoing a wider critique of European Jewish scholars most famously voiced by Gershom Scholem.⁴⁸ In Dinaburg’s telling, the pioneers of modern Jewish studies like Leopold Zunz had ignored archival sources; as we have seen, there was some measure of truth to this characterization of the earliest scholars, Zunz included, but Dinaburg conveniently glossed over or ignored those many scholars at the turn of the twentieth century who had turned to archival sources as the basis for Jewish history. Clearly, he sought to juxtapose the Jerusalem scholars’ focus on communal archives with a supposed disinterest in archival sources among scholars in the Diaspora.⁴⁹

They also repeatedly returned to the archive’s ambitious scale, aiming, in Dinaburg’s words, to create “a *large* central archive for Jewish history.”⁵⁰ In 1945, Meisl talked of collecting “in a systematic manner in a comprehensive field,” and the following year Dinaburg and Herlitz penned a memorandum describing the mission of the General Archives to gather materials on “the history of the Jews in all lands and in all periods.”⁵¹ A few months later, in March 1947, the

⁴⁷ Bein, “Kibbutz galuyot le-ginze ha-’umah,” *Beterem* 8, no. 4–5 (Apr.–May 1950): 87–90; “Historical Documents Acquired by Zionist Archives,” 20 Jan. 1950, CZA L33/1449; Bein to S. Rosenberg-Elbogen, 21 Aug. 1950, CZA L33/1881; and Daniel Cohen, “Ha-’arkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot yisra’el,” *Zion* 20, no. 3–4 (1955): 182–191, explaining that the JHGA was “a wide documentary basis for [the] Jewish historiography” emerging in Jerusalem.

⁴⁸ See Gershom Scholem, “Mitokh hirhurim ‘al hokhmat yisra’el,” *Luah ha-’arets* (1944–45), 94–112, also Scholem, “Reflections on Modern Jewish Studies,” in *On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism in Our Time*, ed. Avraham Shapira (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997), 51–71.

⁴⁹ See Dinaburg, cited ch. 4, n. 1; cf. Alex Bein, “Matsav ha-’arkhiyonim ha-yehudiim ba-tefutsot u-ba-’arets,” 27 Jul. 1961 (also Apr. 1963), CZA P64/163a, CZA P64/164, and Bein’s lecture notes, 25 Jan. 1962, ISA G-18-12648, where he makes a similar argument.

⁵⁰ Original emphasis, “Protoḳol mi-yeshivat ha-ya’adah ha-’arkhiyonit,” 14 Sept. 1947, CAHJP IHS/8, IHS/76.

⁵¹ “Yeshivat ya’adat ha-’arkhiyon,” 10 May 1945, CAHJP IHS/74b; Ben Zion Dinaburg, Georg Herlitz, “Tazkir ’el

Historical and Ethnographic Society explained the archive's aim to "centralize all of the documentation for the history of Israel in the Diaspora," echoed in their budget that October, which explained that the Society and its archives were not limited to Palestine but encompassed Jewish history and life around the world.⁵² This vision reached grander expression in 1951 as the ambition "to collect in all possible completeness the sources of Jewish history."⁵³ Consequently, under Dinaburg's leadership the project boldly laid claim to new ambitions, bound together, as we shall see, with the archive's planned physical edifice, which Dinaburg hoped would be "large and glorious" befitting its importance.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, the Jewish Historical General Archives made little headway in the first years of the postwar era; it would only be after the establishment of the state of Israel that they found success. Not much had practically changed, it seems, as a result of the archive's September 1944 absorption into the Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society. Its board, now the Society's "archive committee," had almost all already been active in the Historical Society.⁵⁵ Neither did the PHES provided them with a generous budget, and equipping their rooms at the Museum of Jewish Antiquities proved slow going.⁵⁶ After inspecting the space,

ha-ḳongres ha-tsiyoni ha-k"b be-ʿinyan rikuz ha-teʿudot le-toldot ha-golah," 24 Nov. 1946, CAHJP IHS/25.

⁵² Dinaburg, Circular, 10 Mar. 1947, PHES, "Report, Budget and Financial Statement," 1 Oct. 1947, CAHJP IHS/25.

⁵³ Alex Bein, Yisra'el Halpern to Dinaburg, "'Al hatsalat ha-ʾarkhiyonim ha-yehudim min ha-golah ye-rikuzam ba-ʾarets," 29 Oct. 1951, CZA P64/148/1/1.

⁵⁴ See Dinaburg, cited n. 1.

⁵⁵ Dinaburg, "Ha-ʾarkhiyon ha-kelali le-ḳehillot yisraʾel," CAHJP P28/6/33, "Zikhron devarim," 1944, CAHJP IHS/21a. Also Meisl to Dinaburg, 5 Feb. 1945, CAHJP P28/6/33, where he writes of the autonomy promised him.

⁵⁶ The archive committee received 50 Palestine Pounds, approximately one third of the requested budget of 150 £P. (As the Palestine Pound was tied to the British Pound Sterling, 150 £P in 1945 equates to approximately £6,000 in 2017, or \$7,700.) See "Yeshivat yaʿadat ha-ʾarkhiyon," 14 Feb. 1945, CAHJP IHS/74b; "Protokol yeshivat yaʿad ha-ḳevrah ha-ʾy le-histoyah ye-ʾetnografyah," 15 Oct. 1945, CAHJP IHS/7; "Long Term Indicator of Prices of Consumer Goods and Services," U.K. Office for National Statistics, accessed May 18, 2017, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/cdko/mm23>. Also see "Du"ḥ mi-yeshivah shel ha-moʿetset ha-riʾshon," 14 Jun. 1945, CAHJP IHS/5, where they note that they must prepare the rooms before they proceed in collecting material.

Alex Bein and Georg Herlitz insisted that it required major renovations.⁵⁷ Sending emissaries to occupied Germany remained financially unfeasible, and then the war of 1947–1949 led to severe restrictions on travel abroad.⁵⁸ What is more, those who did dispatch agents to Europe in search of looted cultural treasures—like the Hebrew University’s ‘Otsrot ha-golah (Treasures of the Exile) initiative, headed by the university’s chancellor Judah Magnes and Gershom Scholem—prioritized books over archives.⁵⁹ Magnes did express interest in the Jewish communities of Italy and Worms in the summer of 1945, and when Gershom Scholem and Avraham Ya’ari travelled to Europe the following year, they were commissioned to uncover “the fate of the Jewish libraries, archives, and similar collections.”⁶⁰ Their focus, however, was trained primarily upon the loot of the Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, now administered by the Americans at the Offenbach Archival Depot.⁶¹ Many communal archives were scattered, and despite many

⁵⁷ “He’erot le-tokhnit ha-binyan bishvil ha-’arkhiyon ha-kelali,” 24 Sept. 1944, CAHJP IHS/21a; Meisl, Herlitz to PHEs, 15 May 1945, CAHJP P28/6/33; “Yeshivat ya’adat ha-’arkhiyon,” 15 Nov. 1945, CAHJP IHS/74b.

⁵⁸ Gershom Scholem and Avraham Ya’ari, who traveled to Germany on behalf of ‘Otsrot ha-golah in 1946, encountered extreme difficulty in gaining access to occupied Germany as non-military personnel. They arrived in Paris on April 1946, and only were able to enter the occupied areas six weeks later. See Gershom Scholem, Abraham Ya’ari to Hebrew University, 19 Apr. 1946, Scholem, Ya’ari to Hebrew University, 24 Apr. 1946, Scholem to Judah Magnes, 22 May 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.1; Scholem, “Din ye-ḥeshbon shel prof Gershom Scholem ‘al sheliḥuto le-’eropah (ba-ḳayits tsh"v) be-ḳesher le-’otsrot ha-golah,” Sept. 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.2. On Israeli travel restrictions, see Orit Rozin, “Israel and the Right to Travel Abroad, 1948–1961,” *Israel Studies* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 147–176.

⁵⁹ This is despite the General Archives’ leaders’ repeated pressure to find archives; “Yeshivat ya’adat ha-’arkhiyon,” 10 May 1945, 15 Nov. 1945, CAHJP IHS/74b; Herlitz to Magnes, 30 Nov. 1945, CAHJP P3/2056; Herlitz to Magnes, 1 Feb. 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.1. On ‘Otsrot ha-golah, see: Dov Schidorsky, *Gevilim nisrafim ye-’otiyot porḥot: toldotehem shel ‘osfe sefarim ye-sefriyot be-’erets yisra’el ye-nisḥiyonot le-hatsalat seridehem be-’eropah le-’aḥar ha-sho’ah* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2008), 237–254; Elisabeth Gallas, “*Das Leichenhaus der Bücher.*” *Kultur-restitution und jüdisches Geschichtsdenken nach 1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 188–217.

⁶⁰ Abraham Ya’ari to Judah Magnes, 12 Jul. 1945, Cecil Roth to Magnes, 13 Aug. 1945, CAHJP P3/2056; “Ha-ya’ada le-hatsalat ‘otsrot ha-golah,” 5 Nov. 1945, CAHJP P3/2057; Walter Zander, 18 Oct. 1945, CAHJP P3/2056; M. Fekte, S. Ginzberg to Scholem, Ya’ari, 20 Mar. 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.1; Scholem to Rat der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden in Böhmen und Mähren, 17 Jun. 1946, Scholem, “Din ye-ḥeshbon shel prof Gershom Scholem ‘al sheliḥuto le-’eropah (ba-ḳayits tsh"v) be-ḳesher le-’otsrot ha-golah,” Sept. 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.2.

⁶¹ Scholem heard of the Hamburg archives after he had already left Germany (See Salomon Carlebach to Scholem, 29 Aug. 1946, Gershom Scholem, “Hamburg,” n.d., NLI ARC 4° 793/212.2). On Offenbach: Gallas, “*Das Leichenhaus der Bücher,*” 27–76; Anne Rothfeld, “Returning Looted European Library Collections: An Historical Analysis of the Offenbach Archival Depot, 1945–1948,” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 6, no. 1 (March 2005): 14–24; also Seymour J. Pomrenze, “The Restitution of Jewish Cultural Treasures after the Holocaust: The Offenbach Archival Depot’s Role in the Fulfillment of U.S. International and Moral Obligations (A

scholars' interest in recovering them, they required even more intensive work to unearth.

The General Archives also found itself at odds with those seeking to establish the Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem. In 1945, Mordechai Shenhavi, one of the originators of that project, spoke of creating a wide-ranging “Central Archive for the History of the Exile [*Golah*]” with an emphasis on both the Holocaust and “the history of the land of Israel in all epochs, with an especial focus on the period of Zionism.”⁶² Of course, Shenhavi's was but one of a wide array of efforts to document the Holocaust in these years, when scholars the world over formed historical commissions to “collect and record” documentation of the recent genocide.⁶³ But his vision was perhaps the widest in scope; Shenhavi and his colleagues David Remez and Zorah Warhaftig insisted that Yad Vashem's archive be the central institution around which other collecting projects in Palestine would align themselves, a position echoed by Arieh Tartakover and Mordechai Shenhavi in March 1947 when they suggested that Yad Vashem be an “umbrella” archive with a “maximum program” covering the entire period of Jewish life in the Diaspora.⁶⁴ Such posturing clearly came into conflict with the ambitions of the Jewish Historical General Archives' leaders, who suggested that in addition to their focus on Jewish history at large, they also be in charge of Holocaust documentation. In November 1946, Herlitz and Dinaburg had suggested that the General Archives undertake the Holocaust documentation proposed by Yad Vashem, and the following May, both Herlitz and Bein argued that they should host Yad

First Hand Account),” Association of Jewish Libraries, Rosaline and Myer Feinstein Lecture Series, 2002.

⁶² Mooli Brog, “In Blessed Memory of a Dream: Mordechai Shenhavi and Initial Holocaust Commemoration Ideas in Palestine, 1942–1945,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 30 (2002): 297–336; M. Schenhabi, “‘Jad Washem’, Verewigungswerk für die Vernichtete Golah. Plan für die Verewigung des Andenkens der vernichteten Golah,” 2 May 1945, YV AM.1/480. Also see: Boaz Cohen, “The Difficulties of Creating a Holocaust Archive: Yad Vashem and Israel Kastner, 1947–1948,” *Jewish Culture and History* 15, no. 3 (2014): 178–187.

⁶³ On postwar documentation in Europe, see Laura Joekusch, *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁶⁴ Zorah Warhaftig, “Yad Vashem Lagola,” 22 Dec. 1945, YV AM.1/ 455; “Yeshivat hanhalat hy‘t”l,” 6 May 1946, YV AM.1/480; “Tizkoret mi-pegishah ‘im minhale ha-’arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni,” 18 Mar. 1947, CAHJP IHS/8.

Vashem's archival materials.⁶⁵ In early 1947, the leaders of Yad Vashem and the General Archives reached an agreement; the General Archives walked back from its ambition to document the Holocaust but agreed to collect on behalf of Yad Vashem.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, points of contention remained; in July of that year, a committee outlined that Yad Vashem's historical material would be held by the General Archives only until Yad Vashem had its own buildings.⁶⁷ It seems that neither side was quite sure at this time what collaboration might look like.

At this stage, the debate between the leaders of Yad Vashem and the Jewish Historical General Archives was an odd one, a fight to stake out turf among initiatives that remained in fundamental positions of weakness, at a stage of ambition rather than implementation. In part, this is reflected in the General Archives's vacillation over the scope of their project, while its leaders debated in the absence of any practical advances whether they should be an archive devoted strictly to the Diaspora or also collect materials on Palestine, as Dinaburg had mentioned in 1944 and even again in his 1947 speech, or over the question of whether the Holocaust was part of their purview.⁶⁸ On the whole, it reflected the aspirational moment of the yishuv in the twilight of the British Mandate, holding its collective breath for an approaching moment of action. It was true of the archives, too, envisioning their future place in the Jewish state, as did Georg Herlitz and Alex Bein when they proposed that their Zionist Archives become not just the

⁶⁵ Dinaburg, Herlitz, "Tazkir 'el ha-ḳongres ha-tsiyoni ha-k"b be-'inyan rikuz ha-te'udot le-toldot ha-golah," 24 Nov. 1946, CAHJP IHS/25; also published in Dinur, *Ketavim ḥadashim ye-gam yeshanim*, 280. Also see "Yeshivat ya'adat ha-'arkhiyon," 16 May 1947, CAHJP IHS/8, CAHP IHS/77.

⁶⁶ "Protoḳol mi-yeshivat ya'ad ha-ḥevrah," 16 May 1947, "Tizkoret mi-pegishah 'im minhale ha-'arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni," 18 Mar. 1947, CAHJP IHS/77; "Tizkoret mi-pegishah 'im d'r y. robinzon," 31 Mar. 1947, CAHJP IHS/8.

⁶⁷ "Hatsa'ot le-heḥlatot ha-ye'idah li-ḥḳor ha-sho'ah ye-ha-gevurah," 11 Jul. 1947, CAHJP IHS/76.

⁶⁸ Dinaburg to Yitshak Grinboym, 31 Jul. 1944, CAHJP IHS/21a; Dinaburg, "Ha-'arkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot yisra'el," 30 Jan. 1947, Dinaburg, "Ha-'arkhiyon ha-kelali le-ḳehillot yisra'el," n.d., CAHJP P28/6/33; "Report, Budget and Financial Statement," 1 Oct. 1947, CAHJP IHS/25, "Protoḳol mi-yeshivat ha-ya'adah ha-'arkhiyonit," 14 Sept. 1947, CAHJP IHS/8.

archives of the Zionist Organization and the pre-state yishuv, but also the state archives.⁶⁹ But for years, these institutions' aspirations lacked any outside affirmation: Whereas the 'Otsrot ha-golah committee was tied to the Hebrew University and the National Library, the JHGA had long been left to languish as a cabinet in Meisl's apartment. Even when provided space on Mt. Scopus, it was on the university's outskirts, and remained a private initiative laying claim to public service. Likewise, the Zionist Archives found itself passed over when Israeli's State Archives were established in Tel Aviv under the leadership of Sophia Yudin in 1949.⁷⁰

In the meantime, political and economic realities forced Jewish archives in Palestine/Israel to pool limited resources. A fruitful collaboration emerged between Yad Vashem, the Jewish Historical General Archives, and the Central Zionist Archives on the basis of their shared conviction of the centrality of Palestine as a gathering point for Jewish culture, leading to surprising synergies. When Alex Bein traveled in search of archives, he came to represent these three groups all together, at one point even writing on a shared letterhead.⁷¹ In part, it was a practicality, as all recognized the foolishness of duplicating efforts when traveling abroad remained difficult and expensive. It also provided Bein with added gravitas. Even before he was elevated to the position of Israel's first state archivist in 1956, he could speak for an array of institutions instead of a single archive with a circumscribed mandate. But it was more than a matter of convenience: When the Hebrew University at Mt. Scopus became an isolated military outpost in the Israeli-Arab war, the Jewish Historical General Archives' offices were cut off and the files stranded there, leading Dinaburg to reflect in 1955 that they had had to more or less

⁶⁹ Georg Herlitz and Alex Bein, "Tazkir 'al ma'amado shel ha-'arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni ha-merkazi be-mivneh he-ḥadash shel mosadotenu ha-le'umiim," 22 Jul. 1948, CZA L33/1859.

⁷⁰ Note that Yudin had previously headed the Zionist Library and Archives in New York City, founded 1939.

⁷¹ See, for instance, Alex Bein to E. Fritz Bloch, 28 May 1954, CZA L33/1448, among other similar letters.

begin from scratch.⁷² After extensive negotiations in 1957, the General Archives relocated to Yad Vashem's campus on *Har ha-zikaron* in west Jerusalem, where it would remain until 1962. This was the total inverse of their planned cooperation, according to which the General Archives would house Yad Vashem and collect on its behalf; now, the two were being represented by the assistant director of the Central Zionist Archives. The increasing cohesion represented the pragmatic reality that although these institutions remained discrete bodies, their leading figures progressively had their hands in the same pots, as when Dinaburg became the de facto leader of Yad Vashem upon his appointment as minister of education and culture in 1952. It also reflected the transformation of what archival centralization might mean and symbolize: In 1921 Dinaburg had looked to form an archive of nationalism; nearly thirty years later, in 1950, he spoke of bringing the Zionist Archives, General Archives, and Yad Vashem under one roof as an archive of the nation.⁷³ As such, diverse dreams of archives in Israel/Palestine—an archive of the yishuv and the Zionist movement, an archive of the Diaspora, and in later years an archive of the Holocaust—came together in a common aim to gather Jewish archival material to Jerusalem.

Alex Bein and the “Ingathering of the Exiles of the Past”

In September 1949, Alex Bein—then assistant director of the Central Zionist Archives and a member of the Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society's archive committee—departed on a three-month archival expedition to Europe.⁷⁴ It was the first in a series of trips abroad, when Bein stood at the fore of a growing delegation of Israeli archivists searching for Jewish archives that could be gathered to the Central Zionist Archives, Yad Vashem, and above

⁷² Ben Zion Dinur, “Shloshim shanah le-‘tsiyon’ u-le-ḥevrah ha-historit ha-yisra’elit,” *Zion* 20, no. 3–4 (1955): 111–116.

⁷³ “Ba-ḥevra ha-historit ha-yisra’elit,” *Zion* 15 (1950): 160; “Yeshivat ya‘ad ha-ḥevrah,” 16 Jul. 1950, CAHJP IHS/10.

⁷⁴ Alex Bein, “Tazkir bi-devar nesi‘ah le-ḥuts la-‘arets mi-ṭa‘am ha-’arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni,” 10 Jun. 1949, Bein to A. Dubkin, 9 Aug. 1949, CZA L33/1439

all the Jewish Historical General Archives, leading him to once be termed the Israelis' "foreign minister" of archives.⁷⁵ The title, when bestowed upon Bein by Yisra'el Klausner in 1957, reflected both Bein's place at the head of this effort and his then-recent appointment as state archivist. It also gestured at his centrality in the development of archives in Israel/Palestine generally. From his institutional perch at the Central Zionist Archives—where Bein began in 1936 as Georg Herlitz's assistant, becoming his successor in 1955, a position he would hold until 1971—Bein shaped the archival landscape of Israel/Palestine perhaps more than anyone else: He not only led the charge in gathering Diaspora archives, but also nearly single-handedly drafted Israel's Archives Law of 1955, under which he became Israel's first state archivist and helped to foster a network of "public archives" (including the Zionist Archives and the General Archives, among many others) which he viewed in sum as a kind of national archive, distinct from the state's archives.⁷⁶ He pioneered archival training in Palestine too, shaping generations of archivists.⁷⁷ In this capacity, he could be potentially characterized as an Israeli parallel to Ernst Posner, the German archivist of Jewish heritage who, after fleeing to America in 1938, worked to establish professional archival training, bringing German archival expertise to a country which until 1934 lacked a federal archives administration.⁷⁸ Consequently, Bein's significance to the

⁷⁵ Yisra'el Klausner, introducing Alex Bein, "Hartsa'ah du"ḥ 'al nesi'ati," 1957, CZA P64/20/I.

⁷⁶ See Alex Bein to Hannah 'Even-Tov, 13 Jan. 1949, ISA G-22-326, where Bein laid out the basic tenets which would become the archives law in 1955. Also see: Sofia Yudin to Haim H. Cohen, 16 Jan. 1951, ISA G-22-5398; "Hatsa'aot le-ḥoḳ ha-'arkhiyonim," 24 Apr. 1951, "Protoḳol mi-yeshivat ha-ya'adah ha-'arkhiyonit shel ha-ḥevrah ha-historit ha-yisra'elit," 16 Dec. 1951, IHS/82; "He'arot ha-ya'adah ha-'arkhiyonit shel ha-ḥevrah ha-historit ha-yisra'elit le-hatsa'at ḥoḳ ha-'arkhiyonim tshy"a-1951," 7 Apr. 1952, ISA G-22-5398.

⁷⁷ On Bein's work in archival training, see: "Ḳurs le-haksharat 'arkhiyona'im mada'iim," 13 Oct. 1952, CZA A198/13, Students to Alex Bein (inviting him to join them for celebration of first class of graduating archivists), 31 Oct. 1952, CZA P64/153/7; Bein, "Tazkir bi-devar heḳmat bet-sefer le-'arkhiyona'ut 'al yad ha-'universiṭah ha-'ivrit," 26 Jun. 1957, CZA P64/148/8, and notes from his lectures, ISA G-18-12648.

⁷⁸ See Meyer Fishbein, "Ernst Posner, 1892–1980," *American Archivist* 43, no. 3 (Summer 1980): 426–428; Paul Lewinson, "The Two Careers of Ernst Posner," in *Archives and the Public Interest* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006), 9–21; Rodney A. Ross, "Ernst Posner: The Bridge Between the Old World and the New," *American Archivist* 44, no. 4 (Fall 1981): 304–312.

development of archives in Israel/Palestine, and the Jewish Historical General Archives in particular, cannot be overstated: Dinaburg and Meisl had dreamt of central archives, but it was Bein who implemented their program, communicating the case for what he termed the “ingathering of the exiles of the past” and imparting a conception of the history of Jewish archives and the central place of Jerusalem within it to figures abroad and at home, especially to a younger generation of archivists who carried forth the program of archival centralization in Jerusalem.

In his memoirs, Bein remarked that Georg Herlitz complained that Bein was more of a historian than an archivist.⁷⁹ As a student at the University of Berlin, Bein had worked closely with the renowned historian Friedrich Meinecke, under whom he wrote his doctorate on the political philosophy of Alexander Hamilton, and Bein hoped to habilitate in pursuit of a career in German academia.⁸⁰ However, on Meinecke’s urging in 1927 Bein took a position at the Reichsarchiv, the German military archive in Potsdam founded in 1919 tasked with studying the Great War and publishing materials in the aim of demonstrating that the Germans were not at fault for its origin.⁸¹ It was there, where Bein would work until he was sacked in April 1933 under the Nazis’ “Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung der Berufsbeamtentums,” that he received his first exposure to archival work, profoundly shaping his conception of the active role archives could play in the Jewish national project.⁸² In his studies, as Bein later noted, professors had spoken of archival

⁷⁹ Alex Bein, “*Hier kannst Du nicht jeden grüßen.*” *Erinnerungen und Betrachtungen* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1996), 299, hereafter cited as *Erinnerungen*.

⁸⁰ Alex Bein, *Die Staatsidee Alexander Hamiltons in ihrer Entstehung und Entwicklung* (Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1927), also in *Historische Zeitschrift* 12 (1927): 1–186; Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 156–165. Bein was close with Meinecke; on one occasion, he recalled, Meinecke consulted Bein on which classes he should offer. However, Bein’s hope to teach at German universities was dashed by his mentor when Meinecke noted: “You too? I already have had difficulty placing Dr. Masur at a university. The university... responded that they already have enough Jews!” (Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 165.)

⁸¹ On the Reichsarchiv, see: Matthias Hermann, “Das Reichsarchiv (1919–1945). Eine archivalische Institution im Spannungsfeld der deutschen Politik” (Ph.D. dissertation, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 1993); Walter Vogel, *Der Kampf um das Geistige Erbe. Zur Geschichte der Reichsarchividee und des Reichsarchivs als “geistiger Tempel deutscher Einheit”* (Bonn: Bernard & Graefe Verlag, 1994).

⁸² Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 198, 238–241; Ernst Müsebeck, “Zeugnis,” 23 May 1933, CZA L33/695.

sources but students did not make use of them.⁸³ Bein found archives exhilarating. Later, he described it as opening him to “an entirely new world,” echoing nearly verbatim the way Herlitz spoke of his time served alongside Eugen Täubler at the Gesamtarchiv a generation before.⁸⁴ Bein later claimed to have declared to his wife upon his installation at the Reichsarchiv in 1927 that—as a devout Zionist, having been a leader in the German Zionist student group Blau-Weiß—“perhaps it will be my task to organize archives in Palestine.”⁸⁵ Such claims to “prophecy,” pronounced decades after-the-fact, must be considered carefully; but it is certain that in a career spanning four decades Bein doggedly pursued the development of Jewish archives in Palestine.

On October 16, 1933, Bein arrived in Palestine with his wife and four-year-old son.⁸⁶ Immediately thereafter, the thirty-year-old commenced the search for appropriate employment. He initially turned to the Hebrew University, where he hoped to organize archives at the National Library, but he was open to any academic work, including teaching as a docent or serving as a professor’s assistant.⁸⁷ When he was rebuffed, Bein continued work on the biography of Theodor Herzl he had begun in 1929, the first edition of which appeared in 1934, and he pursued other studies such as an examination of Jewish agricultural settlements.⁸⁸ Still, he persevered in pursuit of archival work: In February 1934, he appealed to the Va‘ad Le’umi (National Council), the

⁸³ Bein’s dissertation was based almost exclusively on printed materials; see Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 181–182, 196. Cf. Jacob Rader Marcus’ notebooks (AJA MS-210), where he discusses the use of published sources but not archives. Bein and Marcus studied at the University of Berlin and likely participated in the same seminars, particularly Erich Marcks’ “Allgemeine Geschichte im Zeitalter der französischen Revolution.” (Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 156; Marcus to Julian Morgenstern, 4 Jul. 1924, AJA MS-210 7/10.)

⁸⁴ Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 196 (“Es war eine völlig neue Welt, in die ich da eintrat”); cf. Georg Herlitz, *Erinnerungen*, 82 (“eine völlig neue Welt eröffnete”).

⁸⁵ Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 196.

⁸⁶ Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 253.

⁸⁷ Alex Bein to Chancellor of the Hebrew University, 15 Feb. 1934, Bein to unknown, 21 Feb. 1934, Bein to Dr. Torczyner, 21 Feb. 1934, CZA P64/16/7b. On Bein’s rejection, see Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 266.

⁸⁸ Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 269.

Jewish executive body in Palestine, to establish an archive of the yishuv.⁸⁹ “*It is still possible,*” he stressed, “to create one such archive systematically and comprehensively,” writing that delay would lead to the loss of valuable historical material.⁹⁰ The Council dismissed the proposal as impractical, but commissioned Bein to examine the state of archives in Palestine nonetheless.⁹¹ After Bein presented his report in October of that year, he and Georg Herlitz worked to reconstitute the Zionist Archives with the support of the Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society, which as we will recall had long envisioned the creation of an archive of the yishuv.⁹² Herlitz had arrived in Palestine just days after Bein in 1933, with the specific aim of managing the Archiv der Zionistischen Organisation that had been his charge in Berlin. As he discovered, Jews in Palestine had clamored for the archives’ transfer, but the Zionist Organization’s Palestine Office had neither the budget for an archivist nor space to store the material. The 154 crates, then, remained in a basement corridor with, as Herlitz later noted, “absolutely no thought... to open [them].”⁹³ Only after Bein and Herlitz made a case to broaden the archive’s mandate—no longer merely an archive of the activities of the Zionist Organization, now to be a central archive of the

⁸⁹ The Va‘ad le’umi was a key component of the emerging Jewish administrative capacity in British-controlled Palestine and the immediate predecessor to the 1948 provisional government. Founded in 1920, it was the executive of the ‘Asefat ha-nivḥarim (Elected Assembly), recognized as the representative Jewish body by the Mandate authorities in 1920 and again in 1928. In 1930, the British authorized the National Council to collect taxes. It was closely tied to, though not subservient to, the Zionist Executive which was based at that time in London. Perhaps parallel to the Palestinian National Congress (1918–1923, 1934), the aspirations of Jews of Palestine for semi-autonomy were not hamstrung, as the Palestinians were, by the British demand to support the Mandate’s constitutional bias towards the establishment of a Jewish national home. On the Va‘ad Le’umi, see David Vital, “From ‘State Within a State’ to State,” *Israel Affairs* 5, no. 4 (1999): 32–42; Moshe Naor, “From Voluntary Funds to National Loans: The Financing of Israel’s 1948 War Effort,” *Israel Studies* 11, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 62–82; Shmuel Sandler, “Territoriality and Nation-State Formation: The Yishuv and the Making of the State of Israel,” *Nations and Nationalism* 3, no. 4 (1997): 667–688; also see Moshe ‘Atyash, ed, *Sefer ha-te‘udot shel ha-ya‘ad ha-le’umi li-keneset yisra‘el be-‘erets yisra‘el* (Jerusalem, 1963), particularly x–lxiv.

⁹⁰ Original emphasis, Bein, 25 Feb. 1934, CZA P64/148/4. Also: Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 267, Bein, “Denkschrift über die Schaffung eines Archiv des Jüdischen Jischuw,” n.d., CZA P64/148/4, cf. Bein, “Hatsa‘ah bi-devar heḳmat ‘arkhiyon ha-yishuv ha-‘ivri be-‘erets-yisra‘el,” 1935, CZA J1/4536, published in *‘Arkhiyon* 4 (1990): 137–139.

⁹¹ Va‘ad Le’umi to Alex Bein, 19 Apr. 1934, CZA P64/148/4.

⁹² “Du”h mi-yeshivat ha-ya‘ad,” 3 Nov. 1934, 9 Nov. 1934, CAHJP IHS/4; cf. PHES to Jewish Agency, 26 Mar. 1936, CAHJP IHS/17d; Protocol: First Meeting of the Special Committee of the Zionist Archives, 10 Dec. 1934, CAHJP P28/6/43. On Herlitz’s arrival, see: Herlitz, *Erinnerungen*, 155, “Rechnung,” 10 Oct. 1933, CZA A198/9.

⁹³ Herlitz, *Erinnerungen*, 161.

yishuv and the Jewish settlements in Palestine—would the Zionist Executive in London approve a budget for the archive in September 1935, and the following month the archive reopened as the Zionisches Zentralarchiv in the basement of the Palestine Office on King George Street.⁹⁴

In the years that followed, Bein sought to develop the Central Zionist Archives and archives in Palestine in general along a threefold program. First, he aimed to bring a professional archival ethos to Palestine. His initial assessment of the archival situation there was that it was poor, and Herlitz did not escape his ire, either.⁹⁵ Despite Herlitz's seniority, Bein derided him as unfamiliar with the latest archival techniques due to his lack of English, and describing the Zionist Archives as "ein one-man-job."⁹⁶ By contrast, Bein saw himself as the sole representative of a Continental tradition of professional archiving, and quickly began to publish on archival matters in the hope to increase public awareness of archives and to spur yishuv institutions to better manage their files.⁹⁷ Secondly, the core of Bein's work at the Zionist Archives was to gather non-institutional archives. His first major task was the acquisition of the papers of Theodor Herzl in 1937, and he continued this emphasis in later years when he gathered files for the General Archives.⁹⁸ And finally, Bein held a broad conception of the active role of archives. In retrospect, Bein derided Herlitz as a lackey of the Zionist Executive for whom "the leadership

⁹⁴ Georg Herlitz, "Kruz 'el kol ha-mosadot ye-ha-'anashim ha-pra'itim 'asher be-yadehem te'udot u-me'korot le-toldot ha-tnu'ah ye-ha-histadrut ha-tsiyonit, le-toldoteha shel 'erets-yisra'el benenah ye-yishuvah," CZA A198/9. Also Herlitz, "Tazkir 'al mivneh ha-'arkhiyon shel ha-histadrut ha-tsiyonit ha-'olamit ye-'al pe'ulato le-'atid, mugash le-hanhalat ha-histadrut ha-tsiyonit u-le-hanhalat ha-sokhnut ha-yehudit le-'y," 22 Jun. 1934, CZA L33/2293, "Tazkir 'al har'avat pe'ulotav shel 'arkhiyon ha-histadrut ha-tsiyonit ha-'olamit," CAHJP P28/6/43.

⁹⁵ Bein, "Hatsa'ah bi-devar ha'kirat ha-matsav ha-'arkhiyoni," 26 Oct. 1934, CAHJP IHS/17a.

⁹⁶ Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 278–279, Bein, "Dr. Georg Herlitz," Jul. 1968, CZA P64/15/IV.

⁹⁷ Bein, "Sefer she-higiyah sha'ato," 16 Oct. 1934, "Registra'turah-'Arkhiyon-Historyah," Mar. 1937, CZA P64/148/2, among others.

⁹⁸ The Herzl files came to Jerusalem in 1937 after Bein convinced Moritz Reichenfeld of the Herzl-Komitee in Vienna, which had acquired the files by way of Herzl's wife Julia and their confidant Johann Kremnitski, that the files would be safer in Palestine. See Michael Heymann, "'Arkhiyon Hertsl,'" *Arkhiyon* 10–11 (1999): 17–41; cf. Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 276–277. On the specifics of Bein's work at the Reichsarchiv, see Ernst Müsebeck, "Zeugnis," 23 May 1933, CZA L33/695; Bein to Chancellor of the Hebrew University, 15 Feb. 1934, CZA P64/16/7b; Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 200–203.

has decided' was ... something akin to a military command."⁹⁹ By contrast, Bein believed that instead of passively following orders, they should actively seek to implement programs directed at nationalist goals, like forming an archive of Jewish settlement in Palestine in advance of the creation of a political state and gathering Diaspora archives.¹⁰⁰

Bein's program was rooted in his experience at the Reichsarchiv: For one, it was there that Bein was inducted into the archival profession. The Reichsarchiv's on-the-job training, with courses on subjects including early modern and modern European history, archival practice and history, and French, proved a model for a number of archival seminars in Palestine.¹⁰¹ At the Reichsarchiv, too, Bein had primarily accessioned and described the papers of notable figures, as opposed to institutional files. And perhaps most importantly, the Potsdam archive colored Bein's conceptions of archives' role in society. The Reichsarchiv was both a historical archive and a full-fledged research institute, providing Bein with a model for an activist archive openly acting in the national interest. One particular lecture from the Reichsarchiv seminar, presented by Georg Leibbrandt in March 1930 on the topic "Research in the History of the German People in Russia," seems to have left a particular impact, inasmuch as Bein kept a copy of the text in his files, one of the few he retained from this period. Leibbrandt, born near Odessa in 1899, would join the Nazi party in 1933, serving as a director of the Eastern Division of the NSDAP's Foreign Policy Office and participating in the infamous January 1941 Wannsee conference.¹⁰² When

⁹⁹ Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 278–279.

¹⁰⁰ Notably, he would later become particularly enamored with microfilm. On microfilm, see ch. 5, pp. 352–354; Alex Bein, "The Use of Microfilms in Archives and in Historiography," 1954, CZA P64/163c, A198/9.

¹⁰¹ Under this framework, Bein conducted research on the history of English archives, which he presented in 1928. See Bein, "Das englische Archivwesen," 9 Nov. 1928, BArch Lichterfelde R1506/1089. He most likely conducted the research for this presentation while on his honeymoon, when he traveled to England; the notable event later recorded in his memoir was his opportunity to meet the British archivist Hilary Jenkinson. (Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 208)

¹⁰² On Leibbrandt, see Eric J. Schmaltz, Samuel Sinner, "The Nazi Ethnographic Research of Georg Leibbrandt and Karl Stumpp in Ukraine, and its North American Legacy," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 14, no. 1 (2000): 28–64.

Leibbrandt spoke at the Reichsarchiv in 1930, he painted a picture of the Germans as a dispersed people, arguing that Germany had an obligation to these ethnic Germans outside its political borders, especially in Soviet Russia; he suggested that the Reichsarchiv should reorient itself to the study of ethnic Germans and collect historical sources related to their study. The Reichsarchiv, he concluded, “is the archive of the German Reich, thus it must, according to the new orientation of the entire German people (*des gesamten deutschen Volkstums*), [transform] its essence to a German national archive.”¹⁰³ Bein’s conception of the role of archives in Palestine mirrored this most curiously. He wanted archives to not just simply document the efforts to establish a Jewish state but also to participate in it, and he aimed to document the Jewish Diaspora, paralleling Leibbrandt’s interest in ethnic groups beyond the state’s political borders.

Bein’s 1949 archival survey in Europe followed from this overall program. When he first proposed that he travel abroad, it was to continue collecting the files of Zionist leaders on behalf of the Central Zionist Archives and to glean information on new archival techniques.¹⁰⁴ With Herlitz’s support, he was to seek out the files of the Zionist movement in Germany and meet with leaders of Zionist groups and federations.¹⁰⁵ The Israeli army also wanted Bein to report on the administration of military archives, and Josef Meisl implored him to search for archives for the Jewish Historical General Archives, in particular asking about the fate of the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden*.¹⁰⁶ Bein was initially provided with a budget for two months’ travel, but he extended the trip with the support of the Historical and Ethnographic Society, though Herlitz was

¹⁰³ “Quellenforschungen zur Geschichte des deutschen Volkstums in Russland,” 28 Mar. 1930, CZA P64/149/1; N.B. that the source is dated incorrectly, cf. BArch Lichterfelde, R1506/1088 for a full list of lectures presented.

¹⁰⁴ Alex Bein, “Tazkir bi-devar nesi‘ah le-ḥuts la-‘arets mi-ṭa‘am ha-’arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni,” 10 Jun. 1949, Alex Bein to A. Dubkin, “Nesi‘ah mi-ṭa‘am ha-’arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni,” 9 Aug. 1949, CZA L33/1439.

¹⁰⁵ Georg Herlitz to Financial Office, 30 Aug. 1949, CZA L33/1439; Arthur Hantke to Dr. Weinberg, 31 Aug. 1949, CZA P64/18/I; Georg Herlitz, “Tizkoret le-dr” bein bishvil pe‘ulato be-’eropah,” 8 Sept. 1949, CZA L33/1439.

¹⁰⁶ Josef Meisl to Bein, 8 Sept. 1949, Tsahal to Bein, 5 Sept. 1949, Meisl to Bein, 27 Oct. 1949, CZA L33/1439.

quick to remind him that he was in Europe primarily to represent the Zionist Archives.¹⁰⁷ And so from September to December of that year, Bein manically crisscrossed Europe, visiting in short order Paris, London, Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Vienna, and Milan.¹⁰⁸ There, he visited as many municipal and state archives as he could, gathering information on new professional archival methods, seeking out material which might be brought to Israel, and speaking before Jewish groups about his work at the Zionist archives and Zionism in general.¹⁰⁹

Upon his return, Bein boasted of the notable collections he had gained, including the files of Max Nordau, the renowned *fin de siècle* cultural icon and lieutenant to Theodor Herzl, as well as the papers of Territorialist leader Israel Zangwill, the early Zionist writer Moses Hess, and the French rabbi Zadoc Kahn. But when he addressed the staff of the Zionist Archives on December 19, 1949, he was generally pessimistic about Jewish archives in Europe, and he urged the commissioning of further expeditions and even permanent representatives in Europe to collect archives. After drafting the report, Bein amended his concluding remarks: “The ‘ingathering of the exiles,’” he scribbled, “needs to be not only about bringing people [to Israel] but also about saving the remnants of their past, in the original or in photocopies.”¹¹⁰ In this first instance, Bein spoke of the Zionist Archives, but he quickly began applying the same idea to the Jewish Historical General Archives. When he addressed the general assembly of the Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society in February 1950, he presented an argument for archival centralization in three movements: First, he posited the importance of archives for historical scholarship,

¹⁰⁷ “Protokol mi-yeshivat ha-ya‘ad shel ha-ḥevrah ha-”y le-hiṣṭoryah ve-’etnografyah,” 29 Oct. 1949, CAHJP P127/39; Georg Herlitz to Alex Bein, 30 Oct. 1949, CZA L33/1439.

¹⁰⁸ Bein frequently drafted reports late in the evening. For instance: Bein to Herlitz, 4 Nov. 1949, CZA L33/1439. On his itinerary, see Bein, “Din ve-ḥeshbon mi-nesi‘ati le-’eropah,” 19 Dec. 1949, L33/1439

¹⁰⁹ Bein to A. Lonburg, 10 Nov. 1949, Bein to Herlitz, 11 Dec. 1949 (where he discusses his purchase of books on archives), “Herzl Week: Need for Renewed Zionist Activity,” 4 Nov. 1949, CZA L33/1449.

¹¹⁰ Bein, “Din ve-ḥeshbon mi-nesi‘ati le-’eropah,” 19 Dec. 1949, L33/1439; see esp. the draft of this document, also found in the same file, where the discussion of the “*kibbutz gauliyot*” is added as an addendum.

describing the archive as the historian's laboratory, except that while the scientist's laboratory contains all the tools to study the natural sciences, archives are dispersed. "The problem," he explained, "is how to concentrate them." In the same breath, he suggested that Jews in Europe held little regard for historical materials, and that there existed no archives there or even in the United States to manage these files; if there were to be another war, all would be lost. For this reason, he concluded that archives must come to Jerusalem: "We must salvage the archives," he explained, "similar to how we are realizing the saving of the Jews of the Diaspora [*Golah*]." ¹¹¹ It was on this basis that Bein penned a series of articles in the Israeli and German press explaining the need for "the ingathering of the exiles, also for Jewish archives." ¹¹²

Collecting Archives and Mass Immigration: "Ingathering the Exiles of the Past"

Bein certainly was not the first to apply the "ingathering of the exiles" (*kibbutz galuyot*) to the question of archives or to Jewish culture more broadly. In 1926, Hayim Nahman Bialik spoke of the need for a "spiritual ingathering of the exiles" (*kibbutz galuyot ruhani*), referring to the project of "*kinus*" or gathering and culling the Jews' literary treasures. ¹¹³ Yisra'el Klausner's 1935 call for a central archive also rested upon the concept, beginning as he did with the need to collect archives "in this time of the 'ingathering of the exiles.'" ¹¹⁴ And in 1942, the "Committee for the *kibbutz galuyot*" in Tel Aviv formed a section to collect historical materials. ¹¹⁵ Following Bein's use of the term, the Jewish Historical General Archives quickly adopted the language of the "ingathering of the exiles," describing their activities in terms such as the "salvage the

¹¹¹ "Ha-'asifah ha-kelalit ha-shenatit shel ha-ḥevrah," 2 Feb. 1950, CAHJP IHS/9.

¹¹² Bein, "Kibbutz galuyot le-ginze ha-'umah"; Bein, "Kibbutz Galujoth auch für jüdische Archive," *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland*, 2 pts., 20 Oct. 1950, 8, 27 Oct. 1950, 7.

¹¹³ Bialik, "'Al kinus ha-ruah," in *Devarim she-ba'al peh* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1935), I:64. On *Kinus*, see above, p. 173.

¹¹⁴ Yisra'el Klausner to Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society, 28 Oct. 1935, CAHJP IHS/17d.

¹¹⁵ Ha-ya'ad le-hitkarvut ha-'olim-ḳibbutz galuyot, "Ḳol ḳore' le-'esof ḥomer hiṣṭori 'al ḥaye ha-yehudim ba-galut," Jul. 1942, CAHJP P35/34.

documentary remnants of the dispersed [*galuyot*] of Israel in Europe” and in various contexts dubbing their project as the “ingathering the exiles of the past.”¹¹⁶ As the General Archives explained in 1957, its impetus stemmed from the sense that “with the ingathering of the exiles a growing need was felt for creating a central institution in Jerusalem to serve as a national repository for Jewish historical research which is increasingly concentrated in Jerusalem.”¹¹⁷

Draping the General Archives in the language of the “ingathering of the exiles” served a series of purposes. First, it clearly situated the archive project within the political *Zeitgeist* of the newly-established state of Israel and the mass migration of Jews to Palestine. Certainly, since the emergence of the modern Zionist movement in late nineteenth century, growing waves of Jewish immigrants had swelled the Jewish population in Palestine.¹¹⁸ As a result, in 1948 nearly 600,000 Jews called Palestine home. Jews in Palestine remained a minority on the eve of independence, but it was one that would grow rapidly under a regime of unlimited Jewish immigration as codified in Israel’s Declaration of Independence, which proclaimed that “the State of Israel will be open to Jewish immigration and to the Ingathering of the Exiles” (*le-ḳibbutz galuyot*), and the 1950 “Law of Return” (*Hoḳ ha-shvut*), initially entitled the “Law of the Ingathering of the

¹¹⁶ “Ha-’arkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot yisra’el,” *Zion* 16, no. 1–2 (1951): 91; “Be-mivtsa’ zeh shel ḳibbutz galuyot ha-’avar,” n.d. (likely 1954), CAHJP P28/6/39; “Übergabe der Wormser Altertümer im Staatsarchiv,” 29 Oct. 1957, CZA L33/1272 (“Einsammlung der zerstreuten Geschichtsquellen”); “Teḳes ha’avarat ’atikot yorms” 29 Oct. 1957, CZA L33/1272 (“ḳibbutz galuyot shel ginze ha-’umah”); Daniel Cohen, “Aide mémoire über den Stand der Angelegenheit der Archive der Jüdischen Gemeinde Hamburg,” 9 Jul. 1959, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. IV (“Sammlung der Verstreuten der Vergangenheit”), among others.

¹¹⁷ “Archives in Israel,” 12 Mar. 1957, HZA B. 1/7 Nr. 241; cf. “Archives in Israel,” 1959, CZA DD1/3227, and Yisra’el Halpern to Eugene Weill, 29 Mar. 1959, CZA L33/1307, which use the same language.

¹¹⁸ Whereas between thirty and forty thousand Jews arrived in Palestine in the ten years between 1904 and 1914 (an average of between three and four thousand yearly), 29,500 Jews immigrated to Palestine in the years 1919–1923, an average of just over 7,000 per year, between 1932 and 1938, 195,175 Jews came to Palestine (and by another counting, 257,000 between 1933 and 1941), a respective average of nearly 28,000 and 32,000 immigrants per annum. See Gershon Shafir, “Zionist Immigration and Colonization in Palestine until 1948,” in *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 407, and Hagit Lavsky, “German Jewish Interwar Migration in a Comparative Perspective: Mandatory Palestine, the United States, and Great Britain,” in *Ethnicity and Beyond: Theories and Dilemmas of Jewish Group Demarcation*, ed. Eli Lederhendler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 115–144, presents an important synthesis of research on the fleeing German Jewish population and gathers important, but too-often scattered, tabulations on the numbers of migrants.

Exiles.”¹¹⁹ Nearly three-quarters of a million Jews arrived in Palestine between 1948 and 1954, with ninety percent of them in the first three years.¹²⁰ A number of prominent Israelis, Daniel Cohen included, noted that this wave of migration included the arrival of “entire communities” in Palestine, gesturing at a millennial vision of a seeming conclusion to the era of the Jewish Diaspora and giving further ammunition for the “migration” of the files of entire communities of Jews to Palestine as well.¹²¹ Bein and the JHGA’s leaders also applied the language of immigration to archives, with Dinaburg speaking of how archives had “returned to [Israel] after forty generations of wandering,” and Bein coined the term *ḵeliṭah* (absorption) for the accession of files, the same used to describe the integration of Jewish immigrants.¹²²

The idea of “ingathering of the exiles of the past” rooted the General Archives’ project within a wider trajectory of Zionist aspiration, and it also presented an important cultural critique of contemporary political priorities. The archive’s leaders spoke broadly of the “ingathering of the exiles” as a fundamental undertaking of Zionism. As Bein put it in 1950, it was the “task of our generation,” and nearly two decades later Cohen claimed that it was “the dominant feature of Jewish life.”¹²³ But he and others also saw gathering Jews to Palestine as prerequisite to, not the fulfilment of, the broader Zionist dream. In 1949, Bein hinted at this when he stressed that a state

¹¹⁹ Israel’s Proclamation of Independence used the language of “*kibbutz galuyot*” in its Hebrew version (published in *Davar*, May 16, 1948, 1, 4); the English translation stated that “the State of Israel will be open to the immigration of Jews from all countries of their dispersion” (*Palestine Post*, May 16, 1948, 1–2). On the Law of Return, see Devora Hacoen, “The Law of Return as an Embodiment of the Link Between Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora,” *Journal of Israeli History* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 63. Also *Divre ha-keneset* 30 (3–5 July 1950), 2036–2037, when David Ben-Gurion introduced the first parliamentary reading of the “Law of Return” with an explanation that it “comprises the central mission of our state, the mission of the ingathering of the exiles [*kibbutz galuyot*].”

¹²⁰ Moshe Sicron, “The Role of the Immigration Wave of 1948–1954 in the Population and Labour Force of Israel,” *Divre ha-ḵongres ha-’olami le-mada’e ha-yahadut* 5 (1969): vol. 5, 345–363.

¹²¹ Daniel Cohen, “The Gathering of Jewish Records to Israel,” 5 Aug. 1969, AJA MS-687 18/20.

¹²² “Be-shem ha-’arkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot yisra’el,” 29 Oct. 1957, CAHJP P28/6/38; Alex Bein, “Me‘arekhet ha-’arkhiyonim ba-’arets,” *Divre ha-ḵongres ha-’olami le-mada’e ha-yahadut* 5 (1969): vol. 5, 31–36.

¹²³ Bein, “Kibbutz galuyot le-ginze ha-’umah,” “Kibbutz Galujoth auch für jüdische Archive,” Daniel Cohen, “The Gathering of Jewish Records to Israel.”

was a means, not an end; Zionism's full realization, he insisted, depended not on statehood but the "complete ingathering of the exiles."¹²⁴ The notion of "complete" ingathering went beyond people: the archives were both the "historical-archival counterpart to the 'ingathering of the exiles,'" as Cohen put it in 1956.¹²⁵ Bein remarked similarly that the "*kibbutz galuyot*" could not be limited to people, but should also include archives, as he explained in 1958 when he wrote that it must be "something more than the mere transplanting of numerous human beings."¹²⁶

It is important to recognize that Bein's language of archival "ingathering of the exiles" was not a simplistic adoption of political discourse. The language retained deep-seated religious resonance; in this context, Gershom Scholem's notion of the "apocalyptic thorn" of Hebrew—by which concepts like the "ingathering of the exiles" cannot be fully divested of their profound religious meaning—is particularly apt, as the phrase held the inalienable baggage of centuries of religious discourse and messianic expectations.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, the concept was fundamentally reconfigured within the wider transformation and translation of Judaism in the production of modern Zionism. The idea of "ingathering the exiles" may have been rooted in Biblical notions of the return of Jews to the land of Israel, but modern Zionist notions of immigration both drew upon and transvalued traditional visions. The Jewish Bible repeatedly laid out a cycle of exile and return, in fact concluding with the Persian emperor Cyrus' proclamation of the return of the

¹²⁴ "Herzl Week: Need for Renewed Zionist Activity," 4 Nov. 1949, CZA L33/1449.

¹²⁵ Daniel Cohen to Friedrich Janz, 30 Apr. 1956, ISA HZ-19-303; also Alex Bein, "The Archives in Israel as a Basis for Research," 12 Mar. 1957, HZA B. 1/7, 241, where he spoke of "the task of 'ingathering the exiles' with regards to our historical records as well as in the literal sense"; and Historical Society of Israel, "Ta'arukhah shel te'udot le-toldot yisra'el," *Zion* 21, no. 3–4 (1957), which explained that "the two institutions [the General Archives and Yad Vashem] work together with the goal to execute their work of a *kibbutz galuyot* of the written testimonies of Jewish history, which goes alongside the *kibbutz galuyot* of the tribes of Israel to the state of Israel."

¹²⁶ Alex Bein, Michael Heymann, "Records of Jewish Past Coming to Israel," CZA P64/148/1/4; also see Alex Bein, "'Al tokhnut ha-rikuz shel 'arkhiyone ha-golah ba-yerushalayim. Din ye-ḥeshbon 'al shliḥuti le-'eropah u-maskanot mimenah," 18 Sept. 1951, CZA P64/148/1/1.

¹²⁷ William Cutter, "Ghostly Hebrew, Ghostly Speech: Scholem to Rosenzweig, 1926," *Prooftexts* 10, no. 3 (1990): 413–433.

captives of Judah and the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple, the fulfillment of the prophecies of Jeremiah.¹²⁸ However, the phrase “*kibbutz galuyot*” is not in the Biblical corpus. It first appears in the Babylonian Talmud (*Pesachim* 88a) and in medieval commentaries, such as Rashi’s twelfth-century gloss on Deuteronomy 30:3, where he referenced “the great day of the ingathering of the exiles (*kibbutz galuyot*).”¹²⁹ Perhaps most importantly for modern Jews, the language was familiar from the daily ‘Amidah liturgy, which petitioned for the “miracle of the ingathering of our exiles” (*le-ḳabets galuyotenu*). Consequently, it was useful for those who wanted to construct invented traditions and civil religion rooted in traditional Jewish concepts. At the same time, the idea of the “ingathering of the exiles” proved a contested concept within Zionism. Asher Ginzberg, writing under the pen name Ahad Ha-‘am, used the phrase derisively in his critique of Herzl’s vision of political Zionism. For Ginzberg, an “ingathering of the exiles” represented the full resettlement of all Jews to Palestine, which he believed impossible. On the one hand, he wrote, it was a matter of God’s intervention in human events, a “matter above nature,” and on the other hand, it would require the development of an economic basis for their practical absorption.¹³⁰

The creation of a Jewish state unlocked the possibility of unlimited Jewish immigration, long impeded by British policies. In this, the “ingathering of the exiles” radically reformulated messianic visions of the Jews’ return to Palestine, both in terms of the hoped-for return of all Jews (in contrast with Prophetic visions of the “righteous remnant”) as well as its secularization from religious rhetoric to political program, from a transcendental to Promethean messianism

¹²⁸ Chron. II. 36:22–23, cf. Jer. 25, 27, 28:3–4, 29:10–14, 33.

¹²⁹ See for example Isaiah 11:12, referring to the ingathering of the exiles: “*Ve-nisa nes la-goyim / ye-‘assaf nidkhe yisra’el / u-nefutsot yehuda yeḳabets / me-‘arba’ kanfot ha-‘arets.*”

¹³⁰ Ahad Ha-‘am, “‘Altnayland,” in *Kol kitve ‘Aḥad ha-‘am* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1962), 313–320; “Medinat-Ha-yehudim ye-‘tsorat-ha-yehudim,” in *ibid.*, 135–139; “Merkaz ruḥani,” *Ha-zeman*, Feb. 1905, 189–196.

privileging the possibility of human agency over God's eschatological intervention.¹³¹ The Zionist conception of the reestablishment of a Jewish commonwealth by secular means inverted traditional frameworks, like those outlined in the 'Amidah liturgy, in which God would serve as the primary actor. Nevertheless, the Zionist program closely following the liturgical framework and timeline: Even Herzl, who insisted that the Jews receive a charter to colonize Palestine before beginning mass migration, envisioned the arrival of Jews in Palestine before the formation of a state in his futuristic novella *Altneuland*.¹³² The Zionist notion of the ingathering of the exiles and the restoration of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine thereby hewed to what one scholar has called the 'Amidah's "rhetoric of redemption," an eschatological chronology starting with the "ingathering of the exiles," followed by the institution of rule by righteous leaders, distributing punishment to the wicked, rebuilding Jerusalem, and finally the arrival of the Messiah, a component certainly left to the wayside in most secular Zionist perspectives.¹³³ This was in stark contrast with early modern Jewish conceptions of the end of days. Whereas Menasseh ben Israel argued in *Mikveh Yisra'el* (Hope of Israel, 1652) that messianic redemption would come only after Jews had been fully dispersed to the ends of the earth, the Zionist program reformulated it such that the gathering of the exiles would bring about national revival, a form of secular redemption.¹³⁴

By adopting this terminology, Bein deftly co-opted the language of political Zionism. He also presented a cultural critique of the Zionist enterprise by describing the "ingathering of the exiles of the past" a corrective to an overemphasis on people and politics rather than the culture

¹³¹ On the Prometheanism of the Zionist restorative messianism, see David Ohana, *Modernism and Zionism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 80–121.

¹³² Theodor Herzl, *Altneuland* (Leipzig: He. Seemann, 1902).

¹³³ Reuven Kimelman, "The Daily 'Amidah and the Rhetoric of Redemption," *JQR*, n. s., 79, no. 2–3 (Oct. 1988–Jan. 1989): 165–197.

¹³⁴ On Menasseh Ben Israel's conception of messianism, see Ismar Schorsch, "From Messianism to Realpolitik: Menasseh Ben Israel and the Readmission of the Jews to England," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 45 (1978): 187–208.

and historical consciousness of the society thereby created. In some ways, it should be unsurprising: The effort to gather archives to Jerusalem was part of a wider cultural project, the construction of a scholarly edifice in Palestine for the study of Jewish history, with roots stretching back to *fin de siècle* critiques of Herzl's political vision. Asher Ginzberg and his followers had espoused a vision of cultural work as the paramount component of Jewish national revival, and the notion that collecting cultural treasures like archives was of equal importance to the absorption of immigrants was a direct descendant of this outlook, as it represented their continued dissatisfaction with a vision of Zionism limited to creating a political entity and bringing Jews to Palestine. But whereas Ginzberg had used the terminology of the "ingathering of the exiles" to disparage Herzl's political vision, Bein used it to situate the project of collecting archives within the cultural and political mainstream, framing the project in a way to make it practically palatable.

"Salvaging the Remnants of the Jewish Past in Europe": Collecting in Practice

With Alex Bein's initial trip to Europe in 1949 to survey archives, the Israelis began an ambitious initiative to gather Jewish communal archives with the aim to establish a kind of national archive and a monument to the destroyed Jewish communities of Europe. In the years that followed, they gained the archives of hundreds of Jewish communities through the postwar restitution of looted and heirless property as well as negotiations, sometimes tense, with Jewish communities and the municipal and state archives that held these archives. Meanwhile, young Israeli archivists and scholars surveyed archives in France, Italy, and elsewhere, creating registers of material relating to Jewish history and microfilming their most important findings. On the whole, their work represented a three-pronged effort to collect original archives, index documents related to Jewish history held in "general archives" (that is, state and municipal

collections), and microfilm important material held by Jews abroad.¹³⁵ In the years that followed, they gained tremendous archival holdings: By 1952, the General Archives had received the files of over 350 communities from Germany and Austria as well as numerous Jewish institutions, and in 1957, they boasted of over 800 such archives, reflecting their focus in these years on the archives of central European Jews.¹³⁶ But Israeli archivists also turned elsewhere in Europe, hoping to simultaneously support the maintenance of Jewish archival material, gathering microfilms and perhaps moving towards the eventual transfer of the originals to Jerusalem.

On Bein's first trip abroad, the primary trophies he sought for the General Archives were the files formerly held by the Gesamtarchiv and the archives of the Jews of Vienna.¹³⁷ The Berlin archive held particular significance, and not only because it contained files from hundreds of communities. It was a symbol of the destroyed archives of Europe that Jewish scholars hoped to reconstitute, and as we will see, the Jerusalem archivists explicitly tried to take up its legacy, both as an archive of German Jewry and in its dream of archival totality.¹³⁸ As one will recall, after the Gesamtarchiv's confiscation in 1943, it was divided among a number of Nazi caches, in Kyffhäuser and Schönebeck, and then in Merseburg, which all fell in the Soviet zone.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ The plan was repeatedly emphasized by the archive's leaders. See Cohen, "The Gathering of Jewish Records to Israel;" Cohen, "Sekarim mi-ta'am ha-'arkhiyon ha-merkazi le-toldot ha-'am ha-yehudi be-'arkhiyone 'eropah sikum sheloshim shanot pe'ulah," *Zion* 47, no. 1 (1982): 99–102; and Hadassah Assouline, "Central Archives for Jewish History." On the use of "general archives" to refer to "non-Jewish" archives: Dinaburg, cited n. 1; "Ba-ḥevrah ha-historit ha-yisra'elit," *Zion* 15 (1950): 160–162; Dinaburg to Y. Posman, 7 Mar. 1950, CZA L33/1290.

¹³⁶ "Reshimah 'ara'it shel ha-ḥomer ha-te'udati she-nitkabel me-germanyah," CZA L33/1882.

¹³⁷ Josef Meisl to Alex Bein, 8 Sept. 1949, CZA L33/1439.

