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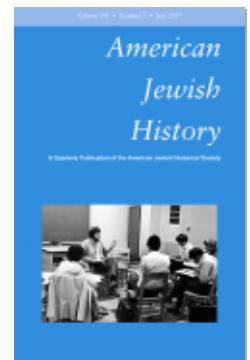
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Kimmy Caplan

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A Survey of Jewish History: An Early Representation of Orthodox Historiography on American Soil¹

KIMMY CAPLAN

As the era of mass immigration came to a close during the early twentieth century, a cadre of English-speaking American Orthodox rabbis emerged. Mostly younger than their East European immigrant Orthodox colleagues, these rabbis shared the understanding that in order to secure the future and relevance of Orthodoxy in the “New World” it was essential to provide Orthodox religious and cultural content that could be consumed in English, rather than continue the dominant Yiddish-based immigrant religious culture. This manifested in synagogue life and ritual, for example, in sermons delivered in English, in the cultural and educational agenda adopted by Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary after its reorganization in 1915, and in the founding of the Hebrew Theological College in Chicago in 1921.²

Another manifestation of this development was the publication of the Orthodox-oriented “Jewish Library” series. The first set of booklets in this series appeared toward the mid-1920s,³ and in 1928, the Macmillan

1. This article originates from a lecture delivered at an international conference, entitled “Modern Orthodoxy, 1940–1970,” which took place at the University of Scranton in June 2006. I thank Alan Brill and Marc Shapiro for including me in this conference, as well as the participants for their comments and criticism following the lecture. My gratitude to Richelle Budd Caplan, Jeffrey Gurock, Lawrence Kaplan, Jonathan Sarna, and the anonymous readers for their comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this article. Finally, a terminological note is in place. The terms Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, and Haredi have undergone various changes and developments in the ways they are used and perceived in both popular and scholarly writings throughout the twentieth century and in different social, communal, and geographical contexts. For example, the term Haredi was largely irrelevant as a social phenomenon to American Orthodoxy until the mid-1930s, whereas it was relevant in Palestine during this period. Therefore, I use these different terms in accordance with their historical relevance.

2. See Louis Bernstein, *Challenge and Mission: The Emergence of the English Speaking Orthodox Rabbinate* (New York: Shengold, 1982); Jeffrey S. Gurock, “From Exception to Role Model: Bernard Drachman and the Evolution of Jewish Religious Life in America, 1880–1920,” *American Jewish History*, 76, 4 (1987): 456–485; Jeffrey S. Gurock, *Orthodox Jews in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 163; William B. Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva: An Intimate Portrait of Orthodox Jewry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 24–25.

3. See Leo Jung, *The Path of a Pioneer: The Autobiography of Leo Jung* (London: Soncino Press, 1980), 130–132; Marc L. Raphael, “Rabbi Leo Jung and the Americanization of Orthodox Judaism: A Biographical Essay,” Jacob J. Schacter, ed., *Reverence, Righteousness, and Rahamanut: Essays in Memory of Rabbi Dr. Leo Jung* (Northvale and London: Jason Aronson, 1992), 69, 76–77.

Company published twelve of them together in book form.⁴ Rabbi Dr. Leo Jung (1892–1987), who immigrated to America in 1920 and two years later was appointed as the spiritual leader of the Orthodox Jewish Center congregation in Manhattan, initiated the series and served as editor of the project.⁵

A considerable number of the booklets in this series addressed topics relating to religious beliefs, norms, and practice from an Orthodox point of view. Jung presumably perceived these topics as relevant to the challenges facing contemporary American Orthodox Jewry with a view towards providing adequate educational tools to deal with noticeable religious laxity during the interwar period.⁶ Examples of the publications targeted toward waning religiosity include David de Sola Pool's (1885–1970) *Jehuda Halevy's Defense of His Faith*, Isaac Unna's (1872–1948) *Marriage in Judaism*, Isidore Epstein's (1894–1962) *The Ceremonies*, and Herbert S. Goldstein's (1890–1970) *The Dietary Laws*.

Other publications addressed issues that were at the center of American and American Jewish public discourse. Oskar Wolfsberg's (1893–1957) *The Theory of Evolution* and Jacob Hoschander's (1874–1933) *The Bible and Its Critics* offered responses to contemporary debates. It was no accident that the former appeared after the 1925–1926 Scopes Monkey Trial in Tennessee. The latter reflected heated discussion about biblical criticism among American fundamentalists during this period.⁷

4. See Leo Jung, ed., *The Jewish Library: First Series* (New York: Macmillan, 1928).

5. On Jung's life, thought, and activities, see Gil Graff, "Giving Voice to 'Torah-True Judaism' in the U.S., 1922–39: Leo Jung and the Legacy of the *Rabbinerseminar*," *Modern Judaism* 34, no. 2 (2014): 167–188; Jung, *The Path of a Pioneer*; Maxine Jacobson, *Modern Orthodoxy in American Judaism: The Era of Rabbi Leo Jung* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2016); Raphael, "Rabbi Leo Jung and the Americanization of Orthodox Judaism: A Biographical Essay," 21–93; Moshe D. Sherman, *Orthodox Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 110–114; Jenna Weissman Joselit, *New York's Orthodox Jews: The Orthodox Community in the Interwar Years* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 68–71. For sympathetic and somewhat hagiographic accounts, see Nima H. Adlerblum, "Leo Jung," in *The Leo Jung Jubilee Volume: essays in his honor on the occasion of his seventieth birthday*, eds. Menahem M. Kasher, Norman Lamm, and Leonard Rosenfeld (New York: The Jewish Center, 1962), 1–41; Joshua Modlinger, *Leo Jung: Talmudist, Scholar, Author, Editor, Educator* (New York: Shoulson Press, 1950).