¹³⁸ See S. Shunami, "Report of a Mission to Berlin," 21 Jun. 1949, LBI DM 223 14/52, in which the Gesamtarchiv is described as "for years ... the 'Sorgenkind' of historians, librarians and archivists." (3)

¹³⁹ Jacobson also managed to take some files to Theresienstadt, which he brought to England after the war. A part of the Gesamtarchiv also made its way to the Moscow Sonderarchiv. See Scholem, "Din ye-ḥeshbon shel prof Gershom Scholem," Sept. 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.2, 10; Jacobson to Täubler, 12 Dec. 1945, UB Basel NL 76 E1; Joshua Starr, "Confidential Report: Cultural Property in Berlin and the Soviet Zone," 8 Apr. 1949, CAHJP JRSO/NY/ 923a; Jacobson to Selma Stern-Täubler, May 1949, UB Basel NL 120 D/10; Shunami, "Report of a Mission to Berlin," 21 Jun. 1949, LBI DM 223 14/52, Hans Hertz to Heinz Galinski, 7 Nov. 1949, StA Hamburg 622-1/120/914, and

Following reports that fragments of the Berlin archive had been located, Bein opened communication with Julius Meyer, leader of the association of Jewish communities in east Germany. He also reestablished ties with Otto Korfes, a former colleague from his Reichsarchiv days, now director of both the Deutsches Zentralarchiv in Potsdam and the archives division of the GDR's Ministry of the Interior.¹⁴⁰ Korfes and Meyer were both supportive, and inspected and organized the looted files with the intention of returning them to the Berlin Jewish community and the understanding that they would ultimately make their way to Jerusalem. Bein also appealed to the Jews of Vienna, whom he visited shortly before his return to Jerusalem in December 1949 and to whom he subsequently addressed an impassioned plea, imploring the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde to deposit their archives in Jerusalem, opening the way to transfer the majority of their files to the General Archives over the course of twenty years.¹⁴¹

Upon Bein's return to Jerusalem in December 1949, it quickly became apparent that he would need to go back to Europe.¹⁴² Bein repeatedly inquired of the archives with the Viennese Jewish community and Daniel Levin, the Israeli consul in Vienna, but he received no indication of the community's decision.¹⁴³ Similarly, the Berlin Jews received the Gesamtarchiv files in September 1950, but the material proved difficult to extract from east Berlin, in part because some feared archival transfer might be considered a form of reparations.¹⁴⁴ As a result, Bein

"Herkunft und Zusammensetzung des Archivguts," 11 Aug. 1988, BArch Lichterfelde DO4/1348.

¹⁴⁰ The Zentralarchiv, the GDR's state archive, took over the Reichsarchiv's former files. Korfes to Bein, 17 Aug. 1949, CZA L33/1273; Bein to Korfes, 6 Sept. 1949, Korfes to Bein, 11 Oct. 1949, Bein to Korfes, 4 Nov. 1949, Bein to Herlitz, 23 Nov. 1949, CZA L33/1882. On Korfes' time at the Reichsarchiv, see Matthias Hermann, *Das Reichsarchiv*, II:407, 477. On Bein's relation to Korfes, Bein to Herlitz, 21 May 1951, CZA L33/1884, and Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 199, 203, 242.

¹⁴¹ Alex Bein to Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien, 9 Dec. 1949, CZA L33/1439.

¹⁴² Gershom Scholem to Hannah Arendt, 7 Dec. 1950, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/212; "Yeshivat ya'adat ha-'arkhiyon," 20 Feb. 1951, CZA L33/1290.

¹⁴³ IKG Wien to PHES, 17 Feb. 1950, Bein to Daniel Levin, 21 Feb. 1950, Bein to Levin, 25 Jun. 1950, Bein to Levin, 21 Aug. 1950, Bein to Ms. S. Rosenberg-Elbogen, 21 Aug. 1950, CZA L33/1881.

¹⁴⁴ Scholem to Bein, 20 Sept. 1950, CZA L33/1882; also Bein to Herlitz, 2 Apr. 1951, CZA L33/1884, esp. pt. 3.

returned for three months in the spring of 1951, leading to the transfer to Jerusalem of around fifty boxes of Gesamtarchiv material and an agreement for the deposit of the Vienna archives “for the purpose of security.”¹⁴⁵ After Paul Alsberg, an assistant at the Zionist Archives who would later succeed Bein as State Archivist in 1971, traveled to Vienna in 1952 to help catalogue the material in preparation for its transfer, the first shipment of Viennese archives arrived in Jerusalem in August 1952, beginning a process which would only conclude in 1971.¹⁴⁶

These collections marked two of the General Archives’ major early acquisitions, and they were in some ways representative: Bein’s approaches to them gesture at the wider arguments he and other Israeli archivists presented over the years that followed. First and foremost, the Jerusalem archivists argued that Jews in Europe lacked the ability to store their archives and the historical consciousness to study them. Bein claimed he found the files in Vienna in disarray, and in later appeals he stressed that the Jews of Vienna had “neither the interest, nor the means, nor the men, and not the research institutes” to make use of them.¹⁴⁷ The Hebrew University, he claimed, was the only place where the material could be studied: “There, and only there,” he explained, “are there professors and students who are ready, and even more, who are waiting, to conduct scientific research and write histories on the basis of these archival materials.”¹⁴⁸ To this

¹⁴⁵ It was somewhere between 50 and 53 boxes; see Bein, “Reshimah le-tiq 35,” 28 Oct. 1951, CZA L33/1882, Bein, Yisra’el Halpern to Dinaburg, “‘Al hatsalat ha-’arkhiyonim ha-yehudim min ha-golah ve-rikuzam ba-’arets,” 29 Oct 1951, CZA P64/148/1/1. It appears that the Israelis were unaware of the Kyffhäuser cache, which was deposited at the Deutsches Zentralarchiv in Potsdam in 1958 due to physical deterioration, where it remained until the 1990s, when it was given to the Centrum Judaicum in Berlin. (See “Herkunft und Zusammensetzung des Archivguts,” 11 Aug. 1988, BArch Lichterfelde, DO4/1348). On the transfer of the Gesamtarchiv to Jerusalem, see Bein, “Vorläufiger Bericht,” 13 Apr. 1951, Bein to Herlitz, 20 Apr. 1951, CZA L33/1884; Bein to Korfes, 10 May 1951, Bein, 28 Oct. 1951, CZA L33/1882. On Vienna: “Vereinbarung zwischen der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien und der Hebräischen Universität in Jerusalem,” 25 May 1951, CZA L33/1315; “Aktannotiz Vienna,” CZA L33/1884.

¹⁴⁶ Daniel Cohen to M. Simon, 6 May 1964, CZA L33/1315; “Ba-’arkhiyon ha-merkazi le-toldot ha-‘am ha-yehudi,” *Zion* 32, no. 2 (1976): 171–181, 43, no. 2 (1971): 118–123.

¹⁴⁷ Alex Bein to Joseph Rubin-Bittmann, 31 Dec. 1950, CZA L33/1881

¹⁴⁸ Alex Bein to IKG Wien, 9 Dec. 1949, CZA L33/1439, Bein to Jüdische Gemeinde in Hamburg, 23 May 1954, HZA B. 1/7 241, Bein to E. Fritz Bloch, 28 May 1954, CZA L33/1277, and also Daniel Cohen to Dr. G. Brunschvig, 21 Sept. 1959, CZA L33/1310, M. Schwabe, Dinaburg to IKG Wien, 3 Jul. 1951, CZA L33/1315, which stresses the importance

he added the oft-repeated claim that research required Hebrew knowledge, which scholars in Europe lacked.¹⁴⁹ Bein's Reichsarchiv pedigree also proved useful, and far beyond his ties to Korfes. It placed him on the same professional level as his German counterparts, and was the cornerstone of a justification for extracting archives on the grounds that only in Jerusalem were there trained Jewish archivists. Bein's characterization of Jewish archives in postwar Europe in shambles was in sharp contrast with the implication that files in Jerusalem were maintained according to best practices. When Israeli archivists sought to "assist" in the organization of Jewish communal archives in later years, it was thus both a means to create indices of materials and also to demonstrate further Israel's primacy in archival expertise.

The Israelis also made a sentimental case for archival transfer. In his 1949 letter, Bein argued that bringing the Viennese files to Jerusalem would constitute a monument to the historic community. This was a point to which he would return again and again, that archives in Jerusalem were a memorial to the Jews of Europe, who could thereby find "continued life" (*Fortleben*) in the state of Israel.¹⁵⁰ Such claims were imbued with at least two meanings: That historical scholarship would keep their memory alive, and that the Jewish state itself would carry forth their cultural and historical legacy. What is more, Bein was not just an archivist but also a prolific author and historian; he brought to bear his role as biographer of Theodor Herzl and historian of Jewish settlement in Palestine, not to mention his formidable skills as a propagandist, honed as a youth as a leader in the Blau-Weiß.¹⁵¹ When Bein sent Korfes his Herzl biography, it

of the files for scholars at the Hebrew University and also the idea of the archive as a chance for "continued life."

¹⁴⁹ Daniel Cohen to Mark Uveeler, 16 Aug. 1955, CZA L33/1311; Cohen to a.D.W. Landahl, 23 Oct. 1955, CZA L33/1289; Berthold Simonsohn to Hendrick van Dam, 8 Mar. 1957, HZA B. 1/7 241, among others.

¹⁵⁰ Bein to Dr. Bellée, 12 Apr. 1951, CAHJP P28/6/37; Bein to Korfes, 10 May 1951, Dinaburg to Heinz Galinski, 3 Jul. 1951, CZA L33/1882; M. Schwabe, Dinaburg to IKG Wien, 3 July 1951, CZA L33/1315; Bein to Jüdische Gemeinde in Hamburg, 23 May 1954, HZA B. 1/7 241; Bein to Erich von Lehe, 9 Dec. 1957, CAHJP P28/6/38.

¹⁵¹ On his time in the Blau-Weiß and "Führertum," see Bein, *Erinnerungen*, 113–116. On Blau-Weiß, see Walter

was more than a matter of friendliness.¹⁵² He and the other Israeli archivists were selling archival centralization in Jerusalem as part of a total vision of Zionism from Theodore Herzl's dream of a state of the Jews to David Ben-Gurion's "ingathering of the exiles," an effort given most concrete form when Bein and Cohen served as tour guides for German dignitaries and archivists in 1958 and 1959, when a visit to the Jewish Historical General Archives meant traveling to the campus of Yad Vashem at *Har ha-hazikaron* (Mt. Memorial) in west Jerusalem, fortuitously fulfilling the Israelis' claim that their archive was a memorial to the destroyed Jewish communities.¹⁵³

The transfer of the Vienna archives and the Gesamtarchiv represented major victories, and Bein's approach to them represented a wider strategy, but these acquisitions were in some ways unusual. The Gesamtarchiv's extraction from east Germany was particularly curious. Unlike the western Allies, the Soviets established no official framework for property restitution following their own looting "trophy brigades" and on the basis of the Communist repudiation of property ownership itself.¹⁵⁴ And in Vienna, Jewish community leaders provided continued assistance for transfer of the archives over the course of two decades, sending the materials in parts. In most cases of archival transfer, the Israelis received a collection in one piece and through the emergent restitution frameworks, supported by restitution groups who frequently

Gross, "The Zionist Students' Movement," *LBIYB* 4 (1959): 143–164; Ivonne Meyboom, *Erziehung zum Zionismus. Die Jüdische Wanderbund Blau-Weiß als Versuch einer praktischen Umsetzung des Programms der Jüdischen Renaissance* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009); Robert-Jan Adriaansen, *The Rhythm of Eternity: The German Youth Movement and the Experience of the Past* (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 68–74; Chanoch Rinott, "Major Trends in Jewish Youth Movements in Germany," *LBIYB* 19 (1974): 77–95; Chaim Schatzky, "The Jewish Youth Movements as an Historical Phenomenon," *Studies in Jewish Civilization* 3 (1992): 149–165.

¹⁵² Bein to Korfes, 18 Apr. 1950, CZA L33/1882; Friedrich Janz to Bein, 6 Mar. 1958, ISA G-14-12648, where Janz's wife asks for a copy of Bein's biography of Herzl.

¹⁵³ See, for instance, "Programm für den Besuch von Herrn Ministerialdirektor Dr. F. Janz in Israel," 25 Feb. 1958, CZA L33/1272; "Suggested Itinerary for Mr. and Mrs. A. Völker," Apr. 1958, ISA G-14-12648; "Programme for the visit of Ministerialdirektor and Mrs. H. Hermanns," 6 May 1958, CZA L33/1272.

¹⁵⁴ See Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "From Nazi Plunder to Russian Restitution," in Patricia Grimsted, F. J. Hoogewoud, and E. Ketelaar (eds), *Returned from Russia: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues* (Buith Wells, UK: Institute of Art and Law, 2007), 65–80.

applied pressure on both Jews and German officials to get their way. It was for this reason that when Daniel Cohen reflected on the Israelis' successes in 1960, he was quick to thank the restitution agencies, in particular the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO) in the American zone and the Jewish Trust Corporation (JTC) in the British zone, who held rights to the restitution of archives of destroyed Jewish communities.¹⁵⁵

As a result, the Jewish Historical General Archives' success was inextricably tied to the contemporary context of postwar reconstruction, when unprecedented legal and cultural fluidity enabled novel restitution principles whereby much looted property—including archives—was not returned to former owners, but was instead transferred to those who claimed to carry forward their legacy. As many Jewish leaders argued, principles like escheat (by which heirless property reverts to the state) and the repatriation of war booty violated basic moral imperatives: Why should looted goods be provided to the German state, or sent to Eastern Europe where few Jews remained?¹⁵⁶ And the destruction and scattering of Jewish families, communities, and institutions in the Holocaust meant that the great centers of Jewish life in Europe, long founts of Jewish learning and culture, had been cut off. In their absence, Jews in Great Britain, the United States, and Palestine looked to reconstruct Jewish life in their own countries rather than on Europe's blood-stained soil. It was for this reason that Salo Baron's Jewish Cultural Reconstruction suggested in 1946 that it might be best to "redistribute the Jewish cultural treasures in accordance with the new needs created by the new situation of world Jewry."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ "The Transfer of the Hamburg and Königsberg Community Archives," 18 Feb. 1960, HZA B. 1/7 241.

¹⁵⁶ See "Memorandum on Jewish Art and Cultural Objects in Germany," 20 Aug. 1945, CAHJP P3/2059; "Tazkir ha-ya'adah ha-mishpatit sh"ay ha-ya'adah le-hatsalat 'otsrot ha-golah," 26 Feb. 1946, Jerome Michael to General J.H. Hilldring, 5 Jun. 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.1; Max Lowenthal to Lucius D. Clay, 8 Oct. 1946, CZA C7/1284/1; Jerome Michael to J.H. Hilldring, 26 Aug. 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.2, among others.

¹⁵⁷ Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, "Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries," *Jewish Social Studies* 8, no. 1, Supplement (1946), 6.

The military regimes' wide legislative authority allowed for radical solutions to such problems, leading western Allied military governments to establish restitution frameworks empowering Jewish groups to manage looted communal and cultural property, including archives.¹⁵⁸ In the postwar years, groups like the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO) in the American zone, the Jewish Trust Corporation (JTC) in the British Zone, and the Jewish Trust Corporation's "Branche Française" for the French zone were given authority over heirless and unidentifiable goods after an all-too-brief window for survivors to claim looted property. Some Jewish communities in postwar Germany made the case that they should receive former communal property, but JRSO and JTC fought this so-called "Gemeinde problem" and claimed that all former communal property should be considered heirless. The struggle was ultimately resolved by the restitution courts, which decided that destroyed communities could have no heirs as a result of the legal minutiae of the repeal of Nazi law and its subsequent effects, and agreements between Jews in Germany and the restitution groups to absolve communities of debts by renouncing their rights to be successors to prewar Jewish communities.¹⁵⁹

Consequently, archives fell under the umbrella of heirless communal and cultural property put at the disposition of JRSO and JTC. In 1949, JRSO and its cultural arm Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR) decided that Israeli institutions—first and foremost, but not

¹⁵⁸ On this process, see: Jürgen Lillteicher, *Raub, Recht und Restitution. Die Rückerstattung jüdischen Eigentums in der frühen Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), 357–398; Ayaka Takei, "The Jewish People as the Heir: The Jewish Successor Organizations (JRSO, JTC, French Branch) and the Postwar Jewish Communities in Germany" (Ph.D. dissertation, Waseda University, Tokyo, 2004), 67–88.

¹⁵⁹ The particular issue at hand was whether Nazi laws had been repealed at the end of the war 'ex nunc' (from now on) or 'ex tunc' (from the outset). If the laws were repealed 'ex nunc,' as it was accepted, then Nazi actions had been legal under the Hitler regime but not afterwards, and their practical effects could not be undone: the Jewish communities' dissolution through forcible incorporation into the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland in 1939 meant that they had no heirs. On the repeal of Nazi laws, see Michael Stolleis, *The Law Under the Swastika* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 1–22, 167–184; Karl Loewenstein, "Law and the Legislative Process in Occupied Germany: I," *The Yale Law Journal* 57, no. 5 (March 1948): 724–760, esp. 730–735. On the "Gemeinde problem," see Takei, "The 'Gemeinde Problem': The Jewish Restitution Successor Organization and the Postwar Jewish Communities in Germany, 1947–1954," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 16, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 266–288.

exclusively, the National Library—would receive books and other cultural objects in order to “complete” their collections. The National Library in Jerusalem would thereby be entitled to receive “first priority in regard to single copies of titles which it lacks,” and after that books would be distributed to other communities in Europe and outside it.¹⁶⁰ In March 1949 JCR arrived at a similar policy for art objects, with priority going to the Bezalel art museum in Jerusalem (since 1965 the Israel Museum) for “styles now lacking.” Other ceremonial objects would be divided on the general scheme of 40 percent to Israel, and the remainder allocated to synagogues elsewhere.¹⁶¹ This percentage scheme was similarly applied to books; in September 1950, Hannah Arendt—then serving as JCR’s executive secretary—noted that from the beginning their general policy was that 40 percent of books would make their way to Israel/Palestine, 40 percent to the United States, and 20 percent to the rest of the world.¹⁶²

When JCR turned its attention in 1949 to the archives of Bavarian Jewish communities, the first cache of such materials at their disposal, the initial impulse was to divvy them up along the same lines, allocating original archives more or less equitably: If the Israelis gained the Gesamtarchiv, then the Bavarian archives should go to New York. JCR instead settled on a policy of archival centralization, leading to the gathering of these archives at the Jewish Historical General Archives, as the group’s leaders felt that archives presented a different class of cultural property to which the same rules could not apply.¹⁶³ The decision on Hebrew University’s priority for books had been based on the possibility of multiple extant copies;

¹⁶⁰ Conditions to obtain material from the JCR, 1949, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/267.

¹⁶¹ JCR Resolution, Adopted at Board of Directors Meeting, 14 Mar. 1949, LBI DM 223 13/3; it was ratified 8 Apr. 1949, see: “Minutes, Meeting of the Executive Committee of JRSO,” CAHJP JRSO/NY/896a.

¹⁶² Arendt to Eli Rock, 1 Sept. 1950, CAHJP JTC/Lon/575; as the group began to wind down in 1950, they applied the policy by sending books unsorted (see Arendt to Board of Directors, 29 Aug. 1950, CAHJP JRSO/NY/923c).

¹⁶³ Minutes of Special Meeting of the Advisory Committee, 27 Mar. 1950, NLI ARC 288/310; Arendt to Scholem, 13 Apr. 1950, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/109.

archives could perhaps be duplicated and distributed, as Hannah Arendt and Salo Baron suggested, but originals were unique.¹⁶⁴ Other cultural objects could be put to use nearly anywhere, but archives represented a specialized good requiring archival and historical expertise. JCR's policy, later followed by JTC in the British zone and the JTC's "Branche Française," was that archives would be most useful in a centralized location—either in the United States or Jerusalem—in contrast to their broader policy of allocating books on a basis of equity.

As a result, JCR moved towards centralization. In November 1950, I. Edward Kiev of Hebrew Union College suggested that the American Jewish Archives should receive restitutable archives; in December of that year JCR's Sub-Committee on Archival Material approved that solution.¹⁶⁵ But two weeks later, the Board of Directors decided to send the archives to Jerusalem instead. They asked that "microfilm copies of the more important documents" be provided for scholars in Cincinnati, but felt that archives would be better put to use in Jerusalem as "future generations of scholars are much more likely to gather around the Hebrew University than the United States."¹⁶⁶ In the British Zone, the Jewish Trust Corporation went through a similar process, and in November 1951 its Advisory Council on Jewish Cultural and Religious Objects decided that material should go to Jerusalem.¹⁶⁷ Consequently, restitution groups facilitated the transfer of communal archives to Israel, primarily to the Jewish Historical General Archives.

¹⁶⁴ Eli Rock to Benjamin Ferencz, 12 April 1949, CAHJP JRSO/NY/923a. Arendt also attempted to get microfilms of the Worms archives, which were deposited in the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati: Arendt to Friedrich Illert, 27 September 1950, Arendt to Illert, 12 February 1951, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 72.

¹⁶⁵ Minutes of Special Meeting of the Board of Directors, 9 Oct. 1950, Memorandum to the Members of the Board of Directors, 28 Nov. 1950, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/328; Motion Passed by Sub-Committee on Archival Material, 6 Dec. 1950, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/216.

¹⁶⁶ Minutes of Special Meeting of the Board of Directors, 21 December 1950, CAHJP JRSO/NY/923c; Arendt wrote to Scholem that it was "*strongly* requested," Arendt to Scholem, 27 December 1950, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/218.

¹⁶⁷ Minutes of the First Meeting of the Advisory Council on Jewish Cultural and Religious Objects, in the British Zone of Germany, 14 Nov. 1951, CAHJP JTC/Lon/575; also see "Rundschreiben Nr. 143, Auszug aus dem Protokoll der Executive der JTC," 20 Nov. 1952, HZA B. 1/7 232, which reaffirmed the 1951 decision and asked the German Jewish communities to determine which files they required for daily use and which they were prepared to ship to Jerusalem.

Backed by the restitution groups, Alex Bein and Paul Alsberg traveled sporadically to Europe in the early 1950s in order to search for archives and shepherd their transfer. The short trips were dense and intense, requiring work on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays; Bein drafted his reports to Jerusalem in the middle of the night, detailing the exhausting, lonely work.¹⁶⁸ Bein was particularly interested in the archives of Hamburg, and toured Bavaria in search of community archives, leading to an agreement in October 1952 for the transfer of the Bavarian archives from before 1870 to Jerusalem.¹⁶⁹ By 1954, someone was constantly in Europe. The Israelis' increased presence stemmed, first, from their expanded region of activity. In the first years, the focus had been Germany, but as time went on, they increasingly turned elsewhere. For instance, in April 1954, Daniel Cohen, then an assistant at the General Archives, and Daniel Carpi, a Hebrew University student of Italian origin, were dispatched to Rome. There, they tried to convince the Italian Jews of the necessity to centralize their archives and, if possible, send them to Jerusalem for safekeeping.¹⁷⁰ A second reason for increased archival travel was that the struggle over the Jewish communal archives of Hamburg and Worms proved especially difficult, cases to which we will return in more depth in chapter six. The Israelis' early successes were supported by the restitution groups, and the Jewish communities in Germany had been in a weak position to make claims on their archives, just as on other communal and cultural property.¹⁷¹ Now, Jews in Germany became increasingly assertive and the German government less acquiescent, requiring more hands-on involvement and face-to-face lobbying. Finally, the

¹⁶⁸ See Bein to Herlitz, 9 Oct. 1949, 15 Oct. 1949 (written at 1am), 4 Nov. 1949 (midnight), CZA L33/1439; Bein to Herlitz, 23 Nov. 1949 (at airport), 11 May 1951, CZA L33/1882; Bein to Herlitz, 2 May 1951, CZA L33/1884.

¹⁶⁹ Bein, "Vorläufiger Bericht," 13 Apr. 1951, Bein to Herlitz, 20 Apr. 1951, 12 May 1951, CZA L33/1884; Saul Kagan to Moses Leavitt, Maurice Boukstein, 1 Oct. 1952, CAHJP JRSO/NY/330a. Also see the introductions to CAHJP finding aids RI-1 *Archiv der israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Regensburg*, and RI-4 *Akten und Archivalien der Gemeinden Mittelfrankens (Nürnberg-Fürth u. Umgebung)*, which detail the negotiations for the Bavarian archives.

¹⁷⁰ Dr. E. Urbach to Dr. A. Toaf, 17 Jan. 1954, CAHJP P28/6/37; Daniel Cohen, 2 May 1954, CAHJP P127/39.

¹⁷¹ See Takei, "The 'Gemeinde Problem.'"

Israelis began participating in the wider world of the archive profession in Europe. From the start, Bein's travels had been directed at both collecting archives and keeping abreast of new techniques and technologies.¹⁷² In one notable instance, Bein requested funds to secure a modern microfilm machine which was far beyond the Zionist Archives' budget.¹⁷³ What is more, Bein aimed to develop ties with state archivists across Europe. For this reason, Bein, Carpi, Cohen, along with Chaim Szmeruk, another General Archives archivist, participated in an international conference of archivists in Florence in October 1956, where they presented the project of the "ingathering of the exiles of the past," making the case that the Jerusalem archives were a secure place to keep the files of the European Jews, and made professional connections, particularly with archivists in France and the Soviet bloc where they had not yet been active.¹⁷⁴

Beyond the restitution frameworks, then, the Israelis developed a wider strategy to gather archives. First, they dispatched emissaries with personal ties to the target locations. Besides Bein's experience as a German state archivist, he also had grown up in southern Germany, an area where he was particularly active in the early 1950s. Daniel Cohen, a native of Hamburg, was instrumental in the extended negotiations for the Jewish archives of that city. Carpi, who immigrated to Palestine from Italy in 1945 and later would head the Department of Jewish History at Tel Aviv University, was an ideal ambassador to the Italian archives.¹⁷⁵ And to search for archives in Alsace and Lorraine, they sent Paul Klein (who went by the Hebraicized name Moche Catan after his migration to Israel in 1949), himself from Strasbourg.¹⁷⁶ They also sought

¹⁷² Bein, "Tazkir bi-devar nesi'ah le-ḥuts la-'arets mi-ṭa'am ha-'arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni," 10 Jun. 1949, CZA L33/1439.

¹⁷³ Alex Bein to Georg Herlitz, 20 Apr. 1951, CZA L33/1884.

¹⁷⁴ Chaim Szmeruk to Yisra'el Halpern, 1 Oct. 1956, CAHJP P28/6/38, Daniel Cohen, 1 Oct. 1956, CAHJP P28/6/37.

¹⁷⁵ On Carpi, see Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, "Daniel Carpi: Milano, 3 Agosto 1926–Tel Aviv, 3 Dicembre 2005," *Materia giudaica* 10, no. 2 (2005): 221–232; *Sefer yovel le-dani'el ḳa'rpi*, ed. Anita Shapira (Tel Aviv, 1996), 9–12.

¹⁷⁶ On Klein, see Lisa Leff, *The Archive Thief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 159. Also see materials in L33/1307; Moche Catan, "Din ve-ḥeshbon," 3 Apr. 1959, CAHJP P28/6/39.

to recruit local Jews in the aim of organizing archives in Europe. These efforts served two purposes; the Israelis were genuinely interested in raising the level of Jewish archives abroad, but they also hoped that their assistance might pave the way for eventual transfer to Jerusalem, or at least the creation of a detailed catalog. When Ephraim Urbach, a professor at Hebrew University, first reached out to the Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche Italiane about their archives in 1954, the Italians were not interested in sending their files to Jerusalem.¹⁷⁷ Instead, they faced the problem that communal archives were scattered throughout the country, and they were under threat of government confiscation from a 1940 law requiring that historical files be managed professionally.¹⁷⁸ After the Israelis convinced Raffaele Cantoni, the group's president from 1946 to 1954, that they did not plan to "kidnap" the files, the General Archives sent Cohen and Carpi to Italy in 1954 and again in 1956 to assist in the archives' centralization in Rome.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the Israelis still held forth hope that they could gain the originals for Jerusalem.¹⁸⁰ In the meantime, the Israelis would keep a copy of the registers they produced and microfilm the most important materials. Similarly, in 1957 the Israelis commissioned Georges Weill, then an archivist in Strasbourg, to survey the archives in Alsace and Lorraine for materials in Jewish interest.¹⁸¹ As in Italy, Bein expressed interest in assisting in the organization of the files of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, then underway in advance of the Paris organization's centennial to be celebrated in 1960. They hoped that the Alliance might permit the Jerusalem archive to

¹⁷⁷ Dr. E. Urbach to Dr. A. Toaf, 17 Jan. 1954, CAHJP P28/6/37; Giorgio Zevi to Jewish Historical Society of Israel, 30 Apr. 1954, CAHJP P127/39; E.E. Urbach to Giorgio Zevi, 18 May 1954, CZA L33/1309.

¹⁷⁸ On the legal issues, see Alex Bein to Sergio Piperno, 3 Oct. 1956, CZA L33/1309.

¹⁷⁹ Daniel Cohen, "Du"ḥ 'al nesiy'ati le-'eropah ba-ḳayits u-ba-stay 1954," 20 Jan. 1955, CZA L33/1275.

¹⁸⁰ Cohen, "Du"ḥ mugash le-ḥevrah ha-hiṣtorit ha-yisraelit," 10 Nov. 1954, CZA L33/1309; Cohen, "Du"ḥ 'al nesiy'ati le-'eropah ba-ḳayits u-ba-stay 1954," 20 Jan. 1955, CZA L33/1275; Daniel Cohen, Chayim Szmeruk, Daniel Carpi, Report, 7 Oct. 1956, Cohen, "Zikhron-devarim," 20 Jan. 1957, CAHJP P28/6/37, among others.

¹⁸¹ Daniel Cohen to Georges Weill, 11 Dec. 1957, CZA L33/1307; Weill to Cohen, 10 Feb. 1958, CAHJP P28/6/39.

microfilm their files for “security,” leading to an agreement to send some copies.¹⁸²

The Israeli archivists clearly preferred historical archives in the original, and in this they met with some success, especially with the looted archives they gained from restitution groups. Their efforts outside Germany, though, demonstrate a certain pragmatism with an openness to microfilming. Alex Bein in particular pined over microfilm, which he called “revolutionary” in one 1954 presentation dedicated to the technology.¹⁸³ He argued that microfilming would allow for increased archival centralization; he hoped that the need for security copies would bring microfilms of important Diaspora archives to Jerusalem, and he also advocated that archives in Israel be microfilmed in light of Israel’s military situation.¹⁸⁴ As he explained in 1961: “The best method has been found to be, for the time being, the microfilming of the material and the storage [of archives] ... somewhere removed from the original.”¹⁸⁵ On the whole, then, the Jerusalem archivists preferred originals but microfilming was also a major component of their collecting project. When they aided Jewish groups in Italy, Yugoslavia, Austria, and elsewhere to maintain their files, it was a part of a broader survey of historical material in Jewish communal files and state archives with the aim to find (and copy) whatever might be of use to scholars in Jerusalem. By the 1980s, Hadassah Assouline reported that they had gained “several million frames” of microfilm, and in the 1990s, when Russian archives opened to researchers, the Jerusalem archive

¹⁸² “Célébration du Centenaire de l’A.I.U.,” 30 Jan. 1957, AIU PV3; Bein, “‘Arkhiyon ky”h u-yehesenu ’elav,” 17 Nov. 1957, ISA G-14-12648; Bein to Eugene Weill, 11 Jul. 1958, Yisra’el Halpern to Weill, 29 Mar. 1959, Weill to Halpern, 4 Jun. 1959, Halpern to Weill, 17 Jul. 1959, CZA L33/1307.

¹⁸³ Alex Bein, “The Use of Microfilms in Archives and in Historiography,” 1954, CZA P64/163c. Generally, Bein was interested in using new technology for archival purposes; see “Kenes le-tei’ud ba’al-peh,” 9 Mar. 1966, CAHJP IHS/71, where Bein claimed that he was one of the first people in the state of Israel to acquire a cassette recorder.

¹⁸⁴ Alex Bein, “Kibbutz galuyot le-ginze ha-’umah,” *Be’erem*, Apr.–May 1950, 87–90; Bein, “‘Al ’irgun ha-‘avodah le-ma’an rikuz ha-me’orot ha-’arkhiyonim le-toldot ha-yehudim be-’arkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot ha-yehudim,” 4 Jan. 1953; Alex Bein, “On Collecting and Microfilming the Sources for the History of the Jews. Tentative Proposals for Work to be Done During the Next Years,” 20 Jan. 1955, CZA P64/163/b; Bein, “Ha-shimush be-mikrofilm be-’arkhiyonim u-be-historiografyah,” May 1952, CZA A198/9.

¹⁸⁵ Bein, “Matsav ha-’arkhiyonim ha-yehudiim ba-tefutsot u-ba-’arets,” 27 Jul. 1961, CZA P64/163a.

was quick to dispatch researchers to survey archives there and microfilm whatever they could.¹⁸⁶

Bein had called for the “ingathering of the exiles” of archives in December 1949. Almost a decade later to the day, on December 18, 1959, the Jewish Trust Corporation and the state of Hamburg finalized an agreement for the transfer of the archives of the Jewish communities of Hamburg, Altona, and Wandsbek to Jerusalem. When Daniel Cohen triumphantly announced the conclusion of the “ingathering of the exiles of the past” in West Germany, he did so with the knowledge that he and his colleagues had gathered a collection of historical archives of tremendous scale that would serve as the basis for a major center of Jewish historical scholarship. It was the first decade of an effort, through the survey of state archives around the world and microfilming or otherwise registering materials of historical interest, to create a comprehensive collection of Jewish history under the banner of the “ingathering of the exiles of the past.” For this reason, one could say that although Bein, Cohen, and others had collected the files of the past, they had instead forged something radically innovative: The process of restitution facilitated not the return of property to prewar owners but to new groups; in the aftermath of unimaginable destruction, it would clearly be impossible to return to the *status quo ante bellum*. The gathering of archives to Jerusalem constructed a novel structure out of materials once scattered across Europe in various communal archives and municipal and state repositories, for the first time brought together. The archives of the Jews had become a Jewish archive, one for which the Jerusalem archivists had grand plans, envisioning it as a Jewish national archive, even a total archive of Jewish history.

The Jewish Historical General Archives as a National Archive

In November 1954, the Court of Restitution Appeals in Nuremberg ruled that the Jewish

¹⁸⁶ Assouline, “Central Archives for Jewish History,” side 1, 17:30; Benjamin Lukin, “The Creation of a Documentary Collection on the History of Russian Jewry at the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People,” in *Judaica in the Slavic Realm, Slavica in the Judaic Realm*, ed. Zachary Baker (New York: Haworth Information Press, 2003), 17–36.

community in Augsburg did not constitute a legal successor to the prewar Jewish community, and that the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization was the heir to its communal property; shortly thereafter, JRSO and the Augsburg Jews ironed out an agreement to divide this property. Among other stipulations, it stated: “All archives until the year 1870... will be provided to JRSO for the purpose of transfer to the National Archives in Jerusalem.”¹⁸⁷ The Augsburg accord echoed a number of similar agreements which prescribed the transfer of archives to the “Jewish national archive” in Jerusalem.¹⁸⁸ At this time, Israeli archivists, restitution leaders, and German figures draped the Jewish Historical General Archives in national language—in one instance, Bein called it the “national archive of the state of Israel”—despite the fact that the archive remained a private initiative with no official ties of any kind to the state.¹⁸⁹ It was more than window-dressing: The Jerusalem archivists earnestly understood their General Archives, and archive-making more generally, to be in service of scholarship and the national project. Scholars and archivists’ efforts to cultivate an archival landscape in Palestine and to gather archival material from the Diaspora, then, fell along a wide spectrum of what a “national archive” might look like and its place within the geography of Jewish peoplehood, the state of Israel, and Jerusalem itself.

In some ways, none of this should be surprising to the astute student of history: Archives

¹⁸⁷ “Vereinbarung zwischen JRSO und der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Augsburg,” 14 Mar. 1955, “Summary of Proposed Agreement with Augsburg Jewish Community,” 18 May 1955, CAHJP JRSO/NY/602b.

¹⁸⁸ “Summary, Agreement Between Munich Gemeinde and JRSO,” 3 Oct. 1952, LBI DM 223 16/37; “Resolution (betr. Archive),” 14 Jun. 1954, CAHJP P28/6/37; Maurice Weinberg to Alex Bein, 14 Jun. 1954, CZA L33/1277.

¹⁸⁹ Bein to Dr. Grieser, 19 Dec. 1956, CZA L33/1268; Daniel Cohen to Georges Weill, 11 Dec. 1957, CZA L33/1307; Cohen, “Aide mémoire über den Stand der Angelegenheit der Archive der Jüdischen Gemeinde Hamburg,” 9 Jul. 1959, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2; Yisra’el Halpern to Eugene Weill, 29 Mar. 1959, CZA L33/1307; “Archiv der Königsberger Synagogengemeinde,” 22 Jan. 1957, HZA B. 1/7 241. Perhaps, as when some spoke of depositing files at the Hebrew University, with which the archive was not affiliated either, it was an attempt to gain authority, as in a letter of introduction claiming Bein represented the “Jewish Historical General Archives at the Hebrew University,” or it was utilitarian, as when Gershom Scholem wrote that they should send the Gesamtarchiv files to the “harmless” address of the Hebrew University to expedite its extraction before giving it to the General Archives. See: “Vollmacht,” 15 Mar. 1951, CZA L33/1884; Gershom Scholem to Bein, 20 Sept. 1950, CZA L33/1882. It may also have been a measure of confusion, as when Bein was described as the General Archives’ leader (Saul Kagan to Henri Meyerowitz, 4 Jan. 1955, CAHJP JRSO/NY/632).

have long been closely tied to state power, from medieval *trésors des chartes* to modern-day bureaucracy, and as tools for the cultivation of national historical narratives.¹⁹⁰ Collecting dispersed historical materials and thereby creating a set of “national” sources was one means to project nationalist aspirations, as did nineteenth-century monumental projects like the *Monumenta germaniae historica*, *Regesta diplomatica historiae danicae*, and others.¹⁹¹ And the history of Jewish nationalism is strewn with diverse visions of a Jewish national home and of the place of Palestine within the Jewish people on the whole. At its base, then, the Jewish Historical General Archives, and archives in Palestine more generally, were similarly bound up in this tradition of nation- and state-building just as much with the complex negotiation of the aims of nationalism itself. As we have seen, Jews had long hoped to create “national archives” in Palestine, the earliest visions of which were as an archive of nationalism, to document the national movement and serve as a part of the yishuv’s administrative apparatus: If Dinaburg put forward a vaguely-phrased vision, Bein and Herlitz clearly intended the Central Zionist Archives to serve as a para-state institution, alongside the *Ya’ad Le’umi* and the Jewish militias, components of a developing infrastructure expected to morph ultimately into the apparatus of state. As early as 1920, Herlitz wrote of his *Archiv der Zionistischen Organisation* as “the foundation of a future central archive of the new Jewish commonwealth in Palestine,” and when Alex Bein called for an archive of the yishuv, he stressed its administrative utility.¹⁹² In July

¹⁹⁰ See, among others, Robert-Henri Bautier, “La phase cruciale de l’histoire des archives: la constitution des dépôts d’archives et la naissance de l’archivistique,” *Archivum* 18 (1968): 129–149; Richard Harvey Brown, Beth Davis-Brown, “The Making of Memory: The Politics of Archives, Libraries and Museums in the Construction of National Consciousness,” *History of the Human Sciences* 11, no. 17 (1998): 17–32; Stefan Berger, “The Role of National Archives in Constructing National Master Narratives in Europe,” *Archival Science* 13, no. 1 (2013): 1–22.

¹⁹¹ Daniela Saxer, “Monumental Undertakings: Source Publications for the Nation,” in *Setting the Standards*, ed. Ilaria Porciani, et al (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 47–69

¹⁹² Herlitz to Alfred Klee, 12 Jul. 1920, CZA L33/2; Bein, “Hatsa’ah bi-devar haqirat ha-matsav ha-’arkhiyoni shel ha-yishuv ha-’ivri be-”y,” 26 Oct. 1934, CAHJP IHS/17a; Bein, “Denkschrift über die Schaffung eines Archiv des Jüdischen Jischuw,” CZA P64/148/4.

1948, Bein and Herlitz again argued that their archive should be integrated into the newly-founded state as a repository both for papers of state and the historical files of the Mandate administration. They also stressed that the archive could play an important role in the development of Jerusalem as a “cultural center for the people of Israel.”¹⁹³

The same impulse inspired the gathering of Diaspora archives at the Jewish Historical General Archives. At the February 1947 opening of the General Archives, Dinaburg discussed the archive as part of the yishuv’s emerging “place... in the life of the [Jewish] people,” emphasizing the ties between constructing archives and developing the yishuv as a cultural and political epicenter of the Jewish world.¹⁹⁴ Moreover, the archive’s leaders situated the project within a broader reconfiguration of Jewish life resulting from the return of Jews to their historic homeland. As Cohen explained in a 1959 memorandum: “We wish to bear witness to our past in the lands of the Diaspora and establish in Jerusalem a national archives, which for other peoples have grown organically in the course of centuries through the normal course of history.”¹⁹⁵ Clearly, the aim was to serve as a corrective to the lack of Jewish archives in the absence of a state. Ezechiel Zivier had called for a German-Jewish archive on the basis of a type of archival universalism, pronouncing in 1903 that “all great peoples have an archive of their antiquities;” so too did Cohen declare that a national archive was the hallmark of normative historical development, which must be corrected as part of the project of Jewish national revival in Palestine.¹⁹⁶ Archives in Jerusalem, then, were to be a marker of the Jews’ historical agency; in the eyes of these Jerusalem archivists, gathering historical files and thereby reconstituting an archive of the nation would

¹⁹³ Bein, Herlitz, “Tazkir ‘al ma’amado shel ha-’arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni ha-merkazi be-mivneh he-’hadash shel mosadotenu ha-le’umiim,” 22 Jul. 1948, CZA L33/1859.

¹⁹⁴ Ben Zion Dinaburg, “Ha-’arkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot yisra’el, ne’um le-petihah ha-’arkhiyon, 30.01.1947,” in *Ketavim hadashim ye-gam yeshanim*, 281–284.

¹⁹⁵ Daniel Cohen, “Aide mémoire,” 9 Jul. 1959, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. IV.

¹⁹⁶ “Allgemeines Archiv der deutschen Juden,” *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Dec. 1903, 8.

serve as a fundamental and necessary corrective to the Jews' historical existence in the Diaspora.

This vision was tied to Alex Bein's conception of the history of Jewish archives at large and the redemptive potential of archives: In 1949, Bein insisted that that archives in the Diaspora were in sad shape, for which reason they must come to Jerusalem.¹⁹⁷ This view was rooted in both the contemporary situation of Jewish archives looted and scattered in the Second World War and a wider schemata of Jewish archives. Bein repeatedly explained that Jews in the Diaspora may have retained records—they were the “people of the book,” after all, as he noted; but, he claimed, they had historically not maintained archives.¹⁹⁸ In and of itself, the notion was not especially novel: Jewish scholars and archivists of all political and ideological stripes long lamented what they perceived as archival neglect.¹⁹⁹ Bein followed this tradition, drawing on tropes and images popular among those who liked to complain of files ill-kept in basements and cellars.²⁰⁰ Bein's distinctive approach was to frame his lachrymose history of Jewish archives within the conceptual cycle of the Jews' “exile from history” and subsequent return to it through the Jewish national revival in Palestine. Consequently, Bein constructed a framework for understanding Jewish archives whereby archival institutions in Palestine reflected a new sense of historical consciousness activated by the Jews' “return” to historical agency in Palestine, while Jews in the Diaspora by and large let archives lie fallow.²⁰¹

Many scholars have identified a strand of Zionist historiography tied to the conception

¹⁹⁷ Bein, “Din ve-ḥeshbon mi-nesi'ati le-'eropah,” 19 Dec. 1949, Report, 5 Jan. 1950, CZA L33/1439.

¹⁹⁸ Bein, “Me'arekhet ha-'arkhiyonim ba-'arets ke-basis le-mehkar,” 12 Mar. 1957, HZA B. 1/7 241, “Matsav ha-'arkhiyonim ha-yehudiim ba-tefutsot u-ba-'arets,” 27 Jul. 1961, CZA P64/163a, etc.

¹⁹⁹ See ch. 1, pp. 87–90.

²⁰⁰ Alex Bein, “Kibbutz galuyot le-ginze ha-'umah,” Bein, “Kibbutz Galujoth auch für jüdische Archive,” “Herzl Week: Need for Renewed Zionist Activity,” 4 Nov. 1949, CZA L33/1449; Daniel Cohen, “The Gathering of Jewish Records to Israel,” 5 Aug. 1969, AJA MS-687 18/20; also see Cohen, “Jüdisches Archivwesen: Ziele, Aufgaben und Probleme des Zentralarchivs für die Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes in Jerusalem,” CAHJP P202.

²⁰¹ See esp. Bein, “Matsav ha-'arkhiyonim ha-yehudiim ba-tefutsot u-ba-'arets,” 27 Jul. 1961, CZA P64/163a, where he associates the first Jewish archives with the nineteenth-century Jewish settlements in Palestine.

that when the Jews lost their ancient commonwealth in Palestine they were removed from a position of agency within history, and that the return of the Jews to their historic homeland marked the return of the Jews to the stage of history.²⁰² Bein's approach was clearly a part of this discourse, and its novelty was highlighted when Bein participated in a symposium on the topic of "Archives as Historical Sources" at the first meeting of the Israel Archives Association of March 1957. Yisra'el Halpern opened the discussion, arguing as had Markus Brann and David Kaufmann a half-century before, that the Jews lacked archival material as a direct result of their historic condition in the Diaspora, following from repeated expulsions and the wandering from place to place which had not given Jews the time to collect their archives.²⁰³ When it was Bein's turn to speak, he identified the supposed lack of archives not with Jews' historic status but with their intellectual and spiritual situation, resulting from a lack of historical (and national) consciousness coupled with the lack of a state. An archival gap, then, seemed to follow from an absence of Jewish political bodies, an assessment Bein validated when he identified the first Jewish archives in modern times with the initiation of Jewish settlement in Palestine.²⁰⁴ Instead of the archives as a victim of the persecution of the Jews, Bein claimed that Jews did not keep sufficient historical archives because they lacked historical consciousness in the period of their exile.

Bein extended this historical analysis of the development of Jewish archives to the present. Just as, in his view, Jews had historically lacked a sense of history, and thus did not keep

²⁰² See Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile, History, and the Nationalization of Jewish Memory: Some Reflections on the Zionist Notion of History and Return," *Journal of Levantine Studies* 3, no. 2 (Winter 2013): 37–70; David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3–4.

²⁰³ Yisra'el Halpern, "Jewish Historical Research and Archives," 12 Mar. 1957, HZA B. 1/7 Nr. 241; cf. Brann, "Heinrich Graetz," *MGWJ*, 3rd ser., 25 (1917): 321–346; Kaufmann, "H. Graetz," *GS* 1, 272–282. Also see Daniel Cohen, "Jewish Records from Germany in the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem," *LBIYB* 1 (1956): 331–345, who made the same causal claim when he wrote that Jews' lacked archives "because the repeated expulsions prevented the accumulation of such material."

²⁰⁴ See Bein, "Matsav ha-'arkhiyonim ha-yehudiim ba-tefutsot u-ba-'arets," 27 Jul. 1961, CZA P64/163a.

archives, in the present day it was only in the land of Israel where Jews had expressly developed this historical consciousness given form in the archives. Bein's argument centered around his insistence that the archives of the Jewish past were in danger of destruction so long as they were kept in the Diaspora. The situation, as he explained after he returned from Europe in 1949, was "generally bad," and many of the archives were in danger of being destroyed.²⁰⁵ He would make such claims repeatedly, arguing that Jewish archives were in both physical and moral danger. In an article published in the *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland* in October 1950, Bein claimed that in the field of Jewish studies, "scientific archives"—i.e., archives managed according to the latest professional best practices—did not exist outside of the state of Israel.²⁰⁶ Bein made similar claims in 1957, addressing the Israel Archives Association, and again at the Third World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem in June 1961, qualifying it only with the example of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati.²⁰⁷ The lack of archives, it seemed to him, was symptomatic of a general disinterest in the past.²⁰⁸ Addressing the general assembly of the Historical Society of Israel in 1950, Bein claimed that "in Europe, where there is no belief in the future, there is also no real connection to the past, especially among the Jews."²⁰⁹ Consequently, we can perceive how Bein used his expertise in archival management to articulate a broader message of Israel's central place in the Jewish world as a leader willing to assist Jewish communities in the management of their archives, at the same time that he argued that Jews lacked archives in the Diaspora because they had been "exiled" from history.

²⁰⁵ Bein, "Din ye-ḥeshbon mi-nesi'ati le-'eropah," 19 Dec. 1949, CZA L33/1439.

²⁰⁶ Bein, "Kibbutz Galujoth auch für jüdische Archive."

²⁰⁷ Bein, "Me'arekhet ha-'arkhiyonim ba-'arets ke-basis le-mehqar," 12 Mar. 1957, HZA B. 1/7, 241; Bein, "Matsav ha-'arkhiyonim ha-yehudim," 27 Jul. 1961, CZA P64/163a; also Bein's notes, 25 Jan. 1962, ISA G-18-12648.

²⁰⁸ See "Historical Documents Acquired by Zionist Archives," 20 Jan. 1950, CZA L33/1449.

²⁰⁹ "Ha-'asifah ha-kelalit ha-shenatit shel ha-ḥevrah," 2 Feb. 1950, CAHJP IHS/9.

What is more, bringing archives to Jerusalem symbolized the state of Israel as a successor to European Jewry more broadly.²¹⁰ The Western Allies' restitution policies, as we have seen, sanctioned restitution agencies representing the Jewish people at large, not the state of Israel, as the successors of destroyed communities, and the Jerusalem archivists recognized that they received restitutable archives out of their benevolence, not by inherent right. However, some maintained a notion of Israel's special status as a successor to European Jewry. During the 1956 negotiations over the Worms archives, Henri Meyrowitz of the Jewish Trust Corporation's Branche Française remarked that if the group were to be dissolved, the state of Israel would certainly be its successor.²¹¹ In 1960, Daniel Cohen also expressed the notion that the General Archives itself was the "natural heir" to the destroyed communities, echoing Bein's words before the Israel Archives Association in 1957 when he connected gathering archives to "the principle that the successor of the communities destroyed in the Holocaust is the state of Israel, and in the state of Israel—the Jewish Historical General Archives."²¹² At the same time, the archives leveraged the trappings of state to enshrine the transfer of archives, as in one instance when Bein organized a ceremony for the historical files of Worms in October 1957 at Israel's State Archives instead of at the Jewish Historical General Archives where they were to be stored.²¹³

The leaders of the Zionist Archives and the General Archives sought to tie the archives to the Jewish state and also to mark Israel's Jewishness through gathering archives to symbolize its

²¹⁰ See Jason Lustig, "Who Are to be the Successors of European Jewry? The Restitution of German Jewish Communal and Cultural Property," *Journal of Contemporary History*, doi:10.1177/0022009416647116.

²¹¹ Alex Bein, "Vorläufiger Bericht über unsere Tätigkeit zur Überführung des Archivs, der Handschriften etc. der Jüdischen Gemeinde, Worms," 3 Sept. 1956, ISA HZ-19-303. It is from this perspective interesting that in the 1970s the Jewish Historical General Archives (by this time known as the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People) received the extensive files of JRSO and JTC's numerous branches.

²¹² "The Jewish Historical General Archives," 18 Feb. 1960, HZA B. 1/7 241; Bein, "Me'arekhet ha-'arkhiyonim ba-'arets ke-basis le-meḥkar," 12 Mar. 1957, HZA B. 1/7, 241.

²¹³ See Bein, 23 Oct. 1957, and "Be-shem ha-'arkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot yisra'el," speech at ceremony at Israel State Archives, 29 Oct. 1957, CAHJP P28/6/38; "Teḳes ha'avarat 'atikot yorms," 29 Oct. 1957, CZA L33/1272.

status as a successor to the Jewish communities of Europe. Before the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, archives represented a part of the infrastructure for a future state. And in the first years of statehood, archives represented the possibility for Israel to assert its position as the Jewish state not through creating state archives but a national one. The Jewish Historical General Archives thus presents a curious effort to “reconstruct” an archive of a nation by gathering of the scattered files outside its borders. Just as nation-states sought to reincorporate their expatriate ethnic members, so too did the General Archives aim to bring scattered historical files to the Jews’ ancient capital. But whereas the notion of the “ingathering of the exiles” rested upon the notion that the ancient Jews and Israelites had once resided in Palestine, there had never been any such an archive, as the files had been scattered across Europe and around the world to begin with. If the Zionist Archives were envisioned as an archive of the prehistory of the state of Israel itself, the General Archives’ collecting efforts aimed to constitute an archive of the Jewish nation in its dispersion and asserting the Jews’ historical agency. Now that they had a state, their logic went, they should gain the archives of the Diaspora.

Jewish archivists, thus, situated the project of creating and collecting archives within the efforts to create infrastructure leading to the creation of a state. This process, it seems, was one that the native Palestinians were unable to duplicate. Establishing archives depended largely upon the arrival of highly-educated specialists such as Herlitz and Bein, part of the influx of human capital and the international support of groups ranging from the Zionist Organization to the Jewish restitution groups which sponsored the transfer of archival material outside Palestine to Jerusalem. This is in stark contrast to the Palestinian Arabs: While some worked to construct nationalist institutions and symbols, their attempts were largely ineffective in establishing

infrastructure which would have supported a Palestinian Arab state.²¹⁴ It may be problematic to follow Ernst Posner's somewhat absurd claim that the Prussians were victorious in the 1866 Austro-Prussian war due to a more advanced filing system, thereby positing that a Jewish state emerged because of archives.²¹⁵ But creating archives, both to administer Jewish settlements in Palestine and later establish the state of Israel as a center of Jewish scholarship and life, represented a significant factor among many in developing infrastructure tied to statehood.

In fairness, one must question whether Palestinians could have realistically utilized archives as a tool for anticolonial struggle in the Mandate period. Many have pointed to archives as a tool of political power and especially colonialism.²¹⁶ In some ways, then, it is unsurprising that archives were a means for Zionism, as a settler-colonial movement, to develop institutional control in Mandate Palestine and then symbolize Israel's Jewishness in the years after independence, while the Palestinians struggled. Consequently, it is impossible to fully divorce the Jerusalem scholars' efforts to create archives from the context of conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. Archives represented one component of the Jews' wide-ranging para-state infrastructure, whereas an organized archive was one of a series of institutions the Arabs

²¹⁴ See Tamir Sorek, "The Orange and the 'Cross in the Crescent': Imagining Palestine in 1929," *Nations and Nationalism* 10, no. 3 (2004): 269–291; Yair Wallach, "Creating a Country Through Currency and Stamps: State Symbols and Nation-Building in British-Ruled Palestine," *Nations and Nationalism* 17, no. 1 (2011): 129–147; Weldon C. Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006); Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

²¹⁵ Posner, *Archives and the Public Interest* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1967), 87.

²¹⁶ See, among many others: Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archive Science* 2, no. 1 (Mar. 2002): 1–19; Mir, Farnia, et al, "Roundtable: The Archives of Decolonization," *American Historical Review* 120, no. 3 (Jun. 2015): 844–950; Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science* 2, no. 1 (2002): 87–109; Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993); Jeannette Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost its Archives and Found its History* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003); Cheryl Beredo, *Import of the Archive: U.S. Colonial Rule of the Philippines and the Making of American Archival History* (Sacramento: Litwin Books, 2013); Henriette Fourmille, "Who Owns the Past? Aborigines as Captives of the Archives," *Aboriginal History* 13, no. 1–2 (1989): 1–8.

lacked—a broader challenge scholars have identified as a key reason for the failure to realize an Arab state in Palestine in 1948.²¹⁷ These roadblocks to Palestinian aspirations were exacerbated when the archives and libraries of the exiled Arabs were looted by Israeli forces in 1948 for the National Library at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.²¹⁸ Further, the postwar process of gathering Jewish Diaspora archives to Jerusalem paralleled the broader “territorialization” of the Jewish national movement, in contrast to the fate of Palestinian archives-in-exile such as the Palestine Research Center in Beirut, looted in 1982.²¹⁹ In the decades following the establishment of the state of Israel, the destruction of archives and libraries prevented the Palestinians from creating para-state institutions analogous to those that Jews developed in the lead-up to statehood and in its first years which represented Israel as a sovereign state.²²⁰

Consequently, the Jewish Historical General Archives’ program to gather archives to Jerusalem must be understood as part of a wide spectrum of visions for Jewish archives in Palestine to serve national aims, as well as the fundamentally blustering nature of the efforts of private individuals and groups laying claim to the banner of nation and state. Indeed, neither the Zionist Archives nor the General Archives received any official sanction from the state of Israel: Bein and Herlitz’s hopes that the Zionist Archives would become Israel’s State Archives went

²¹⁷ See Shmuel Sandler, “Territoriality and Nation-State Formation”; Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), xxxiv–xxxviii.

²¹⁸ See Gish Amit, “Salvage or Plunder? Israel’s ‘Collection’ of Private Palestinian Libraries in West Jerusalem,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 40, no. 4 (Summer 2011): 6–23; Amit, *Ex Libris: Historyah shel gezet, shimor ve-nikhush be-sifriyah ha-le’umit bi-yerushalayim* (Jerusalem: Hotsa’at ha-ḳibbutz ha-me’uḥad, 2014).

²¹⁹ Nur Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (London: Zed Books, 2012), 125–147; Editorial, “The Looted Archives of the Orient House,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 13 (2001): 3–7; Rona Sela, “Rethinking National Archives in Colonial Countries and Zones of Conflict: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Israel’s National Photography Archives as a Case Study,” in *Dissonant Archives*, ed. Anthony Downy (London: I.B. Taurus, 2015), 64–79, esp. n. 16. Also see Beverly Butler, “‘Othering’ the Archive—From Exile to Inclusion and Heritage Dignity: The Case of Palestinian Archival Memory,” *Archival Science* 9, no. 1–2 (June 2009): 57–69.

²²⁰ This situation has also created problematic lacunae for scholars of the history of the Palestinian Arabs. See Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*, xxxv–xxxvii, and Beshara B. Doumani, “Rediscovering Ottoman Palestine: Writing Palestinians into History,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 21, no. 2 (1992): 5–28.

unrealized when that institution was established in 1949 under Sophia Yudin.²²¹ The Jewish Historical General Archives, too, remained a private project for two more decades, leading to an awkward situation in one case, in the struggle over the Hamburg archives, when representatives of the Hanseatic state complained that their files would go to a non-state archive.²²² From the moment of its founding in 1939, the General Archives had sought but failed to gain enduring affiliation with academic, state, and national institutions. Its efforts to gather archives in the 1950s succeeded in large part on the coattails of institutions with which it had tenuous ties, the Zionist Archives, which sponsored Bein's initial travel abroad, the Hebrew University, which lent its address to the project, and Yad Vashem, which housed the archive beginning in 1957. It would only be in 1969 that the General Archives' protracted search for legitimacy bore fruit, when it was reorganized as the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People ('Arkhiyon merkazi le-toldot ha-'am ha-yehudi) under the joint management of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Historical Society, and the Hebrew University.²²³ It reflected, in the view of the archives' leaders, the long-awaited validation of its "appropriate status" as "the National Archives of the Jewish people," now one of Israel's "national institutions," with a future home, they envisioned, in a joint building alongside the Zionist Archives and Israel's State Archives.²²⁴ The following year, when Daniel Cohen addressed the World Conference on Records in Salt Lake City, he further laid out the meaning of this change of name which communicated the archive's "importance in the renaissance of the people of Israel" and the status of the files as "the

²²¹ Paul Alsberg, "The Israel State Archives," *Archivaria* 7 (1978): 70–75.

²²² Reinhold Lachs to Manfred Rosenthal, 22 Oct. 1959, CAHJP P28/6/39.

²²³ "Yesod hevrah ha-'arkhiyon ha-merkazi le-toldot ha-'am ha-yehudi," 13 Mar. 1969, CAHJP P28/6/42. Other minor shareholders included Tel Aviv University, Bar-Ilan University, and the National Academy of Sciences.

²²⁴ "Ha-'arkhiyon ha-merkazi le-toldot ha-'am ha-yehudi," *Zion* 34, no. 2 (1969): 265–270, IV–X.

legacy of the Jewish nation.”²²⁵ But it also reflected another longstanding aspect of the archive’s project, the aim to become a total archive of Jewish history on the whole.

The Jewish Historical General Archives as a Total Archive of Jewish History

In Cohen’s August 1969 speech in Salt Lake City, he explained that the renaming of the Jerusalem archive as the “Central Archive for the History of the Jewish People” reflected the “widening in the basis of [its] activities.”²²⁶ The new name, however, did not represent a radically new mission; as we have seen, at an early stage the archive’s founders aimed to become an archive of Jewish life around the world, even if they had not expressed it as transparently as Cohen did thirty years later. One could say, perhaps, that ambitions like Meisl’s idea to gather the files of Middle Eastern Jews in 1942, or Dinaburg’s 1944 proposal to document the Holocaust, were merely a kind of programmatic thrashing about in the absence of demonstrable progress.²²⁷ But they also prefigured the grand vision of a world archive of Jewish history, encompassing “the entire [*gesamte*] archival material of history of Jews [around] the world,” as they put it in 1955.²²⁸ In the years that followed, the Jerusalem archive followed in the footsteps of the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden*, emulating its Berlin predecessor both in its early emphasis on the historical files of German Jewish communities, and in its attempt to achieve archival totality.

In the early years, it seems that the ties between the two archives were contested, an issue which came to the fore in a heated correspondence over the Jerusalem archive’s name between Josef Meisl and Ismar Freund in 1946. At that time, Freund wrote that his research archive,

²²⁵ Daniel Cohen, “The Gathering of Jewish Records to Israel,” 5 Aug. 1969, AJA MS-687 18/20; also see Daniel Cohen, “Jüdisches Archivwesen: Ziele, Aufgaben und Probleme des Zentralarchivs für die Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes in Jerusalem,” CAHJP P202.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Meisl, 25 Dec. 1942, printed in Jütte, 96; Dinaburg, “Ha-’arkhiyon ha-kelali le-kehillot yisra’el,” CAHJP P28/6/33.

²²⁸ JHGA to Vorbereitende Comité des Leo Baeck Instituts, 29 May 1955, CZA L33/1290.

which he hoped to provide to Meisl, could serve as “the basis of a Jewish World Archive” (“der Grundstock eines jüdischen Welt-Archivs”).²²⁹ When Meisl got word, he wrote Freund a sharply worded letter explaining that instead of the “presumptuous and excessively euphonic” Welt-Archive, he preferred the “until-now common” expression “jüdisch-historisches Gesamtarchiv,” or “arkhiyon kelali” in Hebrew (“General Archives”).²³⁰ Freund insisted that his own choice of words was more appropriate, as the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden had been focused on German Jewry alone, whereas the Jewish Historical General Archives, it was clear to him, aimed to collect material on Jews around the world.²³¹ In a way, both had it right: Freund was correct in arguing that the General Archives in Jerusalem had aspirations beyond Palestine. At the same time, Meisl was right that the Jewish Historical General Archives followed in the Gesamtarchiv’s footsteps. But the fact that Meisl denied the term “World Archive” as hubristic demonstrates that he did not yet comprehend what was really at stake in the General Archives—that they sought to continue the Gesamtarchiv’s legacy particularly in terms of the program of totality.