6. See Jeffrey S. Gurock, "American Judaism between the Two World Wars," in *The Columbia History of Jews and Judaism in America*, ed. Marc L. Raphael (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 93–114; Jenna Weissman Joselit, *New York's Jewish Jews*, 1–25.

7. On Modern Orthodox encounters with Darwin's theory, see Rachel S.A. Pear, "'And It Was Good?': American Modern Orthodox Engagement with Darwinism from 1925 to the Present (2012)" (PhD diss., Bar-Ilan University, 2012). See Nancy T. Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, eds. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991),

A few other booklets in this series were devoted to the Bible,⁸ and two were devoted to Jewish History: Abraham Cohen's (1887-1957) *Judaism in Jewish History* and, important for this essay, Moses Auerbach's (1881-1976) *Survey of Jewish History*.⁹

This article offers a preliminary contextualization of Auerbach's book, points to its main characteristics, places it in historical context, and explains its relationship with the genre of Orthodox historiography. Through this analysis of Auerbach's work, I will offer some initial observations on the development of Orthodox historiography in America and on its intended audience. This audience was perceived as being in need of assistance to successfully overcome the challenges of American Jewish society and culture in the years following mass immigration. Furthermore, examining Auerbach's *Survey of Jewish History* and American Orthodox historiography from the perspective of those involved in its publication provides us with unique insights into American Orthodoxy and its dilemmas, challenges, and worldview.

As this issue is devoted to Jeffrey Gurock, the leading historian of American Orthodoxy, it is worth noting that that he does not utilize, address, or analyze this literary sub-genre in his work. No relevant entries exist in the indexes of his books. In rare cases, such as his writing on the Ramaz School in New York, Gurock addresses Orthodox historical consciousness,¹⁰ but he does not analyze how text such as these aimed

11-12; James Moore, "The Creationist Cosmos of Protestant Fundamentalism," in *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family, and Education*, eds. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 42-47. Notably, Bible criticism was a controversial issue during the founding and early years of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. See Sara Japhet, "Research and Academic Teaching of the Bible in Israel," *Jewish Studies* 32 (1992): 13-25, esp. p. 17; eadem, "The Establishment and Early History of the Department of Bible, 1925-1949," in *The History of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem: A Period of Consolidation and Growth*, ed. Hagit Lavsky (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2005), 283-304 [Hebrew]; Daniel R. Schwartz, "From Rabbinical Seminaries to the Institute of Jewish Studies," in *The History of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Origins and Beginnings*, eds. Shaul Katz and Michael Heyd (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1997), 469-470 [Hebrew]; Marc B. Shapiro, "Rabbi David Tsevi Hoffmann on Orthodox Involvement with the Hebrew University," *Tradition* 33, no. 3 (1999): 88-94.

8. See, for example, Joseph Carlebach, *The Bible* (New York: Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, 1927).

9. See Moses Auerbach, *A Survey of Jewish History* (New York: The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, 1927), and, a year later, in Jung, ed., *The Jewish Library: First Series*, 239-311. For an earlier use of the phrase "bird's eye-view" as a sub-title of a book on Jewish Orthodoxy, see: Sabetai B. Rohold, *The War and the Jew: A Bird's-eye View of the World's Situation and the Jew's Place in it* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1915).

10. See Jeffrey S. Gurock, *American Jewish Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1996), 313-351.

to construct an ideologically and educationally “useful past,” nor does he consider how such works offer insight into contemporary Orthodoxy in a specific period.

Being a social, urban, and ethnic historian, Gurock understandably does not focus on images, perceptions, and representations of the past. His focus is on reality. In his numerous studies he reconstructs the past and points to developments and processes within it. Gurock documents, characterizes, and analyzes American Orthodox groups and sub-groups, personalities, institutions, organizations, as urban settings, as well as the behavioral characteristics of Orthodox Jews during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In doing so he offers various typologies, definitions, and terms. Some of these, such as “resisters and accommodators”¹¹ and “non-observant Orthodoxy,”¹² are milestones in the history of American Orthodoxy. Historians of American Orthodoxy trained in the United States tend to follow in Gurock’s footsteps and overlook Orthodox historiography as a historical and sociological source.

Orthodox Historiography

Since the early 1980s, there has been an increase in scholarly attention devoted to Orthodox historiography. This genre of religious-educational literature is written by Orthodox Jews, and aims to reach Orthodox audiences. Although not the first to discuss this genre, Israel Bartal coined the term Orthodox historiography, defined some of its characteristics, and drew attention to some of methodological considerations pertaining to the scholarly examination of this literature.¹³ Bartal offered his insights by analyzing the posthumously-published memoirs of Yaakov Halevi Lipshütz (1838–1921).¹⁴ Lipshütz, the secretary of Rabbi Isaac

11. See Gurock, *American Jewish Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective* 1–63.

12. See Jeffrey S. Gurock, “Twentieth-Century American Orthodoxy’s Era of Non-Observance, 1900–1960,” *Torah u-Madda Journal* 9 (2000): 87–108; Jeffrey S. Gurock, “Rethinking the History of Nonobservance as an American Orthodox Jewish Lifestyle,” in *New Essays in American Jewish History*, eds. Pamela S. Nadell, Jonathan D. Sarna, and Lance J. Sussman (Cincinnati: The American Jewish Archives, 2010), 305–325. Gurock is not the first to relate to this category, but places it in a historical context and provides a nuanced portrait of its representations. For earlier discussions, see Charles S. Liebman, “A Sociological Analysis of Contemporary Orthodoxy,” *Judaism* 13, no. 3 (1964): 285–305; Charles S. Liebman, “Religion, Class, and Culture in American Jewish History,” *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 9, no. 2 (1967): 227–242; Harold Polsky, “A Study of Orthodoxy in Milwaukee: Social Characteristics, Beliefs and Observances,” Marshall Sklare, ed., *The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1958), 325–335.

13. See for example, Rachel Elior, “The Controversy over the Leadership of the Habad Movement,” *Tarbiz*, 49, 1–2 (1980): 166–187 [Hebrew].

14. See Yaakov Halevi Lifshitz, *Zikhron Yaakov*, 3 Vols. (Kovna-Slobodka: Neta Lipshütz, 1924–1930) [Hebrew].

Elchanan Spektor (1817–1896) of Kaunas, was active in various East European Orthodox political initiatives and internal Jewish struggles in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁵ Bartal discussed a number of other case studies,¹⁶ and several scholars, including David Assaf, Immanuel Etkes, Haim Gertner, and Ada Rapoport Albert, have devoted attention to other nineteenth and early twentieth century East European authors, case studies, and sub-genres of Orthodox historiography.¹⁷ Interestingly, while historians have devoted considerable attention to representations of this genre, which appeared in the aforementioned period, similar publications that appeared on American soil in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have, for the most part, been overlooked.

A few aspects of American Modern Orthodox and Haredi (i.e., Ultra Orthodox) historiography in the second half of the twentieth century, however, have received attention. Examples include representations of European Orthodox personalities and events, and the need for “Torah-true” historians.¹⁸ Likewise, since the mid-twentieth century and within the

15. See Israel Bartal, “Zikhron Ya’akov—Orthodox Historiography?,” in *Milet: Studies in Jewish History and Culture* 2, eds. Shmuel Ettinger et. al. (Tel-Aviv: Open University, 1985) (Hebrew), 409–414. On Lipshütz’s actions, see Israel Oppenheim, “The Kovno Circle of Rabbi Yitzhak Elhanan Spektor: Organizing Western Public Opinion Over Pogroms in the 1880s,” in *Organizing Rescue: National Jewish Solidarity in the Modern Period*, eds. S. Ilan Troen and Benjamin Pinkus (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 91–126; Mordechai Zalkin, “‘Orthodoxy in the Town’: the Question of Orthodoxy’s Existence in Nineteenth Century Lithuania,” Yosef Salmon et. al., eds., *Orthodox Judaism: New Perspectives* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2006) (Hebrew), 436–440.

16. See Israel Bartal, “Shimon Hakofer’—A Chapter in Orthodox Historiography,” in *Studies in Jewish Culture in Honour of Chone Shmeruk*, eds. Israel Bartal et. al. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1993) (Hebrew), 243–269; Israel Bartal, “True Wisdom and Knowledge: On Orthodox Historiography,” *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, 10 (1994):178–192.

17. See David Assaf, *The Regal Way: The Life and Times of Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 11–27; Immanuel Etkes, *The Gaon of Vilna: The Man and his Image* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 96–151; Haim Gertner, “The Beginning of ‘Orthodox Historiography’ in Eastern Europe: A Reassessment,” *Zion*, 67, no. 3 (2002): 293–337 [Hebrew]; Nahum Karlinsky, *Counter History: The Hasidic Epistles from Eretz-Israel—Text and Context* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1998) (Hebrew), 109–167; Ada Rapoport-Albert, “Hagiography with Footnotes: Edifying Tales and the Writing of History in Hasidism,” *History and Theory* 27 (1988):. 119–159.

18. Examples include Kimmy Caplan, “‘Absolutely Intellectually Honest’: A Case-Study of American Jewish Modern Orthodox Historiography,” in *Creation and Re-Creation in Jewish Thought: Festschrift in Honor of Joseph Dan*, eds. Rachel Elior and Peter Shafer (Tubingen: Mohr-Siebek 2005), 339–362; Kimmy Caplan, “Innovating the Past: The Emerging Sphere of the ‘Torah-true Historian’ in America,” *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, 21 (2005): 270–288; Yoel Finkelman, “Nostalgia, Inspiration, Ambivalence: Eastern Europe, Immigration, and the Construction of Collective Memory in Contemporary American Haredi Historiography,” *Jewish History* 23, no. 1 (2009): 57–83; David Shatz,

Israeli Haredi context, we find considerable scholarly attention devoted to representations of the Holocaust, which tend to focus on creating a polemic with regard to the role that Zionists played during this period. Within this literature, Zionists are charged with being either passive or active collaborators with Nazi Germany in its efforts to exterminate European Orthodox Jewry.¹⁹

Based upon this cumulative knowledge, we can point to several basic characteristics of Orthodox historiography. It is a combination of alternative history, counter history, and compensatory history. Even though it is not always a direct and conscious response to academic or other histories, it relates, for the most part, to “other” historiographies. Orthodox historians perceive these “other histories” as deliberately or otherwise distorted accounts of the past.²⁰ God is understood to be the one and only “explanation” for historical events, developments, and processes, and therefore these are presented and analyzed within this framework. Research for the sake of historical knowledge is understood to be useless. The past is valuable only in so far as it provides moral and religious lessons for the present and future. In other words, this genre is didactic by nature. This genre focuses on Jewish history, as the Jews are viewed as the chosen people.²¹ Consequently, all events and developments are not only perceived to be divinely controlled, but tied directly or indirectly to the Jewish people. Religious values are accepted

“Nothing But the Truth?: Modern Orthodoxy and the Polemical Uses of History,” Daniel J. Lasker, ed., *Jewish Thought and Jewish Belief* (Beer Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2012), 141–177; Jeremy Stolow, “Transnationalism and the New Religion-Politics: Reflections on a Jewish Orthodox Case,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 2, no. 2 (2004): 109–137; Jeremy Stolow, “Communicating Authority, Consuming Tradition: Jewish Orthodox Outreach Literature and Its Reading Public,” in *Religion, Media and the Public Sphere*, eds. Birgit Meyer and Annelies Moors (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 73–91.