A decade later, in 1956, Daniel Cohen put forth a clearer archival genealogy when he reported on the Jewish Historical General Archives in the inaugural Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute, established the year before for the study of German Jewry. Detailing the Jerusalem archives’ successes in gathering the files of the German Jews, Cohen explained that by taking in these archives, publishing sources on German Jewish history, and fostering young scholars of German origin, the Jerusalem archives “endeavour to carry on the tradition of the Gesamtarchiv.”²³² A quarter-century later, Cohen suggested that the Täubler had originated the vision of surveying

²²⁹ Ismar Freund to Judah Magnes, 2 Dec. 1946, CAHJP P2/477.

²³⁰ Josef Meisl to Ismar Freund, 8 Dec. 1946, CAHJP P2/477.

²³¹ Ismar Freund to Josef Meisl, 18 Dec. 1946, CAHJP P2/477.

²³² Daniel Cohen, “Jewish Records from Germany in the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem,” *LBIYB* 1 (1956): 331–345.

state archives for records of Jewish interest, leading him to claim that the Jerusalem archive had “implemented Täubler’s plan.”²³³ Such assertions were perhaps tenuous and more than a bit ironic: The Jewish Historical General Archives’ efforts depended on the determination that destroyed Jewish communities lacked successors, and it maintained itself as a spiritual successorship to an archive that, although destroyed and its files scattered, after the war actually found both of its former leaders alive and mostly well; Eugen Täubler and his wife Selma Stern had settled in Cincinnati, where Stern worked as an archivist at Jacob Rader Marcus’ American Jewish Archives, and Jacob Jacobson found refuge in England.²³⁴

Nevertheless, the Jerusalem archive’s claims should not be entirely discounted. As one will recall, the Gesamtarchiv had been an important model for Jewish archives before the Second World War, and it remained so in the war’s aftermath. For this reason, the Jewish Historical General Archives was not alone in seeking to take up the Berlin archive’s legacy, finding it astride the dreams of Eugen Täubler, who hoped that Jacobson might be able to reconstitute the archive in England, and Bernhard Brillling’s aspirations to create a “new Gesamtarchiv” in postwar Germany.²³⁵ As for the Jewish Historical General Archives, its founders had deep ties to the Gesamtarchiv, with Josef Meisl having served alongside Jacob Jacobson in the offices of the Berlin Jewish community and Georg Herlitz as Täubler’s onetime assistant. They also looked to the Berlin archive as an important point of origin. Meisl chose a name that clearly paralleled the Gesamtarchiv’s, which he and others consistently translated as a “General Archive” of the

²³³ Cohen, “Sekarim mi-ṭa’am ha-’arkhiyon ha-merkazi le-toldot ha-‘am ha-yehudi be-’arkhiyone ’eropah” (1982), 99.

²³⁴ See, for instance, Jacob Jacobson to Eugen Täubler, 25 Jun. 1945, UB Basel NL 76 E1, Jacobson to Selma Stern-Täubler, May 1949, UB Basel NL 120 D/10.

²³⁵ See ch. 6, pp. 406–417; Eugen Täubler to Jewish Theological Seminary, 2 Jun. 1948, Universitätsbibliothek Basel NL 76 E1; Bernhard Brillling, “Ein Archiv für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, als eine Forderung der Wiedergutmachung,” 24 Jan. 1956, JMF SB1676.

German Jews, and they relentlessly pursued the Berlin archive's files.²³⁶ And Herlitz wrote in 1964 of Täubler's "truly gigantic plan" for a "central office for research into the history of the Diaspora," concluding with the suggestion that it was now the time to implement his vision, with the General Archives clearly at its base.²³⁷ It was for these reasons that Cohen suggested that the Jerusalem Archives followed in its Berlin predecessor's path. But the two archives were also bound more esoterically, in ways which the Jerusalem archivists themselves may not have even been aware at first: Each strove to constitute total archives of Jewish history. But whereas the Gesamtarchiv was to be a total archive of the German Jews, the General Archive's dream to acquire original archives and index and microfilm those they could not gain gave a new intensity and scope to this vision, enabled as it was by the postwar environment and the distinctive nationalistic movement that gave birth to the project.

Eugen Täubler's conception of the Gesamtarchiv as a total archive of German Jewry had been an unrealizable ideal, and Jacob Jacobson's later notion that archives document life "from cradle to grave" was a fanciful abstraction.²³⁸ In Germany, as one will recall, the Gesamtarchiv could not approach Täubler's vision of comprehensiveness due to "local patriotism" and resistance to centralization. Just as the Gesamtarchiv could not practically become the total archive its leaders dreamt of, so too comprehensiveness eluded the Jewish Historical General Archives, not least because so many archives were destroyed or lost during World War II. Nevertheless, the Jerusalem archive's activities and vision gesture at the ways in which the

²³⁶ They often used the term "'arkhiyon kelali shel yehude germanyah," though in later years they shifted to "'arkhiyon ha-kolel shel yehude germanyah" (Comprehensive Archive) which reflected the notion of the Gesamtarchiv's program of total comprehensiveness. See for instance: "Yeshivat ya'ad ha-hevrah," 14 Nov. 1950, CAHJP IHS/10, "Yeshivat ya'adat ha-'arkhiyon," 20 Feb. 1950, CZA L33/1290; Yitshak Baer, "Eugen Täubler," *Zion* 19, no. 1–2 (1954): 71–74; in contrast to "Ba-'arkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot yisra'el," *Zion* 19, no. 1–2 (1954): 84–85, "Ba-'arkhiyon ha-kelali le-toldot yisra'el," *Zion* 21, no. 3–4 (1956): 238–241, Alex Bein to Sergio Piperno, 3 Oct. 1956, CZA L33/1309.

²³⁷ Georg Herlitz, "Three Jewish Historians: Isaak Markus Jost, Heinrich Graetz, Eugen Täubler. A Comparative Study," *LBIYB* 9 (1964): 69–90.

²³⁸ See ch. 2, pp. 98–99.

Berlin archive's model, and especially that of the total archive, continued to be an important paradigm of Jewish archives, transposed for a new era and its novel possibilities. In particular, the destruction of Jewish communities and the widely-held belief that Jewish life had little future in Europe, coupled with the strength wielded by restitution agencies, meant that Jews in postwar Europe had little power to fight the extraction of their archives. And the Jewish Historical General Archives took root in a nationalistic environment profoundly distinct from the Gesamtarchiv's; Täubler's archive reflected deep patriotism, manifested through an attachment to Imperial Germany, its geography, and a sense of the strong bonds between the history of Jews and their host environment, whereas the Jerusalem archive was to be a component of a Jewish national revival in Palestine. Together, these factors meant that the General Archives in Jerusalem could make much progress towards the ideal of a total archive, both of German Jewry and of Jewish history as a whole, in ways which had never been possible for the Gesamtarchiv.

Of the 350 German-Jewish communal archives gathered in Jerusalem by 1952, for instance, 164 were from the Gesamtarchiv files Bein had received the year before.²³⁹ As such, it “only” constituted about a third of the Gesamtarchiv's prewar collections of about 480 Jewish communities' files. The General Archives, then, could never fully reconstitute the Gesamtarchiv. But the Jerusalem archive also gained files from hundreds of Jewish communities that had never been part of the Gesamtarchiv, particularly the archives of the Bavarian communities, and—shortly after the publication of Cohen's 1956 article—the Jews of Worms, and in 1959 also adding Hamburg. This was all besides the Vienna collection. The array of archives gathered to Jerusalem held political and archival ramifications: The Gesamtarchiv's geographical limitations reflected a narrow notion of Germanness, excluding the Jews of Austria just as had Deutsch-

²³⁹ “Reshimah 'ara'it shel ha-ḥomer ha-te'udati she-nitkabel me-germanyah,” CZA L33/1882.

Israelitische Gemeindebund, the Berlin archive's sponsor; gaining the Vienna archives demonstrated the Israelis' broader conception of central Europe.²⁴⁰ And by a certain reckoning, the Israeli archivists reached a level of success never attained by Täubler and Jacobson, creating more of a "total archive" of German Jewry in a few short years than the Gesamtarchiv had over the span of nearly four decades. As one will recall, the Gesamtarchiv had collected the archives of hundreds of Jewish communities with the noted absence of the archives of south Germany as well as historic communities such as Worms and Hamburg—just those same regions where the Jewish Historical General Archives would find success. Consequently, by bringing together the remnants of the Gesamtarchiv and some of the materials of communities that had resisted centralization in Berlin, the Jewish Historical General Archives' symbolically approached the "total archive" of German Jewry, and simultaneously laid claim to a wider geographical and political collecting framework, as an archive of the Jewish people as a whole.

The Jewish Historical General Archives' leaders had long spoken of their dream of systematic collecting. In 1953, Bein spoke of the goal of "complete documentation" through the gathering of originals and microfilms, and Daniel Cohen wrote of the project's scope to encompass "all European lands" and their efforts to "complete" the archives.²⁴¹ It was even more explicitly vocalized in 1960, when Cohen described the project as "the systematical collection of archives of Jewish communities, institutions and organizations, private and public collections as well as of odd historical documents from all over the world, regarding the life of our people during the near and far past."²⁴² The Jewish Historical General Archives carried forth the vision of total archiving—magnified by expanding the region of interest and taking advantage of opportunities

²⁴⁰ See ch. 2, p. 130.

²⁴¹ Alex Bein to A. Offenbach, 15 Mar. 1953, CZA P64/18/I; Daniel Cohen to Erich von Lehe, 15 Nov. 1955, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. II; Daniel Cohen to Sergio Piperno, 3 Jan. 1958, CAHJP P28/6/39.

²⁴² "The Jewish Historical General Archives," 18 Feb. HZA B. 1/7 241.

presented by postwar restitution, leading to its simultaneous intensification and transposition to a distinctive key to match the possibilities of the postwar world and also a radically distinctive cultural context.²⁴³ Josef Meisl, Alex Bein, and Georg Herlitz were rooted in a German-Jewish cultural context and notions of professional archival practice, just as Eugen Täubler and Jacob Jacobson had been.²⁴⁴ But the Jerusalem archivists were divorced from Täubler's German patriotism and his notion of the ties between Jewish history and its host society that characterized the Gesamtarchiv and Täubler's vision of a network of "Gesamtarchive" in the various countries of Jewish settlement. Instead, the archival efforts in Jerusalem developed within the environment of Jewish nationalism and a framing of Jewish history as distinctive from the broader historical currents, with Jewish history and life in different lands constituting a singular whole, more closely bound together than with the individual societies in which Jews lived and their history.

Giving Concrete Form to Archival Totality in Jerusalem

The Jewish Historical General Archives' totalizing ambition was perhaps unfeasible. However, they could symbolically represent Jewish history in its totality through the archives' physical configuration, a vision expressed by Ben Zion Dinaburg in March 1951 when he suggested the General Archives be the cornerstone of a central archives building which would bring together other major archives of Jewish history in Jerusalem.²⁴⁵ It was not the first time the General Archives' leaders had held forth plans for archival collaboration. In 1946, Georg Herlitz spoke with the Gesellschaft für Jüdische Familienforschung in Tel Aviv about gathering their materials together with those of the General Archives as a central archive with a genealogical

²⁴³ Alex Bein to Sergio Piperno, 3 Oct. 1956, CZA L33/1309.

²⁴⁴ Indeed, it is notable that nearly all of the leading scholars and archivists involved in the JHGA had close ties to Germany. Even Ben Zion Dinaburg, himself of eastern European origin, was a student of Eugen Täubler's in Berlin. See Robert Jütte, "Der Beitrag deutsch-jüdischer Einwanderer zum Aufbau eines Archivwesens in Israel," *Der Archivar* 43, no. 3 (1990): 395–414; Jütte, *Die Emigration der deutschsprachigen "Wissenschaft des Judentums,"* 89–100.

²⁴⁵ "Ba-ḥevrah ha-historit ha-yisra'elit," *Zion* 15 (1950): 160–162.

section and a “general historical section,” and in 1950 Herlitz and Bein spoke of bringing archives in Palestine under “one roof.”²⁴⁶ When Dinaburg addressed the public opening of the General Archives in February 1947, he spoke of the “large and glorious building” which they hoped to erect for the archives.²⁴⁷ Four years later, in 1951, Dinaburg’s ambitions had grown. He still dreamt of a suitable building for the archive—in contrast with the basement of the Museum of Jewish Antiquities and the apartment they subsequently rented after Mt. Scopus became an Israeli military enclave within Jordanian territory during the 1947–49 war. Now, he envisioned a central archives building with three branches: “One, the history of [the people of] Israel, its Diaspora and its eras, the second, the history of Zionism and the yishuv, and the third, the history of the Holocaust.” He clearly referred to the three major archives in Jerusalem, the Jewish Historical General Archives, the Central Zionist Archives, and Yad Vashem. Dinaburg’s suggestion resonated deeply: Nearly everyone in attendance expressed support, and David Remez, then minister of education and culture, endorsed the plan. As a result, the plenary voted to support the archives’ “transformation” from a “general archive” to a “central historical archive,” which would be managed not only by the Historical Society but also by the Hebrew University and the Israeli government under the Ministry of Education and Culture.²⁴⁸ When Bein laid out a proposal for the centralization of archives in Jerusalem in September 1951, he suggested as the last step in his plan an “archive center” following this same schema, and shortly thereafter wrote of creating a central archives building with a “special section” each for Jewish history, for Zionism, the Holocaust, and contemporary Jewry.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ K. Ball to Mitglieder des Vorstands, 22 Apr. 1946, JMF SB0681; “Yeshivah ha-ya’adah ha-’arkhiyonit,” 5 Mar. 1950, CAHJP P127/39; “Yeshivat ya’ad ha-ḥevrah,” 16 Jul. 1950, CAHJP IHS/10.

²⁴⁷ Dinaburg, cited n. 1.

²⁴⁸ “Ba-ḥevrah ha-historit ha-yisra’elit,” *Zion* 15 (1950): 160–162.

²⁴⁹ Bein, “Al tokhnit ha-rikuz shel ’arkhiyone ha-golah ba-yerushalayim. Din ye-ḥeshbon ‘al shliḥuti le-’eropah u-

Creating a central archives building proved ever-tantalizing and continuously unrealized, just like the notion of a total archive itself. Despite the support shown for Dinaburg's proposal in 1951, it was tabled until near the end of that decade, when in December 1958 Bein—now State Archivist and also director of the Central Zionist Archives—faced the problem that the Zionist Archives simply did not have enough space to store its files.²⁵⁰ Then, and again in 1960, he proposed a variation of Dinaburg's plan, a dedicated facility to house the Zionist Archives alongside the State Archives, and perhaps the Jewish Historical General Archives too.²⁵¹ Bein's building was to be located in the government precinct, immediately adjacent to the Knesset building then being constructed.²⁵² The plan would have placed the archives at the epicenter of the political and cultural geography of west Jerusalem, surrounded by Israel's parliament, supreme court, and the Israel Museum, a "Hebrew acropolis" that housed the Dead Sea Scrolls; it was also walking distance to the Hebrew University's Givat Ram campus and the Israel Museum.²⁵³ By 1965, Bein had gained approval from the Jewish Agency, under whose auspices the Zionist Archives operated, and from an array of government stakeholders. However, when he turned to the Historical Society of Israel in June of that year, Dinaburg curiously opposed the plan so similar to his of fourteen years prior, insisting that the Jewish Historical General

maskanot mimenah," 18 Sept. 1951, Alex Bein, Yisra'el Halpern to Ben Zion Dinaburg, "'Al hatsalat ha-'arkhiyonim ha-yehudim min ha-golah ye-rikuzam ba-'arets," 29 Oct. 1951, CZA P64/148/1/1.

²⁵⁰ Alex Bein to Yaacov Reiser, 10 Dec. 1958, Reiser to Bein, 21 Dec. 1958, CZA L33/1801.

²⁵¹ "Yeshivat ha-ya'adah le-tikhnun u-le-hakanat le-binyan le-'arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni ha-merkazi," 8 Mar. 1960, CZA L33/1801. At one point, it was to also hold the files of the World Jewish Congress. See: Gerhart M. Riegner to Alex, 30 Jun. 1967, CZA L33/1800, and "WJC Participating in Central Archives' Plan," AJA MS-361 J8/14.

²⁵² "Yeshivat ha-ya'adah le-tikhnun u-le-hakanat le-binyan le-'arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni ha-merkazi," 8 Mar. 1960, Alex Bein, "Zikhron-devarim 'al síkhah 'im mar ředi koleř," 4 Apr. 1960, CZA L33/1801.

²⁵³ Alex Bein, "Zikhron devarim bi-devar migrash le-mivnim meshutafim shel ha-'arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni ye-ginzakh ha-medinah," 2 Feb. 1964, CZA L33/1801, and various plans, such as 20 Apr. 1966, CZA L33/1888, which indicate the archive building's location immediately north of the Knesset building. Notably, the planned site of the new National Library building, at the intersection of Kaplan and Ruppín sts., where the Central Archives for the Jewish People is expected to relocate in 2020, is nearly at this same exact location. On the Israel Museum as "Hebrew acropolis," see Audrey Hods, "A Hebrew Acropolis," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (1965): 22, and relating to the Dead Sea Scrolls: Lawrence Shiffman, "The Many Battles of the Scrolls," *Journal of Religious History* 26, no. 2 (2002): 157–178.

Archives remain independent.²⁵⁴ Apparently, he no longer felt the urgency of institutional homelessness brought about by the JHGA's displacement in 1948: After a sojourn of nearly ten years in an apartment near the downtown and just meters from no-man's land, they moved into the campus of Yad Vashem in 1957, and then found a new home in 1962 at the Sprinzak building at Hebrew University alongside the Institute of Contemporary Jewry. But when he saw preliminary blueprints, Dinaburg was swayed and the General Archives joined the scheme.²⁵⁵ As a result, in 1966 and 1967 they moved forward, mustering a budget of two million Israeli Lira for a joint building to be divided among them with approximately a third of the space for the Zionist Archives, half for the State Archives, and just under one-fifth for the General Archives.²⁵⁶

In the end, this central archives building was never created. It was constantly delayed due to budgetary complications and as a result of the shifting political situation following the June 1967 war. The 1968 Jerusalem Master Plan aimed, among other, things to "de-intensify" the government precinct, spreading facilities around the city.²⁵⁷ What is more, the Israeli government opposed establishing new facilities in west Jerusalem. Instead, they insisted that the central archive building be on Mt. Scopus. This directive was both economically and politically motivated, as the price of land rose sharply after the war and the Israeli government also wanted to set down

²⁵⁴ Bein, "Matsav ha-devarim ye-sikum ha-diyunim bi-devar binyan le-'arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni ha-merkazi," 7 Sept. 1961, "Ha-'arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni ha-merkazi ye-ginzakh ha-memshalah," 24 Nov. 1963, CZA L33/1801; Bein, "Zikhron devarim bi-devar migrash le-mivnim meshutafim shel ha-'arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni ye-ginzakh ha-medinah," 2 Feb. 1964, Shmuel Bandor, "Zikhron-devarim, binyan meshutaf le-'arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni u-le-ginzakh ha-medinah," 30 Dec. 1964, CZA L33/1801; Alex Bein to Sh. Ben-David, 26 Jul. 1965, CZA L33/314.

²⁵⁵ "Zikhron dvarim me-ha-hitya'atsut 'al ha-'efsharut le-hakim 'et binyan ha-'arkhiyon ha-merkazi le-toldot ha-'am ha-yehudi yahad 'im ha-mivnim shel ha-ginzakh ye-ha-'arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni be-kiryat ha-memshalah," 30 Nov. 1965, "Zikhron devarim me-diyun 'al tokhmit ha-beniyah shel ha-'arkhiyon ha-merkazi le-'am ha-yehudi," 18 Mar. 1966, CZA L33/314.

²⁵⁶ "Hatsa'ah le-binyan ha-'arkhiyon ha-tsiyoni," 20 Jan. 1966, CZA L33/1888; "Yeshivat hanhalat ha-sokhnut ha-yehudit," 30 Jan. 1967, CZA L33/1800, also see A. Alsberg to Alex Bein, 29 Jun. 1967, CZA L33/1800.

²⁵⁷ Alona Nitzan-Shifan, "Israelizing Jerusalem: The Encounter Between Architectural and National Ideologies, 1967–1977" (Ph.D. dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2002), 109–113. It is notable that Eliezer Brutzkus, the urban planner and elder brother of the architect David Anatol Brutzkus who designed Bein's planned central archive building, was deeply opposed to this aspect of the Masterplan. See Nitzan-Shifan, p. 110, n. 26.

roots in eastern Jerusalem.²⁵⁸ Bein opposed the east Jerusalem location for security and practical reasons, preferring to stick to the previously-approved plan.²⁵⁹ When the Treasury withheld funds, Bein became increasingly irritated. He noted that the plans had been finalized in 1967, and the following year they had been provided with twenty-one Dunam (about five acres) of land, but the Treasury's continual delays—which froze the majority of the assets required to begin construction—had made it impossible for him to execute Israel's Archives Law.²⁶⁰ And because the Zionist Archives simply lacked space to receive any new files, he discussed unilaterally establishing a building with funds from the Jewish Agency.²⁶¹ In August 1970, Bein appealed to Golda Meir, but he had set for himself a lower bar: Instead of the creation of a central building, he now had resigned himself to the need merely for more storage space.²⁶² Shortly thereafter, Bein retired as State Archivist with his dream of a central archives building unfulfilled.²⁶³

Despite the failure to erect the planned central archives building, Israeli archivists long held to the aspiration and what it symbolized: In June 1971, the Union of Israeli Archivists called for a “national archives building,” stressing the importance of documenting the history “of the people of Israel in the Diaspora, of the return to Zion, and the State of Israel”—clearly mirroring Bein's configuration of the Jewish Historical General Archives, the Zionist Archives, and the State Archives.²⁶⁴ In 1977, Daniel Cohen addressed the World Congress of Jewish Studies in

²⁵⁸ On the civic and economic issues of land in Jerusalem, see Elisa Efrat and Allen G. Noble, “Planning Jerusalem,” *Geography Review* 78, no. 4 (Oct. 1988): 384–404.

²⁵⁹ Bein to E.L. Pinkus, and “‘Al pegishot be-ķasher le-binyan ha-’arkhiyon,” 21 Jan. 1968, CZA L33/1800.

²⁶⁰ Bein, “Ha-binyan ha-merkazi le-’arkhiyonim bi-yerushalayim,” 13 May 1969, CZA L33/1800; Alex Bein to I. Herzog, 14 May 1969, CZA L33/1803.

²⁶¹ Bein to Pinkus, 21 Jan. 1968, Bein to Pinkus, 29 Jul. 1968, Michael Heymann, “Zikhron devarim ‘im yo”r ha-hanhala ha-tsiyonit ”l pinkus ye-‘im gizbar ha-hanhala mar a’ dultsin be-tel-’aviv,” 15 Aug. 1968, CZA L33/1800.

²⁶² Alex Bein to Golda Meir, 12 Aug. 1970, CZA L33/1803.

²⁶³ Though Bein was no longer State Archivist, he remained chair of the Israel Archives Association.

²⁶⁴ “Hats’ aot le-heķlatot ha-ye‘idah,” 28 Jun. 1971, CZA P64/160/2.

Jerusalem, concluding with a similar discussion of the plan to for a central archive with three wings.²⁶⁵ Clearly, the vision of a central archives building first put forth by Dinaburg and then pursued by Bein had a broad and long-lasting appeal. It represented a culmination of the varied dreams to form a central, national archive in Jerusalem. In this, it represented the specific context of the Jewish national project in Israel/Palestine alongside the location of archival efforts there within the wider trajectory of the development of Jewish archives in the twentieth century. Bringing together archives under one roof could reflect a total view of Jewish history, another form of a “total archive” following in the footsteps of the Gesamtarchiv but on a much wider scale. Dinaburg had hoped to bring together under one roof the Jewish Historical General Archives, the Central Zionist Archives, and the archives of Yad Vashem. Bein swapped out Yad Vashem for the State Archives. Despite these differences, each represented a broad schema of Jewish history. In envisioning an archive of Jewish history in three parts—the history of the Diaspora, the history of the Zionist movement, and alternately the history of the Holocaust or the State of Israel—they framed Jewish history as a story in three acts, each represented by one archive.²⁶⁶ Even if none of the archives could gather all of the documents of the past in their entirety, by bringing them together such an archive could symbolically represent Jewish history in its totality.

As a result, the archives parted ways. In 1969, the Jewish Historical General Archives became the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, a “national archive” jointly managed by the Hebrew University, the Historical Society of Israel, and the Israeli government; Dinaburg’s hope that the archive would remain independent was fulfilled. And the Zionist

²⁶⁵ Daniel Cohen, “Sources for the History of the Jewish People in Europe and in Israel,” *Yedi'on ha-'igud ha-'olami le-mada'e ha-yahadut* 17–18 (1981): 5–22.

²⁶⁶ See in particular Prime Minister’s Office (Archivist), *Eser shanim le-bitsu'o shel hoq ha-'arkhiyonim* (Jerusalem: 1967), 7, where Bein explained that bringing the archives together would reflect “the historical documentation of the people of Israel in their dispersion, the organization of the people for the building of the homeland, and the establishment of the state and its development.”

Archives continued to seek a solution to their storage problems, building their own facility, dedicated in November 1987, just months before Bein's passing.²⁶⁷ One reason for this split may have been continued and fundamentally irreconcilably different approaches to a "national archive." Bein's notion of a central archives building, and his insistence that it be located at the government quarter and not the Hebrew University, tied it to the state. By contrast, Dinaburg's "Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People" was to be an archive of the Jewish people around the world with its cultural capital in Jerusalem. Indeed, the Central Archives' newsletter was eventually named "Ginze 'am 'olam," alternately translatable as "treasures [or 'archives'] of an eternal people" or, perhaps better, "treasures of a people of the world."²⁶⁸ As a result, this archive's project of the "ingathering of the exiles of the past" situated it as an effort to undo the process of exile and dispersion, remained itself an archive of exile: even as it gained tremendous caches of historical material, the archive of the documents of exile found itself long unable to find a permanent home both physically and institutionally, leading them to wander Jerusalem, marking them as an archive in exile in their homeland, homeless.

Conclusion: The Jerusalem Archives Within a Wider World

The Jewish Historical General Archives' leaders hoped that their archive would become a national archive of the Jewish people, representing the Jews' return to their historic homeland and symbolizing the unity of the Jewish people throughout their history. They also dreamt of a amassing a total archive, constituting a "central archive" of Jewish history on the whole. It seems that both were fundamentally out of reach: on the one hand, the archive continually failed to gain

²⁶⁷ See Transcript of Opening Ceremony, 10 Nov. 1987, CZA L33/1939.

²⁶⁸ It is notable that this was not the original name of the newsletter, which beginning in 1970 was simply the "Yedi'ot" (Newsletter) of the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, itself an offprint of their reports published in the *Zion* journal of the Historical Society of Israel. Beginning with the seventh issue of this "Yedi'ot" in 1978, still duplicating the *Zion* reports, it was entitled "Ginze 'am 'olam."

the measure of recognition its leaders believed it deserved, and as for comprehensiveness, not only was it impossible to achieve fully but they were unable to bring about the archival amalgamation which would structurally symbolize—through institutionally constructing a Palestinocentric narrative—a certain kind of history of the Jews *in toto*. But both aims were emblematic of a wider world of Jewish archives that emerged after the Second World War, and the struggles to reconstitute archives, not to mention Jewish cultural life on the whole, which had been shattered in the Holocaust. Just as the Jewish Historical General Archives had risen from a multitude of dreams of central archives in Jerusalem, so too was their project just one of a series of such efforts to make a new world of Jewish archives. They were not the only ones to try to take up the mantle of the Gesamtarchiv, both in terms of reconstituting the archive of German Jewry and by constituting “total archives.” What is more, figures like Jacob Rader Marcus in Cincinnati and Bernhard Brillinger in West Germany each sought to create archives that, like the Jerusalem archivists, tried to reflect geographical, political, and cultural *Weltanschauungen* through gathering archives. On the whole, the project of the Jerusalem archivists was part of a wider transnational network of archival efforts that arose after the Second World War, when the dreams of the prewar years were reconfigured and reworked in light of new possibilities, leading to new struggles in terms both regional and global, as archivists and scholars sought to navigate an emerging archival landscape.

Chapter 5

An Archive of Diaspora at the “Jerusalem on the Ohio”

In 1947, at the same time the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem opened its doors, Jacob Rader Marcus established his American Jewish Archives at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Marcus had taught Jewish history at the Reform rabbinical seminary since 1920, when he was ordained there, a position he would hold until just before his death in 1995 at the age of 99. By training, a scholar of European history—his 1925 doctorate at the University of Berlin was on early modern trade relations—in the 1930s he turned to study American Jewry.¹ By 1947, he proposed that HUC become a leading repository for the historical records of American Jewish life.² That September, the *H.U.C. Bulletin* called on alumni to submit files from the synagogues they served to an “American Jewish Congregational Archives.”³ The project quickly grew, as Marcus looked to the historic communities of the Caribbean and South America and even the “mother-synagogues” of the Netherlands, encompassing Jewish life in the Western Hemisphere at large. As he put it in 1948, he would document “all phases of American Jewish history,” aiming to provide scholars “in this one room” with access to all important works and sources to write the history of American Jewry.⁴ In the fifty years that followed, he created an archival edifice leading colleagues to dub him the “‘dean’ of American Jewish historians.”⁵

¹ Marcus, “Die handelspolitischen Beziehungen zwischen England und Deutschland in den Jahren 1576–1585,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Berlin, 1925).

² Marcus to Nelson Glueck, 22 Sept. 1947, AJA SC-4773.

³ “American Jewish Congregational Archives,” *H.U.C. Bulletin*, Sept. 1947, AJA Nearprint File, Box 1.

⁴ Marcus to Nelson Glueck, 8 Jan. 1948, AJA MS-210 1/2; cf. Marcus, “Report,” 1 Jan. 1948, AJA MS-210 1/2.

⁵ See Malcolm H. Stern, “Preface,” in *First American Jewish Families: 600 Genealogies, 1654–1977* (Cincinnati: AJA, 1977); Abraham J. Peck, Press Release, 1994, AJA MS-687 58/4; Jonathan Sarna, “Jacob Rader Marcus (1896–1995),” *AJYB* 97 (1997): 633–640; Sarna, *American Judaism*, ix. Cf. *AJAJ* 50, which echoed this language (*AJAJ* 50, no. 1 (1998):

It was no accident that Marcus' ambitions arose alongside those of archivists in Jerusalem. Half a world apart, they were tightly intertwined, tied to a shared genealogy and a common spirit to preserve the archival record after unforeseen destruction. In Germany, Marcus had learned with the Gesamtarchiv's Jacob Jacobson and studied at the University of Berlin and the Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums alongside Alex Bein.⁶ When Marcus hired Selma Stern-Täubler as his archivist in 1947, he employed an eminent historian of German Jewry and also tied his archive to the Gesamtarchiv, founded by her husband Eugen Täubler; both had fled Nazi Germany for Cincinnati in 1941.⁷ More substantively, scholars in both Jerusalem and Cincinnati projected cultural power by ordering historical knowledge. It was not just that Marcus was island-hopping in the Caribbean in search of archives at the same time Bein crisscrossed Europe. The archives in Jerusalem and the "Jerusalem on the Ohio" present curious parallels where centralizing sources manifested ambitions to cultural supremacy. In Israel, holding archives served to support a claim to be "successors" to European Jewry, and Marcus' turn to American Jewish history reflected his view of American's leadership. Marcus may have declared his archive "a response to a need—a need for accurate, objective, scientific research," but it was clearly instrumentalized.⁸ Scholars in Jerusalem and Cincinnati believed their work to be a corrective to perceived apologetics—whether of the European *Wissenschaft des Judentums* or the American Jewish Historical Society—but in the end, all forged new historical schools hewing to their own outlooks and agendas.⁹

3). Also see Kevin Proffitt, "Jacob Rader Marcus and the Archive He Built," in *New Essays in American Jewish History: Commemorating the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Jewish Archives* (Cincinnati: HUC, 2010), 5–18, which presents a colleague's perspective on Marcus and an important outline of Marcus' activities and methods.

⁶ It is not clear if they knew each other as students, but they participated in the same classes. When Marcus described his Winter 1924 semester (Marcus to Morgenstern, 7 Apr. 1924, AJA MS-210 7/10) he lists Alexander Marcks' seminar on the French Revolution, which Bein also notes in *Hier kannst Du nicht jeden grüßen*, 156.

⁷ On Stern: Marina Sassenberg, *Selma Stern (1890–1981). Das Eigene in der Geschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

⁸ Marcus, "The American Jewish Archives," *American Archivist* 21, no. 1 (Jan. 1960): 58.

⁹ On the rejection of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, see David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European*

Marcus' archive, then, presented a distinctive imperial vision. If the Jerusalem archivists hoped to encompass all Jewish history, Marcus conceived of American Jewry's hemispheric hegemony with its epicenter on the Ohio River. In 1947, Cincinnati was certainly no longer the "Queen City of the West" of a century prior, when it had been a major destination for Jewish migrants and the burgeoning seat of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and Hebrew Union College, founded there by Isaac Mayer Wise in 1873 and 1875 respectively.¹⁰ Just as Marcus saw America as the "greatest Jewry," he—who spent nearly his entire life in Cincinnati, having first arrived to pursue rabbinic studies in 1911 at the age of fifteen—was undeniably a local patriot with a profound sense of regionalism and institutional memory. Each year, Marcus made a symbolic gesture by donning the ordination robes of David Philipson (1863–1948), the venerable HUC professor who was also in the College's first class.¹¹ Marcus carried forth a certain vision of Cincinnati's place as a historic center of Jewish culture akin to a Jerusalem for the "new Zion" of the United States, echoing the sentiment voiced by Isaac Mayer Wise's son Isador in 1912 that the city's sons and daughters in exile—he himself lived in Chicago—proclaimed of their birthplace: "If ever I forget thee... may my right hand be withered."¹² Marcus' archive marked it as a kind of "counter-Zion" at a time that the UAHC and even Manischewitz departed Cincinnati for New York.¹³ Marcus outlined, instead, an idea of American Jewry tilting away from New York and its

Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹⁰ See Stephen Gross Mostov, "A 'Jerusalem' On the Ohio: The Social and Economic History of Cincinnati's Jewish Committee, 1840–1875" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1981).

¹¹ Interview with Jonathan Sarna, 19 Oct. 2016.

¹² Isador Wise, "Judaism in Cincinnati," in *Cincinnati, the Queen City, 1788–1912*, ed. Charles Goss (Cincinnati: S.J. Clarke, 1912), 21–52. For a wider explication of the "Cincinnati ideal," see Sarna, "'A Sort of Paradise for the Hebrews': The Lofty Vision of Cincinnati Jews," in *Ethnic Diversity and Civic Identity*, ed. Henry D. Shapiro and Jonathan Sarna (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 131–164.

¹³ See Michael Meyer, "From Cincinnati to New York: A Symbolic Move," in *The Jewish Condition*, ed. Aron Hirt-Mannheimer (New York: UAHC Press, 1995), 302–313; Sarna, "How Matzah Became Square: Manischewitz and the Development of Machine-Made Matzah in the United States," in *The Chosen Capital: The Jewish Encounter with American Capitalism*, ed. Rebecca Kobrin (London: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 272–288.

American Jewish Historical Society, and also gestured to the elder Wise's dream of a unified American Jewry with its seat on the Ohio; Marcus painted American Jewry's common past, auguring a shared destiny. The result was a unique archival and historical vision, one this chapter will excavate and examine, that elevated the idea of Diaspora and translated his interest in Jewish life across America's wide expanses into a centralized archive made up mostly of photocopies.

Marcus' archive thereby highlights two conflicts over the nature of Jewish life after the Holocaust, the question of Diaspora in Jewish life and the nature of American Jewish history. His historical and archival work centered on a vision of American Jewry scattered across America, tied to what he would term "omniterritoriality," an idea that Jews were to be found everywhere and affirmed dispersion as the key to Jewish survival.¹⁴ He claimed the concept stemmed from the Talmud, citing *Pesachim* 87b, when R. Oshaia declares God "showed righteousness to Israel... by scattering them among the nations"—a curious citation that immediately preceded the first appearance of the terminology of the "ingathering of the exiles" or *ḳibbutz galuyot* (*Pesachim* 88a) that animated the Jerusalem archivists' efforts.¹⁵ His archive was informed by his view of the Diaspora not as a waypoint but something worthy in and of itself, prefiguring what Todd Endelman would term the "legitimization of the Diaspora experience" in Jewish historiography.¹⁶ Moreover, Marcus was driven by a belief in the importance of dispersion for the preservation of the Jews and their records alike. He expressed uncertainty about the future of the state of Israel and the archives brought there, and created his archive as a temple to data, not the document. Emphasizing that he held "no fetish about originals" and preferred photocopies, he created of a series of microfilm

¹⁴ Abraham J. Peck and Jonathan Sarna, eds., *Biz hundert un tsvantsik! A Tribute Volume for Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus* (Cincinnati: HUC-JIR, 1986), 69.

¹⁵ Marcus, "Testament: A Personal Statement," 1989, AJA Jacob Rader Marcus Nearprint File, Box 2, printed in Zola, *The Dynamics of American Jewish History*, 147–151; "A Moment Interview with Jacob Rader Marcus," A78.

¹⁶ Todd Endelman, "The Legitimization of Diaspora Experience in Recent Jewish Historiography," *Modern Judaism* 11, no. 2 (1991): 195–209.

repositories at HUC's campuses and the American Jewish Periodical Center which copied Jewish newspapers.¹⁷ Marcus thus held forth a distinctive perspective in geographical and geopolitical terms. If the Jerusalem archivists gained material due to the fallout of the Second World War, Marcus looked to the Cold War, thinking in terms of the possibility of nuclear war and the United States' hegemony, and highlighted the question of the epicenter of American Jewish life and the thrust of its history, a tension between New York on one side and the hinterland on the other.

Marcus hoped to rectify scholarly lacunae and open a new era in the study of American Jewry. It was a time of increasing interest in American Jewish history, when scholars looked to professionalize the field and, in the lead-up to the 1954 tercentenary celebration—it was in 1654 that the first Jews settled permanently in New Amsterdam—interest grew among a wider public.¹⁸ In *Early American Jewry* (1951), at fifty-five Marcus' first major work in the field, he lamented the lack of the “basic tools with which every historian works.” The sources, yet “to be dug up,” were a first priority, alongside an array of auxiliary aids: atlases, biographical dictionaries, critically edited sources, serial indices, genealogical tables, and so on.¹⁹ With *The Colonial American Jew* (1970), he proposed that every field requires “at least one work which supplies the *Stoff*, the raw material, if only for others to summarize, to reevaluate, and even to reject.”²⁰ Here he referred to this three-volume history and his effort to “give the facts” as a foundation for future study, but he

¹⁷ “The Archives Story,” *H.U.C.–J.I.R. Bulletin*, Jan. 1959, 4–9.

¹⁸ Large numbers of Jews had settled prior to 1654 in the Dutch colonies, and it is well-known that individual Jews made their way to continental North America prior to this date (see Sarna, *American Judaism*, 1–2), but it is generally accepted as the beginning of permanent settlement in what would become the United States. The 1954 Tercentenary was an opportunity for scholars to convene (e.g. AJHS' Conference of Historians on the Writing of American Jewish History in September of that year) and for what Jonathan Sarna termed a “holiday celebration” of American Jewry (“The Cult of Synthesis in American Jewish Culture,” *JSS*, n.s., 5, no. 1–2 (1998–1999): 61). See David Bernstein, “The American Jewish Tercentenary,” *AJYB* 57 (1956): 101–118; Judith Rosen, “Earlier American Jewish Anniversary Celebrations: 1905 and 1954,” *AJH* 92, no. 4 (Dec. 2004): 481–497; Beth Wenger, *History Lessons: The Creation of American Jewish Heritage*, 215–223, Arthur A. Goren, “A ‘Golden Decade’ for American Jews: 1945–1955,” in *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 186–204.

¹⁹ Marcus, *Early American Jewry* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1951), I:vii.

²⁰ Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew, 1492–1776* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press), I:xxvi.

hinted at a wider aim, later realized in his 1990 compendium of population figures, *To Count a People*. He suggested then that these data, upon which he claimed he made “no evaluation” but “if properly interpreted... are mutely eloquent,” could save “dozens of hours of laborious search,” a component of “my plan to make many such tools available.”²¹ Such sentiments undoubtedly framed his archive too. Despite Marcus’ earnest belief in objectivity, his archive told a story of its own. In one 1959 article, he highlighted some such “discoveries” that gestured at his historical vision: the diary of a “Jewish lad from Cleveland” who in 1868 “scaplt three Indians,” and a Jewish venture in Virginia which hired Daniel Boone to survey land along the Ohio. He also raised questions of who was the first Jew in Cincinnati, leading to a conclusion characteristic of Marcus: “No Jew is ever the first Jew anywhere... There is always another who has been there before him.”²² Marcus’ “mutely eloquent” documents thus presented not a blank slate of American Jewish history but an emergent narrative, one not centered on New York City but looking out from Cincinnati to the dispersion of Jews across America, embodying a dramatic history highlighting Jews’ contribution to America and affirming the historical and future viability of the Jewish Diaspora. This chapter, then, will dive into Marcus’ historical and archival projects and consider the tension of his idea of an archive of diaspora that would centralize sources at Cincinnati.

The Making of an American Jewish Historian and his Archives

In 1938, Jacob Rader Marcus published *The Jew in the Medieval World*, a documentary history of Jewish life from 315 CE to 1791.²³ Some have called it his most enduring work, as it proved a rich store of edited sources for the college instructor, but Marcus was about to open a second scholarly act, as he remade himself from a scholar of European Jewry into a student of

²¹ Marcus, *To Count a People: American Jewish Population Data, 1585–1984* (University Press of America, 1990), 3.

²² “The Archives Story,” *H.U.C.–J.I.R. Bulletin*, Jan. 1959, 4–9.

²³ Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Source Book, 315–1791* (Cincinnati: Sinai Press, 1938).

American Jewish history.²⁴ He had already been gathering sources on the subject for his students for some time, and in early 1938, he wrote of developing “a body of historical materials” on American Jewry.²⁵ His first tentative outreaches quickly turned to a torrential outpour. With a voracious appetite, he sought material of all kinds: “diaries, newspaper and magazine clippings, contracts, family biographies, and the like.”²⁶ Whatever Marcus received, he dutifully duplicated and deposited in the Hebrew Union College library.²⁷ By 1953—a decade after he taught his first seminar in American Jewish history in the summer of 1942, what he claimed to be the first such graduate course at any institute of higher learning—Marcus reported that all of his five seminars were on the subject, declaring himself devoted “solely and completely” to its study.²⁸ He could look back on five years of intense work at his Archives, where he had gathered an impressive collection on the basis of his network of students and colleagues as well as proactive efforts like his expedition in search of the files of early American Jewry in the islands of the Caribbean. And he dreamt of forming a “school” of American Jewish history, cementing HUC as a scholarly center and developing American Jewish history as a “scientific” discipline.²⁹

²⁴ Lance J. Sussmann, “‘Historian of the Jewish People’: A Historiographical Reevaluation of the Writings of Jacob R. Marcus,” *AJAJ* 50, no. 1–2 (1998): 11–22, describing it as “his most enduring and perhaps most widely circulated book” (12), and Randall M. Falk, *Bright Eminence: The Life and Thought of Jacob Rader Marcus*, (Malibu, CA: Pangloss Press, 1994), 83. Cf. Marcus, *The Jew in the American World* (1996), modeled on *Medieval World*, boasting that “it is still in print, still employed as a textbook in many colleges and universities” (23).

²⁵ Marcus to Alfred Mack, 5 Feb. 1938, AJA MS-687 1/1; Hamilton Fish to Marcus, 4 Mar. 1938, AJA MS-210 4/4. Cf. Marcus to H.J. Haas, 13 Apr. 1939, MS-687 1/1, describing his hope to assemble “a body of documentary data.”

²⁶ Marcus to Fred Butzel, 15 May 1939, Marcus to Harry Alexander, 15 May 1939, AJA MS-687 1/1.

²⁷ HUC Library, Donor Certificate, 26 Jan. 1942, AJA MS-383 1/6, has a note: “We are indeed glad to have these interesting papers which Dr. Marcus has been using.” Marcus reported in 1937 to Julian Morgenstern that materials photostated from Germany would, “in accordance with our understanding,” be deposited in the library once he finished studying them. (Marcus to Morgenstern, 21 Sept. 1937, AJA MS-5 A18/7).

²⁸ “A Moment Interview with Jacob Rader Marcus,” *Moment*, Mar. 1981, A75–A83; also Press release, 1994, AJA MS-687 58/4; Bertram Korn, “Founders Day Address,” 18 Mar. 1976, Korn, “Tribute to Jacob Rader Marcus,” 17 Dec. 1979, AJA MS-99 41/3. Cf. *Bright Eminence*, 84, and Marcus, interview by Samuel Proctor, 14 Sept. 1985, Samuel Proctor Oral History Program Collection, University of Florida, AJHS 04, p. 18. Cf. Marcus to Salo Baron, 10 Mar. 1953, AJA MS-210, 1/6; Marcus to Baron, 21 Apr. 1953, AJA MS-210, 3/1.

²⁹ Marcus to Bertrand Kahn, 17 Oct. 1952, AJA MS-687 39/8; “After Five Years,” *AJAJ* 5, no. 1 (1953): 3–4.

Marcus left his family in Wheeling, West Virginia, for Hebrew Union College in 1911, at the age of fifteen beginning his rabbinic training, then spanning upwards of nine years alongside secondary studies and courses at the University of Cincinnati.³⁰ Upon his ordination in 1920, he stayed on as an assistant for Gotthard Deutsch, the longtime history professor.³¹ After Deutsch's unexpected death the next year, he was handed the full slate of history courses.³² It was the start of a remarkable tenure spanning nearly the entirety of the twentieth century. In 1919, when Deutsch had suggested he might retire, Marcus had implored him to remain: "You are part of the College itself... We all want you to stay at the College 'Ad Maeh [sic] Shanah,'" until one hundred years.³³ Later, such words might have applied to Marcus. Apart from his military service (1917 to 1919) and studies in Germany (1922 to 1926), he would remain in Cincinnati until his death in 1995, just months shy of that milestone. After the tragic and premature passing of his wife and daughter, Marcus came to see the College, his Archives, and his students as his remaining family; in his will,

³⁰ For Marcus' general biography, see Stanley Chyet, "Jacob Rader Marcus: A Biographical Sketch," in *Essays in American Jewish History* (Cincinnati: 1958), 1–22; Jonathan Sarna, "Jacob Rader Marcus (1896–1995)," *AJYB* 97 (1997): 633–640; Moses Rischin, "Jacob Rader Marcus: Historian-Archivist of Jewish Middle America," *AJH* 85, no. 2 (June 1997): 175–181; and a somewhat hagiographical account, Randall Falk, *Bright Eminence*. On his early years, see Marcus, Autobiographical sketch, 1947, Marcus Tribute Dinner, 20 Nov. 1983, Abraham J. Peck, "Biographical sketch," 27 Jun. 1990, AJA Jacob Rader Marcus Nearprint file, Box 1; Marcus, interview by Ida Selavan, 9 May 1979, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh, National Council of Jewish Women, Pittsburgh Section Records, 1894–2011, AIS.1964.40, Box 104 Folder 21, tape 1, side 1 (5:00); "A Moment Interview with Jacob Rader Marcus" (1981); Marcus, interview by Samuel Proctor. On HUC's program of study, see Michael A. Meyer, *Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion: A Centennial History, 1875–1975* (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 1976), 18–23, 57–58.

³¹ At HUC, Marcus was paid \$2,000 (about \$24,400 in 2017 dollars) instead of \$3,000 (\$36,500 in 2017) offered in New Orleans. See: Diary Entries, 15–24. Mar. 1920, 27. Apr. 1920, AJA MS-210 29/4, and "CPI Inflation Calculator," U.S. Department of Labor, accessed April 13, 2017, <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>. On his teaching at HUC, see diary entries from 4 Jan. 1921, 5. Jan. 1921, 17. Jan. 1921, 22. Jan. 1921, AJA MS-210 29/4, and "Jacob Rader Marcus," *HUC Monthly*, Jun. 1922, which describes his appointment as "assistant to Dr. Deutsch in the history department."

³² On Deutsch's death and Marcus' subsequent appointment, see Diary Entries, 14–19 Oct. 1921, AJA MS-210 29/4. Morgenstern had suggested that Marcus get most of Deutsch's classes even before his passing, on rumors that Deutsch would retire to Palestine; Marcus, however, did not think that Deutsch would "go so quick." (4 Jan. 1921, AJA MS-210 29/4; cf. Deutsch to Marcus, 15 Feb. 1919, AJA MS-210 4/2, where Deutsch intimated his plans to go to Palestine.) With his appointment, Marcus' teaching load grew to include "C. Biblical. B. Post-biblical and Ceremonial. A. General Survey of Jewish History. I-II- 70 to & thru' Maimonides. III. Jr. 1348 - c. 1650. Sources: General survey and Bibliography." (Diary Entry, 9 Sept. 1922, AJA MS-210 29/4)

³³ Original emphasis, Marcus to Deutsch, 24 Jan. 1919 AJA MS-210 4/2, 9/5. Cf. Jacob Meyer, "Our Dr. Deutsch," *HUC Monthly*, May 1916, 274; "Dr. Deutsch (Air: Casey Jones)," AJA Gotthard Deutsch Nearprint file, which concluded: "Dr. Deutsch we cannot do without you, / So please keep on a coming bis zu hundert jahr!"

Marcus left HUC his entire personal fortune, about four million dollars.³⁴ In the final analysis, Marcus' true gift—beyond his prodigious memory and scholarly energy—was his administrative instinct and a blessing of longevity; his archive reflected a productive career as a shepherd of scholarly tools of all types and the greatest booster of the field of American Jewish history.

Marcus claimed he abandoned the study of European Jewry out of shock at the Holocaust and his closely-held conviction of the rise of America in its place. He had written in 1934, with words he would come to regret, that German Jewry would survive Hitler, and three years later he dismissed as “unhistorical” the possibility that any Jewish community could be annihilated.³⁵ Marcus' assessment haunted him.³⁶ He increasingly spoke of a new burden pressed on American Jewry, culminating in a 1947 autobiographical sketch with notes on his beliefs; “Jewry in this country,” he wrote in what would become a refrain, “is destined to be the greatest Jewry in the world in the next hundred years.”³⁷ His conviction that Europe was “dead as a great center” led him to be uninterested in an era of Jewish life upon which the book of history had closed forever.³⁸ Likewise, Marcus and his colleagues claimed that the American Jewish Archives was a measured response to the “unchallenged reality” of American Jewish cultural hegemony, amplified by

³⁴ “A Moment Interview,” A85; Sarna, “Marcus,” 637, 640; Marcus to Abraham J. Peck, 4 May 1990, AJA MS-687 58/9.

³⁵ In 1934, Marcus remarked: “German Jewry has the will to survive... The lesson of Jewish history lends us further assurance that, barring wholesale expulsion or massacre, which seem rather remote even under the implacable hatred of the National Socialists, what has been called the ‘Jewish genius for survival’ will manifest itself in Germany” (*Rise and Destiny of the German Jew*, 1934, 293). In the 1973 reissue, he detailed his 1937 meeting with Otto D. Tolischus at the *New York Times*' Berlin bureau, and his assessment of the impossibility of mass murder. Cf. Marcus, interview by Samuel Proctor (1985), 21–22, where he again defended his early skepticism of the Nazi threat.

³⁶ In the recollection of Gary Zola (Interview, Aug. 2012), Marcus declared his wish to destroy every copy of the book. Cf. “A Moment Interview,” and Peck, “Biographical sketch,” 27 Jun. 1990, AJA Jacob Rader Marcus Nearprint File, Box 1, which notes that “Dr. Marcus was affected and continues to be affected by the Holocaust.”

³⁷ Marcus, “New Literary Responsibilities,” *AJYB* 43 (1941–42): 784–791; Marcus, “Judaism and Western Civilization,” *Contemporary Jewish Record*, Oct. 1941, 501–510; Autobiographical sketch, 1947, AJA Jacob Rader Marcus Nearprint File, Box 1.

³⁸ “A Moment Interview with Jacob Rader Marcus.”

America's place as the world's superpower.³⁹ And so, he suggested his turn to American Jewish history was a radical reinvention. In 1985, he claimed it had been "almost overnight."⁴⁰ At the same time, he pointed to a 1916 essay on America as the "Spiritual Center of Jewry," building up an emergent myth that he was in some ways predestined to pursue the study of American Jewry.⁴¹

On closer examination, a more complex story comes into view. Marcus first collected Americana in 1934, when he sought sources for his student Allan Tarshish.⁴² His *Medieval World* sourcebook, too, included material on America, and in 1940, he began composing *Communal Sick-Care in the German Ghetto*, a study of Jewish medical professions and institutions that appeared in 1947.⁴³ Moreover, Marcus' archive reflected a wider project characterized by a series of through-lines both before and after his turn to the study of American Jewry: When he wrote in 1990 of his "plan to make as many ... tools available to future scholars as I can," he gestured at a bookshelf lined with bibliographies, indices, and auxiliary aids, from his 1935 *Brief Introduction to the Bibliography of Modern Jewish History* to *The Jew in the American World*,

³⁹ Marcus, "After Twenty-Five Volumes," *AJAJ* 26, no. 1 (1974): 3–4. Also see Marcus, "The American Jewish Archives," *American Archivist* 23, 1 (Jan. 1960): 57–61; Abraham Peck, Society of American Archivist Meeting Presentation, 1 Oct. 1980, AJA Nearprint file, box 3; Abraham J. Peck, "Introduction," *All Hail to a Prince of a Schnorrer* (Cincinnati: AJA, 1996), 5, and "The American Jewish Archives: What and Why?" AJA MS-687 39/2.

⁴⁰ Marcus, interview by Samuel Proctor (1985), 18, 25, 33; cf. "A Moment Interview" (1981), A81.

⁴¹ "A Moment Interview" (1981), A81; Marcus, interview by Samuel Proctor (1985), 17–18. Here, he referred to his 1916 essay (incorrectly dating it to 1913), "The Spiritual Center of Jewry," *Jewish Community Bulletin* (Wheeling, WV), 17 Apr. 1916 (also printed in *DAJH*, 37–42). Gary Zola insinuated that it indicated Marcus' early belief in America: "Was it merely an interesting coincidence that the twenty-year-old Jacob Marcus decided to write about Jewish life in America when he first began to publish articles?" (*DAJH*, 37) Stanley Chyet began his sketch of Marcus with this essay, noting that "already in the youth of twenty there stirred love and concern for the life of American Jewry" (*Essays in American Jewish History*, 1). In a highly uncritical 1994 biography, Randall Falk suggested that "it was a prophetic forerunner of the field to which Marcus would devote himself in his writings and in his founding of the American Jewish Archives." (*Bright Eminence*, 77).

⁴² Marcus to Cong. Mishkan Israel, 23 Apr. 1934, Abraham J. Feldman to Marcus, 2 May 1934, AJA MS-38 23/16; Marcus to Julian Morgenstern, 6 Feb. 1936 AJA MS-5 A18/7. Tarshish's dissertation, "The Rise of American Judaism: A History of American Jewish Life from 1848 to 1881" (Ph.D. dissertation, HUC, 1938), was perhaps the first dissertation on American Jewish history. Cf. Bertram Korn, "Founders Day Address in Honor of Professor Jacob Rader Marcus," 18 Mar. 1976, Korn, "Tribute to Jacob Rader Marcus," 17 Dec. 1979, AJA MS-99 41/3. See *Medieval World*, 60–74, 80–83.

⁴³ Marcus to Julian Morgenstern, 21 Sept. 1937, Marcus to Morgenstern, Dec. 1938, AJA MS-5 A18/7. In Marcus to Morgenstern, 3 Dec. 1946, AJA MS-5 A18/7, he claimed "it took me seven years" to finish *Communal Sick-Care*.

published posthumously in 1996.⁴⁴ Throughout, he held firm to a notion of “scientific” scholarship and a belief that his archive might “ascertain the facts as they actually are.”⁴⁵ In his early study of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century colonies of the Atlantic world, he trained his eye on the same period examined in *Communal Sick-Care*, which he notably concluded with a note about Cincinnati’s Jewish hospital.⁴⁶ And as most of these Jews had hailed from Spanish and Portuguese origin, he gestured at his deep ties to the German Jewish scholarly and cultural milieu in which he had matured, where the “myth of Sephardic supremacy” long reigned.⁴⁷ Perhaps most of all, his every action was motivated by a central drive to elevate the status of HUC and a remarkable institutional savvy that enabled him to secure tremendous achievements.

In November 1943, HUC hoped to develop a collection of Americana. When the librarian, Walter Rothman, was directed to collect “archiv [sic] material,” he turned for guidance to Marcus, who suggested they approach synagogues to photostat their records.⁴⁸ The effort was short-lived: Rothman resigned soon thereafter, having received the files of a single synagogue.⁴⁹ In the meantime, Marcus suggested in 1945 that the American Jewish Historical Society relocate from New York to HUC’s Cincinnati campus.⁵⁰ The following year, at the 1946 meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Marcus called on synagogues to preserve their records. Curiously,

⁴⁴ In addition, he produced *An Index to Jewish Festschriften* (1937); “A Brief Bibliography of American Jewish History” (1943–44); *An Index to Scientific Articles on American Jewish History* (1971), *To Count A People* (1990).

⁴⁵ “The Program of the American Jewish Archives,” *AJAJ* 1, no. 1 (Jun. 1948): 2–5.

⁴⁶ *Communal Sick-Care* focused on the sixteenth century to nineteenth century, presenting a particularly “Jewish” definition of the Medieval period; on the Cincinnati hospital, see *Communal Sick-Care*, 287–288.

⁴⁷ See John Efron, *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Carstein Schapkow, *Role Model and Countermodel: The Golden Age of Iberian Jewry and German Jewish Culture During the Era of Emancipation* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 1994), 71–92.

⁴⁸ “Minutes of the Meeting of the HUC Library Committee,” 1 Nov. 1943, “Report of Committee on Library,” 9 Nov. 1943, “Report of Faculty Committee on Library,” 4 Jan. 1944, Rothman to Victor Greenebaum, 21 Apr. 1944, AJA MS-5 E1/19.

⁴⁹ Rothman to Greenebaum, 21 Apr. 1944, AJA MS-5 E1/19, reporting that he received files from Montgomery, AL.

⁵⁰ Marcus to Maurice Eisendrath, Adolph Rosenberg, 6 Apr. 1945, AJA MS-210 4/15.

Marcus did not insist that files be sent to Cincinnati only, but also suggested as libraries of deposit the New York-based AJHS and the Jewish Institute of Religion, the competing Reform seminary in that same city led by Stephen S. Wise.⁵¹ Most important to Marcus—for him a common theme—was that the material be preserved, not necessarily where it was housed.

Meanwhile, Marcus continued teaching and his own research. At HUC, Marcus taught the full range of Jewish history from the Bible to modern times, including American Jewish history. With his offering of a seminar on American Jewish history in 1942, he increasingly assigned students themes in the topic for rabbinic theses.⁵² But Marcus produced little work of his own in this field outside of a bibliographic essay and a few articles intended for a popular audience.⁵³ HUC prided itself as a research center, following a tradition of rabbinical seminaries serving as centers of Jewish studies, but it was mainly a teaching institution.⁵⁴ As a result, Marcus' research was mostly limited to the summer recesses.⁵⁵ In 1946, he appealed for sabbatical leave; it would be the first there ever awarded under a system that provided leave once every thirteen

⁵¹ "Report of the Committee on Contemporaneous History," *CCARYB* 56 (1946): 72–91.

⁵² See, among others, rabbinical theses by William Sajowitz, "History of Reform Judaism in San Antonio, Texas, 1874–1945" (1945); Martin I. Hinchin, "A History of the Jews of Sioux City, Iowa (1857–1945)" (1946); Jerome Grollman, "The Emergence of Reform Judaism in the United States" (1948; *AJAJ* 2, no. 2 (1950): 3–14); Herbert Yarrish, "The Beginnings of the Mikve Israel Congregation of Philadelphia" (1949); Martin B. Ryback, "The East-West Conflict in American Reform as Reflected in the Israelite, 1854–1879" (1949; *AJAJ* 4, no. 1 (1952): 3–25); Earl Grollman, "A History of the Jews of the North American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century" (1950); Benno Wallach, "Dr. David Einhorn's Sinai, 1856–1862" (1951).

⁵³ Marcus, "Judaism and Western Civilization," *Contemporary Jewish Record*, Oct. 1941, 501–510; "A Brief Bibliography of American Jewish History," *Jewish Book Annual* 2 (1943–44), 23–30; Marcus, "An Old People in a New World," *Contemporary Religious Thought*, Jun. 1945, 16–18; "The Contribution of the Jew to American Civilization," Broadcast on *Message of Israel*, 8 Apr. 1945; *The Jew in American Life* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1945).

⁵⁴ On rabbinical seminaries and Jewish studies, see among others, Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context*; David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Myers, "The Ideology of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*," in *History of Jewish Philosophy*, ed. Daniel H. Frank, Oliver Lehman (New York: Routledge), 706–720; Michael Brenner, *Prophets of the Past: Interpreters of Jewish History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 24–35.