19. See, for example: Amos Goldberg, “The Holocaust in the Ultra Orthodox Press,” *Contemporary Jewry* 11–12 (1998): 155–207 [Hebrew]; Dina Porat, “‘Amalek’s Accomplishes’: Blaming Zionism for the Holocaust—Anti-Zionist Ultra-Orthodoxy in Israel during the 1980s,” *Contemporary History* 27, no. 4 (1992): 695–735; Meir Sompolinsky, “Jewish Institutions in the World and the Yishuv as Reflected in the Holocaust Historiography of the Ultra-Orthodox,” in *The Historiography of the Holocaust Period: Proceedings of the Fifth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference*, eds. Yisrael Gutman and Gideon Grief (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1988), 609–631; Judith Tydor-Baumel, “Responses to the Uprising in the Haredi World,” *Dapim Studies on the Shoah* 12 (1995): 289–309 [Hebrew].

20. See Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993), 106–123.

21. On the plethora of those who claim to be the chosen, see William R. Hutchison and Hartmut Lehmann, eds., *Many Are Chosen: Divine Election and Western Nationalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).

as taking precedence over the obligation to explore the past with critical methods. For example, the sacred classic texts (i.e., the Bible, Mishnah, and Talmud) represent absolute truth and therefore, by definition, cannot be subject to critical assessment and analysis. The tone of this literature tends to be triumphalist, emphasizing the ongoing existence and vitality of Orthodoxy, notwithstanding it being a minority that faces continuous existential threats.²² Finally, given the aforementioned characteristics, it is clear that only a “true-believing” Orthodox Jew can be trusted to write a reliable and worthy historical account.

Even though the shaping of this literature is clearly motivated by the authors’ contemporary ideological and educational agendas, when read with adequate methodological tools it can be a useful source for scholars. In various cases, it provides information or helps uncover previously unknown details and aspects of the history of Orthodoxy and almost always offers a unique insight into contemporary ideological and educational challenges and encounters as perceived from an Orthodox point of view.

Rabbi Dr. Moses Auerbach—A Biographical Outline

Moses Auerbach was born in Halberstadt, Germany into a local rabbinic dynasty. Both his grandfather and father served as rabbis of this town.²³ During his formative years, Auerbach studied with his father, Rabbi Aviezri Auerbach (1840–1901), and others. In 1900, he relocated to Esriel Hildesheimer’s *Rabbinerseminar* (Rabbinical Seminary) in Berlin. While studying at the Seminary, Auerbach began his studies at the University of Strasbourg, receiving his PhD in 1905. After teaching at Berlin’s Adat Israel school for approximately two years, Auerbach accepted an invitation to teach at the Teachers’ Seminary in Cologne in 1907. In the summer of 1909, he immigrated to Palestine and settled in Petah-Tikvah. According to Auerbach, he was called upon by Agudat Israel’s influential leader, Jacob Rosenheim (1870–1965), to serve as a

22. For one of many examples, see Berel Wein, *Triumph of Survival: The Story of the Jews in the Modern Era, 1650–1990* (New York: Shaar Press, 1990).

23. See Nathan R. Auerbach, ed., *Zikbronot Harav Moshe Oyerbakh Zz”l* (Jerusalem: Hama’ayan, 1982) (Hebrew). For a revised and expanded edition, see Nathan R. Auerbach, ed., *Mihalbershtat Ad Petah-Tikvah: Zikbronot Harav Moshe Oyerbakh Zz”l* (Jerusalem: n.p., 1987) (Hebrew); Esriel Hildesheimer, “Rabanei Halbershtat Vehakhamehah,” in *Sefer Aviad: Kovez Ma’amarim Umehkarim Lezekher Yeshayahu Volfsberg-Aviad Z”l*, ed. Yizchak Raphael (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1986) (Hebrew), 248–252, 256–257; Hanan Feist, “The History of the Jewish Community Halberstadt in the 19th and 20th Centuries” (PhD diss., Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2003) (Hebrew).

teacher and headmaster of the Nezah Israel in Petah-Tikvah. This school, which would gradually develop into a chain of schools, was founded three years earlier by a German-Orthodox organization that sought to promote religious education in Palestine.²⁴

Over the next eight years, Auerbach was instrumental in expanding this school and its branches to promote conservative Orthodox education in Palestine. In 1917, the Turkish authorities expelled Auerbach from Palestine, because they perceived educational figures, among others, as a possible threat to their authority. Other educational figures expelled include David Yellin (1864–1941), head of the Hebrew Teacher's Seminary in Jerusalem, and Eliezer M. Lipschütz (1879–1946), a teacher at Yellin's seminary who, three years later, founded the Mizrahi Teacher's Seminary in Jerusalem.

After spending a short time in Germany, Auerbach went to Warsaw to head the local girls' school, Havazelet. In 1918, he relocated to Köln and taught at the local Talmud Torah institute for four years. Four years later, he accepted an offer from the Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin to serve as a lecturer (*dozent*) of Talmud and Jewish history.²⁵ Auerbach would return to Petah-Tikvah in 1934. In addition to directing Nezah Yisrael, he held an official municipal job, and was a central and influential educational and ideological figure in the *Poalei Agudat Israel* movement as well as in various organizations and settlements associated with it, such as the kibbutz Hafez Hayim.²⁶ In 1947, he retired, but continued to be active in Haredi education in Petah-Tikvah and Tel-Aviv.

Keeping in mind that Jung graduated from the Rabbinical Seminary of Berlin in 1920 and probably knew Auerbach, it seems reasonable to assume that Jung approached him regarding the possibility of writing a popular overview of Jewish history in the early 1920s while Auerbach was teaching there. Auerbach had gained a reputation as an author of several historical publications,²⁷ and Jung might have known of the historical survey that Auerbach was to publish in German in 1925²⁸ as part of a joined effort in certain German Orthodox intellectual circles to publish

24. See Yosef Burg, *Chapters from an Autobiography* (Jerusalem: Yad Shapira, 2000), 36 [Hebrew]; Yosef Lang, "A Stormy Chapter in the History of Education in Petach-Tikva," *Dor Ledor* 25 (2005): 66–72 [Hebrew]; Nadav, "Petah Tikvah," *Hahavazelet* 39, no. 105, June 18, 1909: 554 [Hebrew].