⁵⁵ See Marcus to Morgenstern, 12 Jul. 1938, AJA MS-5 A18/7: "Like yourself I am fortunate this summer to get in a lot of good licks on my research." Also Eugen Täubler to Nelson Glueck, 6 Jul. 1949, UB Basel NL 76 E4 #014.5, complaining of his treatment as a "white slave laborer" under Morgenstern, with no time to conduct his own work.

years.⁵⁶ It had taken Marcus seven years to compose *Communal Sick-Care in the German Ghetto*. Now fifty, he despaired that his new effort would take at least a decade if he were not relieved of teaching duties. In his travels, he had found that the sources of American Jewish history were scattered far and wide, and he expected he would need to visit “most of the major libraries in this country and in Canada” to conduct systematic research.”⁵⁷ He dreamt, then, of a central repository where he could work continuously. In the self-described “provinces,” with his wife increasingly ill, Marcus gathered materials that he could study close at hand.⁵⁸

In the summer of 1947, the initiative Rothman and Marcus had begun in 1943 resurfaced. Irving M. Levey, the new librarian, reached out to synagogues to gather materials “for the purpose of creating an archive on the history of Early Reform Judaism in the United States.”⁵⁹ The effort was expensive. In one instance, Marcus spent \$216.94 (almost \$2,400 in 2017 dollars) on photostats from Rhode Island.⁶⁰ By September 1947 Marcus turned to Nelson Glueck, the newly-appointed president of HUC, for a needed cash infusion.⁶¹ Glueck and Marcus were fast friends, having been schoolmates at the College and flatmates in Berlin and Jerusalem when they undertook graduate studies; in fact, Marcus was more or less responsible for Glueck’s hiring.⁶²

⁵⁶ Marcus to Morgenstern, 3 Dec. 1946, AJA MS-5 A18/7; see Board of Governors, Report of the President, 18 Dec. 1946, AJA MS-5 D19/2, which describes the system of sabbatical leave.

⁵⁷ Marcus to Morgenstern, 3 Dec. 1946, AJA MS-5 A18/7.

⁵⁸ Marcus to Annie Nathan Meyer, 5 Jul. 1945, AJA MS-687 1/3. Also see Marcus to Frank L. Weil, 22 Jun. 1949, AJA MS-210 9/1; he then suggested that he could not travel because “I have an invalid wife.”

⁵⁹ Board of Governors, “Meeting of July 7,” 22 Oct. 1947, AJA MS-5 D19/3, lists “Library of Americana” under “Expansion of Library functions and facilities.” Marcus to the Librarian, 10 Jun. 1947, AJA MS-5 E12, “Report of the Librarian,” 7 May 1947, AJA MS-5 D19/3. Irving M. Levey to Victor Greenebaum, 8 May 1946, AJA MS-5 E1/19. The notes from the Board of Governors meeting, 20 Jan. 1948, AJA MS-20 D1-1/1, note: “Approximately four years ago [1943/44], Dr. Jacob R. Marcus ... in connection with his pioneer scholarship in American Jewish History, initiated a project designed to create at the Hebrew Union College a repository for all documents and materials bearing upon Jewish life in America.”

⁶⁰ See Irving M. Levey to Maxwell Lyons, 7 Nov. 1947, AJA MS-5 E12; “CPI Inflation Calculator.”

⁶¹ Marcus to Nelson Glueck, 22 Sept. 1947, AJA SC-4773.

⁶² See Marcus’ diaries, AJA MS-210 29/4; and study notebooks in boxes 27 and 28, which include a number of Glueck’s. In 1924, Marcus encouraged Julian Morgenstern to foster homegrown instructors instead of looking for European scholars to bring to Cincinnati, as had long been the standard. As luck would have it, three of Marcus’

As a result, by 1947 Marcus had wide latitude. Except for the venerable David Philipson, who passed away in 1948, Marcus was by then the longest-standing member of the faculty, with the ear of the president, of whom Marcus boasted that he served as a personal “brain trust.”⁶³

Moreover, Marcus’ prodigious fundraising provided him with a measure of independence.⁶⁴

And so, in September 1947 Marcus asked Glueck for “special funds for Americana archives.” He argued that America was “the greatest Jewry in the world today” and its valuable records, “still available in large part,” were in danger of destruction. Marcus suggested HUC was a natural gathering point for the files of Reform synagogues and could be a leading repository of American Jewish historical records at large. On a “relatively small budget” of \$3,000, about \$32,700 in 2017 terms, he wrote that “we could easily make Hebrew Union College the center of American Jewish historical studies.”⁶⁵ Within days, Glueck found Marcus his money and an unused seminar room, and printed an announcement in the *H.U.C. Bulletin* calling on alumni to send their synagogues’ files to the “American Jewish Congregational Archives.”⁶⁶ Nearly one hundred congregations responded to the call.⁶⁷ And so when the Board of Governors met on Monday, December 1, 1947—a decade after Marcus had first spoken of his “body of historical materials”—the American Jewish Archives were officially established, and Marcus proclaimed

close friends were then studying in Germany—Nelson Glueck, Sheldon Blank, and Walter Rothman—all of whom were hired on his glowing recommendations (Marcus to Morgenstern, 17 Apr. 1924, AJA MS-5 A18/7).

⁶³ Marcus to Zvei Lichtenstein, 7 Nov. 1950, AJA MS-210 7/6.

⁶⁴ Marcus raised tremendous sums; see “Memo from Dr. Marcus to Dr. Glueck,” 8 Jun. 1955 (\$20,000 raised), 13 Jun. 1956 (about \$25,000 raised), AJA MS-687 39/2. In one telling instance, when Marcus asked for funds in 1963, Glueck wrote back: “We’re broke!!! I don’t know where to get you \$2000 now.” Marcus responded with a request that if he raised more money than his promised quota (\$12,000), he might use it for his own projects, to which Glueck simply wrote in the margins “O.K. ng” (Marcus to Glueck, 17 Oct. 1963, 25 Oct. 1963, AJA MS-160 1/9).

⁶⁵ Marcus to Glueck, “Special Funds for Americana Archives,” 22 Sept. 1947, AJA SC-4773. “CPI Inflation Calculator.”

⁶⁶ Irving M. Levey to Marcus, 26 Sept. 1947, AJA SC-4773; “American Jewish Congregational Archives,” *H.U.C. Bulletin* (Sept. 1949), AJA Nearprint File, Box 1; Marcus to Nelson Glueck, 8 Jan. 1948, AJA MS-210 1/2.

⁶⁷ Irving M. Levey to Marcus, 26 Sept. 1947, Levey to Maxwell Lyons, 26 Sept. 1947, AJA SC-4773; Lyons to Levey, 26 Sept. 1947, AJA MS-5 E12; Board of Governors Meeting, 22 Oct. 1947 (Appendix G, Report of the Librarian to the Library Committee, C. Archives of Congregational Records and Minute Books), AJA MS-5 D19/3.

soon thereafter that they would create a major research center for the study of American Jewish history, the only one between New York City and the Pacific Ocean, whose files would be indispensable for the serious scholar of American Jewry.⁶⁸

Out of One, Many: Marcus' Program for an American Jewish Archives

Marcus was by no means alone in his growing interest in the field of American Jewish history and his effort to document it. Just a few years before, from 1935 to 1942, the Works Progress Administration's Historical Records Survey cataloged records across the land, including those of Jewish communities.⁶⁹ In 1941, the American Jewish Historical Society's Isidore S. Meyer had called for a "Gesamt-Archiv" of American Jewry.⁷⁰ In 1942, Salo Baron called for investigation of American Jewry due to its new position in a postwar world, the same year his study of pre-emancipation Jewish life concluded not with the French Revolution but with a discussion of America.⁷¹ In 1949, Oscar Handlin also called for professional inquiry, decrying

⁶⁸ Board of Governors, 1 Dec. 1947, AJA MS-5 B1-1/1; Marcus, "Report," 1 Jan. 1948, Marcus to Glueck, 8 Jan. 1948, Marcus to Sydney Lubarr, 10 Aug. 1949, AJA MS-210 1/2 ("No man can write the history of American Jewry... without having recourse to our files and records"); Marcus to Abraham Feldman, 31 Oct. 1950, AJA MS-38, 1/8 ("No one will be able to write the history of American Jewry without constant use of our papers."); "Report to Dr. Glueck," 28 Apr. 1955, AJA MS-687 4/13 ("No one can attempt to write the history of American Jewry without using this material.")

⁶⁹ Leonard Rapport, "An Overview of the Historical Records Survey," *The WPA Historical Records Survey: A Guide to the Unpublished Inventories, Indexes, and Transcripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1980), 1–8; Robert Kidder, "The Historical Records Survey: Activities and Publications," *Library Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (Apr. 1943): 136–149; also see Edward Frances Barrese, "The Historical Records Survey: A Nation Acts to Save Its Memory" (Ph.d. Dissertation, George Washington University, 1980), and William F. McDonald, *Federal Relief Administration and the Arts* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969), 751–828, esp. 807–810, dealing with the records of churches and other religious institutions (though he does not mention synagogues). Cf. Marcus, "History V: Sources of Jewish History," 25 Mar. 1955, AJA MS-210 22/10; he suggests the HRC surveyed Jewish records in five states.

⁷⁰ Isidore S. Meyer, "Memorandum on the Preservation of the American Jewish War Records," 6 Jun. 1941, AJHS I-1, 125/1; cf. Meyer, "The American Jewish Historical Society," *Journal of Jewish Bibliography* 4, no. 1–2 (1943): 6–24.

⁷¹ Salo Baron, *The Effect of the War on Jewish Community Life* (New York: Glucksman Memorial Committee, 1942); Salo Baron, "American and Jewish Destiny: A Semimillennial Experience," 12 Oct. 1942, in *Stepped by Adversity: Essays and Addresses on American Jewish Life* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1971), 15–25; Baron, *The Jewish Community: Its History and Structure to the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1942), II:365–366, also III:221, n. 8—the work's final note—reflected that "It is hoped that these fascinating developments [i.e. American Jewish history] will be dealt with extensively in the present writer's work on the modern Jewish community, now in the early stages of preparation." Cf. Robert Liberles, *Salo Wittmayer Baron: Architect of Jewish History* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 243–265, esp. 248, where he notes an earlier title for *The Jewish Community*, "The Ghetto Community: A History of

the “low status of writing in American Jewish history”—“an open secret,” he claimed, “for two decades or more.” Of course, the AJHS, founded in 1892, had long fostered this field, but Handlin insisted it required “radical reform;” in 1954, he derided the group in 1954 as a set of “devoted, but not often competent amateurs.”⁷² Marcus echoed such views. In 1943, he had complained that there were few works of “scientific caliber,” and a decade later he declared: “The science of American Jewish history is literally in its swaddling clothes.”⁷³ By 1960, he claimed that prior to the founding of his archive it had known “little more than apologetics,” a veiled reference to the AJHS, which he called in 1963 a domain of “Victorian filiopietism.”⁷⁴ But Marcus primarily focused on practicalities, particularly the Society’s lack of funding or a satisfactory home, which led its collections to be kept in cold storage.⁷⁵ In 1945, Marcus wrote of the AJHS’ “very precarious situation,” of which he would only become further acquainted as the Society’s Vice President (1948–1955) and President (1956–1958).⁷⁶ Consequently, Marcus created his archive at a time of renewed interest in American Jewish history and in light of the vacuum left by the AJHS’ limitations, but he also developed a distinctive historical and archival approach in which he envisioned a series of archives, the AJHS and AJA among them, across the American landscape reflecting his idea of dispersal in Jewish life and in light of the Cold War.

the Jewish Community from the Babylonian Exile to the Emancipation.” Also see Liberles, 306–321 on Baron’s interest in America and American Jewish history, culminating with his presidency of the AJHS from 1953 to 1955.

⁷² Handlin, “Our Unknown American Jewish Ancestors: Fact and Myth in History,” *Commentary*, Feb. 1948, 104–110; Handlin, “New Paths in American Jewish History,” *Commentary*, Jan. 1949, 388–394; Handlin, “Foreword,” in Moses Rischin, *An Inventory of American Jewish History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), vii–viii. On Handlin’s work in American Jewish history, see Hasia Diner, “Oscar Handlin: A Jewish Historian,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 32, no. 3 (Spring 2013): 53–61.

⁷³ Marcus, “A Brief Bibliography of American Jewish History,” *Jewish Book Annual* 2 (1943–44), 23–30; Marcus, *Early American Jewry* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951), I:xviii.

⁷⁴ Marcus, “The American Jewish Archives,” *American Archivist* 23, no. 1 (Jan. 1960): 57–61; Marcus, “Major Trends in American Jewish Historical Research,” AJA Jacob Rader Marcus Nearprint file, Box 2, printed in *Studies in American Jewish History: Studies and Addresses* (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 1969), 31–43.

⁷⁵ See, among many other reports, “Memorandum: Housing Needs of the AJHS,” 17 May 1949, AJHS I-1, 109/17.

⁷⁶ Marcus to Maurice Eisendrath, Adolf Rosenberg, 6 Apr. 1945, AJA MS-210 4/15.

Marcus gave form to his vision in a June 1948 essay that refined and revised the proposal he had presented the prior year.⁷⁷ In 1947, he had described America as the world's "greatest Jewry" and "one of the youngest," and dreamt of an archive of Reform synagogues, based at HUC as a matter of course.⁷⁸ He now presented a more assertive vision of greater scale and urgency. He declared a "new chapter" in Jewish life and situated America's Jews, now the "pivotal and controlling factor in Jewish life," as successor to historical centers of Babylon, medieval Spain, Germany, and Poland.⁷⁹ He also argued that historians had been granted a unique opportunity. He proposed that one could "film" Jewish life in America in real time, while it remained "young, virile, and growing," in contrast with most Jewish historical studies, which he characterized as a "post-mortem autopsy." And Marcus appraised the geographical and institutional contours of American Jewish life in his suggestion that the AJHS by "accident of its geographic situation" could only serve scholars in the New York region. Pointing to Cincinnati as the first Jewish community founded west of the Alleghenies, Marcus saw it as an ideal site to serve the scholars of the hinterland. Gesturing to the "inevitable geographic expansion of American Jewish culture" from east to west, he claimed it was "but a matter of time" before another archive was established on the Pacific. In this one essay, Marcus provided a thematic touchstone, underlining in a single stroke the opportunities and imperatives to document and study America's Jews as well as his particular archival and historical approach, rooted in an idea of the importance of dispersion and decentralization colored by the politics of the cold war and a reading of Jewish history at large. He here hinted at what he would come to call "omniterritoriality," a notion of boundless

⁷⁷ "The Program of the American Jewish Archives," *AJAJ* 1, no. 1 (Jun. 1948): 2–5.

⁷⁸ Marcus to Nelson Glueck, "Special Funds for Americana Archives," 22 Sept. 1947, AJA SC-4773.

⁷⁹ Echoed in Marcus, *Early American Jewry*, I:3–9; in his lecture notes, for instance "History V, Introduction to Jewish History," AJA MS-210 23/5, which outlined this historical framework. Cf. "Teachers Institute," 1937, AJA MS-5 A18/7, which lays out a similar schemata of the shifting centers of Jewish life.

dispersal as the key to Jewish history and survival, as well as the security in keeping copies of archives in far-off places for scholarly use and under the specter of atomic war. These strands joined together into an intellectual tapestry weaving a vision of American Jewish history decentered from New York, an interest in photocopies over originals, and a plan for archival centers across the American landscape that all validated dispersion in archival and historical terms, reflecting at once the wider currents of the age and his distinctive approach.

Marcus' archival vision emerged from his analysis of Jewish history, in which he saw the rise and fall of successive centers of Jewish life. He followed in a distinguished historiographic tradition, primarily associated with Simon Dubnow, who traced Jewish history across a series of hegemonic cultural centers from ancient Babylon to eastern Europe; Marcus added America as the next great center.⁸⁰ With between 4.5 and 5 million souls, the Jews of mid-century America far outclassed the ancient commonwealths in Palestine, which Marcus estimated had a maximum population of two million, as well as the contemporary yishuv, with less than 600,000 Jews; American Jewry would remain the world's largest Jewish community well into the twenty-first century.⁸¹ More peculiar, perhaps, was Marcus' description of the "youth" of American Jewry. In 1946, Marcus prefaced his call for archival preservation with an assertion that "the United States is still a young country," and that "American Jewry is just [e]merging historically," which he

⁸⁰ This concept is already apparent in Dubnow, *Jewish History: An Essay in the Philosophy of History* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1903), when he wrote of the shifting "center of gravity" of Jewish life, and reached its apotheosis in Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte der Jüdischen Volkes* (10 vols., 1925–1929). See Benjamin Nathans, "On Russian-Jewish Historiography," in *Historiography of Imperial Russia*, ed. Thomas Sanders (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 397–432; Simon Rabinovitch, "The Dawn of a New Diaspora: Simon Dubnov's Autonomism, from St. Petersburg to Berlin," *LBIYB* 50 (2006): 267–288. Cf. Marcus, "The Effects of Modern Research on our Knowledge of Jewish History," undated lecture, AJA MS-210 20/4, and *United States Jewry* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), I:21–24, where he traces a series of Jewish cultural centers in Palestine, Babylon, Spain, Poland, and then America.

⁸¹ On modern population numbers, see Sarna, *American Judaism*, 375, Rabinovich and Reinharz, *Israel in the Middle East*, 571–572. See Marcus, "An Old People in a New World: The Story of How the Jew Came to America," *Contemporary Religious Thought*, Jun. 1945, 16; cf. Marcus, "The Impacts of Contemporary Life upon Judaism," 18 Jun. 1933 (UAHC), where he suggests that New York City held more Jews than ancient Palestine (28). In 2000, estimates (see n. 88) placed the American Jewish population at between 5.3 and 6.1 million; Israel only breached this lower estimate in 2005 (with approximately 5,313,800 Jews) and the upper one in 2014 (6,102,000).

echoed in 1947 and again in 1948.⁸² Certainly, the settlement of Jews in the Americas, dating from the seventeenth century, was in absolute terms more recent than the European communities Marcus had long studied. Marcus' claim also reflected his idea of a living chain linking early American Jews to the present: He emphasized that "hundreds," himself included, had enjoyed the company of those whose grandparents had come to America in the eighteenth century.⁸³ It meant that much of American Jewish history was still within living memory and could be documented with testimony and anecdote. Moreover, Marcus argued that America's "youth" allowed for American Jewry to be studied while its history was still in the making. This idea informed a proactive program. In one illuminating example, Marcus stressed in 1955 that the difference between his archive and the AJHS was that he did not wait for people to die before seeking their files.⁸⁴ Marcus' approach mirrored his conception of American Jewry, whose "youth" placed it earlier in a chronological scale of the rise and fall of Jewish communal centers. He was determined to document it while it was still "alive," just as he pursued the papers of living figures.

Still, Marcus did not perceive American Jewry's rise through rose-colored glasses. A new "golden age" of Jewish life was by nature limited, and his schema of a series of great Jewish centers was predicated upon the inevitable decline of each in succession. For all his descriptions of America's "fabulous Jewry," he remained anchored to a lachrymose history of the Jews, suggesting that Jewish life always trended downward.⁸⁵ American Jewry would ultimately decline,

⁸² Marcus, "Report of the Committee on Contemporaneous History," *CCARYB* 56 (1946): 72–91.

⁸³ See Marcus, "Special Funds for Americana Archive," 22 Sept. 1947, AJA SC-4733; "The Program of the American Jewish Archives," Jun. 1948; Marcus, *United States Jewry*, I:14.

⁸⁴ Marcus, "History V: Sources of Jewish History," 25 Mar. 1955, AJA MS-210 22/10; cf. "The Archives Story."

⁸⁵ Marcus, "The American Jewish Archives," *Reform Judaism*, 19 Sept. 1972, AJA JRM Nearprint file, Box 2. Cf. Salo Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation," *Menorah Journal*, Jun. 1928, 515–526, published in *The Menorah Treasury*, ed. Leo W. Schwarz (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1964), 50–63; Ismar Schorsch, "The Lachrymose Conception of Jewish History," in *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 1994), 376–388; David Engel, *Historians of the Jews and the Holocaust* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

he argued. In 1957, Marcus claimed that by the year 2000, American Jews would be smaller in number and more culturally integrated with Gentile society.⁸⁶ Marcus later downplayed the significance of numbers, seeing cultural and religious cohesion as a potential upside of what sociologist Stephen M. Cohen termed a “leaner and meaner” Jewish community.⁸⁷ Still, Marcus stayed the course, espousing American Jewry’s coming decline. In 1981 he stated unequivocally: “All Jewries are destined to die. No Jewry is permanent.”⁸⁸ In his preface for *To Count a People* (1990), Marcus sketched the twentieth-century decline of small-town Jewish life, falling prey to Henry Ford—due not to his antisemitism but, instead, to the automobile’s debilitating success, gutting small towns and hamlets.⁸⁹ On occasion he spoke of the town of his birth, New Haven, Pennsylvania, which no longer existed, standing in for a narrative of the vanishing village.⁹⁰ As a result, Marcus imbued his project with a certain urgency. If the study of Jews was often trained on communities in decline or after their destruction, Marcus held forth an opportunity to study American Jewry while it remained “virile and growing.”⁹¹

Marcus also emphasized the perils of contemporary social change and world politics.⁹² In

⁸⁶ “The Next Half Century,” *American Examiner*, 17 May 1957, Julia Kaufman, “A ‘New Kind of Jewry in the Year 2000,’” *Southwestern Jewish Press*, 31 May 1957, AJA Nearprint file, box 2. See Marcus, “The Future of American Jewry,” 2 Jun. 1955, printed in *Studies in American Jewish History*, 222–230. Cf. Marcus, interview by Samuel Proctor (1985), 58, where Marcus mused that by 2050 there would be only three or four million Jews in America.

⁸⁷ Marcus, “Tomorrow’s Prospect,” *American Israelite*, 16 Jun. 1965 AJA Nearprint File, Box 1. Cf. Steven M. Cohen, “Why Inter-marriage May Not Threaten the Jewish Community,” *Moment*, 31 Dec. 1994, 54; Cohen, “De-Constructing the Outreach-Inreach Debate,” *Jerusalem Papers on Jewish Continuity* (Jerusalem, 1996).

⁸⁸ “A Moment Interview with Jacob Rader Marcus,” A78; cf. Marcus, “History V: Sources of Jewish History,” 25 Mar. 1955, AJA MS-210 22/10, 8, where he uses similar language of death to describe Jewish life in Babylon.

⁸⁹ *To Count a People*, 3. See Neil Baldwin, *Henry Ford and the Jews: The Mass Production of Hate* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001); David Lewis, “Henry Ford’s Anti-Semitism and its Repercussions,” *Michigan Jewish History* 24 (1984): 3–10; Leo Ribuffo, “Henry Ford and The International Jew,” *AJH* 69, no. 4 (June 1980): 437–477.

⁹⁰ See Marcus, interview by Ida Selavan, 9 May 1979, tape 1, side 1 (5:00), Marcus, interview by Samuel Proctor (1985), 2. Cf. George B. Barbour, “Presentation of Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus,” 9 Jun. 1950, AJA Marcus Nearprint File, Box 1.

⁹¹ “The Program of the American Jewish Archives,” 3.

⁹² Marcus to Mrs. Joshua Loth Leibman, 21 Mar. 1949, AJA MS-210 7/6; Marcus to Alice de Ford, 7 Feb. 1951, AJA MS-687 67/18; Marcus to Sidney Singer, 23 Mar. 1951, AJA MS-210 8/4.

one instance, Marcus viewed suburbanization and the erecting of new synagogues as a danger to historical materials, characterizing the transformation of American Jewry in the postwar years as a force for archival destruction.⁹³ Marcus also eyed warily the wider geopolitical scene. On one hand, he claimed America's political and military power magnified American Jewry's cultural hegemony, but he also wrote over and over again of the possibility of nuclear holocaust.⁹⁴ In 1949, he advocated that congregational files be copied and stored in a far-off site, ideally "at a distance of at least twenty or thirty miles away, in view of the destructive power of atomic bombing," echoing similar recommendations to duplicate and decentralize government archives.⁹⁵ The fate of these files might seem trivial in the grand scheme of a possible nuclear exchange after which, as Herman Kahn put it, the survivors might envy the dead—but the thermonuclear threat to archives stayed on Marcus' mind.⁹⁶ In 1951, he advised that "in this age of atomic warfare, it is imperative that copies of important congregational records be made and kept in a distant spot," a sentiment he repeated in 1956: "I am frightened at the possibility of an atomic war which would destroy old established depositories of invaluable source materials."⁹⁷ In 1962, too, Marcus made the case for microfilming first and foremost due to atomic war.⁹⁸ Beyond the uneasiness of the duck-and-cover years, he also saw much to fear in gathering books and archives to Jerusalem. On a handful of occasions, he expressed concern that the nascent Jewish state might not survive, besieged as it was on all sides; in 1985, he stated outright that "I have no confidence that Israel

⁹³ See Carl Alpert, "Don't Throw Away Those Records: They May Have Historical Value," 21 Jul. 1950, "Dramatic Highlights of Jewish Life in Early U.S. Revealed in Archives," *American Jewish World*, 7 Sept. 1956, AJA Nearprint File.

⁹⁴ Marcus, "The American Jewish Archives," *American Archivist* 23, no. 1 (Jan. 1960): 57–61.

⁹⁵ "Memorandum for the Congregational Historical Committee," 14 Feb. 1949, AJA MS-210 1/2. Cf. Ansley J. Coale, *The Problem of Reducing Vulnerability to Atomic Bombs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 22.

⁹⁶ See Herman Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 40–95.

⁹⁷ Marcus to Henry Silverman, 6 Aug. 1951, AJA MS-687 58/6; Marcus to Rosenwald, 15 Feb. 1956, AJA MS-687 72/23.

⁹⁸ Journal, Archival Expedition to Europe and Israel, Jul. 1962, AJA Nearprint File, Box 4. Cf. Marcus circular, 19 Oct. 1983, in *All Hail to a Prince of a Schnorrer*, 42–43, where he writes: "We live in an egalitarian world where everybody everywhere beats up on Jews; with God's help in this nuclear age we shall all be cremated equal."

will survive.”⁹⁹ On this basis, he explained that “it is always a mistake to put all our eggs in one basket,” voicing a general unease with centralization.¹⁰⁰

Marcus’ archival vision was also linked with a wider reading of Jewish history. Writing in 1951 of the arrival of the “first” Jews in New York, Marcus concluded: “The careful historian soon comes to the unfailing rule that no Jew is ever the first Jew in any town: there is always one who had been there before him.”¹⁰¹ Marcus continuously emphasized that whatever Jews were doing around the world, like when Grace Kelly graced the throne of Monaco, or the state of Israel demonstrated military power, they were not the first.¹⁰² Alongside his 1948 claim of the “inevitable geographic expansion of American Jewish culture,” he gestured at an idea he would come to term the “omniterritoriality” of Jewish history—that Jews were to be found everywhere and even that dispersion was the secret to Jews’ survival throughout history—and what one scholar termed a “neo-Turnerian” vision of Jews across the country’s wide expanses, far from the ken of immigrant centers.¹⁰³ When Marcus first gathered materials, in addition to his outreach to the “first families” of American Jews on the eastern seaboard, he also actively sought to document Jewish participation in the settling of the American West, among the cattle ranchers of Wyoming and Texas, early settlers in Arizona, participants in battles with Native Americans

⁹⁹ Marcus gestured at this theme as early as 1941, in “New Literary Responsibilities,” *AJYB* 43 (1941–42), 789; Marcus, “The American Jewish Archives” (Jan. 1960), as well as “A Moment Interview with Jacob Rader Marcus,” A79 (“I don’t like the fact that so many people are there; three million Jews are there. And I dread and would not be shocked at the prospect of a holocaust [sic] in Israel.”) and Marcus, interview by Samuel Proctor (1985), 58.

¹⁰⁰ Marcus to I. Edward Kiev, 31 Oct. 1950, AJA MS-210 6/10.

¹⁰¹ See *Early American Jewry*, I:24. Marcus made the same move when he discussed the first Jews in Cincinnati; see “First Cincinnati Jew is Goal of Archives,” *Cincinnati Post*, 25 Jan. 1957, “Listen, My Children: The Story of Jonas Horwitz,” *The Jewish Record* (Atlantic City), 1 Feb. 1957, “No Jew is Ever the First Jew Anywhere” *Jewish Times* (Youngstown OH), 19 Apr. 1957, AJA Nearprint box 2. Also cf. “The Archives Story,” 1959, in which a section entitled “Who Was First?” discusses this story, with Marcus concluding: “So much for the matter of who was first.”

¹⁰² “Princess Grace Was Not the First!” (Press Release), May 1966, AJA Nearprint File, Box 1; “The First American Jewish General” (Press Release), Mar. 1968, AJA Nearprint File, Box 3.

¹⁰³ Rischin, “Jacob Rader Marcus: Historian-Archivist of Jewish Middle America,” *AJH* 85, no. 2 (June 1997): 175–181.

and the drama of the Wild West, and twentieth-century pioneers in the Alaskan tundra.¹⁰⁴

Together with his notion of the importance of the Diaspora in Jewish history, in his staunch description of American Jewry as the world's "greatest Jewry," his fears for the future of the state of Israel, and even his declaration in 1981 that "Galut (exile) is a good thing," alongside his idea of the importance of dispersing files for their protection, one finds the outlines of a total vision of Jewish history and archiving: An idea that translated into the necessity of a network of archives, the possibility of photoduplication, and a vision of historical dispersion, that set him apart from both the Israeli archivists, who sought to form a singular archival center, as well as some of Marcus' contemporaries who saw New York as the beating heart of American Jewry.¹⁰⁵

In creating his archive on the Ohio, Marcus both gestured at his ideal of a network of archives as opposed to a single center, and a kind of regionalism, even a certain boosterism for Cincinnati. It was a perspective which would lead Moses Rischin to call the American Jewish Archives in 1954 a "declaration of independence on the part of western and mid-western Jews," and four decades later to term Marcus a "meta-historian of Jewish middle America," focused not on New York City but the American hinterland.¹⁰⁶ In 1989, Marcus introduced his four-volume *United States Jewry* by explicitly stating his interest in Jewish life outside New York City. He argued that despite that city's importance as a center of immigration, since the 1700s a minority of American Jews had lived there. By the 1920s, he stressed, Jews were found in 10,000 towns across the country, with only 1.5 million out of 4 million Jews in the United States residing in

¹⁰⁴ Marcus to Perry Kallison, 13 Mar. 1946, AJA MS-687 1/4, Lola M. Homsher to Marcus, 12 Feb. 1947, AJA MS-687 1/6; Marcus to Matthew J. Ritchie, 25 Mar. 1949, Ritchie to Marcus, 17 Apr. 1949, AJA MS-210 8/4; Press Release, "American Jewish Archives," 27 May 1951, Press Release, "Indian Fighters' Diary, Important Historical Find, Brought to Light by American Jewish Archives," 27 Jul. 1951, AJA Nearprint File, Box 1.

¹⁰⁵ For Marcus' affirmation of exile, see "A Moment Interview," A79.

¹⁰⁶ Rischin, *An Inventory of American Jewish History*, 7; Rischin, "Jacob Rader Marcus: Historian-Archivist of Jewish Middle America," *AJH* 85, no. 2 (1997): 175-181.

New York.¹⁰⁷ Marcus' general disinterest in population numbers as a metric of cultural vitality, and his explanation that "centers" of Jewish life arise where there is a degree of security alongside the prospering of "rabbinic learning," signaled his idea of Cincinnati and its rabbinical school as a natural center of American Jewry and also his distance from contemporaries who also wanted to develop the field of American Jewish history but who held a more metropolitan perspective.¹⁰⁸

This vision, alongside his assessment of the AJHS' financial and logistical challenges, inspired a wider program of the coexistence of two vibrant historical institutions, based on a division of labor and the duplicative possibilities of microphotography. On one side, Marcus suggested that his Cincinnati archive would supplement, not supplant, the AJHS.¹⁰⁹ At first, he emphasized it in geographical terms, with his archive intended primarily to serve scholars in the Midwest.¹¹⁰ A few years later, when Marcus assumed the Society's presidency, he spoke of his Cincinnati Archives and the Society in New York serving separate purposes: His own archive, he thought, would support "scientific" research while the Society fostered "amateur" scholarship.¹¹¹ Here, Marcus broke from other critics of the Society such as Oscar Handlin by accepting the necessity of nonprofessional historians, seeing them as a crucial part of a wider ecosystem of popularizing Jewish history.¹¹² And Marcus' vision of the sweeping scale of American Jewish settlement, with Cincinnati as a historic center, separated him from other scholars who emphasized immigration, like Handlin and his student Moses Rischin, or the centrality of New

¹⁰⁷ Marcus, *United States Jewry*, I:15.

¹⁰⁸ Marcus, *United States Jewry*, I:21.

¹⁰⁹ "Early Jewish Americana," *Jewish Advocate*, 16 Sept. 1948, AJA Nearprint File, Box 2; Marcus to William Zuckerman, 12 Jan. 1950, AJA MS-687 46/32.

¹¹⁰ Marcus, "Report," 30 May 1948, AJA MS-20 B1-1/2; "Program of the American Jewish Archives," Jun. 1948.

¹¹¹ Marcus, "Address of the President," 16 Feb. 1957, AJA MS-210 1/8.

¹¹² Cf. Jeffrey Gurock, "Jacob Rader Marcus, Salo W. Baron, and the Public's Need to Know American Jewish History," *AJAJ* 50, no. 1 (1998): 23–27.

York region, as did Baron's student Hyman Grinstein, whose 1945 dissertation was a history of the Jews in New York.¹¹³ By contrast, Marcus and his students, including Allan Tarshish and Bertram Korn, wrote a different kind of history about American Jewry, focused on the history of religion, the importance of rabbis, and trained on individual community histories.¹¹⁴

Marcus' historical perspective reflected a profoundly local vision of the place of Cincinnati in American Jewish life, one which by the 1950s was perhaps outdated and was nearly impossible to conceive of from a site such as New York City. Even when Isaac Mayer Wise founded Hebrew Union College in 1875, the onetime "Jerusalem on the Ohio" had already been bypassed as a gateway to the west.¹¹⁵ By 1950, it had long been eclipsed in numeric terms. Cleveland then boasted a Jewish community nearly quadruple the size of Cincinnati's and Chicago was the indisputable capital of the Jewish Midwest, not to mention towering centers of immigration like New York City.¹¹⁶ What is more, Wise had created the College alongside the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (1873) and Central Conference of American Rabbis (1889) with a vision of the union of American Jewry with its nerve-center at the inland entrepôt on the Ohio.¹¹⁷ Wise's 1857 prayerbook *Minhag America* (American rite) aimed to establish a distinctive and unitary liturgy for American Jews, replacing competing varieties practiced by

¹¹³ See, for instance, Hyman Grinstein, "The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654–1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1944); and Moses Rischin, "Jewish Life and Labor in New York City, 1870–1914" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1957).

¹¹⁴ Allan Tarshish, "The Rise of American Judaism: A History of American Jewish Life From 1848 to 1881" (Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew Union College, 1936), and Bertram Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Cincinnati: Experimental Edition, 1949).

¹¹⁵ See Daniel Aaron, *Cincinnati: Queen City of the West, 1819–1838* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1992); Raymond Pettit, "Predictions and Local History in Cincinnati, 1815–1912," *Ohio Valley History* 11, no. 1 (2011): 26–45.

¹¹⁶ In 1948, the *AJYB* reported Cincinnati's Jewish population at 22,000 (*To Count a People* [TCAP], 173), in comparison with Cleveland (80,000, *TCAP*, 173), Chicago (300–400,000, *TCAP*, 57), and New York City (2,000,000 *TCAP*, 152).

¹¹⁷ In Wise's language of "Union," one sees the distinctive imprint of the debates of the mid-eighteenth century over the fate of the United States and the contentious issue of the development of divided Jewish communities, as opposed to unitary local synagogue-communities, as well as the crucial question of clerical independence, as a union of congregations and the centralized training of rabbis would reduce power for local lay boards.

Jews of diverse origins, and codifying his preferred religious reforms.¹¹⁸ But Wise’s dreams of religious and institutional unity fractured under the weight of increasing immigration and caustic debates over Jewish religious beliefs and practice of the 1880s.¹¹⁹ As a result, the HUC, UAHC, and CCAR became denominational domains of a Reform movement, by the mid-twentieth century a minority among American Jews.¹²⁰ With the establishment of the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City in 1921 by Stephen S. Wise (no relation to Isaac Mayer Wise), HUC faced competition from a Reform seminary in the largest Jewish population center, themselves almost relegated to a backwater.¹²¹ Nevertheless, though Glueck lamented in 1949 that the College was “on the brink of insolvency,” the institution was on the cusp of a new era of expansion.¹²² The 1950 merger with Wise’s Jewish Institute of Religion saw the New York seminary join the historic Cincinnati campus, which remained the administrative center of the newly-named “Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion,” and it soon gained outposts in Los Angeles (1954) and Jerusalem (1963).¹²³ Consequently, the American Jewish Archives fell under the umbrella of what was then described as HUC’s “newly expanded program.”¹²⁴

At the opening of the postwar era, Marcus and other College leaders articulated their ambitions in view of American Jewry’s forced independence from European centers of Jewish learning and culture. In 1946, librarian Irving M. Levey wrote of the burden to carry forward

¹¹⁸ Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 238–244; Sefton D. Temkin, *Creating American Reform Judaism: The Life and Times of Isaac Mayer Wise* (London: Littmann, 1992).

¹¹⁹ See Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 264–295.

¹²⁰ By 1940, Reform synagogues held 200,000 dues-paying members out of approximately 4.7 million total Jews. See Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*, 207, 375; Sarna, “Contemporary Reform Judaism: An Historical Analysis,” in *International Conference on Contemporary Reform Judaism* (Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem, Israel: 2007).

¹²¹ I. Edward Kiev, “Jewish Institute of Religion,” *AJYB* 49 (1947): 91–100; Meyer, *Centennial History*, 137–170.

¹²² Nelson Glueck, “Our Seminaries,” *CCARYB* 59 (1949): 303–304; Meyer, *Centennial History*, 119–123.

¹²³ Meyer, *Centennial History*, 164–169, 184–190; see AJA MS-160 1/4.

¹²⁴ “Recreating American Jewish History,” *Kansas City Jewish Chronicle*, 27 Aug. 1948, AJA Nearprint file, box 1; “Early Jewish Americana,” *Jewish Advocate*, 16 Sept. 1948, AJA Nearprint file, Box 2.

Jewish culture.¹²⁵ Nelson Glueck spoke in similar terms when he definitively pronounced in 1948 that they could “no longer turn to Europe, for our teachers and the teachers of our teachers.”¹²⁶ The new reality was a marked departure for the institution. Though the Cincinnati seminary had been established to produce native rabbis for a country that had long needed to import its clergymen, HUC had long looked abroad for the acquisition of both books and scholars. This new turn, however, represented more than a project of cultural reconstruction; it was the sharpening of longstanding ambitions in a new key. In the 1930s, then-president Julian Morgenstern had engineered the extraction of a group of German Jewish refugee scholars to Cincinnati, part of an effort to build what was once termed a “Jewish College in Exile.”¹²⁷ Eugen Täubler proposed HUC as a site of a “Leo Baeck memorial library” of German Jewry.¹²⁸ In 1949, Täubler insisted that because he had in Cincinnati under his direction a number of previous members of the *Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the Cincinnati seminary should be considered its “real successor... *in flesh and spirit*.”¹²⁹ Täubler’s “memorial library” would eventually take form, after his 1953 death, as the Leo Baeck Institute with branches in New York, London, and Jerusalem, but his vision gestured at a plan for HUC as a major cultural and scholarly center. It was for this reason that Marcus and I. Edward Kiev, the Jewish Institute of Religion’s librarian, argued that the combined College–Institute should receive German Jewish

¹²⁵ Irving M. Levey to Victor Greenebaum, 8 May 1946, AJA MS-5 E1/19.

¹²⁶ Nelson Glueck, “The Combined Seminars,” *CCARYB* 58 (1948): 338–341.

¹²⁷ Michael A. Meyer, “The Refugee Scholars Project of the Hebrew Union College,” in Meyer (ed.), *Judaism within Modernity: Essays on Jewish History and Religion* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), 345–361. Also see Edward K. Kaplan, “Coming to America: Abraham Joshua Heschel, 1940–1941,” *Modern Judaism* 27, no. 2 (May 2007): 129–145.

¹²⁸ See Christhard Hoffmann (ed.), *Preserving the Legacy of German Jewry: A History of the Leo Baeck Institute, 1955–2005*, 1–58; Ruth Nattermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung nach der Shoah: Die Gründungs- und Frühgeschichte des Leo Baeck Institute*; Nattermann, “A Struggle for the Preservation of a German-Jewish Legacy. The Foundation of the Leo Baeck Institute in New York,” *European Judaism* 45, no. 2 (Autumn 2012): 90–102.

¹²⁹ Eugen Täubler to Herman Muller, 27 Apr. 1949, LBI DM 223 17/17, UB Basel NL 76 E4 #027.2. It should be noted that Täubler also suggested Columbia University as a possible site for the memorial library.

archives that were ultimately deposited at the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem, at the same time Glueck sought security copies of the Dead Sea Scrolls.¹³⁰

Marcus was a major booster of the ambitious aims for HUC's postwar program. In 1925, while pursuing his doctorate in Berlin, Marcus had declared his dream that the Cincinnati seminary's history department would be "the best in the world," and in March 1949 he pronounced the goal achieved on the basis of the refugee scholars like Täubler and his American Jewish Archives.¹³¹ The very next day, at a meeting of the faculty library committee, he advocated that they acquire "all bibliothecal and bibliographical materials" and "all books and other materials" on Jewish history.¹³² A contrary voice suggested that Marcus did not grasp the idea of a collecting policy: "Its function is not that of 'expansion,' but of 'limitation.'" ¹³³ Here, one glimpses Marcus' grandiose approach, applied equally to his American Jewish Archives; in 1962, he instructed Glueck to emphasize the "College as a research center," and later he declared Cincinnati the capital of an "academic empire... from the hills of Judea to the Pacific Ocean."¹³⁴ When Marcus had written in 1947 of gathering the files of Reform synagogues and establishing a major archive of American Jewry, then, he spoke to institutional memories and ambitions, representing in miniature the aims—seemingly at odds—for HUC to serve as a center of Reform Judaism and also return to a time when it held a position of leadership of American Jewry at large.

Marcus' program emerged from a series of competing impulses and historical-geographical perspectives which came together into a unified archival vision. He displayed a

¹³⁰ Marcus to Kiev, 31 Oct. 1950, AJA MS-210 6/10; Marcus to Hannah Arendt, 5 Jan. 1951, AJA MS-210 5/7; Jason Kalman, *Hebrew Union College and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Cincinnati: HUC-JIR, 2009); also Richard Freund, "The Dead Sea Scrolls, Hebrew Union College, and Reform Judaism 1948–2008," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Contemporary Culture*, ed. Adolfo D. Roitman, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 621–648.

¹³¹ Marcus to Morgenstern, 3 Aug. 1925, AJA MS-5 A18/7; Marcus to Bertram Korn, 7 Mar. 1949, MS-210 7/3.

¹³² Minutes of Special Meeting of Faculty Library Committee, 8 Mar. 1949, AJA MS-5 E1/19.

¹³³ Isaiah Sonne to Marcus, 8 Mar. 1949, AJA MS-210 5/7.

¹³⁴ Marcus to Glueck, 14 Jun. 1962, AJA MS-160 1/9; "On the Passing of Nelson Glueck," *AJAJ* 23, no. 1 (1971): 5.

regionalism rooted in his own life experience as well as local institutional loyalty, looking back to a time when Cincinnati asserted itself as a burgeoning center of American Jewish cultural and religious life. If Cincinnati was no longer the “Jerusalem on the Ohio” of Isaac Mayer Wise’s day, it still constituted in Marcus’ view a major center of Jewish life, which he would once explain was not so much about population numbers but “where rabbinic learning prospers.”¹³⁵ It also reflected a vision of grander scope, of the expansion of American Jewish life across the continent, and the need for cultural resources for Jews outside major population centers. It was this conception of the dispersal of Jews across the continent that underlined his scholarly and archival work alike, leading to a notion of the importance of dispersion and decentralization as an archival and historical principle.

In January 1948, just after Marcus created his archive, he received a report of an effort to collect the historical records of Philadelphia’s Jews for the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.¹³⁶ “I am prejudiced,” Marcus wrote in a curious response. “I would like to see the American Jewish Historical Society get all of these records.” Here, we find Marcus at his most characteristic. For if he was a patriot for Hebrew Union College, neither was he an institutional imperialist. Though writing in his capacity as an executive of the Historical Society, his advice reflected his general archival approach, a fine balance between ideals of decentralization and local control, the practical needs of scholars, and matters of security. Marcus explained that there was a clear argument to keep historical material close to home. But he insisted that the files “can only be properly evaluated by Jewish historians and all such Jewish material should be sent to the important Jewish archives.” In the final analysis, he suggested it would be preferable to make

¹³⁵ Marcus, *United States Jewry*, I:21.

¹³⁶ Edwin Wolf II to Marcus, 13 Jan. 1948, AJA MS-687 1/9.

photostats so that the originals could be deposited in one locale and the copies in the other. “In the long run,” he concluded, “from the point of view of the historian, it will make no difference which institution has the originals or the photostats as long as both institutions have available copies.”¹³⁷ This episode illustrates the thrust of Marcus’ vision, of the possibility of archives sharing materials with the aid of microcopies, mitigating any issue of fighting over who might hold which physical papers and thereby making materials widely available to scholars.

Just a few months later, Marcus’ “Program of the American Jewish Archives” espoused a similar notion of regionalism and institutional coexistence when he explained that he hoped that his new archive would supplement, not supplant, the AJHS. At least at the outset, he believed his archive would be dedicated to the local region, and that the capability to copy files was a benefit to scholars as well as a salve for any political issues that might be involved in collecting historical materials. And so he spoke of his archive as one in a series of such institutions across the United States. It was for this reason that Marcus wrote in January 1949: “We have established in Cincinnati,” he explained, “an American Jewish Archives.”¹³⁸ Marcus’ phrasing signaled how he conceptualized the archive as one among many, not the singular center to which all files would be gathered but one in a network of archives dispersed across the American landscape. It was in this way that Marcus’ historical and archival program reflected a vision of dispersion. On one hand, he had an impulse to the importance of spreading files far and wide, due to the geopolitical context of the Cold War, and as well as to its utility to scholars. The ability to make photoduplicates, too, made this a practical possibility. And fundamentally he held forth a vision of diaspora, both of the importance of Diaspora as a function of Jewish history and life—as he would argue, the key to Jews’ future survival—as well as of the internal dispersion of Jews

¹³⁷ Marcus to Edwin Wolf II, 22 Jan. 1948, AJA MS-687 1/9.

¹³⁸ Marcus to Mary Churchill, 19 Jan. 1949, AJA MS-687 78/12.

across the United States which would characterize both the material he would collect and the type of history of American Jews he would advocate. And yet, his cordial cooperation masked an aggressive stance; as he wrote to his student Bertram Korn in 1951 about the Philadelphia archives: “You understand, of course, that no matter what you people decide to do we are going to go into every community in the country and try to salvage what we can.”¹³⁹

“I Want You to Buy It, Borrow It, Or Steal It”: Documenting American Jewry

In 1955, Marcus appealed to his students to gather material for his American Jewish Archives. “I want to ask you boys,” he explained to his history lecture, “all of you who have bi-weeklies”—that is, a student pulpit—“to please look around.” No matter the locale, he continued, one would find useful material, like congregational records, family letters, birth and circumcision records, and personal recollections. He urged them to gather these sources: “I want you to buy it, borrow it, or steal it, but bring it back to the American Jewish Archives.”¹⁴⁰ This exhortation gave voice to Marcus’ characteristic energy, as he gathered files by any means necessary. The material would be “lost anyhow,” he claimed, and they all had an obligation to do something about it. Over the years, Marcus relied closely on his friends, colleagues, and students in both financial and practical terms. What resulted was a tremendous if idiosyncratic collection, one that both reflected on the practicalities of collecting and expressed an archival narrative of the nature and scope of American Jewish history: with a focus on synagogues as a driving cultural force, the Caribbean islands and the wider Atlantic world as the prelude to Jewish life in the United States, and emphasizing Jews as builders of America.

Marcus depended in large part on personal ties. He had never held a pulpit, but he remained

¹³⁹ Marcus to Bertram W. Korn, 5 Dec. 1951, AJA MS-99 41/3.

¹⁴⁰ Marcus, “Sources of Jewish History,” 11 Oct. 1955, AJA MS-210 22/15.

close to the rabbinic world and was active in the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Reform rabbinical association of which he was appointed president in 1949, the first HUC faculty member to be elected to the post since Isaac Mayer Wise. His rabbinic rolodex proved a powerful aid. In his first effort to collect sources, in 1934, Marcus had reached out to his onetime classmate Abraham J. Feldman, by then rabbi of Mishkan Israel in New Haven, Connecticut.¹⁴¹ Marcus' friends also furnished introductions, as did the rabbis Leo Franklin (Detroit), Samuel Sandmel (Atlanta), Abraham Schusterman (Baltimore), Allan Tarshish (Philadelphia), and others.¹⁴² In March 1947, Rabbi Eugene Mannheimer of Des Moines got his sister to send Marcus the papers of their father, and in 1949 Marcus used the name of Rabbi Philip Jaffa when writing to a potential contributor in Phoenix.¹⁴³ In addition to historical materials, they also submitted those most valuable contemporary documents, autographed checks.¹⁴⁴ He put his students to work, too. In October 1950, William Sanderson, then a student at the College, wrote Marcus (addressed to "My Favorite Professor"); he would soon leave his post as student rabbi at Congregation L'shem Shomayim of Wheeling, West Virginia, the very synagogue Marcus had attended as a youth.¹⁴⁵ "It is imperative," Marcus responded, "that you borrow, steal, or secure the Wheeling Archives before you sever relations with that distinguished congregation. This is a must."¹⁴⁶ Marcus suggested that Sanderson bring the files to Cincinnati to "study" them, and

¹⁴¹ Marcus to Cong. Mishkan Israel, 23 Apr. 1934, Abraham J. Feldman to Marcus, 2 May 1934, AJA MS-38 23/16.

¹⁴² Marcus to H.J. Haas, 13 Apr. 1939, Marcus to Fred Butzel, 15 May 1939, Marcus to Harry Alexander, 15 May 1939, AJA MS-687 1/1; Marcus to Alice DeFord, 12 Dec. 1944, AJA MS-687 1/2; Marcus to Tillie Abeles, 20 Mar. 1945, Marcus to R. Abraham Shusterman, 30 Apr. 1945, AJA MS-687 1/3, Joseph Loeb to Marcus, 20 Dec. 1945, Marcus to Perry Kallison, 13 Mar. 1946, AJA MS-687 1/4, and R. Henry Cohen to Marcus, 19 Feb. 1945, AJA MS-687 1/3.

¹⁴³ E. Manner to Marcus, 11 Mar. 1947, AJA MS-687 1/7; Marcus to M. Ritchie, 25 Mar. 1949, AJA MS-210 8/4.

¹⁴⁴ See, for instance, Marcus to Abraham Feldman, 31 Oct. 1950, AJA MS-38, 1/8, where he declared that "We are dependent largely on the rabbis if we are to keep open." Many of Marcus' best "schnor letters" were published posthumously as *All Hail to a Prince of a Schnorner* (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1996)

¹⁴⁵ William Sanderson to Marcus, 27 Oct. 1950, AJA MS-210 8/7.

¹⁴⁶ Original emphasis, Marcus to William Sanderson, 1 Nov. 1950, AJA MS-210 8/7.

return them the next week.¹⁴⁷ Marcus also enlisted the students to search out materials when they were sent out for High Holiday pulpits, adding an item to a questionnaire about whether they could secure historical documents to be photostated and then returned to the synagogues.¹⁴⁸ As a result, Marcus amassed an extensive collection of synagogue records. In January 1948, he reported that they had the files of twenty-five congregations; by the end of that year, the number had grown to two hundred minute books, and by October of 1949, three hundred, allowing him to boast of “the most representative collection of this type found anywhere.”¹⁴⁹

In 1947, Marcus had described his project as an archive of Reform Judaism. But he never intended his archive to be so limited, as he emphasized that he would include Orthodox and Conservative communities, and described his aim to document “all phases of American Jewish history.”¹⁵⁰ In this, he looked beyond the boundaries of the United States itself, turning his gaze in particular to the Caribbean and South America. This region held claim to many of the oldest Jewish communities of the western hemisphere, dating to the seventeenth century. The colonial Atlantic world proved a relatively safe haven, especially for Crypto-Jews and those of the “Portuguese Nation,” many of whom were descendants of those forcibly converted in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spain and Portugal. The Dutch colonies extended policies of toleration that had made Amsterdam a thriving center of Jewish life, whereas Spanish, Portuguese, and English territories still technically barred Jews on the basis of the decrees of expulsion of 1492, 1497,

¹⁴⁷ Marcus to William Sanderson, 1 Nov. 1950, AJA MS-210 8/7.

¹⁴⁸ “Committee on Student Ministrations,” 1951, AJA MS-687 39/4. In his 1955 lecture, when asked how students could help, Marcus responded: “The answer is this: We have a form that you can fill out.” (Marcus, “Sources of Jewish History,” 11 Oct. 1955, AJA MS-210 22/15) In the 1970s, the AJA again produced a survey for students to fill out while visiting their pulpits, indicating that this remained a longstanding practice (Abraham J. Peck, “To: All Students visiting bi-weekly or monthly congregations,” 4 Apr. 1978, AJA Nearprint File, Box 4).

¹⁴⁹ Marcus to Glueck, 8 Jan. 1948, AJA MS-210 1/2; Marcus, “Report of the Director,” 29 Dec. 1948, AJA MS-5, B1-1/4; Marcus, “Report to the President,” 1 Oct. 1949, AJA MS-210 1/2.

¹⁵⁰ Marcus, “Report of the Director,” 1 Jan. 1948, AJA MS-210 1/2; Marcus to Rabbi H. Elihu Rickel, 18 May 1949, AJA MS-210 8/4; Marcus to Sydney Lubarr, 10 Aug. 1949, AJA MS-210 1/2.

and 1290. So long as Recife remained Dutch, its Jewish population grew, reaching around 1,500; but after its capture by the Portuguese in 1654, those who remained scattered: Many returned to Amsterdam, but a small group made its way to New Amsterdam, and others found safe harbor elsewhere in the Caribbean.¹⁵¹ These Jewish settlements were certainly not unknown: Mayer Kayserling wrote of the Jews of Surinam as early as the 1850s, and the topic of early Jewish settlements remained of great interest as important points of origin for the early Jewish communities of North America, almost universally formed by Jews with roots in this region.¹⁵²

In 1894, Oscar Straus, president of the newly-formed AJHS, had suggested that it would be beneficial to study the early settlements, but the Historical Society never undertook any such expedition.¹⁵³ In 1949, Marcus found some success in gaining records when he reached out to Jews in Surinam, but he hoped to undertake the work personally.¹⁵⁴ In 1951, he turned to Lessing Rosenwald, the Sears-Roebuck executive and leader of the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, to finance the trip. With a new camera developed at Yale, Marcus wrote, in about two months two men could easily “photostat all congregational and societal records” in the Caribbean and South America. As the mission was a “labor of love,” Marcus insisted he would remain unpaid and that they only needed to cover travel expenses.¹⁵⁵ A year later, in June 1952, Marcus set off from Miami, accompanied by Rabbi Theodore S. Levy, his student who had just been ordained the year before, along with his wife Ina Rae Levy, who provided “technical assistance”—that is to

¹⁵¹ Sarna, *American Judaism*, 1–8.

¹⁵² Moritz Kayserling, “Die Juden in Surinam,” *MGWJ* 8 (1859): 205–213.

¹⁵³ Oscar Straus, “Address of the President,” *PAJHS* 3 (1895): 4.

¹⁵⁴ Marcus to P. H. Samson, 24 Feb. 1949, Samson to Marcus, 25 Mar. 1949, Marcus to Samson, 7 Apr. 1949, Marcus to Samson, 14 Jul. 1949, AJA MS-210 8/7. Marcus to Council of Jewish Organizations, 2 Oct. 1950, Edgar Gruen to Marcus, 14 Oct. 1950, Marcus to Gruen, 23 Oct. 1950, R. Moses D. Sasso to Marcus, 21 Feb. 1951, Marcus to Sasso, Mar. 1951, AJA MS-687 58/7.

¹⁵⁵ Marcus to Rosenwald, 12 Apr. 1951, AJA MS-687 72/23. Marcus was generally unpaid for his archival work; see Marcus, “Report,” 30 May 1948, AJA MS-20 B1-1/2; Marcus to Weil, 19 Jan. 1949, AJA MS-210 9/1.

say, she did the bulk of the actual work of photography—and Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman, a close friend of Marcus’ from his student days.¹⁵⁶ As Marcus explained on the eve of their departure, they were “back tracking over the road taken by the 1654 Brazilian refugees.”¹⁵⁷ In thirty-three days, they visited a circle of communities—Curaçao, Surinam, Caracas (Venezuela), Barranquilla (Columbia), Port of Spain (Trinidad), Barbados, San Juan (Puerto Rico), St. Thomas, and Kingston (Jamaica)—where Marcus uncovered records and wills at synagogues and colonial archives.¹⁵⁸ Despite the “very hot and uncomfortable” weather, he wrote, they copied about 5,000 pages.¹⁵⁹

Marcus recognized that his expedition marked the beginning of the research in the region, not its conclusion. Marcus and Levy found themselves beset with technical difficulties. The camera proved unable to photograph large folio pages, and they could not photostat more than one hundred pages a day due to the government archives’ early closing-time. “Under such conditions,” Marcus reflected, “it would have taken us many months to copy all the materials.”¹⁶⁰ Consequently, Marcus continued to work with local figures to procure material well into the 1960s, contracting a studio in Curaçao to microfilm some of the most fragile record books and working with the Island Records Office in Jamaica to transcribe specific wills of notable Jews.¹⁶¹ He also recognized that the Caribbean synagogue-communities were part of the

¹⁵⁶ See “Interview with Theodore and Ina Rae Levy,” AJA SC-13450. Levy noted that “when I went with him [in 1952], that was my job to photocopy many of the materials and make many of the arrangements for him.”

¹⁵⁷ Marcus, “Journal of the West India and South America Expedition of the American Jewish Archives, June 28–July 26, 1952,” entry for 28 Jun. 1952, AJA MS-210 29/7.

¹⁵⁸ For a detailed account of their day-to-day activities, see Marcus, “Journal of the West India and South America Expedition of the American Jewish Archives, June 28–July 26, 1952,” AJA MS-210 29/7. The trip is also documented in “Itinerary,” 12 Feb. 1952, AJA MS-687 58/6, with visas in Marcus’ passport (AJA MS-210 35/4).

¹⁵⁹ Marcus to C. Roth, 1 Aug. 1952, AJA MS-687 72/31; Marcus to M. Goudekot, 1 Aug. 1952, AJA MS-687 22/22.

¹⁶⁰ Marcus, “The West India and South America Expedition of the American Jewish Archives,” 6–8.

¹⁶¹ Abram E. Salas (Curaçao) to Marcus, 24 Aug. 1952, Charles Gomes Casseres (Curaçao) to Marcus, 27 Oct. 1952, Marcus to Casseres, 4 Nov. 1952, Marcus to Salas, 25 Feb. 1953, Salas to Marcus, 24 Mar. 1953, Marcus to Salas, 2 Apr. 1953, Marcus to Salas, 3 Feb. 1956, Fred Fischer to Marcus, 6 Mar. 1964, AJA MS-687 22/22; Marcus to A.W.G. Shaw (Island Record Office, Jamaica), 4 Aug. 1952, Dorrit E. Wilson to Marcus, 21 Jan. 1953, AJA MS-687 83/8; Marcus to Wilson, 12 Apr. 1954, AJA MS-687 44/2, Salas to Marcus, 24 Dec. 1963, Marcus to Salas, 16 Jan. 1964, AJA MS-687 22/22, and so on.

vast Atlantic world, with roots in the “mother synagogues” of Amsterdam (Mikve Israel) and London (Bevis Marks), and that they were part of a wider colonial context, and he would need to mine these synagogues’ archives as well as governmental archives held in centers of colonial power. In 1953, he wrote of the need for a similar archival trip to Europe.¹⁶² But Rosenwald refrained from bankrolling Marcus, and the trip only took place in 1962, when Marcus, again with Levy and his wife (funded by her parents, no less), traveled to major European cities as well as to Israel to gather materials.¹⁶³ The consequence as an expansive vision of the “American” Jews he hoped to document.¹⁶⁴ Instead of a “neo-Turnerian” approach, his expeditions to the Caribbean and Europe cemented a devotion to a wider, hemispheric vision of American Jewish history reminiscent of Herbert Bolton’s notion of “Greater America.”¹⁶⁵ As early as 1946, he had looked to Canada, and the first issue of the *American Jewish Archives* journal listed among the Reform congregations’ minutes they had acquired those of synagogues in Toronto and Panama.¹⁶⁶ By the 1960s, Marcus and his colleagues unabashedly described the archive as devoted to “the American—Western Hemisphere—Jewish experience.”¹⁶⁷

In addition to Marcus’ large-scale collecting efforts, he also pursued specific documents in transcript or photocopy. For instance, in 1947 Marcus wrote after two specific letters by

¹⁶² Marcus, “The West India and South America Expedition of the American Jewish Archives,” 21; Marcus to Lessing Rosenwald, 5 Dec. 1955, Marcus to Rosenwald, 15 Feb. 1956, AJA MS-687 72/23. Cf. Marcus, “Sources of Jewish History,” 11 Oct. 1955, AJA MS-210 22/15, where he also speaks of his hope for an expedition to Holland.

¹⁶³ “The Burdman Archival Expedition to Europe and Israel. July–August 1962,” AJA SC-13450; also see Frederic Krome, “The Burdman-Levy Archival Expedition of 1962 to Europe,” *AJAJ* 55, no. 2 (2003): 31–41.

¹⁶⁴ Marcus to John H. E. Fried, 20 Jul. 1955, AJA MS-687 98/1; “The American Jewish Archives—What it Is and What it Does,” AJA Nearprint File, Box 3.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Herbert E. Bolton, “The Epic of Greater America,” *AHR* 38, no. 3 (1933): 448–474.

¹⁶⁶ Marcus to Julian Morgenstern, 3 Dec. 1946, AJA MS-5 A18/7; see Marcus, *Early American Jewry*, I:198–286; “Acquisitions,” *AJAJ* 1.1 (Jun. 1946), 23.

¹⁶⁷ Marcus to David Ben-Gurion, 30 Dec. 1966, AJA SC-845. Cf. “AJA Organizes Expedition to Europe and Israel,” Jun. 1962, AJA Nearprint File, Box 3; Stanley Chyet to S. A. L. Maduro, 6 Jun. 1962, AJA MS-687 22/22; “The American Jewish Archives: What and Why?” AJA MS-687 39/2.

Rebecca Gratz, the nineteenth-century Jewish educator, only one occasion of many where he aimed to procure specific documents of relevance to American Jewish history.¹⁶⁸ In 1952, he submitted a request to the Jamaican Island Records Office to transcribe specific wills from notable Jamaican Jews.¹⁶⁹ In another instance, Marcus reached out to Albert Einstein in 1951 with a request for any materials he might submit; the physicist responded that he had little if any material relating to American Jewish history.¹⁷⁰ Marcus similarly wrote to David Ben-Gurion in the 1960s, asking for “anything documenting your own relations with America and Americans.”¹⁷¹ Marcus displayed two impulses, firstly to gather whatever scattered materials he could, instead of coherent collections; and secondly, especially in his appeals to people like Einstein and Ben-Gurion, he implied that such distinguished figures would obviously have materials on America.

Marcus also wanted first-hand accounts, and filed information alongside historical documents. In one instance, he corresponded extensively with Jessie Bloom of Seattle, who provided anecdotes and information on early twentieth-century Jewish settlement in the Alaskan territories, a number of which were published in the *American Jewish Archives* journal but which were generally stored in the archive.¹⁷² In 1963 Abraham Feldman submitted a recollection of Louis Brandeis, to which Marcus replied: “We are filing your letter as a document.”¹⁷³ Marcus also curated biographical files of rabbis and other historical figures, gathering ephemera and

¹⁶⁸ Marcus to Miriam Dent (Brunswick GA), 22 Sept. 1947, AJA MS-687 1/5; Marcus to Historical Society of Philadelphia, 27 Apr. 1949, Marcus to Sidney Fish, 28 Apr. 1949, AJA MS-210 4/4; Barney Cesnick to Marcus, 4 May 1949, AJA MS-210 1/2; Marcus to David Kahn, 24 May 1949, AJA MS-210 6/10

¹⁶⁹ Marcus to A.W.G. Shaw, 4 Aug. 1952, Dorrit E. Wilson to Marcus, 17 Nov. 1952, Wilson to Marcus, 21 Jan. 1953 AJA MS-687 83/8; Marcus to Wilson, 12 Apr. 1954, Wilson to Marcus, 29 Aug. 1954, Marcus to Wilson, 6 Apr. 1959, AJA MS-687 44/2.

¹⁷⁰ Albert Einstein to Marcus, 5 Mar. 1951, AJA MS-210 4/2.

¹⁷¹ Marcus to David Ben-Gurion, 30 Dec. 1966, AJA SC-845, cf. Ben-Gurion to Marcus, 1 Feb. 1967, Marcus to Ben-Gurion, 8 Aug. 1968, AJA SC-845.

¹⁷² See Jessie S. Bloom, “The Jews of Alaska,” *AJAJ* 15, no. 2 (Nov. 1963): 97–116. See: Bloom to Marcus, 30 Sept. 1962, Bloom to Marcus, 27 Oct. 1962, Bloom to Marcus, 18 Nov. 1962, Bloom to Stanley Chyet, 16 Jan. 1963, Bloom to Chyet, 7 Feb. 1963, Bloom to Chyet, 9 Aug. 1967, Bloom to Chyet, 3 Dec. 1968, AJA MS-93 1/9.

¹⁷³ Abraham J. Feldman to Marcus, 12 Jul. 1963, Marcus to Feldman, 18 Jul. 1963, AJA MS-38 23/16.

clippings he termed “Nearprint.”¹⁷⁴ These extensive files represented not materials held by historical figures themselves, but assembled by Marcus and his staff. In an illustrative example, Marcus gathered files relating to his mentor Gotthard Deutsch, copies of the historian’s articles in American and German newspapers, and clippings and obituaries following his 1921 death. He also incorporated articles by Deutsch’s children published in the 1960s, a student’s paper written in the 1970s, and a 1963 note from Marcus himself, who detailed the recollections of J. Victor Greenebaume, the onetime HUC board member and physician, detailing anecdotes—one might more accurately call it hearsay—on the opinions of Deutsch and David Philipson of some rabbinical students who they felt were unfit to take a pulpit because they were too nervous or “physically unattractive.”¹⁷⁵ And in the Nearprint file of the Archives itself, Marcus filed a note estimating the date of the American Jewish Archives’ founding based on his recollection.¹⁷⁶

He also sought to document history through a contemporary lens. He gave his students questionnaires about the synagogues they served, and aimed to gather photographs of historic sites.¹⁷⁷ In one striking example, Marcus reached out in 1949 to Ruth Rubin of Charleston to photograph three or four historic homes in that city which were built by or occupied by Jews in the eighteenth century. “Naturally,” he explained, “the older the buildings are, the better we like. We want to show the Jews as the builders of a city.”¹⁷⁸ Such appeals hint at Marcus’ politics, as he wanted to demonstrate Jews as the builders of America, and demonstrate how his efforts were

¹⁷⁴ See Marcus circular, 10 Oct. 1960, printed in *All Hail to a Prince of a Schnorrer*, 14–15, in which he asks not just for checks but added the following postscript: “We are setting up a biographical file for every rabbi. Please send us a photograph of yourself, preferably an 8 x 10 glossy. We would also like to have glossy photographs of the interior and exterior of your temple for our picture collection. Many thanks.”

¹⁷⁵ “Deutsch, Gotthard (1859–1921),” Marcus note, 12 Jun. 1963, AJA Deutsch Nearprint File.

¹⁷⁶ Marcus, “American Jewish Archives,” AJA Nearprint File, Box 1.

¹⁷⁷ Marcus to Robert Katz, 18 Sept. 1951, AJA MS-687 39/4; “Sources of Jewish History,” 11 Oct. 1955, AJA MS-210 22/15; Abraham Peck, “To: All Students visiting bi-weekly or monthly congregations,” AJA Nearprint, Box 4.

¹⁷⁸ Original emphasis. Marcus to Ruth Rubin, 20 Jul. 1949, AJA MS-210 1/2.

colored by his preexisting notions of the narrative of American Jewish history. For when it came time to photograph the houses, Rubin discovered that one of them, no longer possessed by its former inhabitants, was now adorned with a large cross.¹⁷⁹ “I obviously cannot use a picture of a building as a Jewish building with a cross in front of it,” Marcus wrote, but he suggested that they might photograph the house from an angle that the cross wouldn’t show.¹⁸⁰ Just as Marcus had directed Rubin to photograph the homes without any automobiles in front, here Marcus aimed to gather materials with the outcome in mind.¹⁸¹

These efforts gesture at the scale of Marcus’ vision, whereby he sought to document “American Jewry” on the widest and most complete scale in order to tell a specific type of story about American Jewish life, as well as his position as an active shaper of the historical material he assembled. Perhaps not surprisingly for a figure who had spent his whole life at a rabbinical seminary, Marcus laid his focus squarely on Jewish communities and synagogues especially. At times, he spoke of a focus on “American Jewish religious history,” which was not surprising given his position at a center of rabbinic training.¹⁸² Indeed, in a 1959 article Marcus proclaimed the synagogue as a primary theme in American Jewish history.¹⁸³ In the end, even if Marcus looked to collect seemingly “objective” information—to “ascertain the facts as they really are,” as he put it in his 1948 program—he did it on the basis of a series of preexisting priorities and notions of the overarching organizing principles of Jewish history and life. Consequently, in the very act of collecting Marcus imposed his own imprint upon the material, both through what he

¹⁷⁹ Ruth Rubin to Marcus, 11 Dec. 1949, AJA MS-210 1/2.

¹⁸⁰ Marcus to Ruth Rubin, 16 Dec. 1949, AJA MS-210 1/2.

¹⁸¹ Marcus to Ruth Rubin, 22 Nov. 1949, AJA MS-210 1/2.

¹⁸² Marcus, “Report to the President,” 30 May 1948, AJA MS-20 B1-1/2; Marcus to Lessing Rosenwald, 12 Apr. 1951, AJA MS-687 72/23; cf. Marcus, “Report of the Director,” 1 Jan. 1948, AJA MS-210 1/2, explaining that the archive would “in all probability concentrate on sources of a religious nature.” Cf. the work of Marcus’ disciple Bertram Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1951), which focuses on rabbis.

¹⁸³ Marcus, “The Theme in American Jewish History,” *PAJHS* 48, no. 3 (Mar. 1959): 141–46.

gathered and how, reaching an apotheosis in his interest in copies over originals.

The Cult of the Copy: The American Jewish Archives as an Archive of Information

In 1990, at the age of ninety-four, Marcus addressed a memorandum to his staff: “In the event of my death,” he began, “I hope the Archives will take special pains with my personal papers.”¹⁸⁴ He had already willed his library to the College and his papers to the Archives.¹⁸⁵ Now, he provided additional instructions. “I do not ask the Archives to keep my collection intact,” he wrote. “I merely want the material that is useful saved.” Here, Marcus hinted at the general approach that had inhabited his archive for half a century. Fundamentally, Marcus was a historian, not an archivist, and he was a historian of a particularly empiricist strain. His archive was driven by his idea of what he needed for his own research and the goal of making materials available to researchers.¹⁸⁶ Consequently, he sidestepped notions like provenance and *respect des fonds*, preferring to reorganize material to make it “useful.” For instance, when Marcus received the papers of the lawyer Louis Marshall, he actively restructured the collection.¹⁸⁷ Likewise, for his own papers Marcus suggested the efficacy of dividing his files so that they could most effectively be utilized by scholars, disregarding their original order. Just the same, he strove to create an archive that would meet historians’ needs, privileging information over physical documents, elevating the data contained therein over any “fetish” for originals in a cult of the copy.¹⁸⁸

In 1955, Marcus provided two fundamental reasons for why the American Jewish

¹⁸⁴ Marcus to Abraham J. Peck and Kevin Proffitt, 4 May 1990, AJA MS-687 58/9.

¹⁸⁵ 25 Jan. 1988, AJA MS-687 58/9. However, after Marcus’ death, his library made its way to Brandeis University.

¹⁸⁶ See Kevin Proffitt, “Jacob Rader Marcus and the Archive He Built,” 9, which details Marcus’ perspective on “unnecessary rules and regulations” and his hope to make materials available to scholars and easy to access.

¹⁸⁷ Marcus to James Marshall, 24 Jul. 1950, Marcus to Marshall, 7 Mar. 1951, etc., AJA MS-687 58/16.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Hillel Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles* (New York: Zone Books, 2014).

Historical Society's archives were smaller than those of his own archives. "The reason that they are small," he said, "is that they only accept gifts and make no copies." On a related note, he argued that the AJHS was hampered by its lack of a photoduplication laboratory. By contrast, Marcus boasted that "we have no pride of possession [sic] in having originals." Instead, he was primarily interested in having a copy of the documents, and whether it was original or not was of little importance. He boasted that of the approximately 200,000 pages they had accumulated, about seventy or eighty percent were copies.¹⁸⁹ Marcus would repeat these views often and publicly. A 1959 article began with a similarly immodest claim of the American Jewish Archives' exceptionalism: "Its operating methods break with all previous collecting traditions," explaining the archive's program in terms that echoed his College lectures, focusing on the active efforts to gather materials through photoduplication. "The Archives harbors no fetish about originals; often prefers copies." A quarter-century later, Marcus again explained that "we are going to be different from any other archives in the world. All other archives are antiquity archives. They collect what people give them. We are going to collect what we know is necessary for historians."¹⁹⁰ Between Marcus' interest in providing his own organizing framework to material, his interest in specific information, and disinterest in originals, one can perhaps characterize Marcus' project as an archive of information. He styled his archive as an information clearing-house, publishing a long series of press releases to publicize the archive's "discoveries," and a 1966 article in the Los Angeles *Jewish Voice*—"Information, Please!" ran the headline—described the American Jewish Archives as a source for information about

¹⁸⁹ Marcus, "History V: Sources of Jewish History," 25 Mar. 1955, AJA MS-210 22/10.

¹⁹⁰ Marcus, interview by Samuel Proctor (1985), 33. Also cf. Frederic Krome, "The Burdman-Levy Archival Expedition of 1962 to Europe," *AJAJ* 55, no. 2 (2003): 31–41, who noted, based on the explanation of Jonathan Sarna, that "Marcus envisioned the AJA as an information-based archives rather than an antiquarian institution" (32), and Proffitt, "Jacob Rader Marcus and the Archive He Built" (esp. 8–10), which makes a similar claim.

American Jewish history.¹⁹¹ Altogether, he placed an emphasis upon historical data and “facts” rather than the documents themselves; together with his interest in decentralization it led to a curious idea of centralization—an archive of copies.

If Marcus’ program reflected his interest in dispersion, he also was rooted in a philosophy of facticity, one focused on the historical facts found in sources and less interested the physical documents themselves. Its origins can be tracked to Marcus’ time as a rabbinical student, when he learned at the feet of Gotthard Deutsch, a man whom Marcus once termed his “historical god-father.”¹⁹² Marcus’ adulation for his teacher was well-known; one classmate later described him as Marcus’ “mentor and ideal.”¹⁹³ Neither was it unusual: The Moravian-born Deutsch, who taught at HUC from 1891 until his death in 1921, took deep interest in the students, and often invited them to dine at his home.¹⁹⁴ Students described his lectures as dry and tedious, but they also anointed him the “most colorful person on the campus” whose portrait adorned the student lounge.¹⁹⁵ His imposing knowledge went hand-in-hand with a comforting exoticism, a Germanic scholar whose impressive beard conjured an image of a man who both knew Jewish history and also embodied it. Consequently, Deutsch developed something of a cult following. When Deutsch was mired in scandal in 1917 in a question of dual loyalty between the United States and his native Germany,

¹⁹¹ “Information, Please! The American Jewish Archives,” *The Voice* (Los Angeles), Nov. 1966, AJA Nearprint File, Box 1; see press releases in AJA Nearprint File, Box 3, such as: “New Light on Seventeenth Century Jewry” (Sept. 1954), “Three Jews and a Balloon” (May 1957), “George Washington and the Jews” (Aug. 1958).

¹⁹² Marcus to Deutsch, 24. Jan. 1919, AJA MS-210 4/2; Abraham Peck, “Biographical sketch, Jacob Rader Marcus,” 27 Jun. 1990, AJA Jacob Rader Marcus Nearprint File, Box 1.

¹⁹³ Irving F. Reichert to Marcus, 27 Jun. 1962, AJA MS-210 8/4.

¹⁹⁴ See, for instance, Diary entry, 9 Mar. 1920, AJA MS-210 29/4: “Spent the day on my thesis as usual and at night we all went to Deutsch’s for supper.” Cf. *Telling Tales Out of School*, 79.

¹⁹⁵ *Telling Tales Out of School: Seminary Memories of the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion*, ed. Stanley R. Brav (Cincinnati: Alumni Association of the HUC–JIR, 1965), 83. Also see *HUC Bulletin*, May 1916; in later years, Marcus spoke of Deutsch as “a very distinguished person but a lousy teacher,” but it may have been a reference to his heavy accent (Marcus, interview by Samuel Proctor, 1985, p. 6).

his students, Marcus included, testified on his behalf.¹⁹⁶ He was also known for his mastery of the breadth of Jewish history in all of its details; a song-and-dance routine proclaimed “It’s our belief he knows a heap more than [Heinrich] Graetz / And the boys at the college call him Dr. Dates.”¹⁹⁷ Deutsch’s memory was legendary; upon his passing a colleague grieved the loss of the “human encyclopedia.”¹⁹⁸ Most curiously, Deutsch maintained a card catalog of over 70,000 discrete “facts” of Jewish history indexed by topic, geography, and chronology.¹⁹⁹ He likewise instilled in his students an appreciation for “objective” facts as the building blocks of history.²⁰⁰

Deutsch’s influence on Marcus proved profound and enduring. Upon Deutsch’s sudden passing in 1921, Marcus inscribed in his diary: “DEUTSCH DIED TODAY.” Though at a loss for words, he described in fine detail how he and his friend Solomon Freehof consoled Deutsch’s wife and children, staying up all night with the body in his master’s study, reading Leopold Zunz and psalms in advance of the funeral, where he served as pallbearer.²⁰¹ Following his teacher’s example, Marcus maintained a card catalog of his own, and he later appropriated Deutsch’s

¹⁹⁶ Marcus to Deutsch, 24 Jan. 1919, AJA MS-210 4/2; on the “Deutsch Ordeal,” see G. A. Dobbert, “The Ordeal of Gotthard Deutsch,” *AJAJ* 20, no. 2 (Nov. 1968): 129–155, and Michael A. Meyer, “*Wissenschaft des Judentums* Exported to America: The Case of Gotthard Deutsch” (unpublished manuscript, April 2016).

¹⁹⁷ “Dr. Deutsch (Air: Casey Jones),” AJA Gotthard Deutsch Nearprint File.

¹⁹⁸ Isidor Singer, “Human Encyclopedia Passes Away. Prof. Gotthard Deutsch Succumbs to Pneumonia,” *American Hebrew*, 21 Oct. 1921, AJA Deutsch Nearprint file.

¹⁹⁹ Deutsch, an active contributor to the Funk & Wagnalls’ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, promoted a project of a master card-catalog of information about Jewish life and history as part of this effort, out of which his personal *Zettelkasten* of more than 70,000 cards emerged. See Deutsch, “A Plan for Co-Operative Work in Collecting Material for Encyclopedic Studies in Jewish History and Literature,” *CCARYB* 16 (1906): 241–250; Deutsch, “Supplementary Explanations to the Plan for Co-Operative Work in Collecting Material for Encyclopedic Studies in Jewish History,” *CCARYB* 17 (1907): 259–270; Deutsch, “Explanations to the Plan for cooperative work, collecting material for encyclopedic studies in Jewish history and literature,” AJA MS-123 1/32).

²⁰⁰ See, for instance, students’ recollections gathered by James Heller in “Dr. Deutsch and Jewish History,” *H.U.C. Monthly*, May 1916, 257–260. As one would expect, these laudatory remarks may be characterized as hyperbolic as it was a special issue of the *Monthly* (a student publication) dedicated to Deutsch on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his employment at HUC. However, their notes about “facts” indicates Deutsch’s influence on the students.

²⁰¹ Marcus diary, 14–15 Oct. 1921, AJA MS-210 29/4. Deutsch’s correspondence is littered with letters of condolence to his wife; in one instance, Jacob Meyrowitz wrote that Adolph Rosenberg, another of Deutsch’s students, had related that “the shock so deeply affected him that he practically could not eat for three days.” (Meyrowitz to Mrs. Gotthard Deutsch, 27 Oct. 1921, AJA MS-123 2/30). On Freehof’s relation with Deutsch: Joan S. Friedman, “The Making of a Reform Rabbi: Solomon B. Freehof from Childhood to HUC,” *AJAJ* 58, no. 1–2 (2006): 1–49.

cards, extracting those dealing in some measure with the Americas for his archive's reading room, where they remain to the present.²⁰² And in the premier issue of his *American Jewish Archives* journal, when Marcus presented the personal collections acquired, he first listed the Deutsch papers—"the most important," he wrote, "without doubt"—before those of Isaac Mayer Wise.²⁰³ He also proved an important intellectual role model. Marcus internalized his teacher's emphasis on "facts," historical exactness, and gathering information. In 1917, while enlisted in the American army, Marcus received a letter from Deutsch suggesting that "your historic interest is lagging" because his last missive had gone undated. In the same letter, Deutsch asked Marcus to collect information on the history of Jews in Alabama, where he was then stationed. In response, Marcus listed facts and anniversaries taking place on the date of his letter's composition.²⁰⁴ When Marcus went to Berlin in 1922, he sought a measure of distance from his teacher; Deutsch had been a "good man for the facts," but Marcus now needed something beyond the ken of his master's teaching, professing his wish to acquire a German "method" rather than simply more data.²⁰⁵

Marcus may have tempered the excesses of Deutsch's empiricism—on one occasion, he criticized David Philipson for "neglecting to present ideas and motivations as he soberly collated the naked facts"—but he was ultimately unable to break free from the already-lain epistemological

²⁰² It was there at the latest by 1965, when it was referenced in *Telling Tales Out of School*, 80. On Marcus' catalog, see "Student Activities," *HUC Monthly*, Nov. 1922, 27, which wishes Marcus luck in his studies abroad, hoping that he might retain his "health, strength, vitality, liberality, fairness, and interest in us as well as your card index." Also "Student Activities," *HUC Monthly*, Jun. 1923, 36, discusses Marcus' card index: "Tell Jake Marcus hello for us. When we think of that card index by now, we shudder. What proportions it must have assumed. It takes a real man to confine himself to a three by five life, especially if it is white." And W. Gunther Plaut, who studied at HUC in the 1930s, reminisced on the work he did for Marcus gathering information from the nineteenth-century Russian publication *Ha-melits* on America for a card index (Peck, et al, eds., *Biz hundert un tsvantsik!*, 56).

²⁰³ "Acquisitions," *AJAJ* 1, no. 1 (Jun. 1948): 24.

²⁰⁴ On dates, see *Telling Tales Out of School* and other materials. Also, this was a historical perspective which would continue throughout his life, with his "schnor letters" often dwelling upon a "this day in history" perspective. See, for instance, the letters published in *All Hail to a Prince of a Schnorrer*, 1968–1981 (21–39).

²⁰⁵ Marcus to AI [no last name], 16 Dec. 1923, AJA MS-210 9/5; Marcus to Julian Morgenstern, 7 Apr. 1924, AJA MS-210 7/10; Marcus to Morgenstern, 28 Aug. 1924, AJA MS-5 A18/7.

foundations.²⁰⁶ He long professed what he termed the “historian’s credo,” that “the fact scrubbed clean is more eternal than perfumed or rouged words,” and still looked to the historian’s key ability, a “capacity to absorb material.”²⁰⁷ Marcus’ Berlin notebooks were dominated by extensive lists of dates and factual information, and upon his return to Cincinnati in 1926, students complained of “the mass of detailed facts” in a history curriculum oriented around “bi-monthly tests,” in which “a certain covered range of facts are memorized and then almost completely forgotten.”²⁰⁸ It seems, then, that Marcus’ time in Germany was a short-lived detour; he remained rooted in Deutsch’s dogmatic empiricism, carrying a peculiar nineteenth-century outlook to the doorstep of the twenty-first. Like his teacher, Marcus would often write of and speak to his students about the importance of facts. When Marcus first read Ranke in 1922, shortly after his arrival in Germany, he wrote: “A true master. A man of ideas.”²⁰⁹ But instead of focusing on Ranke’s ideas, he seemed to have taken the dictum to write history “wie es eigentlich gewesen” at face value. In his 1948 program for the American Jewish Archives, Marcus concluded that he aimed “to ascertain the facts as they actually are,” and in 1951 he again expressed his view that “the aim of the historian is to understand the facts as they really were.”²¹⁰ Here, he echoed his preface to *The Jew in the Medieval World* (1938), when he stated his aim that “the historical facts... speak for themselves,” just as in *The Colonial American Jew* (1970),

²⁰⁶ Marcus, “Dr. David Philipson’s Place in American Jewish Historiography,” *AJAJ* 3, no. 2 (Jan. 1951): 28–31.

²⁰⁷ Marcus, “Address of the President,” 17 Jul. 1957, AJA MS-210, 1/8; “The Historian’s Credo,” 20 Oct. 1958, AJA Jacob Rader Marcus Nearprint File, Box 2. On the “capacity to absorb material,” see Stanley Chyet, “Jacob Rader Marcus: A Biographical Sketch,” 13, which quotes Marcus on Graetz: “His arrangement of material is bad, but he had vision and ideas, imagination and verve, and a tremendous capacity to absorb material. On the whole, his methodology is excellent.” Cf. Marcus, interview by Samuel Proctor (1985), 5–6, where Marcus attributed his professional success to his ability to memorize material.

²⁰⁸ See AJA MS-210 boxes 27, 28; “Considerations of Our College Curriculum,” *HUC Monthly*, Jun. 1927, 8–14.

²⁰⁹ Marcus, Diary Entry, 4 Nov. 1922, AJA MS-210 29/4.

²¹⁰ Marcus, *Early American Jewry* 1: xv, “The Program of the American Jewish Archives,” Jun. 1948.

where the aim was to “give the facts and document them.”²¹¹ In 1953, when Marcus prepared a pamphlet to guide those writing communal histories, he explained that “Before he even begins to collect a single fact, it would be wise for the research worker to examine and to read the following small books...,” insinuating that the bulk of the work was the process of accumulating “facts.”²¹²

It is important to qualify Marcus’ emphasis on facts. On one occasion, he suggested that the historian’s task should be more than simply “digging up facts.”²¹³ Nevertheless, his choice of metaphor is telling, reflecting his wider perspective on the nature of history. Deutsch once described the historian as a “naturalist,” who gathers information to “reproduce the skeleton by joining the facts as they belong together.”²¹⁴ Marcus spoke of facts not as bones but as gems or stones, and the historian’s task to unearth them and “scrub” or polish them.²¹⁵ In one instance, Marcus was described as “one of the leading diggers for American-Jewish facts,” and he wrote in 1959 that his archive was “mining” important fields of research.²¹⁶ Of course, Marcus was by no means alone in his description of archives as mines.²¹⁷ But he stands apart, for instance, from the

²¹¹ Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World*, vii; *Colonial American Jew*, xxvi.

²¹² Marcus, “How to Write the History of an American Jewish Community,” 1953, AJA Marcus Nearprint, Box 2.

²¹³ “Preparing for an Organic History of American Jewry,” *The Reconstructionist*, May 1953, AJA Nearprint, Box 3.

²¹⁴ “Historian Explains the Causes of the Present European Conflict,” AJA Deutsch Nearprint File.

²¹⁵ Marcus, “The Historians Credo,” 20 Oct. 1958, Marcus, “Address of the President,” AJA Jacob Rader Marcus Nearprint File, Box 2, reprint from *PAJHS* 46, no. 4 (1957).

²¹⁶ Harold Ribalow, “Sherlock Holmeses of Jewish History,” Mar. 1955, AJA Nearprint File, Box 1; “The Archives Story.” Cf. “First Cincinnati Jew is Goal of Archives,” *Cincinnati Post*, 25 Jan. 1957, AJA Nearprint File, Box 2, which reported that “since 1948, the Archive’s been digging out data relating to the history of American’s Jewish community and making it available to scholars,” and also “Jacob Rader Marcus,” *World Over: A Magazine for Boys and Girls*, 14 Nov. 1952, AJA Marcus Nearprint File, Box 1, describing the AJA as “a gold-mine for scholars of American-Jewish history.”

²¹⁷ See, for instance, “Save Historical Records,” *PAJHS* 38, no. 1 (Sept. 1948): 79, which used similar language, describing sources as “mines of material” (cf. Lee M. Friedman, “An Invitation to American Jewish History,” *PAJHS* 38, no. 1 (Sept. 1948), 15), and “The Yiddish Scientific Institute—YIVO: Devoted to Research and Training in the Domain of Jewish Scholarship,” YIVO upstairs collection, Materials on YIVO history [unnamed folder], which described YIVO’s Vilnius collections as “a mine of information.”

Israeli archivist Alex Bein, who spoke of archives as the historian's "laboratory."²¹⁸ Marcus' metaphor reflected a belief that the facts of history are just there, waiting to be uncovered.

Marcus' focus on facticity, it turns out, both spurred his historical activity as well as his archival perspective. In 1925, as he approached the conclusion of his doctoral studies, Marcus proclaimed he had acquired the German "method." Writing to Julian Morgenstern, he declared: "All I need now is the basic knowledge of sources which I must get when I get back. ... At home as I go along I will apply my method to open up the storehouses of Jewish material."²¹⁹ Clearly, when Marcus created his American Jewish Archives a quarter-century later he had this idea in mind, as he sought to apply the same methods to the "Jewish material," which he simply needed to collect and process. In another instance, Deutsch had encouraged Marcus to keep an exact diary, which Marcus did dutifully, with some lapses, for years.²²⁰ Three-quarters of a century later, in 1989, Marcus lamented that he had not kept a diary of his 1962 archival expedition: "That was very un-historical and very un-archival," he wrote then, at the age of ninety-four.²²¹ What is more, he derived at least to some extent his conception of the importance of information itself over the specific documents and as physical objects from his mentor. After Deutsch's death, Marcus became an executor of his literary estate, much of which had been willed to the College. "When I saw how [Deutsch's] books were thrown around," he explained once, "I lost all respect for books as sacred entities in themselves." Continuing, he claimed "I have learned

²¹⁸ "Ha-'asifah ha-kelalit ha-shenatit shel ha-ḥevrah," 2 Feb. 1950, CAHJP IHS/9; Alex Bein, "Kibbutz galuyot le-ginze ha-'umah," *Be'erem*, Apr.–May 1950, 87–90; "Kibbutz Galujoth auch für jüdische Archive," *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland*, 20 Oct. 1950, 8, 27 Oct. 1950, 7; "Israel Archivist Visits Britain," *Jewish Herald* (Johannesburg, South Africa) 13 Jan. 1958, CZA L33/1440.

²¹⁹ Marcus to Morgenstern, 28 Aug. 1924, AJA MS-5 A18/7.

²²⁰ Deutsch to Marcus, 15 Feb. 1919, AJA MS-210 4/2.

²²¹ Marcus to Theodore and Ina Rae Levy, 11 Sept. 1989, AJA SC-13450. In fact, he did keep a diary on this trip, but it was misfiled, finding its way into AJA Nearprint File, Box 4.

that books are instruments and not masters.”²²²

That approach to books could aptly describe Marcus’ distinct disinterest in original archival documents. Over the years, he repeatedly emphasized that he preferred copies over originals. In 1945, he stated it outright: “I prefer Photostats.”²²³ In 1959 he again touched upon the theme as he wrote that “The Archives harbors no fetish about originals; often prefers copies.” Continuing, Marcus explained that “Originals tend to be brittle, difficult and expensive to maintain; often are illegible and usually are expensive.”²²⁴ As one will recall, Marcus’ earliest efforts focused on photostating synagogue records, and he spoke of the efficacy—in terms of both scholarship and matters of security—of maintaining copies of important files in different places. But Marcus’ tendency was not merely a matter of practicality: One can say, perhaps, that he developed his American Jewish Archives on the basis of a cult of the copy. It was for him a matter of pride; as he explained, the photoduplication laboratory set his archive apart from all others. Indeed, he invested tremendous resources. In 1948, he wrote of his hope to purchase “the very best microfilm projector and a machine to blow up microfilms,” and the following year he spent about \$7,000—more than double his archive’s initial total budget—for a new photostat machine.²²⁵ In addition to his effort to duplicate individual documents from other archives and those held in private hands, Marcus also sought microfilm duplicates of full archival collections from the AJHS, who sent him crates of files to duplicate and return.²²⁶ As he accumulated more and more material, Marcus explained that he planned to “macerate” original files once he had

²²² Chyet, “Jacob Rader Marcus: A Biographical Sketch,” 9.

²²³ Marcus to Annie Nathan Meyer, 5 Jul. 1945, AJA MS-687 1/3.

²²⁴ “The Archives Story,” 1959.

²²⁵ Marcus to Mr. Goldberg, 20 Aug. 1948, AJA MS-210 5/7; Memo, Marcus to Mr. Lyons, 1 Mar. 1949, AJA MS-687 39/4; Marcus to Malcolm Stern, 7 Apr. 1949, Marcus to Bernard Starkoff, 29 Jul. 1949, AJA MS-210 8/12.

²²⁶ Marcus to Isidore S. Meyer, 26 Oct. 1950, AJA MS-687 5/1; Marcus to Meyer, 1953 and 1954, AJA MS-687 5/2.

produced microfilm copies.²²⁷ In the end, Marcus' archive was one of photocopies. In 1955, Marcus estimated that of around two hundred thousand pages of material, around 70 or 80 percent was in the form of duplicates.²²⁸ In October 1963, Marcus wrote to Glueck that they had already burned through the microfilming budget for the 1963–64 fiscal year; as he explained, from then until the end of June 1964 “we will not be able to operate at all. We are ‘out of business.’” Here, we see firsthand the rapid pace at which Marcus accumulated photocopies and also the way in which it constituted at this time the core work of the archive.²²⁹

Marcus was not alone in his adulation for photoduplication. Neither was it entirely innovative. Microphotography is as old as photography itself, having been invented by the Englishman John Benjamin Dancer in 1839, the same year as the Daguerreotype. Long the domain of trinkets, microphotography was put to use in the Franco-Prussian war to transmit messages by balloon, demonstrating the possibilities to surreptitiously and secretly transfer documents. Nevertheless, it was only in the 1920s when microfilm made its first truly practical debut with the “Check-o-Matic,” which automatically filmed bank checks; by the 1940s, microfilm had become important for business, bureaucrats, and scholars alike, as all looked to photographic technologies to manage and control vast stores of data for which none had sufficient space.²³⁰ As it was, the years when Marcus began his archive project represented a moment of rapid innovation in the field of microphotography and photoduplication and a vision of applying business techniques

²²⁷ Also see Marcus, “Sources of Jewish History,” 11 Oct. 1966, AJA MS-210 22/15. “[Question:] You said this morning that you had photostats of many documents and that you destroyed the originals. If so, why? ... Oh, so you hadn't destroyed them yourself. I didn't understand. I thought you purposely destroyed them. [Marcus:] You're [sic] not ready for that yet but we'll do that. We're going to ultimately macerate those valuable papers as we microfilm cause we're getting so that we have no more room.” (19–20)

²²⁸ Jacob Rader Marcus, “History V: Sources of Jewish History,” 25 Mar. 1955, AJA MS-210 22/10.

²²⁹ Marcus to Glueck, 17 Oct. 1963, AJA MS-160 1/9.

²³⁰ Frederic Luther, *Microfilm: A History, 1839–1900* (National Microfilm Association, 1959); Susan A. Cady, “Machine Tool of Management: A History of Microfilm Technology” (Ph.D. dissertation, Lehigh University, 1994).

and technologies to historical research. Industry boosters pushed these technologies for varied purposes, and looked to a future of unitized microfilm slides and punchcard processing; when Vannevar Bush described the “Memex” in 1945—an imaginary mechanical desk and data processing system which would allow the researcher or office clerk to easily locate individual records, files, and references from vast libraries of microfilmed volumes in a sort of proto-hypertext—Marcus followed this trajectory.²³¹ His archive also emerged in an environment where new technological capabilities were enabling the creation of historical and contemporary data bases of tremendous scopes.²³² Marcus may not have been aware of these specific projects but he was exceptionally future-facing considering his profession; in 1933 he looked forward to an era when instantaneous communication would “annihilate[] time and space,” and thirty years later he wrote similarly about the possibility of supersonic flight to transform Jewish life.²³³ In the case of microfilm, Marcus was similarly enthralled with the possibilities.

When Marcus dreamt of an archive of copies, then, he drew from a shared well, but in some ways he was behind the times. He remained pleasantly naïve to debates over the stability of these media for long-term storage and use, as archive and microfilm professionals considered the active work and expense required to produce and maintain copies and increasingly argued that microfilm was “no universal answer” and could not be relied upon as a solution to the issues posed by atomic war.²³⁴ Nevertheless, Marcus’ preference reflected a common mid-century vision

²³¹ See Vannevar Bush, “As We May Think,” *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1945, 101–108; Murray G. Lawson, “The Machine Age in Historical Research,” *American Archivist* 11, no. 2 (Apr. 1948): 141–149; Ernest P. Taubes, “The Future of Microfilming,” *American Archivist* 21, no. 2 (Apr. 1958): 153–158.

²³² See Rebecca Lemov, *Database of Dreams: The Lost Quest to Catalog Humanity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

²³³ Marcus, “Impacts of Contemporary Life upon Judaism,” in *Religion Today: A Symposium* (Chicago: UAHC, 1933), also published in 1969 by the AJA; Marcus, “Tomorrow’s Prospect,” *American Israelite*, 23 Sept. 1965.

²³⁴ Daniel F. Noll, “The Maintenance of Microfilm Files,” *American Archivist* 13, no. 2 (Apr. 1950): 129–134; Jerry McDonald, “The Case against Microfilming,” *American Archivist* 20, no. 4 (Oct. 1957): 345–356; Leon deValinger, Jr, “A Microfilmer Replies,” *American Archivist* 21, no. 3 (July 1958): 305–310; John Edwards Caswell, “Archives

of the importance of microfilm as a means of preservation for researchers and businesses, all of which have come under criticism in later decades.²³⁵ In the end, despite Marcus' boast that copies were cheaper to maintain and more durable than originals—"brittle, difficult and expensive to maintain," he had written—by the 1980s, his duplicates were themselves in danger.²³⁶ Kevin Proffitt, at that time the AJA's associate archivist, then reported that despite microfilming efforts, the Cincinnati archive had run out of space.²³⁷ Their collection of photostat congregational records, he wrote, was both without order and in disrepair, having "curled badly over the years." As a result, they embarked on a new effort to microfilm Marcus' early photostats so they would be able to "preserve for all time the record of American Jewry," as Proffitt described their mission.²³⁸

Marcus' prime interest in photoduplication, just as in his early discussion of developing a network of archives across the country for American Jewry, was to make material available to scholars wherever they were. Marcus saw the ultimate goal of collecting material as its availability. Upon returning from his 1952 Caribbean jaunt, he concluded his report that "We conceive that our collections are so much waste paper if they cannot be copied and used by others."²³⁹ When Marcus found that YIVO forbade the copying of manuscript material, he was incensed; in a lengthy retort, he declared that "I cannot conceive of the value of consulting material of which copies cannot be made." Continuing, he wrote of the need for cooperation, lamenting that scholarship could not progress so long as researchers needed to undertake

for Tomorrow's Historians," *American Archivist* 21, no. 4 (Oct. 1958): 409–417; Margaret Weis, "The Case for Microfilming," *American Archivist* 22, no. 1 (Jan. 1959): 15–24; Nicholas Baker, *Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper* (New York: Random House, 2001).

²³⁵ See James O'Toole, "On the Idea of Permanence," *American Archivist* 52, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 10–25.

²³⁶ "The Archives Story," 1959.

²³⁷ Proffitt, "Collection Management at the American Jewish Archives," *American Archivist* 49, no. 2 (1986): 177–179.

²³⁸ Proffitt, "Collection Management"; Proffitt, "The Micrographics Program of the American Jewish Archives," *Microfilm Review* 15, no. 2 (1986): 87–90.

²³⁹ Marcus, "The West India and South America Expedition of the American Jewish Archives," 21.

expensive travel to appear at dispersed archives and then, once there, be unable to copy key documents.²⁴⁰ In a similar way, Marcus wrote to Salo Baron of the importance of access to manuscripts. “Let us make every effort to make the material available to everyone,” he wrote in 1953. “Restriction of manuscript materials—unless of a scandalous nature—is entirely out of consonance with the spirit of the Twentieth Century.”²⁴¹ For this reason, Marcus established branches of his archive in Los Angeles, as well as New York City following the AJHS’ 1968 move to Brandeis University, and at HUC’s Jerusalem campus, where microfilm copies of publications and other collections were stored.²⁴² In this manner, Marcus simultaneously actualized his early vision of a network of archives as well as made security copies.

One will recall that Israeli archivists, and Alex Bein especially, were also interested in microfilm and the possibilities of its use for developing an archival collection by duplicating materials held elsewhere in the original. Indeed, the Israelis worked with Marcus on the basis of reciprocal microfilming. However, Marcus’ preference for microfilm distanced him from the Israelis, who notoriously fought for possession of physical documents in their struggles over German Jewish communal archives. In 1950, Bein claimed that Hebrew University scholars required access to originals, and at a 1954 meeting with Hamburg mayor Kurt Sieveking he was explicit when he explained that he generally advocated the use of microfilm, but “the photograph is in no way equivalent to the source,” a view also expressed in 1956 by Curt Wormann, director of Israel’s National Library, about manuscripts from Worms.²⁴³ In stark contrast, Salo Baron and

²⁴⁰ Marcus to Mark Uveeler, 11 Jun. 1951, AJA MS-210 9/3; Marcus to Lee M. Friedman, 11 Jun. 1951, AJA MS-210 1/5.

²⁴¹ Marcus to Salo Baron, 21 Apr. 1953, AJA MS-210, 3/1.

²⁴² “Institute Starts Archives Project,” *Los Angeles Heritage*, 3 Apr. 1959, AJA Nearprint File, Box 2; Marcus to Glueck, 20 Nov. 1962, AJA MS-160 1/9; Marcus to Alfred Gotteschalk, 5 Mar. 1971, AJA MS-687 39/13; “Ha-snif bi-yerushalayim,” 11 Mar. 1977, AJA Nearprint File, Box 4.

²⁴³ Bein to S. Rosenberg-Elbogen, 21 Aug. 1950, CZA L33/1881; Bein, “Du”h ‘al síhati ‘im ro’sh ha-‘ir hamburg,” 16 Jun. 1954, CAHJP P28/6/37; “Protokol mi-pegisha she-hitkayma be-‘inyan ’arkhiyon kehillat yorms,” 6 Aug.

Hannah Arendt hoped to microfilm the Worms archives, whereas the Jewish Historical General Archives' leaders sought to gain ownership of the originals via restitution processes.²⁴⁴

Consequently, the Israeli archivists gained a reputation for ruthlessness; Daniel Cohen reported that the Italian Jewish community leaders had to be disabused of the notion that their archives would be “kidnapped” and, likewise, when he visited the AJHS in Boston in 1968, he met with an “exceptionally chilly” reception, as they believed that the Israelis would try to take their files.²⁴⁵

And while Marcus was generally amicable with his Israeli counterparts, he found himself in 1962 the recipient of their ire over his pursuit of photocopies.²⁴⁶ Marcus had acquired much material on his archival trip to Europe that year in duplicates; but in a mostly cordial update on the process of reciprocal microfilming, Daniel Cohen wrote: “You will understand, that the microfilming of documents might create a precedent to the disadvantage of our cause.”²⁴⁷ Consequently, one can see how Marcus fell on a broad spectrum on the question of microfilm. What distinguished Marcus from his Israeli colleagues was that he was primarily interested in the information contained in documents, and was not particularly concerned with who held the originals, whereas the Israelis saw important symbolic meaning in holding original archives as part of their effort to demonstrate the state of Israel's position as a cultural successor to European Jewry.

Marcus' archive of information was based on the idea that his archive constituted an

1956, CZA L33/1272.

²⁴⁴ See, for instance, Eli Rock to Benjamin Ferencz, 12 Apr. 1949, CAHJP JRSO/NY/923a; Hannah Arendt to Friedrich Illert, 27 Sept. 1950, Arendt to Illert, 12 Feb. 1951, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 72; Minutes of Special Meeting of the Board of Directors and Advisory Committee, 10 Dec. 1951, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/336; Arendt to Gershom Scholem, 8 Jan. 1952, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/262; Minutes of Special Meeting of the Board of Directors, 12 Apr. 1950, LBI DM 223 14/52; Scholem to Arendt, 29 Jan. 1951, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/229.

²⁴⁵ Daniel Cohen, “Du”h ‘al nesiy’ati le-’eropah ba-ḳayits u-ba-stay 1954,” 20 Jan. 1955, CZA L33/1275; Daniel Cohen, Circular, 11 Aug. 1969, CZA L33/314.

²⁴⁶ See for instance, Bein to Marcus, 4 Jun. 1970, AJA MS-687 18/21, Marcus to Bein, 16 Dec. 1975, AJA MS-687 18/28, as examples of cordial personal notes.

²⁴⁷ Daniel Cohen to Marcus, 30 Nov. 1962, AJA MS-687 18/20.

objective possessor of historical facts and data, open to scholars and interested laypeople. It was for this reason that Marcus worked to gather files in whatever form he could get, in either original or photocopy, although he suggested sometimes that he preferred copies to originals. And when he did receive material, he often reorganized it according to his own conception of its proper categorization. In all his years as director of his American Jewish Archives, Marcus never claimed to be an archivist; it was for this reason that he hired Selma Stern-Täubler for this role and to manage the archive's day-to-day affairs. As the archive's director, he worked as an historian-in-chief, creating in his archive his own research repository. Out of it then emerges a reflection of what Marcus himself saw American Jewish history to be, as a field distinct from the rest of Jewish history as well as a particular vision of the narrative that it contained.

Can Documents “Speak for Themselves”? Delineating a Field of American Jewish History

In 1938, Marcus prefaced *The Jew in the Medieval World* with a hope that its documents should “speak for themselves.”²⁴⁸ In accordance, he insisted that his American Jewish Archives was an instrument of “scientific” history, following a view that one could simply present history “as it really was.” In fact, Marcus’ archive constructed a field of American Jewish history as a discrete entity, separate from the rest of Jewish history, imprinted with his own perspective of the “omniterritoriality” of Jews throughout America and their role as active players in American history. In part, this stemmed from the fact that he gathered materials he thought would be of interest to historians, first and foremost himself and his students, whom he assigned topics for theses out of his own research agenda, focusing on the history of synagogues and Jewish communities. It can also be seen through the materials he actively sought. In photographs of Charleston, he aimed to frame Jewish history with images that represented something historically

²⁴⁸ Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World*, vii.

“accurate,” excising marks of modern times like automobiles or “disturbing” elements like a cross posted by the homes’ current Gentile inhabitants. It also represented a narrative inherent in the archive’s structure, which stemmed from his perception of the nature of American Jewish history and the story that it contained, and in its very existence, which presupposed the existence of a field of American Jewish history as a separate province within the field of Jewish history at large.

Marcus’ collecting efforts reflected the contours of a historical structure that would be embedded in the archive on a large scale, gesturing clearly at the topics and tropes he found most compelling in the history of American Jewry and the type of history he believed should be written about it. As one will recall, Marcus first focused on gathering the early minute-books of synagogues and the letters of prominent Jewish figures, which he hoped to fashion into a history of American Jewry as a collection of personal letters. Addressing one contributor to his book project in 1945, he remarked that it was “a rather strange convention,” but it was not for him a radical departure.²⁴⁹ Just as Marcus’ empiricism, informed by Deutsch, persisted long after his turn to American Jewish history, so too had he long expressed interest in personal letters as a source of history. In 1930, Marcus had proclaimed that letters “present us vividly and honestly” insight into the past, especially as they were not prepared with an eye towards anyone except the intended recipient. Likewise, in the preface to *The Jew in the Medieval World*, Marcus wrote that “business contracts, receipts, inventories, and the like, though important, are as a rule equally boring.”²⁵⁰ Now, he sought to sketch Jewish life in America on the basis of materials of “general human interest,” not official documents.²⁵¹ Above all, he asked that they be interesting: “I want

²⁴⁹ Marcus to Annie Nathan Meyer, 5 Jul. 1945, AJA MS-687 1/3.

²⁵⁰ Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World*, xi.

²⁵¹ Marcus to Tillie Abeles, 20 Mar. 1945, AJA MS-687 1/3, Marcus to Alice DeFord, 12 Dec. 1944, AJA MS-687 1/2. He repeatedly wrote of his pursuit of “interesting letters” (cf. Marcus to Bernard G. Richards, 8 Jan. 1946, Marcus to William I. Spiegelberg, 18 Apr. 1946, Marcus to Mrs. Clarence Mack, 7 Jun. 1946, AJA MS-687 1/4.)

characteristic, revelatory, patriotic, religious letters!”²⁵² In one revealing case, when Marcus sought material on the American Jewish Congress, he related that the letters in the Annual Reports were “rather heavy.” Instead, he requested “lighter, more intimate” material, asking for any such unpublished letters by Louis Marshall; however, he quickly turned and wrote: “The letters don’t have to be by Marshall. Even letters of the staff sent out that are of interest would be welcome.”²⁵³ Here, we find the through-lines of a budding social historian, seeking to portray day-to-day life through both distinguished figures and everyday people. Still, Marcus’ method augured a break from his approach to the history of Jews in Europe. *The Jew in the Medieval World* had been dominated by documents illustrating relations between Jews and the state. In avoiding official documents for his planned history of American Jewish life, Marcus laid out a narrative of American Jewish history dominated not by the state but the Jews’ voluntary relation to one another, the “general human interest” of American Jewish history, and the notion that it was inherently dramatic and colorful. He may have unconsciously tapped into the swashbuckling historical novels of George Henty he had read as a young boy when he publicized the “discoveries” made at the American Jewish Archives like the diary of Sigmund Schlesinger, who participated in the 1878 battle at Beecher Island in Colorado, and memoirs of Jews in Tombstone, Arizona, documenting Wyatt Earp in the flesh.²⁵⁴ Altogether, the items he collected and promoted painted a picture of the scope of American Jewish life and his idea of its omniterritoriality.

Marcus’ quasisociological approach dovetailed with a broader notion that there was a single, characteristic history of American Jewry. In 1979, Marcus penned a telling foreword to

²⁵² Marcus to Annie Nathan Meyer, 5 Jul. 1945, AJA MS-687 1/3.

²⁵³ Marcus to Harry Schneiderman, 3 Aug. 1945, AJA MS-687 1/3.

²⁵⁴ “Synagogues and Six-Shooters,” *Jewish Times*, 19 Apr. 1957, “Jewish Archives Papers Challenge Wyatt Earp,” *Phoenix Jewish News*, 21 Nov. 1958, AJA Nearprint File, Box 2. Also see Marcus, interview by Ida Selavan, tape 1, side 2 (1:30).

David Brener's *The Jews of Lancaster, Pennsylvania*, in which he indicated the kind of history that he thought could be produced about American Jewry. He praised Brener for producing "a good accurate chronicle," a product of "critical method." Continuing, Marcus explained: "His [Brener's] narrative assumes importance because it is typical. In some respects Lancaster is a microcosm of almost every Jewish town in the United States."²⁵⁵ In this way, he suggested that there existed a singular pattern of Jewish life in America, a sentiment he also presented when he produced a series of pamphlets on writing the history of one's Jewish community and maintaining a synagogue archive. There, he presented a "suggested outline" for a communal history, a schema in five parts: the general history of the city or town; the beginnings of organized Jewish communal, economic and social life; the arrival of Jews from Eastern Europe (and their own distinctive economic and philanthropic activities); the "amalgamation" of the founders (whether Sephardic or central European) with newly-arrived immigrants into a singular community; concluding with "a brief summary of the Jewish community and its achievements since the first Jew came to town."²⁵⁶ In 1954, addressing the American Jewish Historical Society, too, Marcus explained that "in the final analysis, the core of a people's history is the determination of that which is typical in the lives of the men and women who constitute that people."²⁵⁷ And it was for this reason that Marcus repeatedly spoke of his archive as crucial for anyone writing "the" history of American Jewry—because it represented a single, shared history with common tropes.

Marcus thus constructed, through the structure of his archive, the idea that American Jewish history was a distinct field. By delineating the boundaries as the Western Hemisphere, he

²⁵⁵ Marcus, "Foreword," in David Brener, *The Jews of Lancaster, Pennsylvania: A Story with Two Beginnings* (Congregation Shaarai Shomayim, Lancaster, PA, and the Lancaster County Historical Society, 1979), vii.

²⁵⁶ Marcus, "How to Write the History of an American Jewish Community," 1953, AJA Marcus Nearprint, Box 2.

²⁵⁷ Marcus, "Letters as a Source of Biography," 1954, YIVO RG584, 399b. Cf. Bertram Korn, *American Jewry in the Civil War* (1951); Korn, Marcus' disciple, here described his hope to write a "group biography" of American Jewry as a single community (xi).

proposed a kind of Monroe Doctrine of American Jewish history, dividing the history of Jews into worlds old and new at a time when the United States' intervention in Latin America reflected a renewed expression of this idea of hemispheric political dominance.²⁵⁸ Here, he followed from a general sense of America's position as a world power and its dominance of Latin America, placing these countries within a sphere of influence of American Jewry too.²⁵⁹ Further, the act of extracting cards dealing with the Americas from Gotthard Deutsch's card catalog and relocating them to his reading room both reflected his continued devotion to his teacher and to his notion of the importance of the "facts" of history; it also effected a division of Deutsch's "data" into two historical fields. He also suggested that the student of American Jewry might follow different rules than one who wrote of the Jewish past elsewhere. Marcus argued that American Jewish life was "completely integrated into the structure of our present everyday life," and so one who studies it must know the history of America, whereas he suggested mistakenly that those who study Jewish life in eastern Europe, for instance, had no such similar imperative to know the wider history and context.²⁶⁰

Just the same, by creating a singular archive of American Jewish history he called forth visions of the unity of American Jewry. For he believed that while American Jewry would over time decline in numbers, it would retrench around a common, shared element.²⁶¹ In a remarkable 1965 article, Marcus explained his belief that Orthodoxy and classical Reform would fall away

²⁵⁸ Cf. *The Varieties of History from Voltaire to the Present*, ed. Fritz Stern (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), 22. See Gretchen Murphy, *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), which suggests the enduring importance of the nineteenth-century policy as well as its flexibility to frame new policies; Gaddis Smith, *The Last Years of the Monroe Doctrine, 1945–1993* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), proposes framing American Cold War policy as an extension of the Monroe Doctrine.

²⁵⁹ Cf. "Tomorrow's Prospect," *American Israelite*, 16 Jun. 1965, AJA Nearprint File, Box 1.

²⁶⁰ Marcus, "Sources of Jewish History," 11 Oct. 1955, AJA MS-210 22/15.

²⁶¹ "The Next Half Century," *American Examiner*, 17 May 1957, AJA Nearprint file, box 2; "Dr. Marcus, Historian, Looks at 'The Future of American Jewry,'" *American Israelite*, 23 Feb. 1956, AJA Nearprint file, box 2.

and “a common type of practice and belief” would emerge among the growing centrist movement of American Jewry, whether it be Conservative or “Neo-Reform.” What is more, he predicted that that the jet age would usher in a new unification of American Jewry. It may have taken Isaac Mayer Wise an hour to travel by horse and buggy from his home to Hebrew Union College, Marcus remarked, but within “ten or twenty years,” he predicted, one would travel from Los Angeles to New York City in the same span, leading naturally to the formation of a “nationally organized community.”²⁶² A decade later, in 1975, Marcus lamented that American Jewry still lacked a “truly representative organization,” and expressed his hope that there might be a return to a semblance of an institutional foundation.²⁶³ As such, Marcus harked back to Wise’s vision of a “Minhag America.” If Wise dreamt of a common liturgy and ritual with a hope to foster a shared religious culture among all American Jews, Marcus envisioned a singular history of America’s Jews, just as he looked to Wise’s plan to form institutions representative of American Jewry as a whole in his vision of an archive that could speak to all aspects of American Jewish history.

At the same time that Marcus looked forward to a “nationally organized” American Jewry, his vision of the Jewish past grounded his vision of an archive of Diaspora and of the dispersed geography of American Judaism with Cincinnati at its center. At once, he affirmed the Diaspora’s historic vitality, and also put forward a notion of his as one of many archives.²⁶⁴ In his 1948 program, Marcus had declared that his archive would supplement the AJHS by serving “researchers living between the Rockies and the Cumberland plateau,” just as the New York-based Historical Society would remain in service of the eastern seaboard and he predicted that “it

²⁶² Marcus, “Tomorrow’s Prospect,” *American Israelite*, 23 Sept. 1965, AJA Nearprint Box 1. Cf. Marcus, “Impacts of Contemporary Life upon Judaism,” where he uses this language nearly verbatim.

²⁶³ Marcus, “The Jew and the American Bicentennial,” 1975, AJA Jacob Rader Marcus Nearprint box 2.

²⁶⁴ “A Moment Interview with Jacob Rader Marcus,” 1981, A79.

is but a matter of time before a similar archive will be established on the Pacific coast.”²⁶⁵

Consequently, Marcus’ vision was of the spread of American Jewry westward, requiring new institutions to serve these regions and to collect materials documenting this historical phenomenon. This notion of a network of archives tied into Marcus’ conception of the geography of Jewish history at large, and American Jewry in particular. He created his archive in Cincinnati not just because the Hebrew Union College was based there—what he would have called another “accident of its geographic situation,” just as the AJHS was based in New York City—but because of its historic stature, as the oldest Jewish settlement west of the Alleghenies.

In 1953, Marcus had written of his hope to create a “school” of American Jewish history.²⁶⁶ Through his archive, he was in some measures successful. At Hebrew Union College, he encouraged students to write rabbinic theses on topics in American Jewish history; their topics evoked the issues that Marcus himself found of interest: the history of individual communities and synagogues. Of these students, a number of them would work closely with him at the archive, as did Bertram Korn, his assistant from 1948 to 1949, and Stanley Chyet a doctoral student of Marcus’ who worked at the archive beginning in 1960 and from 1966 to 1976 served as its Associate Director. But in some ways, Marcus’ influence was limited to just a few students, especially as he got older and more students studied with Ellis Rivkin. For this reason, Marcus has been seen in one of two lights: Either in a hagiographical view, as a “dean” of American Jewish historians and the founder of a new field, or completely written out.²⁶⁷ In the final analysis, though, Marcus left his unmistakable mark through his archive, which became not

²⁶⁵ “The Program of the American Jewish Archives,” Jun. 1948, 2.

²⁶⁶ “After Five Years,” *AJAJ* 5, no. 1 (Jan. 1953): 3–4.

²⁶⁷ See, for instance, Salo Baron, “Newer Emphases in Jewish History,” *JSS* 25, no. 4 (1963): 235–248, which, discussing how American Jewish history had “coming of age,” did not list Marcus or his archive in the related footnote; also see Hasia Diner, “American Jewish History,” in *Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies* (2004).

only one of the premier archival collections dedicated to American Jewish life but also set out one definition of a field of American Jewish history and presented a distinctive vision of what archives of Jewish history might look. At the “Jerusalem on the Ohio,” Marcus created an institution which stood to validate the vitality of Diaspora existence and also the expansiveness of Jewish history beyond major centers of population and political power. And this took place in a time, following the destruction of European Jewry, when the pendulum of Jewish history—and its archival activity—had swung away from wide dispersion towards centralization.

Chapter 6

Contested Fragments Framing the Jewish Past and Forging a Jewish Future

On October 29, 1957, Alex Bein addressed a public ceremony at Israel's State Archives to celebrate the archives of the Jews of Worms, which had been awarded to the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem.¹ Reflecting on the struggle for these files, he declared: "If we had to fight Nazis and foes of the Jews, it would have been relatively easy. But here, it consisted of struggles against friends."² Opponents to archival transfer like Worms archivist Friedrich Illert, he explained, were not motivated by antisemitism but were dear friends of the Jews. In fact, Illert had stolen the files from the Gestapo, not the Jews, and he held the archives with hope of the Jews' return to that historic city. Bein's characterization could apply to a handful of other episodes: In the Israelis' effort to gain the Jewish archives of Hamburg, their prime adversary was Hans Hertz, a non-Jew with interest in Jewish history, and when the Jerusalem archivists sent Bernhard Brillung to search German state archives in search of restitutable materials, he instead called for a Jewish archive in postwar Germany and for the "repatriation" of files sent to Israel. Such efforts reflected a shared vision to reconstitute the fragments of Jewish life after the Holocaust, but also demonstrate the contested nature of such a "time to gather," when possessing the papers of the past stood in for who held the authority to study Jewish history and to shape the Jewish future.

Previous chapters have explored grand archival projects representing alternate visions of Jewish life and culture after the Holocaust. This concluding chapter, by contrast, examines in depth

¹ Bein, "Teqes ha'avarat 'atikot yorms," 29 Oct. 1957, "Übergabe der Wormser Altertümer," 29 Oct. 1957, CZA L33/1272.

² Schalom Ben-Chorin, "Kibbutz Galujoth der Vergangenheit," *Jedioth Chadashoth*, 1 Nov. 1957, CZA L33/1272. Cf. Hans Neumann to Daniel Cohen, 25 Apr. 1958, CZA L33/1312, who wrote that "the greatest difficulty in convincing [Hamburg mayor Max] Breuer lies, in my view paradoxically, that he is a wholehearted friend of the Jews."

a few of the most contentious disputes over the fragments of the Jewish past that highlight the high stakes of the fate of looted archives and the question of claiming cultural property. The battles over the Worms and Hamburg archives and Bernhard Brillling's plan for a new Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden illustrate the intensely personal drama of such debates and call attention to the perspectives of opponents of archival centralization. Moreover, these cases both signal the specific complexities of the postwar years and also gesture at an historic arc drawing a red thread through the history of Jewish archives in the twentieth century. It is no coincidence that Worms and Hamburg archives proved flashpoints: Long before the Second World War, local Jews held these files closely, refusing to give them to the Berlin Gesamtarchiv out of what Eugen Täubler derided as "local patriotism." But it was this sensibility that both led Jews to preserve archives across the centuries and also to their continuous contestation. After the Holocaust, keeping these archives in Germany—in historic locales or, as Brillling proposed, in a central archive—constituted an arena to settle old scores over local control and centralization, of the importance of the past's physical trace as a marker of cultural vitality, of the competing priorities of provenance and pertinence in the organization and preservation of cultural property, and of the meaning of holding originals as opposed to copies. These archival conflicts also stood in for a series of vital questions about the Jewish past and future alike against the backdrop of a shattered landscape of Jewish life.

Among other issues, these "struggles against friends" stood in for the question of what might be the future of Jews in postwar Germany: Was there a place for Jews in that blood-stained land? They were about framing the Jewish past: Should the history of the Jews be examined in the context of the disparate locales where they had lived for hundreds of years, or as a part of the global history of the Jewish people? And they were about the equivalency of, or distinction between, originals and copies: What was the worth of the original, and who had the right to

possess the past? The Jewish Historical General Archives' receipt of collections like the Worms and Hamburg archives symbolized the transfer of German Jewish life and culture into the province of the past and marked these files and the histories they contained as a part of Jewish history as opposed to the local context in which the materials had been created. Moreover, these disputes were part of a long history of wartime archival displacement and its complexities.³ The restitution of Jewish archives may appear at first glance to be relatively successful, given that more than a half-century after the conclusion of the Second World War there remain a great many unresolved instances of looted cultural property and in light of the failures to establish an international law framework for the return of displaced archives.⁴ However, the protracted struggles considered below indicate that the fate of Jewish archives after the Second World War represents not the final resolution of their history but just one chapter in the fate of these displaced archives, highlighting the continual displacement at the heart of Jewish history.