25. See Isi J. Eisner, "Reminiscences of the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 12 (1967): 40, 46–47.

26. *Ibid.*, 47.

27. See, among others, Moses Auerbach, *Wörterbuch zur Mechilta des R. Ismael nebst Einleitung* (Berlin: H. Itzkowski, 1905); Moses Auerbach, *Zur Politischen Geschichte der Juden unter Kaiser Hadrian* (Berlin-Wien: B. Harz, 1924).

28. See Moses Auerbach, *Die Jüdische Geschichte und ihr Sinn* (Berlin: Menorah, 1925).

popular books on Jewish history written in accordance with Orthodox values.²⁹ Finally, and probably most significantly, Auerbach represented the combination that Jung was looking for: an Orthodox Jew who was committed to Orthodox values, beliefs, and practices; trained in an East European yeshiva or West European Orthodox rabbinic seminary; and a university graduate with an advanced scholarly degree.

Almost all authors who participated in the Jewish Library series held rabbinic and academic-doctoral degrees and shared similar worldviews.³⁰ In other words, they represented a combination of a historical-critical approach and Orthodox values, with the latter overruling the former. Notwithstanding important variations and nuances, most authors of the first and second series of the Jewish Library books shared these common intellectual and spiritual backgrounds and characteristics. In addition, most of them did not immigrate to the United States.

Some examples of this cohort include Joseph Carlebach (1882–1942), Rabbi of Lübeck, Altona, and Hamburg, who was murdered in Latvia during the Holocaust; Isidore Epstein, who studied at Hungarian yeshivas and at London University, served between 1921 and 1928 as a rabbi in Middleborough, and, in 1928, began to teach Semitics and worked as a librarian at Jews' College; and Moses Gaster (1856–1939), a native of Bucharest, Romania, who studied at the University of Breslau and at the local Jewish Theological Seminary. After teaching in Romania for four years, Gaster was expelled and settled in England where he taught at Oxford University beginning in 1886; in 1887, he was appointed *Haham* of the English Sephardi community.³¹ Jacob Hoschander of Poland, who did immigrate to the United States in 1909, began teaching at Dropsie College in 1910 and would later lecture at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. David de Sola Pool, who studied at Jews' College and at Hildesheimer's Seminary, immigrated to the United States in 1907 after accepting the position of rabbi of the Sephardi Shearith Israel congregation in New York. Oskar Wolfsberg, later known by his Hebrew name Yeshayahu Aviad, was a native of Hamburg who studied at universities in Heidelberg, Würzburg, and Berlin. After serving as a medical officer in World War I, Wolfsberg became active in the *Mizrachi* (religious Zionism) movement in Germany and settled in Palestine in 1933.

29. See Asaf Yedidya, *Criticized Criticism—Orthodox Alternatives to Wissenschaft des Judentums 1873–1956* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2013) (Hebrew), 182–195.

30. See Graff, "Giving Voice to 'Torah-True Judaism' in the U.S., 1922–39," 178.

31. See Moshe Idel, "Moses Gaster on Jewish Mysticism and the Zohar," Ronit Meroz, ed., *New Developments in Zohar Studies (Te'uda 21–22)* (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University, 2007) (Hebrew), 111–129.

While almost all these personalities were born in the 1880s and combined Orthodox and academic qualifications together with a clear obligation to Orthodoxy, their Jewish political affiliations differed. Some, like Auerbach, were associated with moderate Haredi groups, such as *Poalei Agudat Israel*, whereas others, such as Wolfsberg, identified with the *Mizrachi* movement. Most of them were affiliated at the time with academic universities or with the Jewish Theological Seminary, rather than with Orthodox yeshivas or rabbinical seminaries.

Confronting Developments in the American Jewish Educational Scene

It seems as though certain significant developments within the Jewish educational scene in New York were of concern to Leo Jung and some of the future authors included as part of the Jewish Library series. Although Auerbach and his colleagues do not make clear statements to this effect in their books, it seems as if they felt that Orthodox education in America was potentially challenged by Samson Benderly's (1876–1944) educational agenda, initiatives, and actions within New York's *Kehillah* organization (1908–1922), and later on as well.³²

The founders of the *Kehillah*, led by Rabbi Judah L. Magnes (1877–1948), perceived education to be an important key to securing Jewish group survival, and as a critical tool “for the successful integration of the immigrant masses into American society.”³³ In the fall of 1910, they founded the New York Bureau of Education with a view to modernize and consequently improve what they saw as the poor state of Jewish education. They chose Benderly, a reputable educator, to direct it.³⁴ Benderly “rejected the parochial school as unnecessary” and “objectionable,”³⁵ and noted the lack of adequate educational textbooks.³⁶ This led him to

32. On the *Kehillah*, see Arthur A. Goren, *New York Jews and Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment, 1908–1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).

33. *Ibid.*, 86.

34. For a detailed overview of Benderly's activities and educational vision, and his team, see Jonathan B. Krasner, *The Benderly Boys: American Jewish Education* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2011). For an earlier account, see Nathan H. Winter, *Jewish Education in a Pluralistic Society: Samson Benderly and Jewish Education in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 1966). In addition, see Lloyd P. Gartner, *Jewish Education in the United States: A Documentary History* (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1969), 18–19; Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community*, 86–134; Melissa R. Klapper, *Jewish Girls Coming of Age in America, 1860–1920* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005), 166–170.