This chapter suggests, and the dissertation has argued, that these issues stand at the base of the struggle over preserving the past and giving it meaning. As Jewish life in Europe forcibly entered the realm of history, the aura of these original documents and the dream of reconstituting scattered collections held great weight for Jews and non-Jews alike. At a time when Jews sought to create monumental, total archives, the contests over these historical archives brought to the fore the issues inherent to aspirations to comprehensive documentation. It was the case in 1957, when the Worms archives made their way to Jerusalem, and it remained the case a half-century later, as these issues reverberated in a renewed struggle for the files of the Jews of Vienna, with

³ Ernst Posner, "Effects of Changes of Sovereignty on Archives," in *Archives and the Public Interest: Selected Essays by Ernst Posner*, ed. Ken Munden (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006), 168–181; Leopold Auer, "Displaced Archives in the Wake of Wars," in *Displaced Archives*, ed. James Lowry (London: Routledge, 2017), 114–129.

⁴ See Charles Kecskeméti, "Displaced European Archives: Is It Time for a Post-War Settlement?" *American Archivist* 55, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 132–140; Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Pan-European Displaced Archives in the Russian Federation: Still Prisoners of War on the 70th Anniversary of V-E Day," in *Displaced Archives*, 130–157; Kecskeméti, "Archives Seizures: The Evolution of International Law," in *Displaced Archives*, 12–20.

which this chapter will conclude. In sum, collecting archives may seem to have been a process of gathering the remnants of days of old, a passive activity of reconstructing what had once been whole and now lay broken and scattered. But in fact, it was about creating something radically new: to make a new frame for the Jewish past and through it to forge a path into the future.

“Local Patriotism” and Archives Before and After the Second World War

Buried in the notes of Salo Baron’s *The Jewish Community* (1942), the Columbia scholar commended the Jewish community of Hamburg for its “strict safeguarding of its archives.”⁵ Thirty years prior, Eugen Täubler had a different way of putting it: He derided communities like Hamburg, who refused to send their files to Berlin out of “local patriotism.”⁶ He here hinted at an inherent paradox in centralized collecting and the question of archival survival: Without such “local patriotism,” these files might not have been there at all. The medieval privilegia, charters, and seals no longer provided legal protection, but they gained perhaps greater symbolic meaning as markers of a storied past.⁷ And so, Jews in Hamburg, Worms, and elsewhere preserved and guarded such objects due to the same local identity Täubler ridiculed. The Worms Jews laid claim to be one of the oldest Jewish settlements in Europe: The synagogue was founded in 1034, and the city’s Jews held tight to the mythos of their antiquity, with some claiming speciously that Jews settled there prior to the 586 BCE destruction of the Jerusalem Temple or as Roman slaves.⁸ And the city had been home to a long line of eminent sages, perhaps most famously the eleventh-century exegete Rashi (1040–1105), whose glosses on the Bible are still printed in most traditional

⁵ Salo Baron, *The Jewish Community* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1942), III:139, n. 65.

⁶ “Rede des Dr. Täublers,” *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden* 3 (1911–12): 70.

⁷ See James O’Toole, “The Symbolic Significance of Archives,” *American Archivist* 56, no.2 (Winter 1993): 234–255.

⁸ See, for instance, Moses Mannheimer, *Die Juden in Worms* (1842), and Isidor Kiefer, “Rhenus-Loge,” *LBI AR* 1894 1/3, which repeats the mythology of the Jews first settling in the Rhineland as attendants to Roman legions.

Jewish editions of the Pentateuch.⁹ The Jews of Hamburg and the surrounding towns may not have had as long of a lineage—the first Jews settled there around the end of the sixteenth century—but they maintained a sense of local identity just the same.¹⁰ As a community with trade ties to the wider Atlantic world, holding a distinctive Sephardic heritage, and an important role in the emerging Jewish religious reform in the nineteenth century, their independent streak mirrored the Hanseatic state’s strong tradition of political and economic autonomy.¹¹ And both cities found new importance in the constellation of modern Jewish life: Worms became a destination for Jewish heritage tourism, serving as a location of authenticity in the German Jewish historical imaginary.¹² Likewise, Hamburg was one of the largest centers of Jewish life in Germany outside Berlin and was a major pathway for the flow of millions of Jewish migrants from eastern Europe.¹³ This sense of local rootedness led Jews to closely guard their historic treasures through the centuries, to try to protect them from Nazi looting, and to renewed conflicts after the Second World War.

⁹ On Rashi’s popularity, see Ivan Markus, “Rashi’s Choice: The Humash Commentary as Rewritten Midrash,” in *Studies in Medieval Jewish Intellectual and Social History*, eds. David Engel, et al, 29–45; Eran Viezel, “The Secret of the Popularity of Rashi’s Commentary on the Torah,” *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 17, no. 2 (2014): 207–217. Notably, one major innovation of Moses Mendelssohn’s “Bi’ur,” his translation of portions of the Pentateuch and Psalms, was his replacement of Rashi’s notes with his own commentary (thus the name); curiously, it was still printed with the so-called “Rashi script.” (See Abigail E. Gillman, “Between Religion and Culture: Mendelssohn, Buber, Rosenzweig and the Enterprise of Biblical Translation,” in *Biblical Translation in Context*, ed. Frederick W. Knobloch (Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland 2002), 93–114, esp. 102–103, which reproduces and analyzes the page layout and content of Mendelssohn’s translation.) Also see Lance Sussmann, “Another Look at Isaac Leeser and the First Jewish Translation of the Bible in the United States,” *Modern Judaism* 5, no. 2 (May 1985): 159–190, which discusses the role of Rashi in Isaac Leeser’s English translation (1853–54).

¹⁰ On the history of the Jews in Hamburg its surroundings, see Arno Herzig, ed., *Die Juden in Hamburg 1590 bis 1990* (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 1991); Astrid Louven, *Die Juden in Wandsbek* (Hamburg: Otto Heinevetter, 1991).

¹¹ See Maiken Umbach, “A Tale of Second Cities: Autonomy, Culture, and the Law in Hamburg and Barcelona in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *AHR* 110, no. 3 (2005): 659–692; Klaus Weber, “The Hamburg Sephardic Community in the Context of the Atlantic Economy,” *transversal: Zeitschrift für Jüdische Studien* 14, no. 2 (2013): 23–40.

¹² Nils Roemer, “The City of Worms in Modern Jewish Traveling Cultures of Remembrance,” *Jewish Social Studies*, n.s., 11, no. 3 (Spring–Summer 2005): 67–91; also see Roemer, *German City, Jewish Memory*, 91–141.

¹³ Berlin boasted by far the largest Jewish population in Germany, but Hamburg was among the other large communities. In 1910, about 19,000 Jews lived in Hamburg, in comparison with 144,000 in Berlin, 26,000 in Frankfurt am Main, and 20,000 in Breslau. Notably, from 1910 to 1925 Hamburg’s Jewish population rose only from 19,386 to 19,794, whereas Berlin’s grew from 144,007 to 172,672 in this time, an increase of almost 20 percent. On population numbers, see Dora Weigert, “Die jüdische Bevölkerung in Hamburg,” *Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden* 15, no. 5–7 (May–July 1919): 66–110, esp. 67; and detailed figures in *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs cccii*, pt. 1 (1925): 620–621.

As early as 1726, the Hamburg Jewish community looked to organize their medieval privilegia.¹⁴ A century later, in 1860, leading Hamburg Jews called for an official to manage these files and ensure the accuracy of marriage and divorce records.¹⁵ Around this same time, the Jews of Worms began to cultivate their archives. These files had been decimated during the Thirty Years' War and in fires in 1615 and 1689, but a cache was found in the women's synagogue in 1871; this collection was enlarged after the 1879 excavation of the Mikvah.¹⁶ By 1895, an inventory listed 623 entries from the years 1739 to 1814.¹⁷ For Jews in Worms, such communal antiquities—priceless manuscripts and historical documents alongside the cemetery, synagogue buildings, and “Rashi's chair”—physically represented their long and storied history. It was for this reason that leaders of the Gesamtarchiv, just like the Jerusalem archivists a generation later, coveted these archives, and that local leaders held steadfastly to them. In 1906, Hamburg's Jewish leaders made a monetary contribution to the Berlin archive instead of a documentary one.¹⁸ Just a few weeks after that episode, the Worms Jews demanded the return of files they had sent to Berlin when they learned they would remain in the capital instead of just duplicated.¹⁹ Thirty years later, Täubler's successor Jacob Jacobson expressed his continued interest in the Worms files, and sent Bernhard Brillung to catalog the Hamburg archives.²⁰ Still, these Jews held fast to their treasures, taking literally Jacobson's call to “Schütz euer Archivgut!”—which, writing in 1938, he directed

¹⁴ “Statuten der Hamburg-Altonaer Gemeinde,” §69, 1726, *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde*, 1903, 1–64.

¹⁵ Circular, Mar. 1860, LBI AR7002, 7/II18.

¹⁶ Samson Rothschild, “Das jüdische Museum in Worms,” *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 11 Jun. 1925; Rothschild, “Das Archiv der jüdischen Gemeinde in Worms,” *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung in München*, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 68; Rothschild, *Aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart des israelitische Gemeinde Worms* (1905, 28; 1909, 22).

¹⁷ “Akten des Archivs der israel. Gemeinde Worms,” LBI AR1894 1/3.

¹⁸ Martin Philippon to Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeinde zu Hamburg, 22 Jan. 1906, Levin Lion to Gesamtarchiv, 14 Mar. 1906, Ismar Elbogen to Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeinde, 20 Apr. 1906, CAHJP AHW/326a-b.

¹⁹ “Sitzung des Curatoriums des Gesamtarchivs im Bureau des D.I.G.B.,” 1 Apr. 1906, CAHJP AHW/326a-b.

²⁰ Thirty years after Täubler first failed to gain these files (1906), Jacob Jacobson, now director of the Gesamtarchiv, again expressed interest in the files (Jacob Jacobson, “Reisebericht,” 16 Jul. 1937, CAHJP P17/11).

at individuals requiring evidence of their Jewishness, and communities experiencing high levels of emigration—to protect these files both from the Berlin archive as well as Nazi confiscation.²¹

As the Nazi regime took interest in Jewish communal archives, Jews and interested non-Jews took steps to protect these treasures. In 1935, Leo Lippmann, the Hamburg Jewish civil servant with longstanding interest in Jewish history who that year joined the community's board, encouraged the community to deposit its historical files in the Staatsarchiv for safekeeping.²² For this, there existed precedent: In the nineteenth century, the Hamburg municipal library had acquired a collection of Judaica manuscripts.²³ And so, when they discovered after Kristallnacht that the Gestapo was planning to confiscate Jewish archives and bring them to Berlin, the Hamburg Jews initiated a series of such shipments. Between November 1938 and March 1939, and extending to 1943, the bulk of their files (including the materials of the Jews of Altona and Wandsbek, which had been incorporated into an enlarged Jewish community in 1937) arrived at the Staatsarchiv.²⁴ It is unclear if the Hamburg Jews wanted to avoid the files' confiscation by the Gestapo, or just wanted to keep them close at hand, but those involved later asserted they had provided the files voluntarily.²⁵ In Worms, local figures similarly intervened to avoid the Jewish communal archives' confiscation. In early 1939, Illert proposed that the Jews' archives be placed

²¹ Jacob Jacobson, "Schützt euer Archivgut!," *Gemeindeblatt der Jüdischen Gemeinde zu Berlin*, 26 Jun. 1938, *Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt für die Synagogen-Gemeinden in Preußen/Norddeutschland*, 1 Sept. 1938, CAHJP M5/17.

²² See n. 192.

²³ Michael Studemund-Halévy, "Treasured Legacy: Sefardic Manuscripts and Books from Altona and Hamburg," in *transversal* 14, no. 2 (2013): 41–58.

²⁴ Astrid Louven, *Die Juden in Wandsbek* (Hamburg: Verlag Otto Heinevetter, 1991), 44–46. Also see: Hans Hertz (Öffentliche Sitzung, Wiedergutmachungskammer, 7 Jun. 1956, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. II), Max Plaut (Vermerk, 8 June 1956, *ibid.*), Dr. Löffler to Wiedergutmachungsamt, 19 Oct. 1955, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. I. Jürgen Sielemann notes that there were shipments through 1943 ("Die personenkundliche Abteilung des Staatsarchivs Hamburg im NS-Staat und in der Nachkriegszeit: Von der Judenverfolgung zur 'Wiedergutmachung,'" in *Wie mächtig sind Archive? Perspektiven der Archivwissenschaft* (Hamburg: Hamburg University Press, 2013), 150–155).

²⁵ Dr. Reusch to Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 20 Aug. 1951, StA Hamburg 622-1/20/915, Dr. Löffler to Landgericht Hamburg, 19 Oct. 1953, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. I; Öffentliche Sitzung, Wiedergutmachungskammer, Landgericht Hamburg, 7 June 1956, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. II.

in his custody instead of going to the Gestapo, arguing that the files should remain together with other historical material related to the city. It seems that his request was denied, as the Gestapo confiscated these archives and sent them to a storage facility in Darmstadt.²⁶ Sometime in the following three years—his story was a bit inconsistent—Illert raided the Gestapo’s archive depot and brought the files back to Worms, where they survived the war’s duration.²⁷

When Salo Baron reflected on the “strict safeguarding” of the Hamburg archives in 1942, he could not have been aware of the specifics of their status. The Nazis’ interest in Jewish archives and other cultural goods was well-known, but Jewish cultural leaders only became fully aware of the scope of the Nazis’ regime of looting and plunder as the fog of war lifted.²⁸ In 1943, Cecil Roth, the Cambridge scholar of Italian Jewry, founded the Committee on Restoration of Continental Jewish Museums, Libraries, and Archives; but by the end of the year he lamented that “the incredible devastation of Jewish life... has made me wonder whether there is going to be anything left to restore.”²⁹ Salo Baron created the Commission for European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction with a similar hope, but harsh realities led to a pivot from the restoration and reconstruction of Jewish life in Europe to its rebuilding worldwide on the basis of the historic

²⁶ Reichsstatthalter in Hessen to Landräte und staatl. Polizeiverwalter, 25 April 1939, Müller to Herrn Landräte, Aussendienststellen, Polizeidirektion, 2 May 1939, StadtAWo Abt. 13, Nr. 479; Friedrich Illert to Polizeidirektor, 8 May 1939, Illert to Museum der Stadt Worms, 12 May 1939, StadtAWo Abt. 13, Nr. 479.

²⁷ Illert’s story changed constantly. In April 1948, he wrote that he brought the archives back in 1940 or 1941 (Illert to Spruchkammer Darmstadt, 21 April 1948, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 13, also see Illert, “Bericht über die jüdischen Altertümer in Worms,” 21 Feb. 1949, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 72); but in 1956 Illert claimed that he saved the material in 1942 (Illert to Paul Winer, 6 Sept. 1956, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 72); a *curriculum vitae* that Illert prepared in 1946, however, dated the salvage to 1943 (“Lebenslauf,” 10 July 1946, StadtAWo Abt. 170/16, Nr. 46).

²⁸ On the Nazis’ interest in Jewish studies, see Alan E. Steinweis, *Studying the Jew: Scholarly Antisemitism in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Lutz Hachmeister, *Der Gegnerforscher. Die Karriere des SS-Führers Franz Alfred Six* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1998). As for Jews’ knowledge of this activity and the danger to Jewish archival records, see for instance, Jacob Rader Marcus to Julian Morgenstern, Dec. 1938, AJA MS-5 A18/7, where Marcus reflected that the Gesamtarchiv had “not yet been seized,” and “Protokol mi-yeshivat ha-ya’adah ha-yozemet le-yased ’arkhiyon yehudi merkazi bi-yerushalayim,” 14 Apr. 1939, CZA L33/1201.

²⁹ Cecil Roth to Oskar Rabinowicz, 29 Dec. 1943, CZA A87/352; Rabinowicz, “Report on the work of the Committee for the Restoration of Continental Jewish Libraries, Museums and Archives,” 24 Oct. 1943, CZA A87/64; Roth, “The Restoration of Jewish Libraries, Archives and Museums,” *Contemporary Jewish Record*, June 1944, 253–257.

cultural production of European Jewry.³⁰ As for the fate of archives in particular, in 1945 Jacob Jacobson—who, having survived Theresienstadt, had resettled in England—listed for Roth what he could recall of German Jewry’s archives and what might have become of them.³¹ He was not optimistic. As the former director of the Gesamtarchiv, Jacobson was perhaps more familiar than anyone with the Jewish archival scene in Germany, and he had witnessed firsthand the Nazis’ program of archival confiscation when he had been forced to work with the Gestapo in Berlin and even after his deportation.³² Unaware of Illert’s efforts to protect the Worms files, Jacobson declared in 1946 that they had “probably for the most part” been destroyed in November 1938, and he presumed it “possible” that some of the Hamburg material had survived.³³

While much was indeed lost, the truth was that a great many archives of the Jews of Europe had survived.³⁴ As the Germans retreated, the Allies discovered vast caches of looted Jewish cultural property, and Jewish groups began the effort to salvage what remained. Outside

³⁰ For instance, preliminary proposals for Jewish Cultural Reconstruction called for “the Reconstruction of Jewish cultural institutions in Europe” (Theodor H. Gaster to Oskar Rabinowitz, 10 April 1944, CZA A87/64); in November 1945, Baron called for the “general cultural reconstruction of European Jewry,” but he tempered any optimism with the recognition that Jewish life in postwar Europe would by necessity be a “fresh start” (Salo Baron, “The Spiritual Reconstruction of European Jewry,” *Commentary*, Nov. 1945, 4–12). But only a few months later, when JCR presented its first proposals to the U.S. Military Government in June 1946, they opened by explaining that “for more than a thousand years Europe was the center of Jewish cultural and religious life,” emphasizing a new era dominated by rising centers of Jewish life in America and Palestine. (Jerome Michael to General J.H. Hilldring, 5 June 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.1) On JCR, see Dana Herman, “Hashavat Avedah: A History of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.” (Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, 2008).

³¹ Jacobson, “Ergänzungen zu den Fragebogen der Jewish Historical Society of England,” 16 Nov. 1945, LBI MfW R499; cf. Jacob Jacobson to Eugen Täubler, 16 Nov. 1945, UB Basel NL 76 E1, which discusses this memorandum. On Jacobson’s survival and resettlement, see: “Curriculum Vitae,” 4 Jul. 1943, CAHJP P136/40, Jacobson to Eugen Täubler, 25 Jun. 1945, UB Basel NL 76 E1, and others; Jacobson, “Bruckstücke,” 1965, LBI ME 329.

³² Jacobson, “Bruckstücke,” 1965, LBI ME 329.

³³ Jacobson, “Ergänzungen zu den Fragebogen der Jewish Historical Society of England,” 16 Nov. 1945.

³⁴ See the “tentative lists” of Jewish cultural property printed in *Jewish Social Studies: Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction*, “Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries,” *JSS* 8, no. 1, supplement (1946): 1–103; “Addenda and Corrigenda to Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries,” *JSS* 10, no. 1, supplement (1948): 1–16; “Tentative List of Jewish Publishers of Judaica and Hebraica in Axis-Occupied Countries,” *JSS* 10, no. 2, supplement (1948): 1–56. Also see Joshua Starr, “Jewish Cultural Property Under Nazi Control,” *JSS* 12, no. 1 (Jan. 1950): 27–48, and a recent consideration of the production of such lists: Dov Schidorsky, “Hannah Arendt’s Dedication to Salvaging Jewish Culture,” *LBIYB* 59 (2014): 181–195.

Frankfurt am Main, Alfred Rosenberg had stashed tremendous caches of stolen cultural property; now known as the Offenbach Archival Depot under Allied administration, the warehouse—despite its name—consisted primarily of books and other cultural and religious objects, with the notable exception of the archives of YIVO.³⁵ Jewish archives, for the most part, remained scattered throughout Europe, squirreled away in state archives and Nazi caches and holdouts as a result of a complex history of their confiscation and subsequent division (especially in the confusion of the German retreat), some damaged in Allied bombings and others falling to a “second looting” by Soviet forces.³⁶ In the months and years after German capitulation, then, the looted archives of European Jewry were slowly found. In August 1946, Gershom Scholem—then at the tail of an expedition in search of looted books for the National Library in Jerusalem—received notice from Salomon Carlebach, scion of the German rabbinic dynasty’s Hamburg branch, that the archives of the Jews of Hamburg, Altona, and Wandsbek had been found in the Hamburg Staatsarchiv.³⁷ Similarly, the Worms archives and antiquities soon became known among Jewish leaders. Friedrich Illert was happy to show the treasures to visitors.³⁸

³⁵ See Elisabeth Gallas, *“Das Leichenhaus der Bücher”*: *Kulturrestitution und jüdisches Geschichtsdenken nach 1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 27–76; Anne Rothfeld, “Returning Looted European Library Collections: An Historical Analysis of the Offenbach Archival Depot, 1945–1948,” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 6, no. 1 (Mar. 2005): 14–24; Robert Waite, “Returning Jewish Cultural Property: The Handling of Books Looted by the Nazis in the American Zone of Occupation, 1945 to 1952,” *Libraries and Culture* 37, no. 3 (2002): 213–228. On the infamous Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, see Donald E. Collins and Herberg P. Rothfeder, “The Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg and the Looting of Jewish and Masonic Libraries During World War II,” *Journal of Library History* 18, no. 1 (1983): 21–36; among others.

³⁶ See Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, “From Nazi Plunder to Russian Restitution,” in Grimsted, et al, eds. *Returned from Russia: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues* (Builth Wells 2007), 1–134; also Talya Levi, “Russia and the Stolen Chabad Archive,” *Georgetown Journal of International Law* 46, no. 3 (2015): 915–946. Also see, relating to the fate of archives at the end of the war in general, “Archivalientransporte trotz Verkehrssperre,” 27 Jan. 1945, GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/67, “Bericht über meine Vorkehrung zur Sicherung der Dienstwohnung des Generaldirektors der Staatsarchive seit dem 25. April 1945,” GStAPK I. HA Rep. 178/51.

³⁷ Salomon Carlebach to Scholem, 29 Aug. 1946, Scholem to Yosef Horowitz, 8 Nov. 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.2.

³⁸ Cf. Friedrich Illert, “Noteworthy and Memorable Facts about Worms,” 1945, LBI AR1894, 2/8, where he describes the former Jewish communal manuscripts and the buildings which could still be seen, and Daniel Cohen, “Du”h ‘al nesiy‘ati le-’eropah ba-kayits u-ba-stay 1954,” 20 Jan. 1955, CZA L33/1275. Cohen recounted that when he visited Worms, he claimed he was a visitor from England, not an Israeli archivist, and Illert showed him all the

In these years, Jewish scholars and restitution leaders all pursued these archives, aiming to retrieve them and make them available to scholars; after some debate about these files' disposal, a diverse array of groups—the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization and its cultural arm Jewish Cultural Reconstruction in the American zone of Germany and the Jewish Trust Corporation and its “Branche Française” for the British and French zones respectively—all eventually settled on policies that favored centralizing German-Jewish archives in the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem.³⁹ At the same time, local figures sought to keep “their” archives with the support of Jewish émigrés.⁴⁰ Illert found support from Isidor Kiefer, a longtime friend who had once served as chair of the Jewish community and now lived in New York City; in Hamburg Hans Hertz organized a research project on the history of the Jews in Hamburg with the support of Erich Warburg, scion of the Jewish banking family, who had also fled to New York in 1938, who financed the endeavor and staunchly opposed any removal of the archives. Hertz and Warburg hoped that these materials would remain, at least for the duration of the research project—if not beyond.⁴¹ And so, the story of these and other archives' survival during the Second World War and their fate afterwards is a story of continued controversy over questions of “local patriotism,” on one hand, and centralization on the other.

treasures and explained that the Jews would certainly return, even asserting that Worms Jews dispersed around the world still saw themselves as part of the community and even paid communal taxes and fees.

³⁹ On this decision, see pp. 266–268, and “Minutes of Special Meeting of the Board of Directors,” 21 Dec. 1950, LBI DM 223, 14/52, “Minutes of the First Meeting of the Advisory Council on Jewish Cultural and Religious Objects in the British Zone of Germany,” 14 Nov. 1951, CAHJP JTC/Lon/575, “Rundschreiben Nr. 143, über kulturelle und religiöse Gegenstände in Deutschland,” 20 Nov. 1952, HZA B. 1/7 232.

⁴⁰ See Georg Illert, “Die jüdischen Altertümer in Worms in den Jahren 1938–1961,” in *Fünfzig Jahre Wiedereinweihung der alten Synagoge zu Worms* (2011), 229–241, and Gerald Bönner, “Beschlagnahmt, geborgen, ausgeliefert. Zum Schicksal des Wormser jüdischen Gemeindearchivs, 1938–1957,” in *Das deutsche Archivwesen und der Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Robert Kretschmar (Essen: Klartext, 2007), 101–115.

⁴¹ See, among others, “Niederschrift über die Gründung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für die Geschichte der Juden in Hamburg,” 31 July 1953, StA Hamburg 622-1/120/917; Hans Hertz, Erich Warburg to Dr. Kurt Sieveking, 1 Feb. 1955, E. Warburg to Max Brauer, 17 July 1959, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2.

Between Jerusalem and the “Little Jerusalem of the West”: The Archives of Worms

Among Friedrich Illert’s personal papers, one finds a handful of poems he translated to German. “Worms,” the first, reflected on the city’s antiquity, “Borbetomagus” its Celtic origins. And finally, “Petit Jerusalem” lamented the silences of the Jewish cemetery. With a strong dose of nostalgia, its concluding couplet—“This eternal unrest, this eternal wandering / Sows a great hope that may once again bloom”—looked to the Jews’ return.⁴² It is thus unsurprising that he wrote that Worms was “comme le petit Jérusalem [sic]” in a 1948 plan for the city’s cultural reconstruction, which would include both a historical institute (with a permanent position in Jewish history) and also rebuild cultural buildings. Neither was it uncharacteristic that he wanted it organized around a “geohistorical approach,” using the words of French geographer Paul Vidal de la Blache further popularized a year later by Fernand Braudel, highlighting the city’s uniquely *longue durée* in regional, continental, and distinctly non-national terms, placing Worms and its Jewish history at the heart of what he termed a “symphonia occidentale.”⁴³ A year later, he declared Worms and its sister cities Speyer and Mainz “the central district of Europe... around which the destiny of Europe and the West were molded.”⁴⁴ These communities, known by the Hebrew acronym *Shum*—Spira (Speyer), Warmasia (Worms), and Magenze (Mainz), to use their medieval names—represented for him the crossroads of Western history and the true homeland of Jews in Europe.⁴⁵ Illert’s vision of a cosmopolitan Worms, and his claim to have protected the

⁴² Friedrich Illert, Introduction to poems by Meery Devergnas, StadtAWo Abt. 170/16, Nr. 13; cf. Illert, “Worms: Borbetomagus, Civitas Vangionum, Warmasia,” StadtAWo Abt. 170/16, Nr. 38.

⁴³ Friedrich Illert, “L’Institut de l’histoire occidentale à Worms. Un projet,” StadtAWo Abt. 170/16, Nr. 28; he referenced Vidal in the margins. This item is undated, but was circulated in April 1948 (Th. Bäuerle to Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Worms, 8 Jun. 1948 StadtAWo Abt. 170/16, Nr. 28).

⁴⁴ Illert, “Probleme der Wormser Geschichtsforschung,” *Wormsgau*, July 1951, 4. Note that this 1951 publication reprinted his 1949 speech opening the center. Cf. Illert, “Das Institut für Geschichtliche Landkunde in Worms: Eröffnungsfeier,” 30 Nov. 1949, StadtAWo Abt. 170/16, Nr. 28.

⁴⁵ Illert, “Probleme der Wormser Geschichtsforschung,” 6; Illert, “Worms, die alte Nibelungenstadt am Rhein,” StadtAWo Abt. 170/16, Nr. 38; he wrote of Worms at “dem historischen Kreuzpunkt der großen europäischen

Jews' archives and antiquities too, were perhaps self-serving: They reflected a certain opportunism, bolstering claims to opposition to National Socialism and gesturing at a surprising Europeanism and repudiation of nationalism for a man who—though he never joined the Nazi party—had long held conservative beliefs.⁴⁶ Still, he sincerely saw the Jews' historic presence as a key component of Worms' status as an ancient European city; likewise, the Jews' archives stood in for the possibility of their return, a cornerstone of his hope for the city's cultural reconstruction. The return of the Jews to Worms represented part of the city's return to its golden age, a revitalization and rebirth of a city he perceived in a long decline: once Charlemagne's capital, now somewhat of a backwater, merely a "city of industry" and, more recently, heavily damaged by war.⁴⁷ Over the course of more than a decade, then, he pressed the case that "one thousand years" of Jewish history in Worms taught that Jews would always return to Worms, and so earnestly but ultimately unsuccessfully opposed the restitution groups and Israeli archivists who claimed the archives of what he termed the "little Jerusalem of the West."

It was on this basis that Illert presented his case in February 1949 before the Mainz Wiedergutmachungskammer, which was weighing the state of Israel's claim for these archives. He pointed to two prominent former Worms Jews, Isidor Kiefer and the rabbi Isaac Holzer, who supported the "protection of the Judaica" and the rebuilding of the synagogue; he spoke of these antiquities' "local bonds" (*örtliche Gebundenheit*) and of his hope to hand them to a future

Schicksalstrassen des Rheines und der Donau."

⁴⁶ Nils Roemer, *German City, Jewish Memory*, 151–152; Gerald Bönner, "Beschlagnahm, geborgen, ausgeliefert. Zum Schicksal des Wormser jüdischen Gemeindearchivs 1938–1957," in R. Kretzschmar (ed), *Das deutsche Archivwesen und der Nationalsozialismus* (Essen: Klartext, 2007), 101–115. On Illert's denazification, see Friedrich Illert, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," 27 Sept. 1948, StadtAWo Abt. 17/16, Nr. 10. Also cf. Friedrich Illert, "L'Institut de l'histoire occidentale à Worms. Un projet," StadtAWo Abt. 170/16, Nr. 28, where he admitted that his new historical approach was a direct response to the "ébranlement du status politique des états nationaux européens." And also, even during the war he was interested in preserving Worms' cultural institutions in a similar manner. Cf. Illert, "Denkschrift über den Ausbau der Städtischen Kulturinstitute," Jul. 1940, StadtAWo Abt. 170/16

⁴⁷ Friedrich Illert, *Worms. Im wechselnden Spiel der Jahrtausende* (Worms: Erich Norberg, 1958), 66; Illert, "Noteworthy and Memorable Facts about Worms," 1945, LBI AR1894, 2/8 discusses the bombings in early 1945.

community. For, Illert argued, the Jews of Worms had been expelled many times “but again and again a new Jewish community is created with stronger ties to tradition.”⁴⁸ So, when the Mainz court ruled just a few days later, it rejected the Israelis’ claim outright. The court pointed out that the nascent Jewish state had no diplomatic presence in Germany, and upheld the French military government’s appointment of Worms as a trustee for the archives in advance of the Jews’ return. And the decision reproduced Illert’s arguments nearly verbatim—mentioning his correspondence with former Worms Jews, the archives’ “örtliche Gebundenheit,” and concluding that “the nearly two-hundred-year [sic] history of the Worms Jewish community has experienced numerous years-long absences of the Jews... but there always appears a new Worms Jewish community, which again makes use of the old sacred objects.”⁴⁹

Illert made similar arguments seven years later, when in August 1956 he met in Bonn with Israeli archivists and their allies in the Jewish Trust Corporation’s Branche Française. The Branche Française, which in 1952 became the official restitution organization for looted Jewish property in the French zone, had been awarded these files by the restitution courts. But Illert insisted that former Worms Jews looked back fondly on their home, that Worms remained a site of Jewish pilgrimage, and that there remained “no assurance” that Jews would not return. This time, such “sentimental” claims, as Israeli archivist Daniel Cohen described them, fell on deaf ears.⁵⁰ In fact, when Erwin Meyer, a Jew who had resettled in Worms, spoke in Illert’s defense, Israel’s state archivist Alex Bein verbally attacked him: “I lost my patience,” Bein recounted,

⁴⁸ Illert, “Bericht über den jüdischen Altertümer in Worms,” 21 Feb. 1949, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 72; cf. Friedrich Illert, “Das kleine Jerusalem,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 21 May 1949, LBI DM 223, 13/3.

⁴⁹ Landgericht Mainz, Wiedergutmachungskammer, “Beschluss in Sachen des Staates Israels wider die Stadt Worms,” 3 March 1949, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/271.

⁵⁰ Daniel Cohen, Circular, 28 Aug. 1956, CZA L33/1272.

“and screamed at him... [that] I was astonished that he [could] take this position as a Jew.”⁵¹

After a week of such negotiations, a final agreement was reached for the archives’ transfer to Jerusalem. Illert recognized that his argument had been “very weak” as the Israelis and their allies had the restitution law on their side. Still, Illert complained of the demands for the archives’ “return” (which he placed in quotes) to a country from which they had never been stolen.⁵²

The radical difference between the outcome of Illert’s argument in 1949 and seven years later highlights the importance of political contingencies, specifically the strengthening of ties between West Germany and the state of Israel and the crystallization of the restitution regime in occupied Germany, and the French zone especially, from what was initially a muddled legal situation. In this manner, the victory of the Jewish Trust Corporation’s Branche Française and the transfer of the archives to Jerusalem resulted from a wide set of restitution principles that developed in particular ways across the three western zones of occupied Germany, relating to the establishment and sanctioning of Jewish restitution organizations, the status of Jewish communities in postwar Germany (the so-called “Gemeinde problem”), and the matter of how Jewish cultural property could be best allocated to meet the needs of Jewish life after the Holocaust. But the story of these archives does not represent a secondary aspect of restitution, a coda to earlier debates or the mere application of prior precedents. Instead, their contentiousness indicated the continued contestation of important questions. For the struggle for the Worms was not just about laying claim to a rich and storied past. Instead, the question of their fate rested on, and represented, the future of Jewish life in Germany—whether, as Illert claimed, the Jews would return, or as the Israelis and their supporters in the restitution groups argued, they would not.

⁵¹ Bein, “Vorläufiger Bericht über unsere Tätigkeit,” 3 Sept. 1956, ISA HZ-19-303; cf. Daniel Cohen, Circular, 28 Aug. 1956, CZA L33/1272, which also describes this encounter.

⁵² Friedrich Illert to Isidor Kiefer, 29 Aug. 1956, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 68.

In 1947, Isidor Kiefer wrote from New York City to express his support for Illert's trusteeship of the Jewish archives and antiquities and to implore Illert to rebuild the synagogue, destroyed both in Kristallnacht and subsequently in the course of the war. As a former member of the community's board and a founder of the Jewish museum, he believed that if possible the materials should remain in Worms, for otherwise they would be "scattered in the wind." If Illert could not hold the files, Kiefer suggested, they should go to the Jewish museum in New York.⁵³ In 1949, Herman Müller of the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe also wrote of his general support for Illert, describing him as "trustworthy."⁵⁴ It was on this basis that the Mainz restitution court upheld the city's position in 1949.⁵⁵ However, in January 1950, the situation changed when the Landtag of the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate passed a law which recognized the Jewish communities of Mainz, Koblenz, Neuwied, Bad Kreuznach, and Trier as formal successors to former Jewish communities in their vicinity. Consequently, the Jews of Mainz became owners of the former property of the Worms community that Illert held.⁵⁶

Jewish restitution leaders, like Hannah Arendt of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, strongly opposed this arrangement, which in their view violated the fundamental principles that restitution policy should follow. In 1948, the World Jewish Congress had resolved that "the Jewish people never again... settle on the bloodstained soil of Germany."⁵⁷ While not a "ban," as some have inferred, it indicated the abhorrence of many Jews outside of Germany to the idea of

⁵³ Isidor Kiefer to Friedrich Illert, 3 Dec. 1947, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 72.

⁵⁴ Herman Muller to George Weis, 15 Jun. 1949, LBI DM 22313/3.

⁵⁵ Landgericht Mainz, Wiedergutmachungskammer, "Beschluss in Sachen des Staates Israels ... wider die Stadt Worms," 3 Mar. 1949, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/271.

⁵⁶ "Landesgesetz über die jüdischen Kultusgemeinden in Rheinland-Pfalz," in *Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt der Landesregierung Rheinland-Pfalz, Teil I* 4.2 (25 Jan. 1950), 13.

⁵⁷ World Jewish Congress, *Resolutions Adopted by the Second Plenary Assembly of the World Jewish Congress, Montreux, Switzerland, June 27th–July 6th, 1948* (London: 1948), 7.

continued Jewish life there.⁵⁸ What is more, they were certain that whatever emerged there was merely transitory due to demographic factors alone, as Jews in Germany consisted largely of eastern European refugees and those in mixed marriages, with few youths.⁵⁹ Consequently, as the war came to its conclusion, a range of figures outside Europe who hoped to set the Western Allies' postwar restitution policy—those like Arendt, who worked with Salo Baron's Jewish Cultural Reconstruction in the United States, and Cecil Roth's group in England—advocated diverse solutions to the intractable problem of how to “return” property after once-unthinkable genocide. There were skirmishes, particularly over who should be put in charge, but a common thread of agreement can be identified.⁶⁰ The Germans, it was generally argued, should not be allowed to benefit from the loot through escheat, and neither should properties be returned directly to the places from which they had been stolen where now so few Jews remained, whether in eastern Europe, now under Soviet control, or in occupied Germany itself.⁶¹

Fundamentally, figures like Arendt believed it would be “unfair enrichment” if a handful of survivors in Germany—groups they thought would dissolve in due course—received vast

⁵⁸ See Dan Diner, “Im Zeichen des Banns,” in *Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Michael Brenner (Munich 2012), 15–66, esp. 21–22; Elisabeth Gallas, “Locating the Jewish Future: The Restoration of Looted Cultural Property in Early Postwar Europe,” *Naharaim* 9, no. 1–2 (2015): 25–47, esp. 37.

⁵⁹ See, for example, Eli Rock to JRSO Executive Committee, 19 July 1949, LBI DM 223, 13/3, H.G. Van Dam, “Memorandum: Trust Corporation and Communal Property,” Oct. 1949, CAHJP JTC/Lon/420a. On the demographics of the Jews in postwar Germany, see Harry Maor, “Über den Wiederaufbau der Jüdischen Gemeinden in Deutschland seit 1945” (Ph.D. dissertation, Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität zu Mainz, 1961), 51–87.

⁶⁰ The sense that the Germans had forfeited any claims to serve as a holder for Jewish cultural property prefigured Michelle Caswell's recent call for the importance of trust over the state's inalienable right to archives in cases of human rights violations (Caswell, “Rethinking Inalienability: Trusting Nongovernmental Archives in Transitional Societies,” *American Archivist* 76, no. 1 (Spring–Summer 2013): 113–134). Infighting among the Jewish groups dealt primarily with two issues: If JRSO and JCR would be appointed as the successor groups for the British and French zones, and the proper allocation of the property that they gained. See, for instance, Oskar Rabinowicz to Salo Baron, 14 Oct. 1949, Salo Baron to Cecil Roth, 22 Nov. 1949, CZA A87/64.

⁶¹ On escheat, see “Notes: Origins and Development of Modern Escheat,” *Columbia Law Review* 61, no. 7 (Nov. 1961): 1319–1340; J. V. Orth, “Escheat: Is the State the Last Heir?” *The Green Bag*, 13, no. 1 (2009): 73–84. As for repatriation: During the war, figures like Oskar Rabinowicz feared Jewish property might be “nationalized” (Rabinowicz to Cecil Roth, 24 Sept. 1943, CZA A87/352). Afterwards, many argued that property should only be returned in proportion with the needs of the surviving Jews. See, for instance, Jerome Michael to J. H. Hilldring, 26 Aug. 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.2, Max Lowenthal to Lt. General Lucius D. Clay, 8 Oct. 1946, CZA C7/1284/1.

cultural and material wealth that had once belonged to entire communities; instead, the Jewish people itself should be considered the heir.⁶² It was for this reason that Arendt complained of the Mainz situation: “The result may well be a few Jews... will ‘inherit’ the precious archives, Torah-scrolls and silver of the Worms community.”⁶³ Later that year Meir Ben Horin, another JCR representative, similarly feared that the Worms antiquities would “all legally belong at present to the 65 members—mostly old widows—of the Mainz congregation.”⁶⁴ Instead, they believed that survivors should receive what they required for day-to-day life, and not more, and that a special group should be sanctioned to reallocate communal and cultural property to where Jewish life had a chance at thriving and carrying forth the cultural legacy of European Jewry.⁶⁵

The appointment of the Mainz Jews as a successor to the destroyed community in Worms highlights the challenge posed by the legal diversity of occupied Germany, where overlapping regimes and court systems led to protracted efforts to establish unified policy. American authorities established a restitution framework with Military Law 59 (November 10, 1947), designating the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization—as its name implied—as the sole address of Jewish restitution claims and the legal successor for any Jewish property deemed heirless.⁶⁶ As a membership corporation of varied Jewish groups, JRSO incorporated JCR as its

⁶² This issue is discussed at length in Ayaka Takei, “The Jewish People as the Heir: The Jewish Successor Organizations and the Postwar Jewish Communities in Germany” (Ph.D. dissertation, Waseda University, Tokyo, 2004). On this view, see for instance, “Our Proposal,” 14 Jan. 1947, CAHJP P3/2058, which describes the proposed restitution group as a “trustee for... former Jewish owners and for the entire Jewish people.”

⁶³ Hannah Arendt, JCR Field Report Nr. 15, 10 Feb. 1950, LBI DM 223 14/52.

⁶⁴ JCR Field Report Nr. 21, 9 Oct. 1950, LBI DM 223 14/52.

⁶⁵ Memorandum to Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, 17 May 1946, NLI ARC 4° 793/212.1, Hannah Arendt to Salo Baron, Jerome Michael, 11 Nov. 1949, CAHJP JRSO/NY/923b.

⁶⁶ “Military Government, United States Area of Control, Germany: Law No. 59: Restitution of Identifiable Property,” *American Journal of International Law* 42, no. 1, Supplement: Official Documents (Jan. 1948): 11–45; “United States Military Government, Law 59, Regulation No. 3: Designation of Successor Organization,” 23 Jun. 1948, appointed JRSO as “a” (not “the”) successor organization for the American zone.

cultural arm, and sought to implement the above-described restitution agenda in its jurisdiction.⁶⁷ The British promulgated a similarly-named Military Law 59 in May 1949, but opposed a specifically *Jewish Trust Corporation*.⁶⁸ Instead, British officials preferred that a single group handle all loot, paralleling their resistance to recognizing Jews as a distinct group of Displaced Persons.⁶⁹ British Jews only succeeded in forming the JTC in August 1950.⁷⁰ In the French zone, too, Ordonnance 120 of November 1947 (“relative à la restitution des biens ayant fait l’objet d’actes de spoliation”) avoided establishing a Jewish restitution agency. Instead, it gave German Länder authority to heirless property, under which the Mainz Jews had been appointed successor to the communities in its vicinity, including Worms.⁷¹ In March 1952, this French law was amended to sanction the “Branche Française de la Jewish Trust Corporation.”⁷²

Consequently, restitution groups gradually gained recognition as the sole recipients of heirless property. But their claims on communal property which would be the basis for the

⁶⁷ On the nature of JRSO as it emerged from JCR, see—among many others—“Our Proposal,” 14 Jan. 1947, CAHJP P3/2058, and “Report No. 1 of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization,” 1 Oct. 1948, LBI DM 223, 13/1, “Annual Membership Meeting of JRSO,” 20 Oct. 1948, CAHJP JRSO/NO/340a.

⁶⁸ “Military Law No. 59, Restitution of Identifiable Property to Victims of Nazi Oppression,” *Military Government Gazette, Germany, British Zone of Control* 28 (May 12, 1949): 1169–1187. On the debate about a Jewish Trust Corporation vs. a “General Trust Corporation,” see M. Stephany, “Aid Memoire for the Foreign Office Re: Establishment of a Trust Corporation in the British Zone of Germany for the Purpose of Claiming Unclaimed and Heirless Jewish Property,” 29 Aug. 1949, CAHJP JTC/Lon/278, “Note on a Talk between Professor Norman Bentwich, Mr. Brooks Richards and Mr. Weisberg, at the Foreign Office,” 11 Oct. 1949, CAHJP JTC/Lon/278.

⁶⁹ Arie J. Kochavi, “The Displaced Persons’ Problem and the Formulation of British Policy in Palestine,” *Studies in Zionism* 10, no. 1 (1989): 31–48; Ronald Zweig, “Restitution and the Problem of Jewish Displaced Persons in Anglo-American Relations, 1944–1948,” *American Jewish History* 78, no. 1 (Sept. 1988): 54–78.

⁷⁰ “Military Government Law No. 59, Regulation 7,” *Official Gazette of the Allied High Commission for Germany* 30 (18 Aug. 1950): 531–532; “Military Government Law No. 59, Regulation 10,” printed in Charles Kapralik, *Reclaiming the Nazi Loot*, I:155ff.

⁷¹ “Ordonnance 120,” *Journal officiel du commandement en chef français en Allemagne* 3, no. 119 (14 Nov. 1947): 1919–1222. Also see Landesgesetz über die jüdischen Kultusgemeinden in Rheinland-Pfalz v. 19.1.1950, GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 1950, p. 13. Notably, the law recognized the Jewish communities in Koblenz, Neuwied, Bad Kreuznach, Trier, and Mainz as public corporate bodies (Körperschaften des öffentlichen Rechts) and § 4 Abs. 2 allocated to each of them the “rights and obligations” of the communities in their regions.

⁷² “Arrête No. 177, portant désignation d’une organisation successorale en application de l’article 21 bis de l’ordonnance no. 120,” *Official Gazette of the Allied High Commission for Germany* 79 (8 Apr. 1952): 1618–1620. On the process of the evolution of this legal situation across all three zones, see Branche Française de la Jewish Trust Corporation for Germany, “Memorandum,” 13 Mar. 1953, PAAA B10 1669.

transfer of the archives remained the subject of fierce debate. Jewish leaders outside Europe may have argued that Jewish life in Germany was at its end, but Jews there slowly reorganized communal life in a startling attempt at continuity. For instance, in 1945, Jews in Berlin reconstituted themselves under the 1847 Prussian law that still formally governed Jewish communal bodies.⁷³ In the years that followed, Jewish communities arose across Germany—though not in Worms as Illert hoped, and some made the claim that they were the legal heirs to prewar communities, leading to a crisis: The so-called “Gemeinde problem.”⁷⁴ Hannah Arendt opposed the Mainz Jews’ claim not just because she believed it unethical that a handful of survivors receive such rich treasures, but also because the restitution groups—first JRSO and JCR, and then JTC on the same principle—depended on the argument that the former Jewish communities, congregations, and organizations no longer existed and had no successors, leading to the ability for successor groups to claim the property.⁷⁵ Some Jews, like in Stuttgart, signed voluntary settlements with JRSO and JTC.⁷⁶ That agreement, which the local Jews signed “with a heavy heart,” became a model: JRSO provided financial support and “essential property,” even title to buildings, on the basis of usufruct, and the local Jews agreed to cede the property “when” (not if) the Jewish population fell below a certain threshold, and submitted to an outside control board.⁷⁷ When Jews in Augsburg refused a similar settlement—insisting that they were the

⁷³ H. Lamm to American Jewish Conference, 15 April, 1946, LBI DM 223, 13/18. On the re-establishment of the Berlin Jewish community, see Philipp Nielsen, “‘I’ve Never Regretted Being a German Jew’: Siegmund Weltlinger and the Re-establishment of the Jewish Community in Berlin,” *LBIYB* 54 (2009): 275–296.

⁷⁴ “So-called,” as JRSO and JTC saw the communities as a “problem.” See Ayaka Takei, “The ‘Gemeinde Problem’: The Jewish Restitution Successor Organization and the Postwar Jewish Communities in Germany, 1947–1954,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 16, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 266–288; Lustig, “Who are to be the Successors of European Jewry?”

⁷⁵ This argument was made repeatedly, both internally and to the restitution courts. See, for instance, “Jewish Restitution Successor Organization,” 20 Oct. 1948, LBI DM 223, 13/1.

⁷⁶ Benjamin Ferenz to Dr. Warscher and Dr. Marx, 18 Jul. 1949, LBI DM 223, 13/2; Jerome J. Jacobson to M.W. Beckelman, J.J. Schwartz, 22 Dec. 1949, CAHJP JRSO/NY/640a.

⁷⁷ Jerome J. Jacobson to M.W. Beckelman, J.J. Schwartz, 22 Dec. 1949, CAHJP JRSO/NY/640a.

successors to the prewar community—JRSO went to court, and won, on the argument that the Nazis’ destruction of the Jewish communities meant that the new ones had no historic or legal ties to what came before.⁷⁸ In the British zone, in 1951 the JTC pressured Jewish communities to settle because if the new Jewish communities were recognized as legal successors, they would have to accept not just their property but also their debts.⁷⁹ And in the French zone, such battles—as in Worms—stretched further. Consequently, the restitution groups generally prevailed, but not without generating a great deal of resentment from local Jewish leaders.⁸⁰ This story played out differently in each of the three western zones of Germany, but the principles remained the same: that Jewish life in Germany had no successor, but the communities would receive support from the restitution groups with what they “needed.” And historical archives—the dividing line was usually 1870—generally fell into the basket of property to be extracted.

The fate of the Worms archives, then, fell within the development of a wider restitution framework, but remained intensely individual. Illert worked to keep these files close to home—even if the city technically served as a trustee and not the owner of the historical materials, it could remain in their charge for what he hoped would be a future Jewish community. In March 1951, Jews in Mainz came to such an agreement with Worms’ representatives regarding the Jewish antiquities and property: Worms recognized the Mainz Jews as the legal owners of the archives, synagogue, and cemetery, but the city would retain the objects as a symbol of the connection between the Jews of Worms and the city’s culture and history. Worms would repair and manage the synagogue and cemetery on behalf of the Mainz Jews free of charge, and hire a

⁷⁸ See Ayaka Takei, “The ‘Gemeinde Problem,’” and collected materials in CAHJP JRSO/NY/602a, 602b.

⁷⁹ See Lustig, “Who are to be the Successors of European Jewry?” 14–15.

⁸⁰ See, for instance, the opposition view that saw JRSO’s efforts as another type of looting: “Recht ist, was der JRSO nützt,” *Sonntags Post*, 31 May 1954, CAHJP JRSO/NY/602a.

caretaker for the cemetery and provide access to Jewish visitors gratis.⁸¹ Although the city balked at formally stating that the Jews of Mainz held legal title to these antiquities and properties, preferring to be assigned as a custodian for the property, they found it beneficial inasmuch as it affirmed their rights to hold the property.⁸²

Meanwhile, the JTC's Branche Française worked to undermine any such agreement, as they wanted to uphold their claim to communal property and saw little hope in Illert's dream of a reconstituted community. When the Branche Française was officially recognized as the Jewish successor organization in March 1952, its leaders quickly began to work to gain the Worms antiquities and other property in what would become a test case for the revised restitution framework.⁸³ On March 24, 1953, they submitted a complaint against the state of Rhineland-Palatinate arguing that any agreement between the Jews of Mainz and the city of Worms was illegitimate; as successor to the Worms Jews, the Branche Française claimed to be the only body with the right to make such agreements. However, in May 1953 the restitution chamber sided with the German state. The judges argued that the amended restitution law was vague enough to allow for the Jews of Mainz to constitute a successor organization, as implemented by the 1950 state law.⁸⁴ The Branche Française immediately filed for appeal, and in October 1953 the French Superior Court for Restitution in Rastatt ruled that the French restitution law and its regulations superseded the 1950 law.⁸⁵ The Jews of Mainz still maintained that they should be the successors

⁸¹ Jüdische Gemeinde Mainz to Friedrich Illert, 24 Mar. 1951, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 72; "Vergleich," 18 Mar. 1952, StadtAWo, Abt. 6, Nr. 1393.

⁸² "Aktennotiz, Betr.: Vergleich," 3 Jan. 1953, Rechtsamt to Dr. Reen, 14 Feb. 1953, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 1393.

⁸³ Appointment of the French Branch of the JTC, in Kapralik, *Reclaiming the Nazi Loot*, I:195, and *Journal Officiel de la Haute Commission alliée en Allemagne* 79 (8 April 1952): 1618.

⁸⁴ *Neue juristische Wochenschrift, Rechtsprechung zum Wiedergutmachungsrecht* (hereafter cited as *RzW*), Dec. 1953, 365. Also see Branche Française, "Memorandum," 13 Mar. 1953, PAAA B10 1669; "Branche Française' abgewiesen: Ein grundsätzliches Urteil der Wiedergutmachungskammer in Mainz," 18 Mar. 1953, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 1393.

⁸⁵ *RzW*, Jan 1954, 24.

of the Worms community, but based on the court's decision in March 1954 they agreed to a settlement with the Branche Française along the lines of the Stuttgart formula: The Mainz Jews would receive 120,000 DM (about \$28,500 in contemporary dollars, or \$257,000 in 2017 terms) and be allowed to hold their properties as long as they maintained their organized community.⁸⁶

The Branche Française's appointment as legal successor to the destroyed community and its agreement with the Mainz Jews might seem to conclude such legal struggles.⁸⁷ But in an effort to retain control of the archives, the city of Worms fought the court's ruling, primarily on Illert's argument about the history of the Jews in Worms and the possibilities of their return, and by showcasing the support of a number of émigrés for the city's trusteeship. The Jews, Illert contended in a detailed affidavit, were "indigenous" to Worms, with roots to the time of the Romans. He suggested that the Jews had been an "important factor" in the history of the city, just as Worms "as the 'little Jerusalem'" played an important role in European Jewry." Illert fervently believed that the Jewish community would be reconstituted and for this reason the city must continue to hold the archives and other antiquities in trust for this future Jewish community. The history of the Jews in Worms, he thought, demonstrated that the Jews would return so long as the ancient markers of the community remained—the cemetery, synagogue, and archives. He did admit that the Jews had often been persecuted. However, even if there were brief times in the "thousand-year history" of the Worms Jews when the "Ghetto remained vacant," he insisted: "But the Jews always returned and enjoyed the protection of the Kaiser and the Worms bishops." For this reason, he saw the period of National Socialism as a continuation of this pattern. There

⁸⁶ Jüdische Gemeinde Mainz to Isidor Kiefer, 23 Jan. 1954, Isidor Kiefer to JTC, 25 Jan. 1954, LBI AR1894, 1/1; Friedrich Illert to Paul Freedman, 24 Dec. 1953, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 11. Agreement Between Branche Française and Jewish Community of Mainz, 8 Mar. 1954, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167. For currency conversion, see R.C. Bidwell, *Currency Conversion Tables: A Hundred Years of Change* (London: Rex Collings, 1970), 22-24; and "CPI Inflation Calculator," U.S. Department of Labor, accessed April 13, 2017, <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.

⁸⁷ Dr. E. Mezger to Landgericht Mainz, 17 Sept. 1954, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167.

had been no Jewish community for fifteen years, but now the Worms synagogue, cemetery, and antiquities would once again call its Jews home.⁸⁸ Illert's interpretation of the history of the Jewish community presumed that the Jews would eventually return—even after ten or twenty years—and it provided a foundation for how he saw himself as a trustee of these materials.⁸⁹ He believed that the Jewish archives should remain in Worms so that when (not if) a Jewish community was reestablished, they would be returned to the Jews.⁹⁰

Illert was by no means alone in holding such views, though not everyone was as assured as he of the Jews' eventual return. Isidor Kiefer, for instance, had long promoted a vision of the city's history in which the Jewish presence was a cornerstone just as much as its ancient Roman character.⁹¹ And he worked to cultivate the historical memory of the Jews of Worms, helping establish the Jewish museum and maintaining the archives. In fact, among the papers he brought with him when he fled to the United States in 1938 was his catalogues of these materials, as well as a report, transcribed from the Worms archives, detailing the expulsion of the Jews in 1615 and their subsequent return.⁹² Altogether, one can see how Kiefer would be open to Illert's cultural orientation and argument that Jewish life would reemerge in Worms. And now, alongside Erwin Meyer, a Jew who had resettled in Worms, he circulated a petition declaring that the holy objects and monuments represented the history of the "little Jerusalem of Worms" and would serve as a foundation for a new community.⁹³ About thirty former Worms Jews, nearly all of whom lived in

⁸⁸ "Bericht über den gegenwärtigen Umfang den Zustand und die geschichtliche Lage der jüdischen Altertümer in Worms," 17 May 1954, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 69.

⁸⁹ Friedrich Illert to Heinrich Völker, 17 Aug. 1954, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 69.

⁹⁰ Friedrich Illert to Landesregierung von Rheinland-Pfalz, 27 Oct. 1955, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 69.

⁹¹ See, for instance, Isidor Kiefer, "Rhenus-Loge," LBI AR1894 1/3, which begins with the expression "Civitas Moguntiacum—civitaë Vangionum!" and presents the claim that Jews had settled in Worms in Roman times.

⁹² "Akten des Archivs der israel. Gemeinde Worms," 1895, LBI AR1894 1/3; "Austreibung der Juden aus Worms, 1615. Bericht eine Zeitgenossen in eine Städtischen Chronik (Stadt-Archiv Worms)," LBI AR1894 1/3.

⁹³ Isidor Kiefer circular, 18 July 1955, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 11, Isidor Kiefer to Landgericht Mainz, 1 Oct. 1954,

the United States, signed the statement, though it is necessary to note that a number struck out the line saying they still felt themselves a part of the Worms community.⁹⁴ But Kiefer's optimism was not blunted: "There is no [doubt] that a Jewish congregation will rise again!" he wrote in 1953. "I admit not in 10 or 20 years. However," he continued, "I predict that in 50 or 100 years there will be flourishing congregations in Germany again."⁹⁵ Reaching out to Konrad Adenauer, Kiefer wrote of how Jewish history teaches that the few Jews in Worms would grow in time.⁹⁶ Around this time, Heinz Trützschler von Falkenstein wrote that the German Foreign Office viewed it in the country's interest to foster the development of Jewish life, but he feared that there was little hope in waiting for Jews to return.⁹⁷

In response to Illert's claims, Chaim Yahil, a representative of the Israeli diplomatic mission in Cologne, insisted that the Nazi persecution marked the end of Jewish life in Europe. Whereas Illert and Kiefer argued that the Jews would resettle if their antiquities remained, Yahil rejected the possibility that a Jewish community might be reestablished.⁹⁸ Illert's reply was pointed and direct; he insisted that the Jews would come back and stressed his position as the caretaker for the archives and other antiquities. Because he saved the archives for the Jewish community of Worms, Illert explained, only they could claim them, and no one else. Furthermore, he disagreed with Yahil's reading of Jewish history; clearly the Jews had been persecuted but "we cannot follow this logic so far as to say that the history of the Jews in

StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 1393, Erwin Meyer to Stadtverwaltung Worms, 28 Oct. 1955, StadAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 1393.

⁹⁴ See StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 70, which contains copies of the statement signed by 31 people, 26 of whom lived in the United States (also two living in Buenos Aires, one in the state of Israel, and two were listed without addresses).

⁹⁵ Isidor Kiefer to Rabbi David H. Wice, 5 Jan. 1953, LBI AR1894 2/2.

⁹⁶ Isidor Kiefer to Konrad Adenauer, 21 Mar. 1954, LBI AR1894 2/2.

⁹⁷ Heinz von Trützschler to Abraham Frowein, Aug. 1954, "Entwurf," PAAA B10 1670.

⁹⁸ Chaim Yahil, "Anmerkungen zur Denkschrift des Herrn Oberbürgermeisters der Stadt Worms über die jüdischen Altertümer dortselbst," June 1954, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167.

Germany is ended.” Illert explained that there were more than fifty Jews in the region, and that there was a possibility that the community would be reestablished, and even if this were ten or twenty years in the future they should be able to regain their former property. Worms remained, he argued, the “‘little Jerusalem’ of the west,” its cemetery calling forth a legacy of “a thousand years” of the Jews in Worms.⁹⁹ The city’s legal counsel followed this argument, writing to the German foreign office of their aim to reestablish the community and their hope that the archives and antiquities should not become a museum, but should serve a real Jewish community.¹⁰⁰

On September 30, 1954, the Landgericht in Mainz convened for oral arguments in the appeal; in November of that year the court sided with the Branche Française, affirming its status as the legal successor to the former community and thereby rejecting Illert’s claim that a future Jewish community was the only possible group to claim the materials.¹⁰¹ Even the appearance of the 84-year-old Kiefer, who traveled to Germany from New York to support the city’s case, did not sway the court.¹⁰² But the city still refused to concede.¹⁰³ In August 1955, the Bundestag passed the “Gesetz zum Schutz deutschen Kulturgutes gegen Abwanderung,” which Worms’ counsel believed could offer some protection against the extraction of the archives.¹⁰⁴ But after consulting with the Ministry of Education and Culture, it was determined that registering the

⁹⁹ Friedrich Illert to Heinrich Völker, 17 Aug. 1954, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167.

¹⁰⁰ Rechtsanwalt Schmitt to Auswärtige Amt, 14 Aug. 1954, Dr. Schmitt to Auswärtiges Amt, 31 Aug. 1954, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167.

¹⁰¹ Hans Ramge and Dr. K. H. Schmitt to Rechtsamt Worms, 1 Oct. 1954, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167; “Teil-Urteil in Sachen der Branche Française gegen die Stadt Worms” (Or. 51/53), 18 Nov. 1954, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167.

¹⁰² Hans Ramge and Dr. K. H. Schmitt to Rechtsamt Worms, 1 Oct. 1954, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167; Isidor Kiefer to Hans Schmitt, 8 Sept. 1954, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 69; “Teil-Urteil in Sachen der Branche Française gegen die Stadt Worms” (Or. 51/53), 18 Nov. 1954, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167.

¹⁰³ Weber to Oberlandgericht Koblenz, 23 Apr. 1955, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167.

¹⁰⁴ K.H. Schmitt to Auswärtige Amt, 22 Sept. 1955, PAAA B10 1670; Dr. K. H. Schmitt to Oberbürgermeister Worms, 26 Sept. 1955, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 69. The law was published as Gesetz zum Schutz deutschen Kulturgutes gegen Abwanderung v. 9.8.1955, BGBl. I 1955, pp. 501–503.

archives as a German cultural good would not protect them.¹⁰⁵ Despite this setback, the city was further encouraged when the Mainz Jews turned away from the Branche Française, publicly expressed their support for Worms' claims. "It would be irresponsible," they wrote, "if these irreplaceable historical items would not remain in the city of Worms, whose Jewry has been tied to the city since over 1200 years."¹⁰⁶

Despite the will of Worms to fight on and the renewed support of the Jews in Mainz, the case did not return to trial, in large part due to pressure from the German Foreign Office. The West German government took interest in the case in 1954, when they received the exchange of letters between Illert and Yahil. In an August 1954 memorandum outlining the Foreign Office's position, Trützscher argued that the Nazi crimes disqualified Germany from serving as a trustee for Jewish cultural treasures, and as no Jewish community had been reestablished, he advised that it would be best to try for an amicable settlement.¹⁰⁷ In June 1955, they pressed Worms' legal counsel to contact the Branche Française and the representatives of the Israeli mission with the aim of reaching a settlement before the case could reach the high court in Koblenz.¹⁰⁸ By November 1955, no progress had been made, and the West German government increased pressure on the city: Worms' lawyers in Bonn were informed that Adenauer had taken a personal interest in the case and wanted them to stop their appeals and meet with the Branche Française representatives and the Israeli archivists who would receive the material.¹⁰⁹ This set the stage for extensive negotiations, the October 1956 agreement, and the shipment of the archives to

¹⁰⁵ Friedrich Illert to Landesregierung Rheinland-Pfalz, 27 Oct. 1955, Kahlert to Städtische Kulturinstitute Worms, 14 Nov. 1955, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 69; Schmitt to Rechtsamt Worms, 18 Nov. 1955, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167.

¹⁰⁶ Stempel to Friedrich Illert, 3 Nov. 1955, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167. Also see Max Grünfeld, Leo Reiner, Martin Levy, Jakob Stock to Landesregierung Rheinland-Pfalz, 23 Nov. 1955, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167.

¹⁰⁷ Heinz von Trützscher to Abraham Frowein, "Entwurf," Aug. 1954, PAAA B10 1670.

¹⁰⁸ Heinrich Schroembgens i.V. to Hans Ramge, K.H. Schmitt, 3 June 1955, PAAA B10 1670.

¹⁰⁹ Weber to Dr. K. H. Schmitt, 15 Nov. 1955, Weber to Schmitt, 30 Nov. 1955, Schmitt to Rechtsamt Worms, 1 Dec. 1955, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167; Abraham Frowein, notes, 21 Nov. 1955, PAAA B10 1670.

Jerusalem by diplomatic mail in March and April 1957.¹¹⁰

The fate of the Worms archives, ultimately, resulted from the restitution principles that allowed Jewish restitution groups like the Branche Française to lay claim to looted communal property. But the extended struggle for these archives does not indicate that archives were a secondary aspect of restitution, a coda to earlier debates, or the mere application of prior precedents. Instead, the Worms archives' contentiousness indicates the continued contestation of questions of successorship, representing an exceptional case that proves the rule about the high stakes of postwar restitution. Because even if the fate of the Worms archives ultimately followed these general policies, the struggle was ultimately about radically differing views on the future of the Jewish communities in Germany. In large part, the Worms leaders' inability to keep the archives stemmed from the fact that the Jewish community Illert and Kiefer envisioned simply did not materialize. In September 1954, Worms' legal office noted that "We must unfortunately communicate that the attempt to establish a Jewish community in Worms has failed."¹¹¹ Even Kiefer eventually withdrew his support. When he traveled to Germany in 1957, he wrote to the American ambassador that after seeing the reality of Jewish life there, the Worms files should be given not to the Israelis but to Jews in America, as that was where most of the Worms Jews were.¹¹² By this time, of course, Worms had already signed an agreement for the archives' transfer and they were on their way to Jerusalem.

In the months that followed the transfer of the archives, Illert reassured friends and colleagues that he still planned to proceed with rebuilding the synagogue.¹¹³ When it was

¹¹⁰ See Felix Shinnar to Office in Jerusalem, 27 Mar. 1957, 8 Apr. 1957, CZA L33/1272.

¹¹¹ Rechtsamt Worms to Dr. Schmitt, 7 Sept. 1954, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167.

¹¹² Isidor Kiefer to U.S. Ambassador to Germany, 1957, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 73.

¹¹³ Friedrich Illert to Paul Freedman, 16 Apr. 1957, Friedrich Illert to Ernst Guggenheimer, 28 Nov. 1957, Friedrich

rededicated on December 3, 1961, on the second night of Chanukah, neither Friedrich Illert nor Isidor Kiefer (who passed away just weeks later, on January 27, 1962, at the age of ninety) were able to take part.¹¹⁴ But Illert's son and "Amtsnachfolger" Georg, who had taken up his father's position as director of the Worms archives and other cultural institutes, presided over the occasion to which the two elders had looked forward to for over fifteen years.¹¹⁵ The synagogue had been rebuilt with stones reclaimed from the rubble, based on photographs and plans that Kiefer had from before the war.¹¹⁶ Illert's vision of Worms' history, and the centrality of the Jews to its character, continued; under his son Georg's direction, the Stadtarchiv was established down the block from the rebuilt synagogue, in the "Rashi house" above the Jewish museum. But without the communal archives, any Jewish community that would be established in Worms would lack the historic documents that the Worms Jewish community had held close for so long. The medieval charters, seals, and manuscripts no longer served the practical purposes that they once had, but they would continue to play a symbolic role in their new home. The transfer of the archives of the "little Jerusalem of the West" to Jerusalem—like those of so many other communities whose files ended up at the Jewish Historical General Archives—gave concrete form to the new Jewish world coming into being after more than a half century of mass migration, the Holocaust, and the formation of the State of Israel. But the transfer of these archives, which were welcomed at Israel's State Archives, marked not the JTC's Branche Française but Israel as a successor to the Worms Jews, and removed the possibility of a future Worms Jewish

Illert to Felix Shinnar, 8 Feb. 1958, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 73.

¹¹⁴ It is unclear why this is the case. Illert retired in December 1958 after 38 years of service, but he still resided in Worms (Heinrich Völker to Friedrich Illert, 23 Dec. 1958, StadtAWo Abt. 170/16, Nr. 46).

¹¹⁵ Friedrich Illert to Else Kiefer, 12 Feb. 1962, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 73. See also Isidor Kiefer to Friedrich Illert, 3 Dec. 1947, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 72, in which Kiefer noted that he was concerned with the rebuilding of the synagogue "day and night," and Friedrich Illert, "Bericht über die jüdischen Altertümer in Worms," 21 Feb. 1949, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 72.

¹¹⁶ Isidor Kiefer to JTC, 2 Mar. 1954, LBI AR1894, 1/1.

community finding a degree of continuity with its long and decorated history through the historic antiquities—representing the definite transfer of the Jews of Worms to the realm of the past.

The Archives of Hamburg

In July 1959, Daniel Cohen, director of Jerusalem’s Jewish Historical General Archives, penned a spirited letter to the Hamburg Senate about the Jewish archives in that city, which for almost a decade had been the subject of seemingly interminable dispute.¹¹⁷ In Hamburg, as in Worms, Israelis like Cohen—himself a native son of Hamburg—coveted the historical files; a handful of local Jews, political figures, and intellectuals hoped to keep them close to home. But as Cohen recognized, the story in Hamburg was distinctive, and not just because Hamburg was in the British zone. In crucial ways, the facts of the case and the course of its debate represented an inverse of what happened in Worms. There, Illert’s dream of the Jews’ resettlement went unrealized, whereas Hamburg boasted one of the largest Jewish communities in postwar Germany, close to 1,300 strong, and became the epicenter of organized Jewish life in the British zone.¹¹⁸ And Hamburg argued that its Jews had presented their files to the Staatsarchiv of their own free will, and consequently the archive had never been “looted.” For this reason, the JTC’s Branche Française had vigorously pursued the Worms archives by legal means, but in Hamburg the Jewish Trust Corporation was wary of going to court. And so, if in Worms Illert made the “sentimental” argument, as Cohen had put it, here he recognized that the Israelis themselves made such a case, characterizing it as “not a juridical, but rather a moral problem.” Regardless of the intricacies of

¹¹⁷ Daniel Cohen, “Aide mémoire über den Stand der Angelegenheit der Archive der Jüdischen Gemeinde Hamburg,” 9 Jul. 1959, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. IV.

¹¹⁸ See Lavsky, 80–81, 86–93, and 125 (for demographics), Arno Herzig, ed., *Die Juden in Hamburg*, 613–678; Ina S. Lorenz, *Gehen oder Bleiben. Neuanfang der Jüdischen Gemeinde in Hamburg nach 1945* (Hamburg: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2002). Cf. Harry Maor, “Über der Wiederaufbau der jüdischen Gemeindegemeinden in Deutschland seit 1945” (Ph.D. dissertation, Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität zu Mainz, 1961), 19; Hans Lamm, “Die Wiederaufbau der Hamburger Jüdischen Gemeinde nach 1945,” in *Die Drei-Gemeinde. Aus der Geschichte der Jüdischen Gemeinden Altona–Hamburg–Wandsbek*, ed. Oskar Wolfsberg-Aviad (Munich: Ner-Tamid-Verlag, 1960), 134–146.

restitution law, he claimed, these archives constituted a part of the Jewish national cultural patrimony. In Jerusalem, he declared, they were creating a national archive of the Jewish people, and it was only possible to study the history of the Jews of Hamburg, he insisted, alongside the other historical collections gathered to Jerusalem on the basis of their “raison d’être”—the “idea of the unity of the Jewish people” and its history, which demanded the unity of its archives.¹¹⁹

The fate of the Hamburg archives foregrounds some similar issues as did the Worms dispute regarding the possibility of a Jewish future in Germany, but it also stood in for fundamental debates about the nature of Jewish culture and history. In Hamburg, the rise of a new Jewish community—and the support some of its leaders gave to the city’s claims—presented a distinct challenge to the Israelis and their allies who felt that Jewish life in Europe was at its end. At stake was not *if* the Jews would return, but their legitimacy: It was for this reason that Cohen wrote privately of his fear that if the archives remained, they might serve as a “historical ‘birth-certificate’” for Jews in Hamburg.¹²⁰ Moreover, the struggle over the Hamburg archives centered on historical and archival questions of if the archive should be divided, and what was its proper context. It thereby represented the nexus of complex legal, cultural, and historical problems that sharpen the outlines of issues of ownership and the tangibility of these archives as physical objects. Hamburg archivist Erich von Lehe insisted that the collection could not be divided or otherwise stripped from the historic context of the city in which they had originated; it was, he insisted, “an entirety, not to be divided” (“*ein ganzes, nicht aufzuteilen*”). Instead, he proposed that the Israelis might accept a “representative collection” for museal purposes. Likewise, the Israelis argued that the files should not be divided, but that they wanted the entirety of the

¹¹⁹ Daniel Cohen, “Aide mémoire über den Stand der Angelegenheit der Archive der Jüdischen Gemeinde Hamburg,” 9 Jul. 1959, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. IV.

¹²⁰ Daniel Cohen to Mark Uveeler, 16 Aug. 1955, CZA L33/1311.

collection, not a piecemeal offering, and Bein insisted on receiving the original documents, not photocopies. The Israelis wanted the material to go to the Jewish Historical General Archives where it could be examined in the context of Jewish history in Europe at large, following from their guiding principle Cohen outlined of the “unity of the Jewish people.”¹²¹ By contrast, Von Lehe and Hertz argued that the archives must remain at home so that the Jews of Hamburg could be studied within the context of the city and its history. This dispute, then, centered on questions of provenance and pertinence, on the importance of the files’ original context in contrast with the potential utility to scholars of bringing them together with other relevant materials, as well as the matter of *which* context—of Hamburg and Germany, on one side, or Jewish history on the other—was most pertinent. Consequently, if the dispute over the Worms archives stood in for the question of whether German Jewish life and culture should be relegated to the realm of the past, the fate of the Hamburg archives represented a wider debate over the nature of these files and the histories they contained, if they were primarily a part of Jewish or German history.

In September 1949, Hans Hertz reached out to Jacob Jacobson to ask if the former Gesamtarchiv leader might come to Hamburg to examine the files of the Jewish communities held at the Staatsarchiv.¹²² Hertz was not himself Jewish; he had a Jewish great-grandparent who had converted to Christianity.¹²³ Although Hertz retained his position as a civil servant under the Nazi racial regulations, he had less security due to this Jewish background, however limited. In these years, Hertz, employed at the Staatsarchiv, became aware of the Jewish archives and volunteered to photograph Jewish gravestones.¹²⁴ Now, it was Hertz’s hope that Jacobson could

¹²¹ Daniel Cohen, “Aide mémoire,” 9 Jul. 1959, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. IV.

¹²² Hans Hertz to Jacob Jacobson, 13 Sept. 1949, StA Hamburg 622-1/120/914.

¹²³ Daniel Cohen, “Du”h ‘al nesiy’ati le-’eropah ba-ḳayits u-ba-stay 1954,” 20 Jan. 1955, CZA L33/1275.

¹²⁴ Sielemann, “Die personenkundliche Abteilung des Staatsarchivs Hamburg,” 150–155.

help him prepare these materials—“in whose rescue,” Hertz claimed, “I have played a part”—for scholarly use.¹²⁵ In part, Hertz sought Jacobson’s assistance due to his Gesamtarchiv ties, and also because Jacobson could read the older Hebrew documents, a skill Hertz himself lacked.¹²⁶ With the support of the Hamburg Jewish community and Hans-Joachim Schoeps, the conservative (and onetime pro-Nazi) German-Jewish scholar of religion who returned from his exile in Sweden to teach at the University of Erlangen, Hertz argued that the material should be recognized as the property of the Hamburg Jews and could be used to study Hamburg Jewry.¹²⁷

To Alex Bein and Hannah Arendt, Hertz presented a challenge and a curiosity. “A non-Jew very interested in the archive,” Alex Bein once remarked, “a friend of the Jews but a fanatical fighter for keeping the archive in Hamburg, the living spirit in the whole matter.”¹²⁸ In an early report from 1950, Arendt described Hertz as “a Jew or half-Jew who simply happens to have a special interest in this material.” Continuing, she lamented that “Strange as it sounds, it seems to me quite obvious that that if Dr. Hertz does not want to part with the things... we shall have trouble to get them.” They feared it represented a general trend that “every cultural treasure to which German Jewish communities lay claim eventually becomes private property of some member of the community.” “This is not because of wickedness or dishonesty,” she stressed, but the effect was the same: this “spiritus rector,” who claimed to have saved the archive, was

¹²⁵ Hans Hertz to Jacob Jacobson, 13 Sept. 1949, StA Hamburg 622-1/120/914.

¹²⁶ “Niederschrift über die ... stattgehabte [sic] Gründung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für die Geschichte der Juden in Hamburg,” 31 Jul. 1953, StA Hamburg 622-1/120/917; Daniel Cohen to Mark Uveeler, 16 Aug. 1955, CZA L33/1311, reflects that “there is only one scholar in Hamburg who can read Hebrew,” likely referring to Jacobson.

¹²⁷ Hertz to Hans Joachim Schoeps, 13 Aug. 1949, Hertz to Vorstand der Jüdischen Gemeinde in Hamburg, 13 Sept. 1949, StA Hamburg 622-1/120/914; Hertz to Harry Goldstein, 13 Oct. 1949, StA Hamburg 622-1/120/915; Hertz to Jacob Jacobson, 14 Oct. 1949, StA Hamburg 622-1/120/914. On Schoeps: Richard Faber, *Deutschbewusstes Judentum und jüdischbewusstes Deutschtum. Der historische und politische Theologe Hans-Joachim Schoeps* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008); Philipp Nielsen, “Between Promised Land and Broken Promise: Jews, the Right, and the State in Germany between 1871 and 1935” (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2012), 218–234, 293–294.

¹²⁸ Alex Bein to Georg Herlitz, 8 July 1954, CZA L33/1311.

portrayed as the sole figure who wanted to use the materials.¹²⁹

Despite this characterization, Hertz did not act not alone. In fact, he found support from prominent Jewish figures, like Max Plaut, who had overseen the archives' transfer to the state in the 1930s, and Harry (Heimann) Goldstein, who led the postwar community. What is more, Ludwig Löffler, another member of the Jewish community's board, served as the city's legal counsel and presented much of Hamburg's case for keeping the archives to the restitution courts. Goldstein eventually supported the Israelis' project, but he and the other Hamburg Jews proved open to arguments to keep the files in Hamburg. As Arendt noted in 1950, Goldstein was favorable to the city, given that Hamburg had helped restore the Jewish cemetery; she posited that Goldstein would not support the claims of Jewish restitution groups if they did not help reestablish local Jewish life.¹³⁰ And in 1951, the community's board decided that they could not support the transfer of the original archives to Jerusalem until the project was completed.¹³¹ Alongside these local figures, prominent émigrés such as Erich Warburg, the scion of the Hamburg banking family who had settled in New York City, also supported the city in its ambition to keep the files.¹³² And so in 1953, Hertz together with a number of local intellectuals like the historian Fritz Fischer formed the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft für die Geschichte der Juden in Hamburg" with the aim of producing a history of the Hamburg Jews.¹³³ It was on this basis that Hertz insisted that the files must remain for the duration of the project.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Hannah Arendt, JCR Field Report Nr. 18, 10 Mar. 1950, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/309; Daniel Cohen, "Du"ḥ 'al nesiy'ati le-'eropah ba-ḳayits u-ba-stay 1954," 20 Jan. 1955, CZA L33/1275.

¹³⁰ Hannah Arendt, JCR Field Report Nr. 18, 10 Mar. 1950, NLI ARC 4° 793/288/3088.

¹³¹ Alex Bein, "Bericht über das Archiv der Jüdischen Gemeinde in Hamburg," 20 Apr. 1951, CZA L33/1311; E.G. Lowenthal, "Jewish Archivalia, Staatsarchiv Hamburg," 18 Apr. 1951, CAHJP JTC/Lon/575.

¹³² Alex Bein, "Du"ḥ 'al reshith ha-mu"m be-hamburg," 29 Nov. 1957, CAHJP P28/6/38.

¹³³ "Niederschrift über die ... stattgehabte [sic] Gründung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für die Geschichte der Juden in Hamburg," 31 Jul. 1953, StA Hamburg 622-1/120/917.

¹³⁴ Hans Hertz, "Memorandum betr. die Geschichte der Juden in Hamburg," 15 Aug. 1953, StA Hamburg 133-1 III

All this served to embolden Kurt Sieveking, Hamburg's mayor. From the moment Jewish restitution groups and Israeli archivists first set their sights on these archives in the late 1940s until the final settlement in December 1959, the city and its representatives presented a series of legalistic arguments—some quite spurious—for keeping the archives. First, they suggested that the Jewish communal archives did not constitute looted property.¹³⁵ Löffler and Plaut claimed the files had been given willingly, and so the files should be excluded from the definition of restitutable property according to British restitution law.¹³⁶ The Jewish Trust Corporation, they claimed, was created to reverse the acts of the Nazis, but the Nazis had not confiscated these archives and so there was nothing to be undone.¹³⁷ They also claimed that Jewish life was closely tied to the city, presenting particular legal ramifications. Sieveking suggested that the Jewish archives represented “the manifestation (*Niederschlag*) of the entire public-legal (*öffentlich-rechtlich*) activities.”¹³⁸ This claim of Jewish life's public-legal character led to a legalistic reasoning that the city was the destroyed community's legal heir: As a public corporation (*Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts*) and juridical person, the Jewish community as a legally-constituted body was a creation of the city itself.¹³⁹ In this reading of corporate law, the Nazi dissolution of the community had been illegal, as only Hamburg had the right to dissolve it; but if it *were* to be dissolved, communal property would vest in Hamburg itself as a kind of escheat.¹⁴⁰

Sieveking's claim of the ties of Jews to local life also related to another set of arguments

215-1/4/2, Bd. I; cf. drafts in StA Hamburg 622-1/120/917.

¹³⁵ Dr. Reusch to Staatsarchiv, 20 Aug. 1951, StA Hamburg 622-1/120/915; Landgericht Hamburg, Öffentliche Sitzung: Zeuge, Dr. Plaut, 19 Feb. 1952, CZA L33/1290.

¹³⁶ Dr. Reusch to Staatsarchiv, 20 Aug. 1951, StA Hamburg 622-1/120/915; Löffler to Landgericht Hamburg, 19 Oct. 1953; Öffentliche Sitzung, Wiedergutmachungskammer, 7 Jun. 1956, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. II.

¹³⁷ Löffler to Landgericht Hamburg, 7 Dec. 1955, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167.

¹³⁸ Kurt Sieveking to Harry Goldstein, 2 July 1955, CZA L33/1270.

¹³⁹ Löffler to Landgericht Hamburg, 13 Apr. 1956, StadtAWo Abt. 6, Nr. 2167.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.; Dr. Haas to Amt für Wiedergutmachung, 14 Feb. 1957, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. III.

tied to professional archival practice and historical context. Erich von Lehe, an archivist at the Staatsarchiv (he became its director in 1957), claimed the archive to be *res extra commercium*, a category of properties incapable of being traded or transferred.¹⁴¹ He also tried to argue that the rules of provenance or *respect des fonds* required the archives to remain. “The Jewish archive, from an archival standpoint,” he wrote, “is a whole, not to be divided (*ein Ganzes, nicht aufzuteilen*).” Continuing, he argued that the Jewish files were only comprehensible (*erschließbar*) in the context of other Hamburg archives, such as those of the Hamburg Senate.¹⁴² Following this approach, they argued that the history of the Jews was first and foremost part of the history of Hamburg, and that it could only be studied in this context. In 1954, Sieveking stressed that the archives must remain because Jewish life in Hamburg was more closely tied to the city than in other places.¹⁴³ In a 1955 meeting with Chaim Yahil, Sieveking again explained that “the history of the Jewish community is a part of the history of Hamburg,” and thus the files must be studied in the context of the other materials held in the Staatsarchiv.¹⁴⁴ When the Hamburg Senate

¹⁴¹ Von Lehe, “Aktenvermerk, betr. Anspruch auf Archiv der Jüdischen Gemeinde,” 11 Feb. 1955, StA, Löffler to Wiedergutmachungsamt, 19 Oct. 1955, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. I; Hamburg to Denkmalschutzamt, 7 Sept. 1956, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. II. Cf. Amalie Weidner, *Kulturgüter als res extra commercium im internationalen Staatsrecht* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2001); Robin Evans-Jones and Geoffrey MacCormack, “The Sale of *res extra commercium* in Roman Law,” *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 112, no. 1 (1995): 330–351. This argument prefigured a strain of cultural property nationalism, concretized in the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, limiting trade in inalienable national antiquities. See John Henry Merryman, “Two Ways of Thinking about Cultural Property,” *The American Journal of International Law* 80, no. 4 (Oct. 1986): 831–853, and Merryman, “Cultural Property Internationalism,” *International Journal of Cultural Property* 12 (2005): 11–39. Curiously, the claim of the archive’s extracommercial status perhaps also hinted at a type of internationalism too, by placing the archive within a type of property impossible to own, part of a broader world cultural heritage, inasmuch as the Roman *res extra commercium* frequently delineates property or realms outside the framework of human sovereignty: the property of God, the high seas, or the vast reaches of outer space. (For example, see the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies of 1967, and the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies of 1969.)

¹⁴² Von Lehe, “Aktenvermerk, betr. Anspruch auf Archiv der Jüdischen Gemeinde,” 11 Feb. 1955, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. I.

¹⁴³ Alex Bein, “Du”h ‘al siḥati ‘im ro’sh ha-‘ir hamburg,” 16 Jun. 1954, CAHJP P28/6/37.

¹⁴⁴ Sieveking, “Vermerk,” 22 Oct. 1955, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. I.

moved to register the Jewish archives under the 1920 Hamburg law protecting cultural objects from export,¹⁴⁵ they argued that Plaut and Lippmann sent the Jewish archives to the Staatsarchiv with the view “that these documents of the history of the local Jewish community and its members could only retain their full scientific value here, together with the corresponding state and communal files and the numerous grave-inscriptions.”¹⁴⁶ And on December 18, 1957—the day before the signing of the final agreement—Sieveking’s successor Max Brauer still claimed the files “could only be fully evaluated in connection with the other Hamburg archives.”¹⁴⁷

On this basis, Von Lehe and Sieveking offered the Israelis individual documents as a kind of courtesy. In 1954, Sieveking explained that they could not divide the archive, but they might be able to photocopy some materials; a year later, Von Lehe proposed that, if necessary, the city could provide the Israelis with “microcopies of the most important parts” of the archive as a “substitute.”¹⁴⁸ In 1957, Von Lehe presented this position to Robert Lachs, the Jewish Trust Corporation’s general counsel: They insisted that “the entire archive as a unit” (*das gesamte Archive als Einheit*) remain in Hamburg, but that it might be possible to “produce microfilms of interesting items” for the Israelis.¹⁴⁹

However specious some of the arguments that Hamburg’s leaders presented, the result was that the Jewish Trust Corporation felt that the city held a much stronger legal position than had been the case in Worms. Consequently, they were wary of entering a court battle they were unsure that they would win. A court loss, they feared, would damage other more lucrative

¹⁴⁵ Published as “Denkmalschutzgesetz,” in Hamburg, *Sammlung des bereinigten hamburgischen Landesrechts* I 224 a.

¹⁴⁶ Hamburg Senate to Denkmalschutzamt, 7 Sept. 1956, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. II.

¹⁴⁷ Max Brauer to Eduard Rosenbaum, 18 Dec. 1957, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. III.

¹⁴⁸ Alex Bein, “Du”h ‘al śīḥati ‘im ro’sh ha-‘ir hamburg,” 16 Jun. 1954, CAHJP P28/6/37; von Lehe, “Aktenvermerk, betr. Anspruch auf Archiv der Jüdischen Gemeinde,” 11 Feb. 1955, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. I.

¹⁴⁹ Von Lehe to Dr. Lachs, 4 May 1957, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. III.

projects like compensation claims, and could poison the group's relationship with the city.¹⁵⁰ JTC's cautious approach, combined with the local Jewish community's wavering support between Hertz's project and archival transfer, led the group to be open to Von Lehe's offer of a selection of the documents in place of the other option, to let the case drop. As a result, JTC agreed to a settlement whereby the city would provide "at their discretion ... part of the archives which are of importance in the research into the history of Jewry in Germany or in Hamburg."¹⁵¹ Kurt Oppenheim, another JTC leader, happily reported that they had avoided open conflict with the city by reaching what they believed to be a "long overdue settlement" to produce "parts of the archives... which are of importance for research for the History of Jews in Germany or in Hamburg."¹⁵² It was their hope that such a settlement would release them from of a situation which Lachs described had had "a most undesirable effect on... relations with the Hansestadt [sic] which had hitherto been very amicable."¹⁵³

Lachs realized that his compromise favored Hamburg, and that the Israelis would oppose it.¹⁵⁴ Ever since Bein's first visit to examine the Hamburg archives in 1951, he and Daniel Cohen had aggressively advocated for the extraction of these archives in their entirety to Jerusalem as part of the "ingathering of the exiles of the past." If Hertz had the ear of Erich Warburg, the Israelis brought forward their own set of émigrés, a group of former students of the Talmud-Tora-Real- und Oberrealschule living in Israel who produced a petition with 243 signatories

¹⁵⁰ Charles Kapralik to Bein, 24 Sept. 1954, CZA L33/1276; "Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee," 24 May 1956, CAHJP JRSO/NY/640d; "Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee," 30 Mar. 1957, CZA L33/1311; Kurt Oppenheim to Kapralik, 15 May 1957, Kapralik to Sir Henry d'Avigdor Goldsmid, 17 May 1957, Robert Lachs, "Archives of the Jewish Communities in Hamburg," 21 May 1957, CAHJP JTC/Lon/550.

¹⁵¹ "Jewish Archives in Hamburg," 21 May 1957, ISA HZ-3-293.

¹⁵² Kurt Oppenheim to Charles Kapralik, 15 May 1957, CAHJP JTC/Lon/550.

¹⁵³ "Jewish Archives in Hamburg," 21 May 1957, ISA HZ-3-293.

¹⁵⁴ "Jewish Archives in Hamburg," 21 May 1957, ISA HZ-3-293.

supporting the archives' transfer.¹⁵⁵ Bein and Cohen also attempted to sway the Hamburg Jewish community to their side. In 1951, the local Jews had been reluctant to part with the materials so long as Hertz worked on his project, a position they echoed to Bein three years later when they insisted the archives should remain for at least five more years.¹⁵⁶ Bein responded that the files should be brought to Jerusalem for the use of students at the Hebrew University; to keep them in Hamburg, he suggested, would be to provide the Nazis with another victory. Along the lines of the general agreements restitution groups had made with Jewish communities across Germany, Bein proposed that any material needed for reparations administration could remain in Hamburg, but anything "historical" should be sent to Jerusalem, with both sets of documents microfilmed so each side had a complete copy.¹⁵⁷ On this basis, in August 1954 Jewish communal leaders told Daniel Cohen that they agreed it would be fine to send the originals to Jerusalem as long as microfilms remained for Hertz, a position they expressed privately to Sieveking in February 1955.¹⁵⁸ But clearly, not all members of the community were in agreement. In April of that year, they changed their minds when they conceded to Sieveking that the files could remain until Hertz's book was finished.¹⁵⁹ Only a few weeks later, though, they definitively took the Israelis' side.¹⁶⁰

Parallel to this years-long back-and-forth with the Jewish community, the Israelis made a similar case to Sieveking and JTC leaders, hoping to sway them to their side. In June 1954, Bein met with Sieveking and made the same arguments that he presented to the Jewish community.

¹⁵⁵ "Tagung ehemaliger Schüler der Talmud-Tora-Real-Schule," 6 Dec. 1953, HZA B. 1/7 241.

¹⁵⁶ E.G. Lowenthal, "Jewish Archivalia, Staatsarchiv Hamburg," 18 Apr. 1951, JTC/Lon/575; Bein to Georg Herlitz, 8 Jul. 1954, CZA L33/1311.

¹⁵⁷ Alex Bein to Jüdische Gemeinde in Hamburg, 23 May 1954, HZA B. 1/7 241, CZA L33/1311.

¹⁵⁸ Daniel Cohen, Circular, 1 Sept. 1954, Jüdische Gemeinde in Hamburg to Kurt Sieveking, 3 Feb. 1955, CZA L33/1270. Cf. Sieveking's response to Harry Goldstein, 10 Feb. 1955, CZA L33/1270.

¹⁵⁹ Jüdische Gemeinde in Hamburg to Kurt Sieveking, 19 Apr. 1955, StA Hamburg 215-1/4/2, Bd. I; cf. draft in CZA L33/1270, and Sieveking to Harry Goldstein, 10 Feb. 1955, CZA L33/1270.

¹⁶⁰ Harry Goldstein, Berthold Simonsohn, Statement, 11 May 1955, HZA B. 1/7 241.

But if he had proposed dividing and microfilming the archive to the Jews, for Sieveking he had a specific, more severe message. When Sieveking presented the option of photoduplicating portions of the archives for the Israelis, Bein retorted: "Filming is not equivalent to the source." He explained, moreover, that Jews had a difficult time imagining Germany as a protector of Jewish culture.¹⁶¹ Bein expressed this same viewpoint to Charles Kapralik, chair of JTC, shortly thereafter, when he wrote that the Israelis fundamentally believed that there were practical as well as ethical reasons to extract the archives. On one hand, Bein expressed his fear that they could not leave any archives in Germany, "not even as deposit or trust." "We do not need the Germans as trustees," he wrote. He also suggested that it would be "of much greater value to the Communities" if the materials were organized in Jerusalem instead of "left in a disorderly state in Germany."¹⁶² Here, he presented a counterargument to the views expressed by Sieveking and other Hamburg leaders, who had argued that the files could be best studied in the city itself. Bein had long claimed that these archives files could only be appropriately put to use in Jerusalem, where they would be alongside the archives of hundreds of other Jewish communities and at the disposal of scholars who could work with the Hebrew-language documents.¹⁶³ On one occasion, Daniel Cohen wrote to Hans Hertz to inform him of material relevant to the Hamburg Jews which they had found in the collections of the Jews of Schleswig and also the archives in Copenhagen.¹⁶⁴ Cohen's underhanded point was that the study of the Jews of Hamburg could not be restricted to the files found in that city. Rather, a systematic examination of the history of the Jews in Hamburg required scholars to study the materials alongside those of Jews in other

¹⁶¹ Bein, "Du"ḥ 'al śīḥati 'im ro'sh ha-'ir hamburg," 16 Jun. 1954, CAHJP P28/6/37.

¹⁶² Bein to Charles Kapralik, 17 Aug. 1954, CZA L33/1447.

¹⁶³ See for example Daniel Cohen to Senator a.D.W. Landahl, 23 Oct. 1955, CZA L33/1289, and Alex Bein, "Notes on a Conversation with the Mayor of Hamburg," 19 Jan. 1958, CAHJP P28/6/39.

¹⁶⁴ Daniel Cohen to Hans Hertz, 9 Aug. 1956, CAHJP P127/48a.

locales. And in 1958, Alex Bein insisted that the history of the Jews of Hamburg belonged not only to the city of Hamburg, but to the Jewish people as a whole.¹⁶⁵

When the JTC arrived at its compromise with Hamburg in May 1957, the Israelis responded violently. After an emergency meeting, the leaders of the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem wired Daniel Cohen, at that time in Hamburg, insisting that they could not accept the newly-signed agreement in its current form.¹⁶⁶ JTC, wary of continued struggles, handed it off to the Israelis to implement, who hoped thereby to get better terms.¹⁶⁷ And so, Alex Bein planned yet another visit to Hamburg for these negotiations, which took place in December of that year.¹⁶⁸ Von Lehe, Hertz, and Löffler now insisted that they could only provide “individual items,” which would allow the city to maintain the unity of its collections and Israel to create “a representative collection of documents.” Hearing this, Bein was furious, and insisted the Israelis’ goal was by no means a “representative collection” but rather the development of a research institution. “I stressed,” he reported, “that it cannot be a matter of small gifts.” Further, he argued that they could not trust the Germans to hold onto Jewish archives, and he threatened to discontinue talks entirely.¹⁶⁹ However, Rosenthal was able to calm Bein and convince him to return to the negotiating table.¹⁷⁰ Just a few days later, Von Lehe presented a more generous offer, generally dividing the archive around 1811 so that materials in Hebrew would be provided

¹⁶⁵ Alex Bein, “Notes on a Conversation with the Mayor of Hamburg,” 19 Jan. 1958, CAHJP P28/6/39.

¹⁶⁶ Dinur, Halpern, Bein, Meisl to Jewish Agency, 29 May 1957, CZA L33/1311.

¹⁶⁷ Robert Lachs to Manfred Rosenthal, 15 Aug. 1957, CAHJP JTC/Lon/550.

¹⁶⁸ Initially, Bein hoped that he would be able to come in September 1957, but scheduling conflicts on both sides forced them to delay until December. See Manfred Rosenthal to von Lehe, 13 Aug. 1957, von Lehe to Rosenthal, 15 Aug. 1957, CZA L33/1313; Rosenthal to Dr. Moeller, 14 Oct. 1957, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. III.

¹⁶⁹ Alex Bein, “Du”h ‘al reshith ha-mu”m be-hamburg,” 29 Nov. 1957, CAHJP P28/6/38; also see Bein to Lachs, 16 Dec. 1957, and Bein, “Din ye-heshbon mesakem ‘al masa’ u-matan be-hamburg,” 27 Dec. 1957, CAHJP P28/6/38.

¹⁷⁰ Kurt Oppenheim to Charles Kapralik, Robert Lachs, 29 Nov. 1957, CAHJP JTC/Lon/550.

to the Israelis.¹⁷¹ Ben Zion Dinaburg, Israel Heilpern, and Daniel Cohen, meeting in Jerusalem, argued that it was still unacceptable.¹⁷² Bein insisted that research—both in Hamburg and in Jerusalem—required “the entire [*gesammte*] source material,” and so if the archive was divided it should also be microfilmed in its entirety.¹⁷³ Von Lehe agreed that they could work on this basis, but claimed it might take an additional three years to process the material.¹⁷⁴

At the same time, Hamburg leaders began cultivating opposition to the transfer of the archive. The Israelis had hoped that with the election of a new mayor, Max Brauer, they would find someone more open to their cause.¹⁷⁵ However, Brauer quickly found himself the target of those who opposed the transfer of archives to Jerusalem.¹⁷⁶ At the same time, Ludwig Löffler communicated to Lachs that many members of the Hamburg Senate were of the opinion that the materials should remain in Hamburg, and that they felt further concessions might lead to the end of any negotiations; Lachs spoke with other JTC leaders about the fears that talks might break down. He remarked that the whole matter should be “disposed of,” and turned to Manfred Rosenthal in the hope that he might talk to Bein and “persuade him to be reasonable.”¹⁷⁷ Daniel Cohen, however, insisted they must strive for the maximum concessions.¹⁷⁸

Nevertheless, the prime cause for delay was the fact that the Hamburg archivists still did not have a workable catalog of the archive itself. Hertz had wanted to bring Jacob Jacobson to

¹⁷¹ Von Lehe, “Entwurf einer Vereinbarung,” 3 Dec. 1957, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. III; cf. Kurt Oppenheim to JTC, 6 Dec. 1957, CAHJP JTC/Lon/550.

¹⁷² Ben Zion Dinur, Israel Heilpern, Daniel Cohen to Alex Bein, 5 Dec. 1957, CAHJP P28/6/38.

¹⁷³ Alex Bein to Erich von Lehe, 9 Dec. 1957 CAHJP P28/6/38.

¹⁷⁴ Erich von Lehe to Alex Bein, 11 Dec. 1957, HZA B. 1/7 241.

¹⁷⁵ Abraham Landsberg to Bein, 17 Sept. 1957, Bein, “Din ye-ḥeshbon,” 27 Dec. 1957, CZA L33/1313.

¹⁷⁶ Eduard Rosenbaum to Max Brauer, 1 Jan. 1958, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. IV; Rosenbaum, excerpt, 18 Feb. 1958, CZA L33/1312.

¹⁷⁷ Löffler to Robert Lachs, 2 Jan. 1958, Lachs to Kapralik, 10 Jan. 1958, Kapralik to Sir Henry d’Avigdor Goldsmid, 13 Jan. 1958, CAHJP JTC/Lon/550.

¹⁷⁸ Daniel Cohen to Abraham Landsberg, 9 Mar. 1958, CAHJP P28/6/39.

examine the material as early as 1949, but it was only in 1954 that he began the task.¹⁷⁹ And due to illness, the catalog was continually delayed and was only completed in 1959.¹⁸⁰ And so, when Von Lehe provided Bein with a proposed list of documents to transfer in June 1959, Bein was surprised when they rehashed the argument of a year and a half prior: Von Lehe wrote again of their hope to present the Israelis with a “representative collection of documents” and to keep the archives in Hamburg in connection with the wider city. Bein was incredulous, shocked that Von Lehe hoped “with the stroke of a pen” to undo their prior agreement.¹⁸¹ It was for this reason that Cohen made his “moral” case, articulating the Israelis’ project of the “ingathering of the exiles of the past” and to create in Jerusalem a “national archive.”¹⁸² In response, Von Lehe, Warburg, and Hertz unleashed a final effort to stop the city from sending the files. Hertz complained of the Israelis’ “completely unfair negotiating tactics,” and Warburg tarred Cohen as “a real imperialist for his archive” who worked like a lobbyist, accosting Senate members in the antechamber.¹⁸³ And Von Lehe lamented that if the archives were taken to Jerusalem, it would “obliterate the last vestiges of the... German Jews.”¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless, in the end Brauer and the city finally agreed to divide the archive, with half (mostly Hebrew documents from before 1811) going to Jerusalem, and the other half remaining in Hamburg, with each side receiving microfilm copies of the

¹⁷⁹ Daniel Cohen, “Sikum ha-matsav be-‘inyan ’arkhiyone kehillot hamburg,” 28 Aug. 1957, CZA L33/1313, Jacob Jacobson to Alex Bein, 27 Mar. 1958, ISA HZ-3-293.

¹⁸⁰ See correspondence detailing Jacobson’s progress: Jacob Jacobson to Bein, 27 Mar. 1958, ISA HZ-3-293; Max Kreutzberger to Selma Stern-Täubler, 14 May 1958, UB Basel NL 120 D/14; von Lehe to Bein, 22 May 1958, CAHJP P28/6/39; Daniel Cohen to Abraham Landsberg, 2 Jun. 1958, CZA L33/1312; Bein to von Lehe, 17 Jul. 1958, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. IV; von Lehe to Bein, 21 Aug. 1958, 11 Nov. 1958, CAHJP P28/6/39; Bein to Kapralik, 18 Feb. 1959, ISA HZ-3-293; Bein to von Lehe, 12 Mar. 1959, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. IV.

¹⁸¹ Von Lehe to Bein, 16 Jun. 1959, ISA HZ-3-293; Bein to von Lehe, 1 Jul. 1959, ISA G-14-12648.

¹⁸² Cohen, “Aide mémoire über den Stand der Angelegenheit der Archive der Jüdischen Gemeinde Hamburg,” 9 Jul. 1959, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. IV.

¹⁸³ Hans Hertz, “Memorandum,” 21 Jul. 1959, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. IV.

¹⁸⁴ Von Lehe, “Begründung zum erweiterten Vergleichsvorschlag an Herrn Direktor Cohen,” 13 Jul. 1959, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. IV.

remainder; the final agreement was signed in December 1959.¹⁸⁵ In the end, then, neither side truly triumphed: The Israelis had demanded the original documents and not microfilms, and both sides had wanted the archive to remain as a single, “complete” unit, but the materials were ultimately divided and microfilmed. Still, this struggle and the debates surrounding it demonstrate the stakes of archival ownership, which was not just about the future of Jewish life but also about the construction of Jewish culture and history.

“An Archivist Without an Archive”? Bernhard Brillling’s Dream of a New Gesamtarchiv

As the twentieth anniversary of the Kristallnacht pogrom approached in the fall of 1958, Bernhard Brillling prepared a memorandum on the tasks of a new archive for the history of the Jews in Germany, in Germany. This rabbi and onetime archivist of the Breslau Gemeindegemeinschaft recognized that it would be impossible to fully reconstitute the files that had been destroyed and scattered in November 1938 and over the course of the Second World War. But he believed that such a new archive could “sustain the memory of the history of the German Jews and carry forth the tradition of the Gesamtarchiv in Berlin and the Breslau Jewish community archive.”¹⁸⁶

Brillling had first proposed such a project in 1956 as part of the effort to rebuild Jewish cultural institutions in Germany. Now, it looked like it might become reality: With the support of the Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland, the central body of Jewish life in Germany led by Hendrik Van Dam, and Hans Hertz in Hamburg, Brillling was slated to head a new archive in that city. And so, at the very moment that it was becoming clear that large portions of the archives in of the pre-war Jewish communities of Hamburg would be sent to Jerusalem, figures like Hertz and Brillling were developing a new archival institution that cut directly against the efforts of Israeli

¹⁸⁵ “Öffentliche Sitzung, Landgericht Hamburg, JTC gegen Hamburg,” 18 Dec. 1959, ISA G-14-12648.

¹⁸⁶ Brillling, “Die Aufgaben eines Archivs für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland: Zum 20. Jahrestag der Vernichtung der jüdischen Archive in Deutschland im November 1938,” 1958, JMF SB1676, SB1672.

archivists to extract such archives to Jerusalem. Brillling and his collaborators saw such a new archive as a symbol of the vitality of Jewish life in Germany, representing the process of healing between Germans and Jews. Such an archive might serve to undermine the cultural arc of the Israelis' archival project, just as Brillling's own return to Germany from Israel, motivated primarily by personal and professional reasons, stood against wider currents of Jewish migration after the Holocaust and reflected a belief in the possibility of continued Jewish existence in Germany, something to which so many seemed abhorrent.¹⁸⁷ In the end, not much came of Brillling's efforts due to pressure applied by Alex Bein and other Israeli archivists for Brillling to collect microfilms, not originals, and the limited resources of the Zentralrat. His project represented an alternate vision of what archival reconstruction might look like after the Holocaust, one which would only come to fruition a generation later with a revitalized Jewish community in Germany, once seen to be impossible after the Holocaust.¹⁸⁸

Brillling's archival dreams began with his time as an archivist and rabbinical student in Breslau. In 1926, Brillling commenced his studies at the Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar and the following year he began volunteering at the Gemeindearchiv with Aron Heppner, who had founded the archive in 1924; he would work there, alongside Heppner, until his emigration in 1939.¹⁸⁹ In these years, Brillling and Heppner grew their archive from a repository of that one

¹⁸⁷ On the wider context of return migration, see Ori Yehudai, "Forth From Zion: Jewish Emigration from Palestine and Israel, 1945–1960" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2013); Elizabeth Anthony, "Returning Home: Holocaust Survivors Reestablishing Lives in Postwar Vienna" (Ph.D. dissertation, Clark University, 2016); also Robert Jütte, *Die Emigration der deutsch-sprachigen "Wissenschaft des Judentums."* *Die Auswanderung jüdischer Historiker nach Palästina, 1933–1945* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1991), 187–204, esp. 196–199, where he discusses Brillling.

¹⁸⁸ For a summary of Brillling's effort, see Peter Honigmann, "Das Projekt von Rabbiner Dr. Bernhard Brillling zur Errichtung eines jüdischen Zentralarchivs im Nachkriegsdeutschland," in *Historisches Bewusstsein im jüdischen Kontext. Strategien—Aspekte—Diskurse*, ed. Klaus Hödl (Vienna: Studien Verlag, 2004), 223–241.

¹⁸⁹ On the founding of this archive, see pp. 186–188.

community's files into what Brillling later termed a "Jewish Provincial-Archive of Silesia."¹⁹⁰ By the tenth anniversary of its founding, Brillling boasted that they held materials from nearly thirty Silesian communities.¹⁹¹ Brillling also worked closely with Jacob Jacobson, submitting materials to the Gesamtarchiv and cataloging the files of the Hamburg communal archive.¹⁹² After his 1932 ordination, Brillling stayed on as Heppner's assistant, pursuing varied archival and scholarly work.¹⁹³ After Kristallnacht, Brillling and Heppner were incarcerated at Buchenwald; Heppner, over seventy years of age, died shortly thereafter and Brillling fled to Palestine.¹⁹⁴

There, Brillling sought to rebuild his life. He helped establish the Gesellschaft für jüdische Familienforschung, successor to the genealogical society of the same name founded in Berlin by Arthur Czellitzer in 1925 in which Brillling had been a corresponding member.¹⁹⁵ And he sought archival work, though he found little success. He secured a position in the Tel Aviv municipality, but they did not have an official archive or archivist. In part, Brillling's inability to find suitable

¹⁹⁰ Brillling, "Zum 10 (5) jährigen Bestehen des Breslauer jüdischen Gemeindearchivs am 1. August 1929/1934," 1934, JMF SB1607; "Aufruf an die jüdische Öffentlichkeit," *Breslauer Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt*, 10 Jul. 1937; Brillling, "Das Archiv der Breslauer jüdischen Gemeinde," 1973, JMF SB1614; Brillling, "Das jüdische Archivwesen in Deutschland," *Der Archivar* 13 (1960): 271–290. Cf. Wilhelm Dersch, "Schlesische Archivpflege," *Schlesische Geschichtsblätter: Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte Schlesiens* (Jan. 1933): 1–26, which used similar terms.

¹⁹¹ See Brillling, "Die familiengeschichtlichen Quellen des Archivs der Breslauer Synagogen-Gemeinde, zum 10jährigen Bestehen des Archivs der Synagogen-Gemeinde Breslau," 1934, JMF SB1607; Brillling, "Die familiengeschichtlichen Quellen des Archivs der Breslauer Synagogengemeinde," *Jüdische Familien-Forschung* 1934, 602–604.

¹⁹² "Tätigkeitsbericht über die Zeit vom 26. Februar 1929 bis zum 19. November 1929," CJ 1, 75 C Ge 2, reports that Brillling submitted material. Brillling, Vita, 21 Apr. 1932, JMF SB0657,1 lists Jacobson as a reference. Also cf. Brillling, "Hiermit erlaube ich mir, mich an Sie mit der Bitte um Einstellung in den Staatsdienst den Archivdienst zuwenden," n.d., JMF SB0361, detailing his work with Jacobson. Brillling Vita, 4 Jul. 1938, JMF SB0644, again mentions his work in Hamburg, and Brillling, "Archivtagebuch," 1935–38, JMF SB1238, lists the various places he worked including the Gesamtarchiv. Also see Jacob Jacobson, "Ergänzungen zu den Fragebogen der Jewish Historical Society of England," 16 Nov. 1945, LBI MfW R499, which mentions Brillling's role.

¹⁹³ See Brillling to Saul Kagan, 11 Oct. 1955, JMF SB1680; Arthur Czellitzer to Brillling, 15 Oct. 1934, Brillling to Czellitzer, 19 Oct. 1934, JMF SB0683. Brillling, "Lebenslauf," 1959, JMF SB0454, lists a number of his publications from these years. Also see "Bibliographie Bernhard Brillling, 1928–1968," 2 pts., *Theokratia: Jahrbuch des Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum* 1 (1970): 195–223; 3 (1979): 263–270.

¹⁹⁴ On Heppner's general biography, see Otto Marcus, "Rabbiner Dr. Aron Heppner, anlässlich seines 100. Geburtstages. Eine Biographie, dargestellt von seinem Schwiegersohn," Jul. 1965, JMF SB1610.

¹⁹⁵ Invitation, Verein für jüdische Familienforschung, 4 Mar. 1941, JMF SB0682, Brillling, "Die jüdischen Familien von Zülz O.-S. 1725," *Jüdische Familien-Forschung*, Sept. 1928; Brillling, "Die familiengeschichtlichen Quellen des Archivs der Breslauer Synagogengemeinde," *Jüdische Familien-Forschung* 1934, 602–604; Czellitzer corresp., JMF SB0683.

work reflected his refugee status; Alex Bein, to provide an example of another refugee archivist, faced similar challenges when he made his way to Palestine in 1933.¹⁹⁶ But Brillling had no professional training, whereas Bein had worked at the Prussian Reichsarchiv in Potsdam. Still, Brillling saw himself first and foremost as an archivist, heading correspondence with a self-typed letterhead proclaiming him the “former archivist of the Breslau synagogue-community”—though he only held the position for the few weeks between Heppner’s passing and his emigration.¹⁹⁷

Brillling continually strove to position himself in the world of Israeli archivists, enrolling in the first class of professional archival trainees at Hebrew University in 1952.¹⁹⁸ And in 1955, he set sail from Tel Aviv for Germany on assignment from the Jewish Historical General Archives to search German state archives for materials on Jewish history. But at the same time he prepared reports for the Jerusalem archive, some of which remain today the finding aids for these materials, he developed plans for a new archive in Germany.¹⁹⁹ In January 1956, Brillling turned to Hendrik van Dam, leader of the Zentralrat, with a detailed proposal for “an archive for the history of the Jews in Germany as a demand of reparations.”²⁰⁰ He outlined the “reestablishment” of an archive of German Jewry, as a direct successor to the work of the Berlin Gesamtarchiv and his own Breslau Gemeindearchiv, to provide a way forward for those—like himself—whose

¹⁹⁶ See Bein, *Hier kannst Du nicht jeden grüßen* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1996), 253–266.

¹⁹⁷ See, for instance, Brillling to E.G. Löwenthal, 12 Sept. 1951, JMF SB0661; Brillling to Bundesstelle für Entschädigung der Bediensteten jüd. Gemeinden, 2 Sept. 1955, JMF SB0361, Brillling, “Die Juden-Akten des Stadtarchivs Göttingen,” Jan. 1956, CAHJP R3/56, Brillling to Personenstandsarchiv, Brühl, 3 Jan. 1956, Brillling to R. Weltsch, 13 Jun. 1956, Brillling to Oediger, 18 Feb. 1957, JMF SB0361, Brillling to Hans Lamm, 21 Jan. 1958, JMF SB0440. Also see Brillling, “Zur Geschichte der Breslauer Synagogen,” *Mitteilungen des Verbandes Ehemaliger Breslauer und Schlesier in Israel* Sept. 1962 (no. 4–5), 3, which printed “Ehemals Archivar der Synag.-Gem. Breslau” in larger text than Brillling’s byline.

¹⁹⁸ Brillling, “Kitsur toldot hayay! [sic],” 13 Mar. 1955, JMF SB1671.

¹⁹⁹ See, for instance, Brillling, “Die Juden-Akten des Stadtarchivs Göttingen,” Jan. 1956, CAHJP R3/56, Brillling, “Verzeichnis der Israelitischen Kirchenbücher aus Mecklenburg (befindlich im Staatlichen Archivlager, Göttingen),” 4 Jan. 1956, CAHJP R3/51, Brillling, “Bemerkungen zu dem Verzeichnis der Juden-Akten aus dem Archiv des Etatsministeriums Königsberg / Ostpreussen,” 17 Jan. 1956, CAHJP R3/49.

²⁰⁰ Brillling, “Ein Archiv für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, als eine Forderung der Wiedergutmachung,” 24 Jan. 1956, JMF SB1676.

work in Jewish historical scholarship had been cut off. As he explained, it would serve to continue the work of these pre-war archives, constituting as a memorial for the destroyed Jewish communities. Primarily, he envisioned his project as an effort to comb through German state archives for materials touching on Jewish life, similar to the work he had begun for the Jerusalem archives. He stressed that the archive would make it possible for scholars to conduct their research more easily and effectively, as they would not need to do this work themselves, and that his project went hand-in-hand with the Israelis' by providing yet another location where sources could be kept, protecting them from possible destruction.²⁰¹

With this plan, Brillling found eager ears. In 1953 and again in 1954, Harry Goldstein, leader of the Hamburg Jewish community and the Verband der Jüdischen Gemeinden Nordwestdeutschlands, called for archives and libraries to be gathered to that city.²⁰² When JTC leader Charles Kapralik pressed him on the idea—as JTC had already decided in 1952 to transfer to Jerusalem any archives no longer needed day-to-day—Goldstein clarified that they just wanted to examine the material to see what was necessary for “administrative” purposes; he claimed it would be easier to do in one place than scattered across the British zone.²⁰³ Still, some held hope that despite the restitution groups' policies of archival extraction, it might be possible to keep some materials in Germany. In May 1954, Carl Gussone at the Ministry of the Interior voiced the opinion that a collection of documents should remain in Germany, and a handful of Jewish

²⁰¹ Brillling, “Ein Archiv für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, als eine Forderung der Wiedergutmachung,” 24 Jan. 1956, JMF SB1676.

²⁰² Goldstein to JTC, 6 Jul. 1953, Goldstein to E.G. Lowenthal, 12 Jul. 1953, Verband der Jüdischen Gemeinden Nordwestdeutschlands to JTC, 29 Dec. 1953, CAHJP JTC/Lon/575, Verband der Jüdischen Gemeinden Nordwestdeutschlands to JTC, 18 Feb. 1954, CAHJP JTC/Lon/576a.

²⁰³ Kapralik to Erna Goldschmidt, 7 Jan. 1954, Goldschmidt to Van Dam, 9 Jan. 1954, Verband der Jüdischen Gemeinden Nordwestdeutschlands to Kapralik, 23 Mar. 1954, CAHJP JTC/Lon/576a. Cf. “Rundschreiben Nr. 143, Auszug aus dem Protokoll der Executive der JTC am 16. Oktober 1952,” HZA B. 1/7 232.

leaders chimed in with their support.²⁰⁴ The Verband der Jüdischen Gemeinden called it “very opportune and logical.” “For a long time,” they continued, “we have expressed the wish to create a central Jewish archive at the Zentralrat.”²⁰⁵ And just a few months before Brillling circulated his program in January 1956, Hans Lamm, chair of the Zentralrat’s cultural program, spoke of forming a “Zentralarchiv der Juden in Deutschland.”²⁰⁶ When van Dam circulated Brillling’s notes on the Jewish archives in Germany, he received supportive replies, and he reached out to the Ministry of the Interior with a request to create a special “archive division for the history of Jews in Germany” under the Bundesarchiv, which would collect microfilms and other materials, with a state appointment of an archivist, presumably Brillling, to manage the project.²⁰⁷

In March 1956, Brillling returned to Tel Aviv. While van Dam waited for a response from the German government—he had not even secured a meeting with the appropriate bureaucrats by February 1957, a full year later—Brillling became increasingly impatient, concerned that the plan would dissolve.²⁰⁸ What is more, Brillling believed he deserved a position (and salary) befitting his perceived status as one of a select group of former German Jewish archivists, but his lack of a doctorate and limited archival training left him at a disadvantage. The result of all the uncertainty was that Brillling held contingencies for his future in both Israel and Germany. In March 1957 Brillling sent his proposal to Alex Bein, now Israel’s state archivist, and asked if he might support

²⁰⁴ Dr. Schäfer to Direktoriumsmitglieder und Stellvertreter und Landesverbände und die Gemeinden Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg und Köln, 7 May 1954, Carl Katz to Zentralrat, 10 May 1954, L. Saer to Zentralrat, 10 May 1954, Landesverband der Jüdischen Gemeinden von Niedersachsen to Zentralrat, 10 May 1954, HZA B. 1/7 241.

²⁰⁵ Verband der Jüdischen Gemeinden Nordwestdeutschlands to Dr. Schäfer, 11 May 1954, HZA B. 1/7 241.

²⁰⁶ Hans Lamm, “Programmorschläge für das Kulturdezernat des Zentralrats der Juden in Deutschland,” Sept. 1955, HZA B. 1/7 221.59. Cf. “Niederschrift über die Zentralratstag vom 27. und 28. November 1955 in Düsseldorf,” HZA B. 1/7 221.61, where it was decided that “documents... related to the history of Jewish life since 1945 should be preserved.”

²⁰⁷ van Dam to Direktoriumsmitglieder und Stellvertreter, 8 Mar. 1956, Alfons Jonas to Zentralrat, 9 Mar. 1956, van Dam to Paul Hübinger, 10 Feb. 1956, HZA B. 1/7 241; “Entwurf” to Bundesministerium des Innern, 24 Jan. 1956, JMF SB1676; van Dam to Fritz Manasse, 15 Mar. 1956, HZA B. 1/7 241.

²⁰⁸ van Dam to Hübinger, 11 May 1956, HZA B. 1/7 241; Brillling to van Dam, 17 May 1956, JMF SB1680; Brillling to van Dam, 19 Nov. 1956, JMF SB1680; Brillling to van Dam, 22 Feb. 1957, JMF SB1680.

his hopes of advancement in Tel Aviv. Brillling also held out hope he might be appointed director of the Jewish Historical General Archives when Josef Meisl, who had led it since its founding in 1939, retired later that year.²⁰⁹ Unbeknownst to Brillling, Meisl had already declared privately that Brillling was unsuitable.²¹⁰ Similarly, in 1954 Bein had stated his opposition to the formation of any “Central Jewish Archives Institution” in Germany.²¹¹ And so, Bein told Brillling he would write him a letter of recommendation, but insisted that Brillling’s proposed archive could not be a successor to the Gesamtarchiv as this role was fulfilled by the Jerusalem archives. Further, he asked Brillling to write to his colleagues in Germany and explain that the proposed archive was to focus on photocopies, not originals.²¹² Bein’s stance echoed what he had said just days before to Hans Lamm and the Berlin leader Heinz Galinski: “If one wants to establish a central Jewish archive in Germany,” he wrote, “it will require only photocopies and microfilms ... [and] original material of recent date which is necessary for current work and the purposes of restitution.”²¹³ Speaking before a group of Israeli archivists that same year, Bein explained that he was not against the creation of a new archive for the Jews in Germany on principle, but he believed that they should not hold the originals.²¹⁴ In the end, Brillling caved to Bein’s pressure, perhaps because he needed the recommendation. He explained to Bein that his proposal for the archive was quite clear, but that he was willing to write to van Dam “in the interest of the lofty scientific goals in which we, as archivists, are all interested.”²¹⁵ That same day, Brillling drafted a

²⁰⁹ Bernhard Brillling to Alex Bein, 14 Mar. 1957, CZA L33/1268.

²¹⁰ Josef Meisl to Siegfried Ascher, 12 Sept. 1956, CAHJP P35/34.

²¹¹ Alex Bein to Mr. Charles Kapralik, 17 Aug. 1954, CZA L33/1447.

²¹² Alex Bein to Bernhard Brillling, 21 Mar. 1957, JMF SB1680.

²¹³ Alex Bein to Hans Lamm, 11 Mar. 1957, ISA G-14-12648; Alex Bein to Heinz Galinski, 11 Mar. 1957, CZA L33/1268; Alex Bein to Hans Lamm, 11 Apr. 1957, CZA L33/1268.

²¹⁴ Alex Bein, “Hartsa’ah du”h ‘al nesi’ati,” 1957, CZA P64/20/I, 9.

²¹⁵ Brillling to Alex Bein, 27 Mar. 1957, JMF SB1680.

letter to van Dam explaining that his proposed archive would in no way serve as a competitor with the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem; but he sat on it, mulling it over, for over two weeks before placing it in the post.²¹⁶

Brilling again returned to Germany in the summer of 1957, this time to pursue his doctorate under Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, the New Testament scholar in Münster. A year later, he completed his dissertation on “The Jews and the City of Breslau in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.”²¹⁷ He hoped that, perhaps, with his doctorate he now might be appointed Tel Aviv’s archivist. It seems, though, that Brilling’s future in Israel was non-existent; he just didn’t know it yet. Bein did write a letter of recommendation on Brilling’s behalf, but he remained *persona non grata* among the Jerusalem archivists and particularly Daniel Cohen, who was the one who got Meisl’s job. In part, they believed Brilling was working with Hans Hertz on the Hamburg book project, which as one will recall presented a roadblock for their efforts to extract those archives.²¹⁸ Cohen was irate about Brilling’s interference, writing that “the whole business is a scandal,” and shortly thereafter, he again spoke of the whole “monkey-business with Brilling.”²¹⁹ When Brilling did not receive an archival position at Tel Aviv, he decided to remain in Germany.²²⁰ That summer, van Dam reported that they had secured the support of the ministry of interior to support the creation of a position for an archivist for the Zentralrat, and they moved forward with plans to form the archive in Hamburg, to open in April 1959.²²¹ But the Zentralrat only appointed

²¹⁶ Brilling to van Dam, 27 Mar. 1957, JMF SB1680, also dated 14 Apr. 1956, CZA L33/1268.