35. See Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community*, 97.

36. See Klapper, *Jewish Girls Coming of Age in America*, 127–129, 157. See also Arthur A. Goren, ed., *Dissenter in Zion: From the Writings of Judah L. Magnes* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1982), 128.

suggest that the Bureau publish a series of twenty-eight books, eighteen of which appeared before 1915. But this project led the Bureau into a significant financial deficit.

Be it as it may, while some of New York's Orthodox leaders embraced the *Kehillah's* educational plan or objected to certain aspects of it but nevertheless supported it, others, such as Rabbi Gabriel Z. Margolis (1847–1935), backed by the Orthodox daily *Morgen Zhurnal*, which initially endorsed this endeavor, objected to the aforementioned points on almost all accounts, and denounced the *Kehillah*.³⁷ They disagreed with the proposed religious studies curriculum, rejected the goal of integrating into American society, were among the opponents of teaching Hebrew in Hebrew (*Ivrit B'Ivrit*), and supported the idea that Jewish education should strive toward the “preservation of the Jews as a distinct people existing and developing in the spirit of the Jewish religion” (an idea supported by several of New York's upper class Jews.)³⁸ Those who held these opinions naturally rejected Benderly's plan to standardize and modernize the Orthodox Talmud Torahs.³⁹

Furthermore, Benderly developed a vision with regard to teaching Jewish history “as history and not as *darush*, or homiletics.” According to his vision, “special stress would be placed upon the integration of Jewish history with world history.”⁴⁰ In 1928, Benderly “proposed a twelve-volume set of books called the *Outline of Jewish Knowledge*,” intended for “adolescents who had not acquired a Hebraic background.”⁴¹

A brief comparison between the content of each volume and Auerbach's book that appeared a year earlier suggests that one of Benderly's aims was to counter Auerbach and Jung's response to his earlier efforts to reform the education within Orthodox educational institutions.⁴² For example, in contrast with Auerbach's aforementioned single sentence relating to America, Benderly's tenth proposed volume “was to be concerned with the history and present-day problems of the Jews in America.”⁴³

37. See Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community*, 125–134; Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, 133–134; Jeffrey S. Gurock, *The Men and Women of Yeshiva: Higher Education, Orthodoxy, and American Judaism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 98; Krasner, *The Benderly Boys*, 36–54. On Margolis, see Joshua Hoffman, “The American Rabbinic Career of Rabbi Gavriel Zev Margolis,” (master's thesis: Yeshiva University, 1992).

38. See Klapper, *Jewish Girls Coming of Age in America*, 106, 110–134; Krasner, *The Benderly Boys*, 98–99.

39. See Eadem, 131. For a detailed account and analysis, see Krasner, *The Benderly Boys*, 237–268.

40. See Winter, *Jewish Education in a Pluralistic Society*, 53.

41. *Ibid.*, 120.

42. *Ibid.*, 123–124.

43. *Ibid.*, 123.

The changes in the field of Jewish education in New York offered potentially problematic educational alternatives for American moderate Orthodoxy. At the same time, Jung did not see eye to eye with conservative immigrant Orthodox rabbis, who opted for creating educational enclaves for Orthodox students. It seems as though his initiative to create the Jewish Library series was a response to these developments, as well as to the challenges that American Orthodoxy faced in the wake of mass immigration.⁴⁴ Auerbach, as well as other authors who took part in the Jewish Library series, aimed to offer popular, pedagogically-oriented books for moderate American Orthodox Jews that would meet this potential audience's religious values and standards, and assist in keeping them within the fold.

A Survey of Jewish History: Themes and Characteristics

As mentioned above, the first series of the Jewish Library project included two booklets on Jewish history. In his essay, Abraham Cohen addressed the religious aspect considered essential to the formation and ongoing survival of Judaism and the Jewish nation. He argued that unlike all other nations, Israel “did not depend for its existence upon the possession of territory or political freedom, but upon Torah.”⁴⁵ In light of this historical-theological approach, Cohen analyzed various chapters of ancient Jewish history from the beginning of the Bible through the *Bar Kokhba* revolt against the Romans, and concluded with a warning aimed at the contemporary American Jewish scene: “should Israel desire to be rid of the burden of age, the way of death is simple and speedy—neglect of the synagogue and abandonment of the Torah.”⁴⁶

Moses Auerbach presented Jewish history through a similar ideological prism, but, unlike Cohen, he offered an overall account of Jewish history. A careful reading of Auerbach's book uncovers several basic themes and characteristics, some explicit and others implicit.

Similar to Cohen, the overarching theme in Auerbach's book is the uniqueness of the Jewish people's survival throughout history, and that this phenomenon can be explained only by divine providence.⁴⁷ This had numerous implications for the ways in which the past was constructed, explained, and presented to the reader. For example, the fact that God

44. See Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 228.

45. See Abraham Cohen, *Judaism in Jewish History* (New York: The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, 1925), 4.

46. *Ibid.*, 22.

47. See Auerbach, *A Survey of Jewish History*, 58–63.

is responsible for everything that happens to Jews naturally leads to providing theological explanations for historical events and developments. Thus, in line with the Sages, Auerbach explains the destruction of the First Temple as a result of Israel's "fall from the heights assigned to it," and the fall of Judea to Israel relates to "falling away to idolatry."⁴⁸ In addition, the very basic construction of Jewish history along the lines of "the rise and fall of" the people of Israel and "from independence to exile" and vice-versa is simultaneously based upon and denotes the essential active role of God in Jewish history.⁴⁹

Auerbach's *Survey* opens by stating, "the history of the Jewish people may be divided into two main periods: Israel in its home land, and Israel in exile." According to the author, "the dividing line comes somewhere at the end of the second century of the Common Era."⁵⁰ Indeed, the bulk of this book, forty of its fifty-eight pages, appears in its second part, entitled "The Second Period: Israel in Exile."⁵¹ In other words, in addition to setting forth the historical stage with God at its center, it is reasonable to assume that Auerbach was influenced by and responding to late nineteenth and early twentieth century modern Jewish national and Zionist-oriented authors and historians, such as Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858–1922), who reconstructed Jewish history along the dichotomy of homeland-exile, although from a national rather than religious point of view.⁵²