²¹⁷ Brilling, “Die Juden und die Stadt Breslau im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert” (Ph.D. dissertation, Universität Münster, 1958).

²¹⁸ See Josef Meisl to Siegfried Ascher, 12 Sept. 1956, CAHJP P35/34.

²¹⁹ Daniel Cohen to Issachar Ben-Yaacov, 25 Apr. 1957, Cohen to Bertl Trude, 26 Jun. 1957, CZA L33/1268.

²²⁰ Brilling to Y. Nadivi, 9 Jun. 1958, Brilling to Nadivi, 3 Jul. 1958, Nadivi to Brilling, 17 Jul. 1958, JMF SB1671.

²²¹ Van Dam to Zweig, 30 Jun. 1958, HZA B. 1/7 241; Brilling to van Dam, 1 Dec. 1958, Hans Hertz to van Dam, 26 Feb. 1959, JMF SB0440.

Brilling on a temporary basis, as they only had funds to support him for a single year.²²² Furious, Brilling complained to Hertz: “I am an archivist without an archive!”²²³ Hertz and Rengstorff wrote to van Dam, expressing their disappointment that the Zentralrat was not supporting what they called a “new Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden for our time.”²²⁴ But the damage was done: The Zentralrat archive, under Brilling’s direction, was finished, at least for the time being.

By the time that Brilling began this effort in earnest in the latter half of the 1950s, the most lucrative caches of looted archival materials—in particular a large portion of the former Gesamtarchiv files—had already made their way to Jerusalem through the cooperation of Jewish leaders or diverse restitution processes. Further, the political situation made it difficult to secure archives that remained in eastern Germany (as were more fragments of the Gesamtarchiv) or in Poland, where Brilling’s Breslau files had made their way to Warsaw.²²⁵ Limited to microfilms of existing materials, the Jewish communities in Germany had limited resources to pursue collecting records already being preserved in state archives. And so, this “archivist without an archive” settled in Münster, where he worked with Rengstorff at the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum, the center for Jewish studies—originally founded to promote missionary work among Jews—named for the nineteenth-century scholar Franz Delitzsch and reestablished in Münster by Rengstorff in 1948.²²⁶ There, Brilling headed the “Abteilung für die Geschichte der

²²² Hans Lamm to Hans Hertz, 5 May 1959, HZA B. 1/7 241.

²²³ Brilling to Hans Hertz, 7 May 1959, JMF SB0440.

²²⁴ Hans Hertz, Karl Rengstorff, Brilling to Zentralrat, 5/6 Jun. 1959, JMF SB0440.

²²⁵ Brilling to Bundesarchiv, 8 Jul. 1960, JMF SB1608.

²²⁶ On the history of the Institutum Judaicum, see “Ein Institut von hohem Rang: Existenz des Institutum Judaicum ist gesichert,” 30 May 1973, JMF SB0495; Karl Rengstorff, *Das Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum, 1886–1961* (Münster: Achendorff, 1963); Günter Stemberger, “Judaistik nach der Shoah im deutschsprachigen Raum,” in *Das Studium des Judentums und die jüdisch-christliche Begegnung*, ed. Verena Lenzen (Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2013), 27–40. Also cf. Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 122–136.

Juden in Deutschland” where he gathered microfilms and other historical materials and continued his dream of creating, as Rengstorf put it in 1960, “the foundation for an extensive new Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden.”²²⁷

Brilling and Rengstorf spoke of an aspiration to make a new Gesamtarchiv, the goal being to recreate or reconstruct archives which had been scattered during the Second World War. In 1959, Brilling inquired about some of Gesamtarchiv’s former materials that remained in east Germany, which he wanted to acquire.²²⁸ Though the Jewish Historical General Archives had received a large portion of this material in 1951, some of the material was returned to the Deutsches Zentralarchiv in Potsdam in 1958, where it remained.²²⁹ Brilling also sought material from his former Breslau Gemeindearchiv, which had been taken to Warsaw by the Soviets at the end of the war and became a part of the Jewish Historical Institute in that city; Brilling was able to microfilm some but not all of this material.²³⁰ In 1960, Brilling explained the major goal of his archive to be the “repatriation” of the files of Jewish communities which had been removed from Germany.²³¹ Reaching out to the Verband der Jüdischen Gemeinden Nordwestdeutschlands, Brilling explained that it was quite difficult for Jewish and non-Jewish scholars in Germany to use the materials which had been sent to Jerusalem, and he asked for funds to microfilm them.²³² It doesn’t seem that they were forthcoming with the funds. Similarly, writing in 1961, Brilling declared his aim to “recreate” the archives which had existed before the war, and he lamented

²²⁷ Bernhard Brilling, “Akttennotiz: Besprechung mit Prof. R. am 3.7.1959,” 3 Jul. 1959, JMF SB0540; Rengstorf to Staatssekretär des Bundeskanzleramtes, 6 Jul. 1960, JMF SB0544.

²²⁸ Bernhard Brilling to Jacob Jacobson, 6 Jul. 1959, JMF SB0546.

²²⁹ Herkunft und Zusammensetzung des Archivguts,” 11 Aug. 1988, BArch Lichterfelde, DO4/1348.

²³⁰ On the fate of the Breslau archive, see Brilling, “Archiwum Gminy Żydowskiej we Wrocławiu,” *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego przy C.K. Żydów w Polsce*, Nov. 1950, 15–17, JMF SB1612; Brilling, “Judenakten in deutschen Archiven. Ergebnisse einer wissenschaftlichen Archivreise 1955/56,” *Der Archivar* 11 (1958): 199–212; Brilling, “Das Archiv der Breslauer jüdischen Gemeinde,” 1973, JMF SB1614.

²³¹ Brilling, “Das Prinzip der Rettung jüdischer Gemeindearchivalien aus Deutschland,” 1960, JMF SB1676.

²³² Bernhard Brilling to Verband der Jüdischen Gemeinden Nordwestdeutschlands, 25 Apr. 1960, JMF SB0533d.

that so much historical material was in Jerusalem, far from researchers in Germany, echoing his complaint that he continued to need to rely on Israeli archives and archivists.²³³ He slowly accumulated material; in 1965, Jacob Jacobson noted that Brillling held many microfilms, and by 1973 Brillling boasted of 100,000 pages of material in microfilm.²³⁴ But these achievements were modest by the standard he set, of recreating the archives which had existed before the war.

The failure of Brillling and the Zentralrat to create a central archive for Jews in postwar Germany reflected the Israelis' dominance of the cultural scene in these years, when many believed that there was little hope for a future of Jews in Germany. Individual Jews like Brillling, the communities, and the Zentralrat all had limited resources and lacked the ability to stand up to those who had things that they needed—whether groups like JRSO and the Jewish Trust Corporation, which disbursed funds as part of the restitution settlements, or Israeli archivists who Brillling hoped would support his ambitions. And so, Brillling's dream of a new central archive “as a demand for cultural reparations,” first outlined in 1956, would only come about a generation later. In April 1985, Helmut Kohl, commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen, proposed the formation of an “Archiv zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland.”²³⁵ This archive opened in 1987, just before Brillling's death, as the “Zentralarchiv zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland” at the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien in Heidelberg.²³⁶ At just this same time, Jews in East Germany were working towards what would

²³³ Brillling to Arbeits- und Sozialminister des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 12 Jan. 1961, JMF SB1608; Brillling to Jacob Jacobson, 16 Mar. 1961, JMF SB0110. Cf. Bernhard Brillling to Jacob Jacobson, 16 Aug. 1959, JMF SB0546.

²³⁴ Jacob Jacobson, “Bruckstücke,” 1965, LBI ME 329; “Ein Institut von hohem Rang: Existenz des Institutum Judaicum ist gesichert,” 30 May 1973, JMF SB0495.

²³⁵ Helmut Kohl, “Die Geheimnis der Erlösung heißt Erinnerung. Ansprache in Bergen-Belsen zum 40. Jahrestag der Befreiung der Gefangenen aus den Konzentrationslagern, gehalten am 21. April 1985 in Bergen Belsen,” in *Die unentrinnbare Gegenwart der Geschichte* (Bonn: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 1988), 3–18.

²³⁶ See Peter Honigmann, “Das Heidelberger Zentralarchiv zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland,” *Menora. Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte* 12 (2001): 345–370.

become the Centrum Judaicum in Berlin, which received in 1996 the Gesamtarchiv's files that had been in the Potsdam Zentralarchiv since the late 1950s.²³⁷ The sea change between then and the 1990s was the radical transformation of Jewish life in Germany: These archives came about as a result of, and reflected, the new vitality of Jewish life in Germany. Then, as a generation before, the matter of holding archives—whether in the original or in photo-duplicates—reflected a type of ownership over the past and the ability to control one's future.

Provenance and Pertinence: Understanding Archival Debates and Outcomes

In 1957, Alex Bein addressed a group of Israeli archivists about his efforts to gather archives to Jerusalem.²³⁸ In a wide-ranging presentation, he gave two curious anecdotes: Speaking of his travels in Europe, Bein recounted his visit to the Parthenon in Athens as well as to the British Museum, where the famous friezes were displayed, having been brought to London—in what some might characterize as an act of looting, by others as an attempt at salvage—by Lord Elgin in 1799.²³⁹ Bein asked his audience to humor him, as the story had tenuous ties to archives. But in fact, Bein's take on the Elgin Marbles speaks a great deal about his perspective on the nature of cultural property and its proper disposition. In Bein's view, it was “very interesting” to see these friezes in London, where they were displayed at eye level as opposed to high and far away, and Elgin had saved many of the sculptures from ruin. But Bein ultimately sided with his

²³⁷ “Vermerk über die Gespräch zu Fragen der im Zentralen Staatsarchiv verwahrten Bestände zur Geschichte der deutschen Juden,” 19 Jul. 1987, BArch Lichterfelde DO4/1348; Gesetzblatt der DDR, “Verordnung über die Errichtung einer Stiftung ‘Neue Synagoge Berlin–Centrum Judaicum’ vom 16. Juni 1988,” BArch Lichterfelde, DO4/3261. Also see Barbara Welker, “Das Archiv der Stiftung ‘Neue Synagoge Berlin–Centrum Judaicum,’” *Menora. Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte* 12 (2001): 325–343.

²³⁸ Alex Bein, “Hartsa’ah du”h ‘al nesi’ati,” CZA P64/20/I.

²³⁹ On the history and controversy of the Parthenon Marbles, see John Merryman, “Thinking About the Elgin Marbles,” *Michigan Law Review* 83 (1985): 1–21; Christopher Hitchens, Robert Browning, et al. *The Elgin Marbles: Should They Be Returned to Greece?* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1987), 1–108; Tiffany Jenkins, *Keeping Their Marbles: How the Treasures of the Past Ended Up in Museums... And Why They Should Stay There* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Carol A. Roehrenbeck, “Repatriation of Cultural Property—Who Owns the Past? An Introduction to Approaches and to Selected Statutory Instruments,” *Int’l J. Legal Info* 38, no. 2 (2010): 185–200.

local guide in Athens: “They would be more beautiful,” he explained, “if they were again up on the Parthenon.” Continuing, he noted that the Parthenon has “in the meantime has been fixed up by the [Greek] nation which is coming to life.”²⁴⁰ Bein seemed to take the Greek side, that the friezes were created for the Acropolis, not for display in a museum, and that they were a part of the Greek national cultural patrimony to which they should be returned. However, just a few minutes later, Bein related a second story, with a very different perspective on cultural property. Towards the end of the Second World War, the Germans had brought the archives of Königsberg, and the files of that city’s Jews, westward in the face of advancing Soviet forces and deposited them in the state archive at Göttingen. Now, in the mid-1950s, the Germans refused to return the archive to what was now Soviet-occupied territory, and Bein reflected on their “interesting theory”: “This archive,” he explained, “is a fragment of the work of people, and thus if the people are not in that same place... the archive does not need to remain there.” Thus, because the Russians had expelled the ethnic Germans from Königsberg after the war, there was no need to return the municipal archives there. Bein qualified his support for this approach, but he admitted that “the theory is very convenient.” For, he continued, “if you argue that the archives go with the people... clearly the Jewish archives need to be with us [in Israel].”²⁴¹ The Germans’ proposal, then, was particularly convenient for the Israelis because it made the Jewish archives of Königsberg available for transfer to Israel instead of repatriation to Russia; moreover, this theory of archival provenance, allowing for archives to be removed if their creators were no longer there, also justified the general extraction of Jewish communal archives from Europe.

These two opinions, voiced just minutes apart, may seem at first glance to be contradictory: In one, Bein supported the return of cultural property considered national cultural patrimony on

²⁴⁰ Alex Bein, “Hartsa’ah du”h ‘al nesi’ati,” CZA P64/20/I, 3–4.

²⁴¹ Alex Bein, “Hartsa’ah du”h ‘al nesi’ati,” CZA P64/20/I, 8–9.

the basis of ownership and reversing a process of looting, on the other, Bein saw the usefulness of materials not in their historic setting but where they would be utilized. In a word, one could characterize these two viewpoints to be in opposition on the question of provenance and pertinence. For the Elgin Marbles, Bein saw the importance of provenance—their proper owners and the locale of their creation—whereas for the Königsberg archives he preferred to look to pertinence—how files related to other gathered materials and their practical use. At the same time, Bein’s seemingly paradoxical approach to both the Elgin Marbles and the Königsberg archives, just like with the goal of extracting Jewish archives in general, shared a common element, the emphasis of the ties of archives and other antiquities to the people of whose history they were a part. And so, taken together, the two opinions can be read as a synthetic approach which clarifies the archival debates and outcomes over Jewish archives during the 1950s. To achieve the goal of extracting archives, the Israelis fundamentally moved against provenance, on one hand, by cutting against the idea of *respect des fonds* which animated the argument of someone like Erich von Lehe, who insisted that the Hamburg archives represented a unitary whole which could not be divided, either from itself or from its historical and archival context. Likewise, the Israelis insisted that archives like those in Worms were a part of the Jewish cultural tradition, not a local or regional history as Friedrich Illert advocated. And he emphasized the idea of the state of Israel’s place as the spiritual successor to the destroyed Jewish communities: As Bein put it in another 1957 speech, they had succeeded in gaining communal archives based on the principle that “the successor of the communities destroyed in the Holocaust is the State of Israel, and in the State of Israel... the Jewish Historical General Archives.”²⁴²

It is for this reason quite important to consider the ways in which the Israelis made a

²⁴² Bein, “Me‘arekhet ha-’arkhiyonim ba-’arets ke-basis le-mehkar,” 12 Mar. 1957, HZA B. 1/7 241.

“moral” case for archival transfer to Jerusalem, not just in Hamburg, where Cohen articulated it explicitly, but also for Worms, where the case was settled by legal means. In these instances, as well as in the question of Brillings’ proposed archive, the ultimate fate of these archives fell into the realm of moral and historical judgment. In the absence of a legal obligation to transfer the archives, why might Hamburg leaders choose to give up these historic archives? Or Illert backing down to come to a mutually-agreed settlement? Or that the Israelis were able to put such pressure on Brillings and the Zentralrat? In part, it boiled down to the role archival transfer played in the diplomatic ties between two young states, the state of Israel and West Germany.

The Israelis strove to sell the Germans on the Israeli state and the Jewish future there over the possibility of reestablishing Jewish life in Germany. For instance, when Bein and Cohen sat down in Bonn with Friedrich Illert and the other representatives of Worms to negotiate the transfer of the Worms archives, they began by viewing a film produced by the German journalist Rolf Vogel, “Israel: Land der Hoffnung,” which had recently premiered.²⁴³ And in 1958, the Israelis began a kind of “tourism offensive” to bring German officials involved in the archives disputes to Israel. In 1958, a steady stream of German dignitaries arrived with the explicit purpose of visiting the Israeli archives.²⁴⁴ It was the Israelis’ hope that they would be convinced of Jerusalem’s worthiness as a collecting point for archival material, or strengthened in their support for the archives project. In February 1958, Konrad Adenauer’s deputy Friedrich Janz, who orchestrated the August 1956 Worms negotiations in Bonn, came to Israel for a brief two-day visit. When Daniel Cohen picked him up from the airport, the two specifically discussed the

²⁴³ Daniel Cohen, Circular, 28 Aug. 1956, CZA L33/1272.

²⁴⁴ Notably, they tried to bring Illert but it proved impossible. See Alex Bein to Felix Shinnar, 21 Jan. 1957, Shinnar to Bein, 7 Feb. 1957, CZA L33/1272; Friedrich Janz to Friedrich Illert, 13 Mar. 1957, Illert to Janz, 18 Mar. 1957, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 67; Illert to Shinnar, 24 May 1957, CAHJP P28/6/38; Illert to Daniel Cohen, 11 June 1957, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 67. Also see: Shinnar to Bein, 27 May 1957, CAHJP P28/6/38.

situation of the Hamburg archives on the ride to Tel Aviv; the second day was dedicated to scholarly institutions in Jerusalem, such as the National Library, Central Zionist Archives, Hebrew University, and the Jewish Historical General Archives.²⁴⁵ That April and May, Bein and Cohen respectively welcomed Heinrich Völker, the mayor of Worms, and Hubert Hermanns, the representative of Rhineland-Palatinate in Bonn, who each brought along their wives. If Janz's brief jaunt was all business, Völker and Hermanns were given a grand tour. The itineraries Cohen and Bein planned for them were designed to showcase the country's natural beauty and history with sightseeing throughout the country, boat rides on the Red Sea, and visits to the archaeological excavations at Hatzor. Moreover, they hoped to highlight the young state's technical and social accomplishments, such as communalistic *kibbutz* settlements, the Weizmann Institute, and for Völker the Yom ha-‘atsma’ut parade in Jerusalem (which would have included a display of military might), not to mention activities such as performances of the Israeli philharmonic which demonstrated Israel's cultural pedigree.²⁴⁶ And of course, they visited the National Library, Yad Vashem, and the Jewish Historical General Archives to view the archives of Worms. Bein and Cohen even served as their tour guides, taking them to Ashkelon and around Jerusalem.²⁴⁷

Such experiences had a profound impact: Völker wrote of the “deep impression the land and its inhabitants had on us,” and others, such as Erich Lüth of the Gesellschaft für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit in Hamburg noted that his own visit to the Jewish state had convinced him that it was “the only worthy place for the centralization of the Jewish community

²⁴⁵ Daniel Cohen, “Du”h ‘al šiḥati ‘im d”r yants,” 25 Feb. 1958, CAHJP P28/6/39; “Programm für den Besuch von Herrn Ministerialdirektor Dr. F. Janz in Israel,” 25 Feb. 1958, CZA L33/1272.

²⁴⁶ Maoz Azaryahu, “The Independence Day Military Parade: A Political History of a Patriotic Ritual,” in *The Military and Militarism in Israeli Society*, ed. Eyal Ben-Ari, Edna Lomsky-Feder (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 89–116.

²⁴⁷ “Suggested itinerary for Mr. and Mrs. A. Völker,” Apr. 1958, ISA G-14-12648; “Programme for the visit of Ministerialdirektor and Mrs. H. Hermanns,” 6 May 1958, CZA L33/1272.

archives.”²⁴⁸ There were also practical implications. Not only had Cohen and Bein both lobbied Janz on the matter of the Hamburg archives, but after his trip, Hermanns reached out to the representatives of Hamburg in Bonn, and following a similar visit that same year, Werner Bockelmann, mayor of Frankfurt am Main, not only lobbied his friend Hans Hertz but also began giving public lectures about Israel.²⁴⁹ The Israelis hoped that the visits of Max Brauer and Erich Warburg might sway them to similarly support the transfer of the archives.²⁵⁰ As Bein noted in April 1958, “It is very desirable that the people of Hamburg will be convinced [during their time] in the land [of Israel] that the matter of the archives of the destroyed communities in Germany is not only a professional matter but rather a general question of the people and its leaders.”²⁵¹ Warburg was apparently moved by the visit to the JHGA, but Bein and Cohen did not believe it fully convinced him.²⁵² Clearly it did not, for in July 1959 Warburg complained that the argument that Israel and Germany must be friends was just a tactic to undermine Hamburg’s position.²⁵³ In spite of this failure, by bringing these German figures to Israel, the archivists hoped—and often succeeded—to demonstrate the vitality of the young state, to showcase the archives’ professionalism and ability to safeguard the historic materials, and to further develop personal relationships with those figures on the German side of the negotiating table. In doing so, they situated the transfer of the archives as part of a process of *Wiedergutmachung* and rapprochement between Germans and Jews.

²⁴⁸ Völker to Shinnar, 12 May 1958, ISA G-14-12648; Erich Lüth to Berthold Simonsohn, 19 Apr. 1958, CZA L33/1312.

²⁴⁹ Daniel Cohen, report on my conversation with Dr. Janz, 25 Feb. 1958, CAHJP P28/6/39; Janz to Bein, 6 Mar. 1958, ISA G-14-12648; Daniel Cohen to Felix Shinnar, 14 Aug. 1958, CZA L33/1312; Werner Bockelmann to Daniel Cohen, 20 May 1959, ISA HZ-3-293.

²⁵⁰ Bein to Erich Warburg, 22 May 1958, Erich Lüth to Berthold Simonsohn, 19 Apr. 1958, CZA L33/1312: “Jetzt fliegt Bürgermeister Brauer zum Staatsfeiertag nach Israel. Vielleicht führt man ihm dort auch die jüdischen Archive vor.”

²⁵¹ Bein, “Notes on my conversation with the mayor of Hamburg, Mr. Brauer,” 20 Apr. 1958, CZA L33/1312.

²⁵² Bein to Nahum Goldmann, 2 June 1958, Cohen to Abraham Landsberg, 2 June 1958, CZA L33/1312.

²⁵³ Eric Warburg to Max Brauer, 17 July 1959, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. IV.

On the whole, this idea of the return of archives was particularly appealing to West German officials who had their own interest in the “return” of archives on a general scale. At this exact time, the West German government took possession of files from the Politisches Archiv des Auswärtiges Amt that had been confiscated by western Allies during the war.²⁵⁴ In part, one can see the continuing effort to gather archives in this context, both for the Israelis and for the Germans, as a means to bolster trappings of state for new regimes, each seeking to draw lines of continuity with a broken past. Archival holdings stood for sovereignty and ties to the past: in one case politically, a symbol of the Bundesrepublik’s diplomatic rehabilitation and entrance into the family of nation-states as the West’s accepted successor to the series of historic German states and governments; and in the other case, culturally: The so-called “ingathering of the exiles of the past” to Jerusalem symbolized the end of Jewish life in Europe and Israel’s claims to its cultural legacy. It also represented a testament to the idea that Jewish life could not continue in Germany, both by extracting the files that represented their historic ties to the past—transferring Jewish life there, in concrete physical terms, into the realm of the past—and through the affirmation on both sides that the Jews would not return to places like Worms.

At the same time, these debates over archives, and the question of provenance versus pertinence in particular, reflected a conflict over how the Jewish past should be studied: Primarily by a single scholar in Hamburg, for instance, who would examine the history of the Jews within its local context, or in the environment of an emerging scholarly center where researchers would approach the historical material from the perspective of Jewish history as a whole, but removed from local particularity. In this, the Israelis presented the utility of

²⁵⁴ See Astrid M. Eckert, *The Struggle for the Files: The Western Allies and the Return of German Archives after the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

centralization over the rules of *respect des fonds*. Daniel Cohen recognized this problem explicitly when he addressed the Hamburg Senate in July 1959, just the same as he did when he spoke before the World Conference of Records and Genealogy in Salt Lake City in August 1969. In Hamburg, he had emphasized the importance of pertinence, describing how concentrating the archives of hundreds of communities opened new questions and pathways for research, and put the materials at the disposal of a growing community of scholars who had the ability to use them.²⁵⁵ A decade later, he reflected on the Israelis' project to centralize archives in Jerusalem by posing a rhetorical question: "Isn't it against archival rules to uproot an archive from its place of growth, its natural surroundings? Do not the Jewish archives contain part of the history of a city or a village? Will not the historian, working in a place remote from the place of origin incur the danger of misinterpretation of the source?" Here, he presented the case for provenance, that archival materials should be left in their original context. And he went on to argue that centralization on the basis of pertinence was entirely acceptable, perhaps even preferable to leaving the materials where they were.²⁵⁶

Continuing, Cohen compared the work of the newly-dubbed Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People with the work of the Gesamtarchiv a half-century prior. As he argued, it was easier to grapple with the challenges of centralization in the 1960s than it had been at the beginning of the twentieth century due to technical advances which made it easier to make full microfilm copies of archival material. What is more, he argued that it was preferable to study the archives of Jewish communities all together in a single spot. "The specific Jewish contents of old documents," he explained, "are much more conceptable [sic] to the trained eye of a scholar

²⁵⁵ Daniel Cohen, "Aide mémoire über den Stand der Angelegenheit der Archive der Jüdischen Gemeinde Hamburg," 9 Jul. 1959, StA Hamburg 133-1 III 215-1/4/2, Bd. IV.

²⁵⁶ Daniel Cohen, "The Gathering of Jewish Records to Israel," 5 Aug. 1969, AJA MS-687 18/20.

dealing with similar material from other countries or communities.” Here, he echoed his statements about the Hamburg archives where he suggested that they had materials in Jerusalem that illuminated the files in light of the Jews’ experiences elsewhere.²⁵⁷ Ultimately, Cohen suggested that they saw the files as “the legacy of the Jewish nation,” and that from the point of view of “the unity of Jewish history,” it was necessary to bring these materials all together.

In making such arguments, Cohen laid bare what was at stake in all of the archival struggles, with Worms, Hamburg, and Brillling, and beyond: At a time when photoduplication was increasingly inexpensive, the aura of the original maintained its hold on the archival psyche. Jacob Rader Marcus may have dreamt of creating a total archive of American Jewish life spread across the American landscape, sidestepping the problem of originals by holding to a cult of the copy. But in the years after the Holocaust, when the Jews of Europe slipped across the threshold of history, the physical traces of this past—whether archives, manuscripts, or the rubble of a destroyed synagogue—were, as Bein put it to Sieveking, of infinitely greater value than a microfilm, photograph, or even a certified facsimile.²⁵⁸ What is more, the question of who held these archives stood in both for who could own the past—and thus had a future—and also spoke to the nature of Jewish history. In Hamburg, Hertz’s project was constantly delayed because they simply did not know what was in the archives. But it was not merely a question of the fact that they lacked the Hebrew language skills to decode the documents, but that in giving order to these historical archives they also provided these materials with their context and thereby their content: By gathering records to Jerusalem and extracting them from their historical context, Israeli scholars transformed them into *Jewish* archives. And even if Cohen, Bein, and the other Israeli archivists looked to the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden, whose mantle—and vision of totality—they

²⁵⁷ See p. 41 *supra*, and Daniel Cohen to Hans Hertz, 9 Aug. 1956, CAHJP P127/48a.

²⁵⁸ Bein, “Du”h ‘al síhati ‘im ro’sh ha-‘ir hamburg,” 16 Jun. 1954, CAHJP P28/6/37.

took upon themselves, in the process of gathering the contested fragments of the past they, like all the other Jewish archivists of the twentieth century, were creating something radically new.

An Epilogue: The Archives of Vienna

The questions that dominated the struggles for the archival traces of the Jewish past in the 1950s, and particularly in the cases of the archives of Worms and Hamburg and Brillling's stifled plans, remain relevant even a half century later, as demonstrated by the efforts of the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde in Vienna to reconstitute its historical archives.²⁵⁹ These archives, as one will recall, represented one of the early successes for the Jewish Historical General Archives. The communal archives of Vienna were extensive, with material dating back to the sixteenth century. Like the Jews in Worms and Hamburg, in Vienna the Jewish community had maintained extensive records, but the formation of an actual archive stemmed from the development of the modern communal administration and its relation to the state, both of which demanded a new professional "internal bureaucracy" of kinds. In 1816, Markus Stern, then secretary of the Jewish community, decided to begin collecting these materials, but it would only begin in the 1820s under his successor, Josef Veith, and the practical beginning of the Vienna Jewish archive can be identified with when Ludwig August Frankl was tasked with the project of organizing these materials in 1841.²⁶⁰ A century later, these files were commandeered by Adolf Eichmann and his "emigration office," where they survived the war. And so, when Alex Bein presented the case to Vienna's Jewish community in 1949 for transferring historic archives to Jerusalem "for safekeeping," he met with support; over the course of twenty years, between 1951 and 1971, the

²⁵⁹ This vision of reconstituting these archives parallels the efforts to rebuild the community's library. See Richard Hacken, "The Jewish Community Library in Vienna: From Dispersion and Destruction to Partial Restoration," *LBIYB* 47 (2002): 151–172, which also discusses to a limited extent the fate of the community's archives.

²⁶⁰ Ludwig August Frankl, Sept. 1841, CAHJP AW/1704. Also see Gerhard Milchram, Christa Prokisch, "Entropie oder: Vom vergeblichen Versuch, Ordnung zu Schaffen," in *Ordnung muss sein. Das Archiv der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien* (Vienna: Jüdisches Museum Wien, 2007).

General Archives received a series of shipments of this material.²⁶¹

By the 1990s, the Jewish community of Vienna had transferred almost all their archives to Jerusalem. In 1998, that city's Jewish museum opened an exhibit of an "archive" of cultural and ritual objects as a way of providing visitors with direct contact with the past, through objects and not written documents.²⁶² However, two years later, in 2000, Avshalom Hodik, general secretary of the Jewish community, discovered about eight hundred more cartons of historical materials, about five hundred thousand pages of documents mostly originating in the period from 1938 to 1945, when they were going through the basement of one of the buildings which they planned to sell.²⁶³ In the years that followed, the Jewish community aimed to organize the newly-discovered materials and microfilm them between the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People. But in 2011, the Vienna Jews argued that as these materials' "sole owners," they should be returned to them, based on the idea that the files had been presented to the archives in Jerusalem as a deposit and that they could now ask for them back.²⁶⁴ In opposition, the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish people insisted that the materials' transfer—for which there was no official contract—constituted a permanent loan. The Israeli courts handed the issue off to the office of the State Archivist, Yaacov Lozowick, who ruled that under Israel's 1955 Archives Law (*Hoq ha- 'arkhiyonim*) the material could not be removed from the country.²⁶⁵ Ultimately, in 2015 Israel's high court sided

²⁶¹ "The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People," *Zion* 36, no. 1–2 (1971): 118–123.

²⁶² See *Papier ist doch weiß? Eine Spurensuche im Archiv des Jüdischen Museums Wien* (Vienna: Jüdisches Museum Wien, 1998).

²⁶³ Lothar Hölbling, Ingo Zechner, "Achtung Baustelle! Die Arbeiten an der Wiedererrichtung des Archivs der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien," in *Ordnung muss sein*, 25–30.

²⁶⁴ Ofer Aderet, "We Want Our Archives Back," *Haaretz*, 13 May 2011, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/we-want-our-archives-back-1.361451>.

²⁶⁵ Ofer Aderet, "Israel's State Archivist Opposes Returning Documents to Austrian Jewish Community," *Haaretz*, 23 Oct. 2012, <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/news/israel-s-state-archivist-opposes-returning-documents-to->

with the Jerusalem archives, deciding that although the archives technically remained the property of the Vienna Jewish community the originals could not be returned due to the restrictions on transferring cultural property. Nevertheless, the court ruled that the CAHJP had an obligation to make a digital copy of the entire collection and to loan a number of representative documents in the original for the purposes of public display.²⁶⁶

This case demonstrates how the complex questions that animated archival debates a half-century before still resonate. In some ways, the fight for the fragments of the Jewish past continues in an inverted fashion: Lozowick's legal argument echoes the efforts of municipal leaders in Hamburg and Worms who sought to prevent the export of Jewish communal archives through local laws to register cultural property, and the question of providing "representative documents" to the Vienna Jews harkens back to the Hamburg debate. It raises the question of if these historical collections remain a kind of displaced archive even after their formal restitution. If they were first looted by the Nazis, and then removed from their places of origin, leading to calls from figures such as Rena Lipman for some such "salvaged" cultural property to be returned to Jewish communities in Europe.²⁶⁷ Likewise, new digital duplication techniques may mitigate these issues, making it possible to centralize archive material on the basis of digital surrogates

austrian-jewish-community.premium-1.471848; Yaacov Lozowick, "Hakhra'at ganaz ha-medinah be-bakashah le-ha'avarat homer 'arkhiyoni she-be'arkhiyon tsibori, be-'inyan 'osfe 'arkhiyon ha-kehillah ha-yehudit be-yina ha-mufkedet be-'arkhiyon ha-merkazi le-toldot ha-'am ha-yehudi," 15 Oct. 2012, accessed May 19, 2014, <http://www.archives.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/5F7CEC60-3CC2-442A-8D50-8944900A07F6/0/ViennaJewishcommunity.pdf>.

²⁶⁶ See the decisions of the Israeli Supreme Court, "Ba-bet ha-mishpat ha-'elyon be-shabato ke-bet mishpat le-'ir'urim 'ezrahiim," 3 June 2015, accessed, April 21, 2017, <http://elyon1.court.gov.il/files/12/660/093/z10/12093660.z10.htm>. Also see Talia Einhorn, "Mashma'ut ha-hash'alah 'o ha-hafkadah shel yetsirat 'omanut ve-kinyanim tarbutiim be-yisra'el la-'or ha-kehillah ha-yehudit be-yinah n' ha-'arkhiyon ha-merkazi le-toldot ha-'am ha-yehudi" [Loans and Deposits of Artworks and Cultural Property in Israel in View of Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien v. The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People], *Wealth Management Law Review* 1, no. 3 (2015): 113–145; Einhorn suggests that the outcome of the Vienna case may prove problematic for collaboration between Israeli and foreign cultural institutions who may be wary of lending artwork and other cultural property in light of this case.

²⁶⁷ See Rena Lipman, "Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Reconsidered: Should the Jewish Religious Objects Distributed Around the World After WWII be Returned to Europe?" *Kunst und Recht* 4 (2006): 89–93.

serving as facsimile copies true to the original in almost every way, coupled with a “post-custodial” approach to archives that holds forth a possibility of “scan and return” policies.²⁶⁸ But still, the extended dispute demonstrates there are many for whom the original holds great value. These archives, too, still represent both attempts to hold to the past and claims about the future. In the wake of the Holocaust, it might have been impossible to believe that Jews would again put down roots in central Europe or that Germany could become a center of Jewish studies scholarship.²⁶⁹ The fact that Jews in Germany established the Zentralarchiv zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland in Heidelberg in the 1980s as a sort of “successor” to the Gesamtarchiv, when Brillling had failed a generation before, and that the Jews of Vienna sought the return of their archives from Jerusalem in recent years demonstrates ways in which they, just like the Israelis did in pursuing archives in the 1950s, seek to reclaim their history. And the Israeli supreme court’s decision that the Vienna files constituted “national cultural property” whose “proper home” was Israel highlights the still-unresolved question of the nature of these files. A similar debate over the papers of Franz Kafka centered around whether that author was “German.”²⁷⁰ And just the same, so too did the question of archival ownership in Jewish life—whether in the early twentieth century in the struggles over centralization in Berlin, in the 1950s in Cincinnati or in Jerusalem, or in the twenty-first century—center on the matter of the nature of the files and the histories contained therein. Moïse Ginsburger in Alsace-Lorraine did not see his archives in Strasbourg as part of a *German* Jewish history, whereas Jacob Rader Marcus

²⁶⁸ See Cyndi Shein and Emily Lapworth, “Say Yes to Digital Surrogates: Strengthening the Archival Record in the Postcustodial Era,” *Journal of Western Archives* 7, no. 1 (2016), article 9; Terry Cook, “Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The Revolution in Information Management and Archives in the Post-Custodial and Post-Modernist Era,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 22, no. 2 (November 1994): 300–328.

²⁶⁹ See Till van Rahden, “History in the House of the Hangman: How Postwar Germany Became a Key Site for the Study of Jewish History,” in *The German-Jewish Experience Revisited*, ed. Steven E. Aschheim, Vivian Lisa (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 171–192.

²⁷⁰ See Judith Butler, “Who Owns Kafka?” *London Review of Books*, 3 Mar. 2011; Heather Marie Benbow, “The Curious Case of Kafka, His Papers, the Library and the Archive,” *Australian Journal for Jewish Studies* 25 (2011): 36–55.

envisioned the story of Jews in the Caribbean as part of the American Jewish experience, and Israeli archivists at the Jewish Historical General Archives saw the Jewish communal archives of Europe, and elsewhere around the world, as part of a singular “Jewish history.” In this way, the struggles of the “time to gather” that animated Jewish life throughout the twentieth century—the struggles between friends who shared the common aim to preserve the past—constitute debates over the making and meaning of Jewish history.

Postscript

Notes on Total Archives and the Digital Era

The history of Jewish archives in the twentieth century, as considered in the present study, demonstrates a series of major points. First, it shows the variety of archival practices in Jewish culture and examines an archival impulse in modern Jewish life. Figures like Alex Bein associated archiving with state power and administrative activity suggested that Jews in their dispersion had limited interest in archives. However, the extensive documentation of Jewish history indicates how Jews through the ages have recorded their history and culture. Moreover, this study has examined the rising interest of Jewish scholars in archives in modern times as a source of history and as symbols of identity and memory, and a proliferation of archival efforts on three continents. The archives examined in the preceding chapters sketch the wide range of archives Jews created, and how the terminology of archives was increasingly applied in diverse locales to describe to varied collecting practices. Centralized repositories like the Gesamtarchiv, the Jewish Historical General Archives, and the American Jewish Archives, the archives of YIVO and the American Jewish Historical Society, efforts like Elias Tcherikower's Mizrahyidisher historisher arkhiv, and the various Ghetto "archives" of the Second World War—these and other projects gesture at the growing value not just of collecting and documentation but specifically the idea of archives as a marker of authenticity in Jewish culture and a repository for the materials of memory at a time when traditional frameworks appeared to be deteriorating. In an era of accelerating history, the written record proved increasingly important to hold onto as a means of maintaining memory. I have suggested, following Derrida and Nora, that historical archives represented a prosthesis for memory, a replacement for the social contexts that Jewish

scholars and archivists perceived to be slipping away, a sense of the loss of the past that tragically became only more stark with the destruction of European Jewry in the Holocaust.¹ In this manner, this study has sought to uncover the meaning of a “time to gather” in which Jews the world over looked to archives as important sources of history and memory and created diverse and often competing archives, which became flashpoints for conflict as various Jewish groups and leaders sought to lay claim to the past and thereby to the future.

Secondly, this study has drawn out a long thread of aspirations to archival totality. The Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden enshrined the idea in its very name, as a “total archive” of Germany Jewry, and in its program to gather the files of all the German Jewish communities. Leading figures called forth an idea of the comprehensiveness of files, as did Jacob Jacobson when he spoke of archives as documenting life “from cradle to grave.” Here, the Gesamtarchiv gestured at an archival aim of reconstituting files in their totality as an organic object, and the idea that files contain the full scope of human experience. To use in the expression of Roman Law, it is the notion that “Quod non est in actis, non est in mundo”—an idea that whatever is not recorded might as well not exist. As Bruno Latour put it more recently, one might say that “It is all in the files themselves,” with Cornelia Vismann’s gloss of files and documents as “comprehensive recording devices.”² Highlighting such ideas is not meant to continue a fetishization of files as totalizing media objects. Instead, it underscores the lineage of totalization in the history of Jewish archives and the conflicts thereby engendered. Projects like the Gesamtarchiv, the Jewish Historical General Archives, and the American Jewish Archives were

¹ Jacques Derrida, “Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,” *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 17–19; Pierra Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 13.

² See Bruno Latour, “Visualisation and Cognition: Drawing Things Together,” in *Knowledge and Society: Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present*, ed. H. Kuklick (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1986), VI:1–40; Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 10.

all animated by a vision of archival totality, whether in a dream of gathering the files of all of Jewish history in one country or around the world, or creating a schema of archives representing Jewish history under one roof, or an archive containing all information on American Jewry.

In doing so, it brings us to the third and final point, the significance of “owning” the past and the role that archives have played in shaping the fields of Jewish history and culture. In the archives considered in this study, one sees the debate over how to maintain the authenticity and aura of the past. The creation of archives as institutions to preserve historical materials and make them available to research, certainly, has been one means by which Jewish scholars sought to achieve this aim by conserving for posterity the records of Jewish life. Walter Benjamin may have argued that the process of “mechanical production” has reduced the aura of original works of art, and Hillel Schwartz has written similarly of a “culture of the copy” characterized by a loss of authenticity.³ Instead, this dissertation suggests that with the possibility to duplicate, originals gained even greater meaning. For Jews, creating archives of their own was one way to take control of their history, but archives still proved sites of constant conflict as “owning” the past stood for great symbolism of communal leadership. The place of archives in modern Jewish culture, as explored in this dissertation, illuminates how archiving simultaneously holds possibilities of grasping power by those who have been historically disenfranchised but how it remains fundamentally a tool of oppression, as archives were and remain contested spaces.

In this light, the questions of ownership, originals, and copies bring us towards a fundamental tension and challenge: Historical documents, by their nature, only provide a trace impression of the ideas and acts of those who have come before us, and even original manuscripts and objects are only temporarily placed in the custody of those of us in the present before we,

³ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 2007), 217–252; Hillel Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles* (New York: Zone Books, 2014).

too, must pass them on. Archives and archivists have sought, as did the ones considered in this study, to seek to control the past by possessing its documents. In the process, they have not just preserved the historical record of Jewish history but also produced paradigms and frameworks through which it can be understood—of the history of Jews in a particular country or region, or, in a more expansive vision, the idea of the unity of Jewish history throughout the world embodied in the Jewish Historical General Archives. One may speak of the process of constructing usable pasts and invented traditions, and the creation and organization of archives is a similar attempt to tame the past for the use of the present, to make materials usable by present scholars and also to put them to use as symbols within the contours of social and political struggles. In holding these objects, archivists have not just preserved the past itself but created new contexts by bringing these files to new locales, erecting buildings to house them, and placing them adjacent to other materials, some of them relevant. Nevertheless, despite the best attempts of archivists and archives to “own” the past and to shape its study, scholars are continually seeking to read against the grain.

The possibilities of archival collecting considered in this study took place against the backdrop of technological transformations and possibilities. Railroads, cars, and airplanes enabled Jewish archivists to traverse large distances in search of files—whether for Jacob Jacobson, who traveled around Germany by train and automobile in the 1920s, or Jacob Rader Marcus and Alex Bein who jet-set across the Americas and Europe in the 1950s.⁴ Moreover, the possibility of microfilms and photostats enabled quick and cheap duplication for study and storage offsite. In 1909, Adolf Warschauer prepared a report for German archivists on the use of photography for archiving, suggesting that microfilm presented a means to make important

⁴ See, for instance, Jacob Jacobson, “Vom Sterben des Grenzmarkjudentums. Ein sentimentaler Reisebericht,” 1927, CAHJP P136/26.

source material available widely.⁵ A half-century later, the technology was the centerpiece of projects like the American Jewish Archives. And today, methods of digital duplication raise the possibility of creating “total archives” on a universal scale, what Stefan Berger describes as a “universal super-archive” out of the digitization and amalgamation of individual archive collections on the internet.⁶ Such vistas raise, in a certain way, the question of whether the debates over archival ownership that dominated in the first half of the twentieth century remain relevant. If archives can be digitized and made available in the “cloud,” does it matter who “owns” them? Repositories that might otherwise compete over files could instead exchange copies and thereby create their own “total archives” with once-disparate materials, or scattered collections could be reconstituted, as some have proposed for the fragments of the Cairo Genizah.⁷ However, as this study has sought to demonstrate, the debates over microfilm and originals show that even if it is possible to duplicate the objects and texts of the past, the question of their physical location, institutional structures, and access retain great importance.

These same possibilities and challenges of totality are not just about institutions fighting over material; they are pressing for individual scholars too. This study has been the result of an attempt to create an individualized total archive, and it is by no means alone in this pursuit. Scholars piece together the fragments of histories, creating their own archives of information and connecting sources that are otherwise scattered—whether in separate files, collections, or even disparate archives across the world. For instance, one may find one side of a correspondence in one locale, and the other half in another. In one example from this study, I have relied

⁵ Adolf Warschauer and Otto Mente, *Die Anwendung der Photographie für die Archivalische Praxis* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1909).

⁶ See Stefan Berger, “The Role of National Archives in Constructing National Master Narratives in Europe,” *Archival Science* 13, no. 1 (2013), 1–22, esp. 18.

⁷ Yaacov Choueka, “Computerizing the Cairo Genizah: Aims, Methodologies and Achievements,” *Ginzei Qedem* 8 (2012): 9–30.

extensively on Jewish Cultural Reconstruction's field reports, written by figures like Hannah Arendt and Joshua Starr. As Dana Herman noted in her study of JCR, there is no single archive or collection dedicated to the group. Instead, the files are scattered across many repositories due to the disparate locations where people like Salo Baron, Arendt, and others operated, both in the United States, in Germany, and Israel/Palestine.⁸ However, JCR's reports are numbered, which means that it is possible to discern that one has accumulated the entirety of this record. Similarly, meeting notes such as those of the Palestine Historical and Ethnographic Society's archive committee make reference to future and previous meetings, and one could ascertain the outlines of the "total" record of these files, determining on which dates meetings actually took place and what files are still left to be found. Often, one finds copies of the same document in different archives, sometimes with surprising results. Instead of "copies" of the same item, in one instance, I discovered that one archive held parts of a report that, in another repository, was missing pages; patching them together allowed for the recreation of the "total" document.⁹ In another case, multiple copies of the minutes from a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization had margin notes from different participants at the same meeting, a similar phenomenon to the reports from the Israelis and Germans sitting at the negotiating table over the Worms archives in August 1956.¹⁰ The result of these dispersed files is the possibility to approach total coverage for historical events, or reconstruct a more "complete" view of them, or even to create an entirely new "archive" out of dispersed materials, as Devin Naar described of

⁸ Dana Herman, "*Hashavat Avedah: A History of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.*" (Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, 2008), 14, 25–26.

⁹ Bein, "Vorläufiger Bericht über unsere Tätigkeit zur Überführung des Archivs, der Handschriften etc. der Jüdischen Gemeinde, Worms," 3 Sept. 1956, CZA L33/1272 (missing a page), combined with ISA HZ-19-303.

¹⁰ See Minutes, Meeting of Board of Directors, Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, 3 Mar. 1949, CAHJP JRSO/NY/896a and LBI DM 223 13/1; also Friedrich Illert to Isidor Kiefer, 29 Aug. 1956, StadtAWo Abt. 20, Nr. 68, Daniel Cohen, report, 28 Aug. 1956, CZA L33/1272, Alex Bein, "Vorläufiger Bericht."

his process of studying the Jews of Salonica.¹¹

We must carefully consider the limits of this activity's utility or its possibility. The idea that one can gather enough documentation from disparate sources to reconstruct historical events in their totality is deceiving. Scholars must not forget that there are always gaps in the documentary record. For most of human history, the historical record consists mostly of miniscule fragments, and for the events of recent times, where one faces mountains of documentation, it can never be "complete." By their nature, archives always exclude—whether it is indigenous communities, women, or people of color. Moreover, the idea that one might be able to gain a complete sense of history is pure fantasy. Our vision of the past remains forever blurred and obscured: As this study has emphasized, the past is always slipping over the horizon despite the monumental efforts of scholars and archivists to document it. The rise of archival memory in Jewish life is a testament to the powerful impulse to try to capture the past, but it remains fleeting. One should keep in mind the exemplary case of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, who made peace with the Freud archive's inaccessible "Series Z."¹² Those hidden files, just out of reach, may not actually be necessary, but the aspiration to totality—of collecting and of knowledge—persists.

This all raises the problem of the utility of centralized archives. Ultimately, the kind of documentary coverage described here is only possible *because* archives remain disjointed and dispersed, allowing for some material to survive in one locale where it may be lost elsewhere. In the drive to digitize, the economy of avoiding duplication may lead to loss. We must ask, in the end, what has been the aspiration to totality among archivists and scholars in the twentieth century and how it teaches us about the possibilities and limits of archives and archival memory.

¹¹ Devin Naar, *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), xii, 13–14.

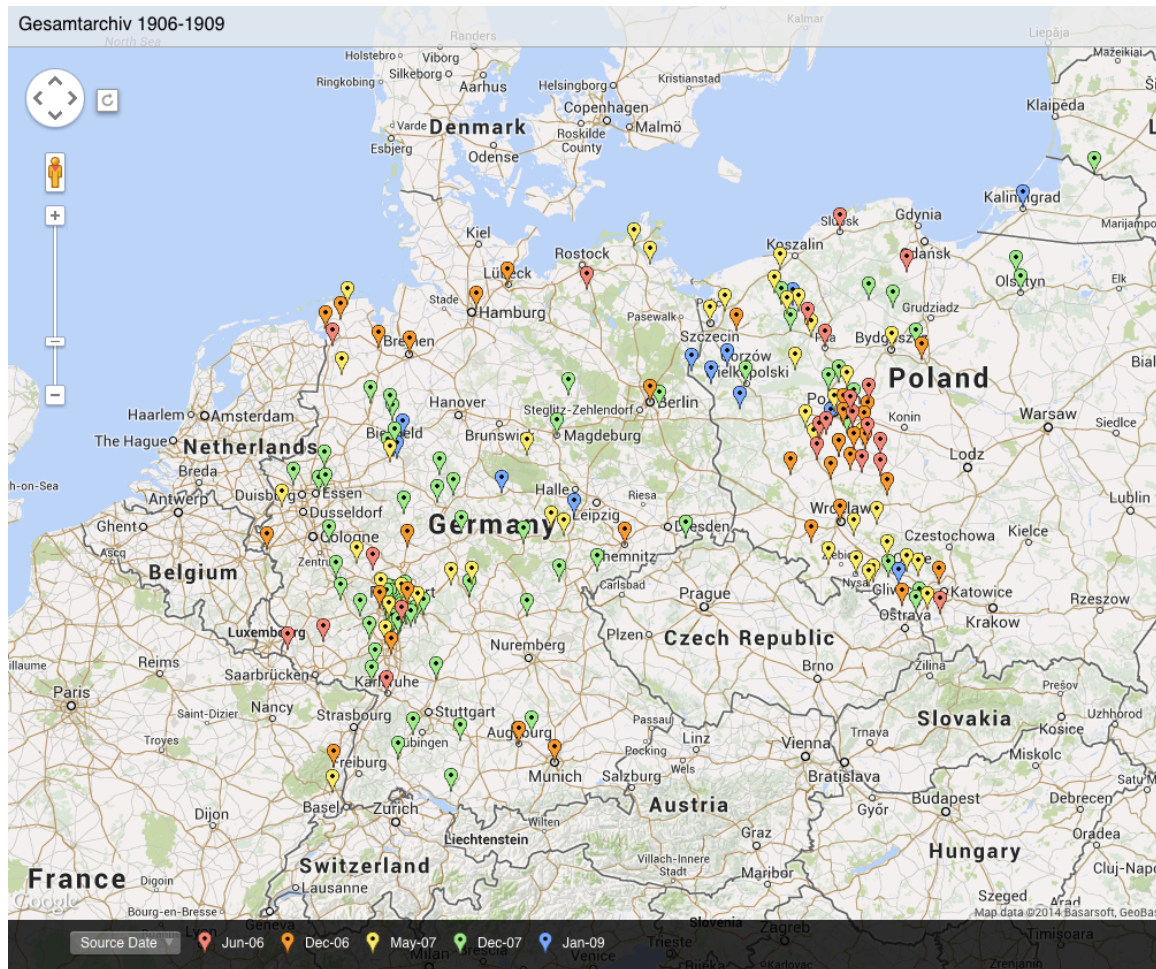
¹² Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "Series Z: An Archival Fantasy," *Journal of European Psychoanalysis* 3–4 (Spring 1996–Winter 1997): 21–31.

In this study, the drive to collect was connected with the idea that one could own and control the past, enabled by new technologies and social structures. As we enter a new age of archiving dominated by the digital—both by the digitization of preexisting paper archives and new, born-digital collections—one must consider how older models of archiving can inform both our knowledge of the past and the present. This study has sought to illustrate the efforts by Jews to create centralized archives, and has focused on the importance of the geography of archival ownership as a proxy for social and political conflicts within Jewish life. If digitization allows for the physical divorce of documents and their users, who no longer need to travel to the places where historical materials are stored, does it make these debates less significant? As the case of the Vienna archives indicates, “owning” the past remains an important marker of communal vitality. Digitization may alleviate the pain of having materials held far away by making them available but it does not offer a true salve to the symbolism of what possessing originals can represent. This dissertation has proposed that these issues remain profoundly relevant, as the impulse to preserve—the idea of a common “time to gather”—is intrinsically tied to the struggle over which institutions and individuals can claim to be the leaders in these efforts and what it represents for their positions of leadership in shaping the present and future.

Appendix

Map 1: Gesamtarchiv collecting activity, 1906–1909

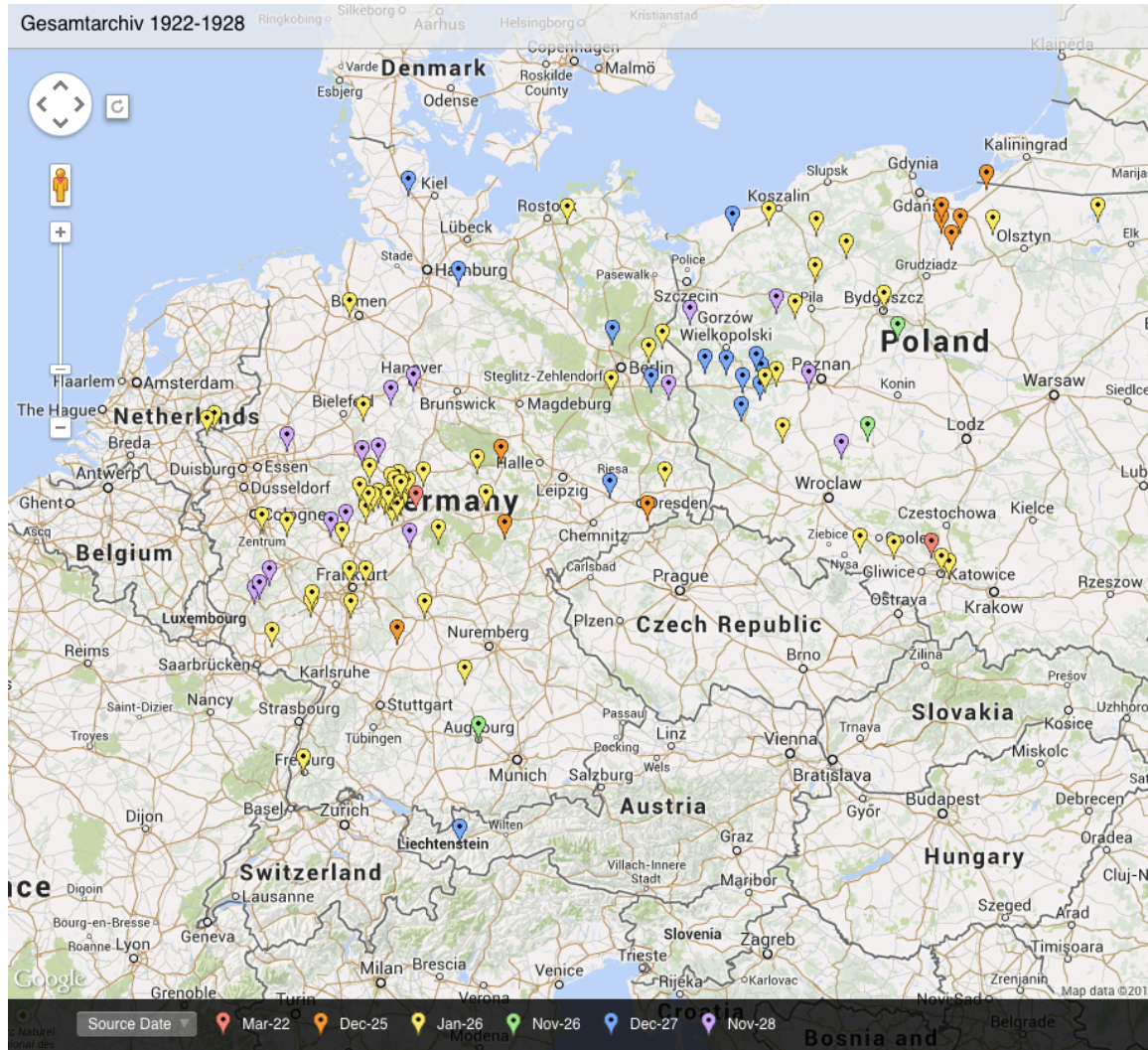
This map represents the communities from whom the Gesamtarchiv collected historical in its earliest years of activity, 1906–1909. The communities are color-coded based on when the archive first collected the files; the Gesamtarchiv usually listed all of the communities whose files they held.*



* Collecting activity detailed in: *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, June 1906; *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, Dec. 1906; *Mitteilungen vom DIGB*, May 1907; *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 1 (1909).

Map 2: Gesamtarchiv collecting activity, 1922–1928

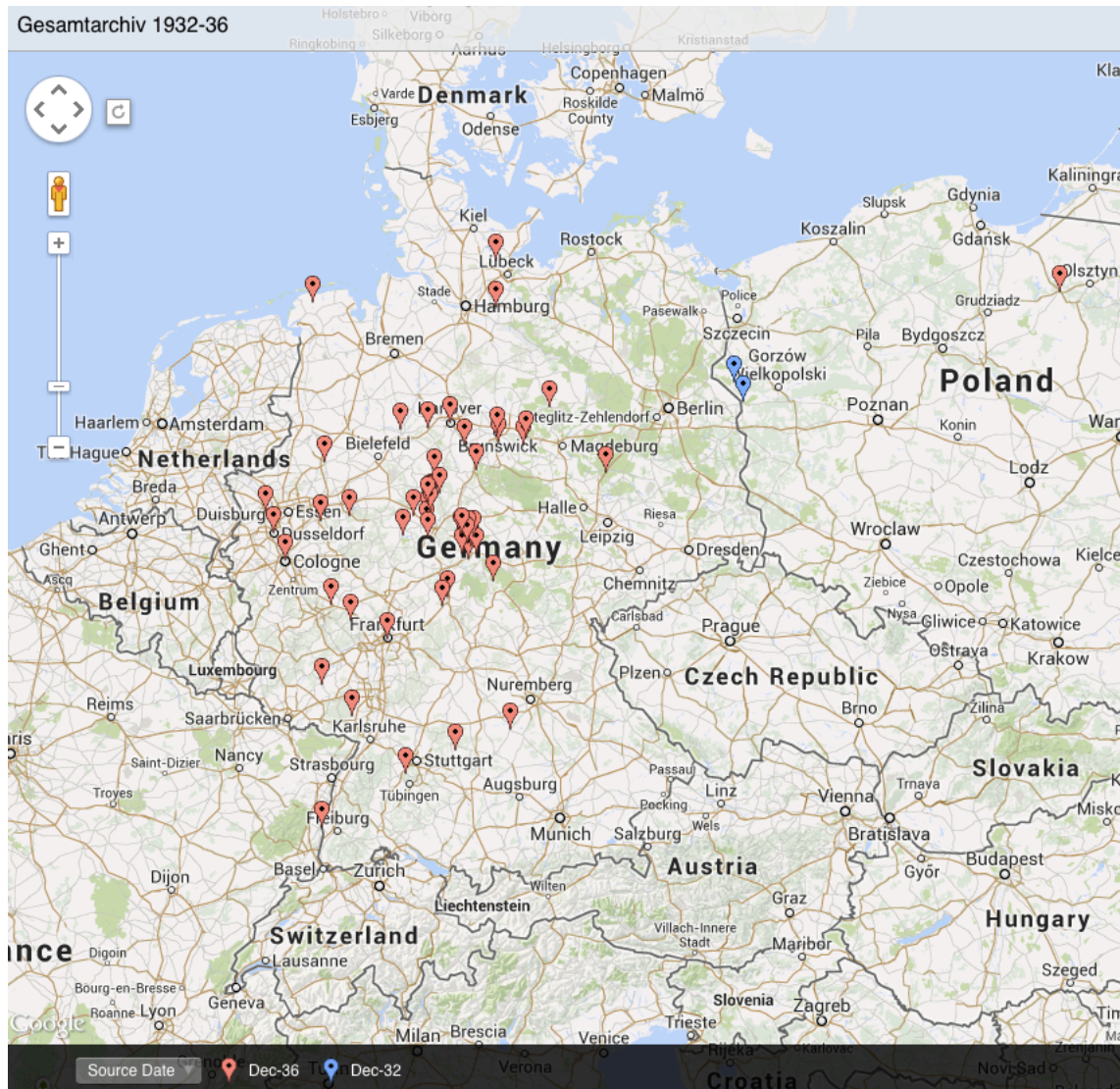
This map represents the *new* communities from whom the Gesamtarchiv collected historical material in the first years of its activity following the First World War, under the direction of Jacob Jacobson, 1922–1928. The communities are color-coded based on when the material was *first* collected from that location; the Gesamtarchiv reports usually list all of the communities whose files they held.*



* Collecting activity detailed in: “Tätigkeitsbericht des Gesamtarchivs für die Zeit vom 16. Nov. 1921 bis 31. März 1922,” CAHJP AHW/326a-b; Jacob Jacobson, “Bericht des Archivars,” 17 Dec. 1925, CAHJP AHW/326a-b; *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs* 6 (1926); Jacob Jacobson, “Bericht des Archivars über die Zeit vom 12.3.1926–23.11.1926,” CAHJP P17/11; “Geschäftsbericht über das Jahr 1927,” CAHJP P17/11; Jacob Jacobson, “Tätigkeitsbericht,” 5 Nov. 1928, CAHJP AHW/326a-b.

Map 3: Gesamtarchiv collecting activity, 1932-36

This map represents the *new* communities from whom the Gesamtarchiv collected historical material during the 1930s. The communities are color-coded based on when the material was *first* collected from that location; the Gesamtarchiv reports usually list all of the communities whose files they held.*



* Collecting activity detailed in: Jacob Jacobson, “Bericht über eine Informationsreise,” 6 Dec. 1932, CAHJP M5/8; Jacob Jacobson, “Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Gesamtarchivs der Juden in Deutschland für die Zeit vom 29. Januar bis 11. November 1936,” CAHJP P17/11.

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Zentralarchiv zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, Heidelberg

Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland, B. 1/7

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