Interestingly, the Commission on Education of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America presented a similar approach fifteen years later, in 1942. Chaired by Leo Jung, this commission included three professors who taught at Yeshiva College: Jekutiel Ginsburg (1889–1957), Samuel K. Mirsky (1899–1967), and Jacob I. Hartstein (1911–1991), as well as Leo Hurewitz (1912–2003), and Rabbi Joseph Kaminetsky (1911–1999), a communal rabbi and educator who, a few years later, was one of the founders of the *Torah Umesorah* educational organization.⁵³

This Commission proposed a curriculum "for the first six years of the elementary department of the Talmud Torah."⁵⁴ Upon stating that

48. *Ibid.*, 7–8.

49. See Yedidya, *Criticized Criticism*, 191–192.

50. *Ibid.*, 5.

51. *Ibid.*, 18.

52. See Dan A. Porat, "The Nation Revised: Teaching the Jewish Past in the Zionist Present (1890–1913)," *Jewish Social Studies* 13, no. 1 (2006): 70–74.

53. See Doniel Z. Kramer, *The Day Schools and Torah Umesorah: The Seeding of Traditional Judaism in America* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1984); Sarna, *American Judaism*, 228–230.

54. See Leo Jung and Joseph Kaminetsky, eds., *The Model Program for the Talmud Torah: A Handbook for Rabbis, Principals, Teachers, Officers and Lay Members of the Board of Jewish Education* (New York: The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, 1942), v.

“many of the teachers of Hebrew schools are the products of a Weltanschauung [worldview] in which godless Jewish nationalism forms the basis of instruction” and rejecting “such teachers” as “not only unfit, but a pernicious influence,” Jung, who designed this curriculum, wrote that “to us Exile and *Eretz Israel* are complementary forms of divinely-designed Jewish tasks.”⁵⁵

Another noteworthy characteristic of Auerbach’s book is the focus on religious history. Aside from occasional attention to social, economic, and demographic matters, Auerbach highlighted religious history, namely religious leaders and personalities, movements and institutions. Examples include the Sura and Pumbedita yeshivas, Saadya Gaon (882–942), Judah Halevi (circa 1075–1141), Maimonides (1138–1204), Shlomo Yizhaki—Rashi (1040–1105), the Zohar, Joseph Caro (1488–1575), Shabbatai Zvi (1626–1676), Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), Israel Ba’al Shem Tov (circa 1700–1760), Eliyahu of Vilna (1720–1797), Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786), the Reform Movement, Enlightened Jews, Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888), and Esriel Hildesheimer (1820–1899). Finally, in his representation of Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) and the Zionist movement, Auerbach strongly emphasized aspects of religion and Jewish identity.⁵⁶

The descriptions and evaluations of these religious figures, institutions, events, and movements are ideologically slanted and judgmental rather than descriptive or analytical. For example, the first translation of the Bible into Greek is described as an act that Israel “suffered” from “even as from the day of the golden calf,”⁵⁷; *Bar Kokhba* is given the title of *Ben Kuziba*⁵⁸; and the period of Shabbatai Zvi’s is presented as one of “wild confusion of mystical ardor,” and his messianic stand as fraudulent.⁵⁹

Auerbach devoted special attention to the developments within German Jewry beginning in the eighteenth century. He described Moses Mendelssohn and the Jewish Enlightenment as a combined negative result of the “synthesis between Judaism and general European culture” and the lack of rabbinic authority. “Thus,” he concluded, “without trust in their leaders, the Jews of Germany turned their faces toward the Era of Enlightenment.” Notwithstanding his implied criticism of traditional rabbinic authorities, Auerbach stated, “an added misfortune in this state of affairs was the fact that their [German Jews’] guide to world culture,” Mendelssohn, “did not stand out as a personality, glowing

55. *Ibid.*, 18–19.

56. See Auerbach, *A Survey of Jewish History*, 55–58.

57. *Ibid.*, 11.

58. *Ibid.*, 16–18; Cohen, *Judaism in Jewish History*, 16.

59. See Auerbach, *A Survey of Jewish History*, 39–40.

with the knowledge and love of Torah.”⁶⁰ This negative evaluation of Mendelssohn and his influence is most probably an implicit response to the clearly positive account of Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891), who admirably ascribed the “re-juvenescence and renaissance of the Jewish race” to Mendelssohn.⁶¹

When discussing the Reform movement Auerbach is more decisive, as is evident from his choice of the term “radical Reform movement.” In other words, it was not a wide-range movement with radicals at its fringes, but rather a radical movement. This critical ideological standpoint is further emphasized by his presentation of all Reform Jews as “young rebels” who adopted “forms of worship used by Christian cults to Jewish ritual.” Nevertheless, Auerbach states, “it was not with a desire to do evil, but rather with criminal recklessness that they laid hands on that which had been sacred for thousands of years.”⁶² It seems as though the term “young rebels” relates to the common young age of those who demanded reforms in the early nineteenth-century events in the Hamburg and Berlin Jewish communities as well as in the 1824 schism in Charleston’s Beth Elohim Congregation, and the adopting of Christian “forms of worship” refers to adaptation of Protestant modes of worship, such as sermons in the vernacular and accompanying prayers with an organ.⁶³

Similar to other ideologically motivated history books, the historical chapters that are absent from this book are equally worth noting, as are its errors, such as the erroneous periodization of the Persian era in classic sources. According to non-Jewish as well as biblical chronology, this period was more or less between 538 B.C. and 330 B.C., but for various reasons, explained by the nature of the sages’ historiography, they adopted an alternative, albeit wrong, periodization.⁶⁴ This issue represented a challenge for later rabbinic sources, including various nineteenth and twentieth century Orthodox historians, and Auerbach adopts the strategy of avoiding it.⁶⁵ He acted similarly in his subsequent Hebrew

60. *Ibid.*, 41–43.

61. See Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, Vol. 5 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1895), 292. For additional expressions of praise for Mendelssohn, see pages 291–374.

62. *Ibid.*, 47–48.

63. See Joseph Tabory, “The Persian Period According to Hazal,” in *Milet: Studies in Jewish History and Culture* 2, eds. Shmuel Ettinger, et. al. (Tel-Aviv: Open University, 1985) (Hebrew), 65–79.

64. *Ibid.*

65. See Auerbach, *A Survey of Jewish History*, 9–10.

textbook, and was criticized for doing so by one of the manuscript's readers, his former student Aryeh Ben-Zvi (1892–1983).⁶⁶

Keeping in mind that the potential audience of this book was American Jews, a notable topic that is absent from its pages is the American Jewish experience in general and particularly those of the Orthodox. This could possibly be a covert response to Reform Rabbi Lee Levinger's (1890–1966) pioneering syllabus on American Jewish history for high school students that appeared two years earlier, in 1925. The latter focuses primarily on various social historical landmarks of American Jewry and Jews, and much less so on religious dimensions, and thus suggests a somewhat different educational agenda than that offered by Auerbach.⁶⁷

We can only speculate that Jung, and Auerbach for that matter, avoided discussing American Jews and Judaism in this volume because doing so would have demanded addressing a variety of sensitive subjects. For example, explaining the comfortable and safe nature of the American Jewish diaspora, compared with earlier and other Jewish experiences in the diaspora, would not fit the paradigm of “The Horrors of Goluth,” that Auerbach sets forth.⁶⁸ Likewise addressing Conservative Judaism, which in the 1920s was both normatively and theologically rather similar to American Orthodoxy, might raise awkward questions.⁶⁹ To this effect, the book by Hyman Grinstein (1899–1982), who taught at Yeshiva College, which appeared two decades later, might be considered as an attempt to critically address the complex and challenging local scene from within Orthodox circles.⁷⁰

Comparative Perspectives

As mentioned above, Auerbach's *Survey* is part of a wider genre of Orthodox historiography, and therefore ought to be placed, even if briefly, within this broader comparative context that goes beyond the specific historical-religious context of American Jewry, in general, and American

66. See Kimmy Caplan, “History Textbooks of the Ultra-Orthodox Society: The First Generation,” *Iyunim Bitkumat Israel* 17 (2007): 17–18 [Hebrew].

67. See Lee J. Levinger, *Jews and Judaism in the United States: A Syllabus* (Cincinnati: The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1925). On his subsequent book, *A History of the Jews in the United States* (Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1930), that is for the most part a socio and cultural account, see Krasner, *The Benderly Boys*, 148–149.

68. See Auerbach, *A Survey of Jewish History*, 33.

69. See Jeffrey S. Gurock, *From Fluidity to Rigidity: The Religious Worlds of Conservative and Orthodox Jews in Twentieth Century America* (David W. Belin Lecture in American Jewish Affairs, 7; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1998).

70. See Lifshiz, *Zikhron Yaakov*.

Orthodoxy, in particular. First and foremost, it is worth noting the fact that this book is part of a series, a combined strategic effort, to put forth an overall Orthodox popular historiography, historiosophy, and theology. Documented Orthodox-oriented publications of this nature from earlier and later periods were typically initiatives of individual authors, such as Lipshütz.⁷¹

The fact that Auerbach devoted the first few pages of his book to the biblical period, starting with Abraham, is not to be taken for granted in this literary genre. Although this is not surprising, considering the aforementioned emphasis on religious history and on God's role in Jewish history, it contradicts the tendency of Orthodox historiography to overlook the biblical period, with a view to avoid discussing the historical reliability of the Bible and prophets, as well as biblical criticism, and the critical attention that Enlightened Jews devoted to the Bible. As a result, Orthodox historians therefore tend to begin their narrative with certain major historical post-biblical junctures, such as the destruction of the Second Temple.

It should be noted that concerns and reservations with regard to studying the Bible and the biblical period arose in the early decades of the twentieth century in various additional social and cultural circles. A related example was the debate regarding the establishment of the Bible Department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which was the last department to be founded in the Institute for Jewish Studies in 1939.⁷²

Existing studies of Orthodox historiography describe, contextualize, and analyze various texts of this genre within their geographical, social, religious, and cultural surroundings. But unlike Orthodox historians who published their books within one social, religious, cultural, communal, and political context, Auerbach published his writings in three very different contexts: Germany, America, and Palestine. This enables us to explore the degree of uniformity of this literary genre in different Orthodox contexts, and uncover the range of what Orthodox leaders and communities consider "acceptable" or "legitimate" approaches in different times, places, and circumstances.

For example, in 1944, seventeen years after Auerbach's book first appeared in the United States, he published the first volume of his history book designated for Haredi high school girls in Palestine. The second and third volumes of this book appeared within the next three years and offer an overview of Jewish history from the destruction of

71. See Lifshiz, *Zikhron Yaakov*.

72. See Japhet, "Research and Academic Teaching of the Bible in Israel"; Japhet, "The Establishment and Early History of the Department of Bible, 1925-1949"; Shapiro, "Rabbi David Tsevi Hoffmann on Orthodox Involvement with the Hebrew University."

the Second Temple period through the development of Hasidism. This Hebrew textbook avoids any discussion of earlier developments, events, and personalities in Jewish history, such as the biblical period, which, as mentioned above, is included in his book published in America.⁷³

What Jung perceived as being within the “legitimate” range of American Orthodox historiography in the mid-1920s was unacceptable in Palestine in the mid-1940s, notwithstanding the fact that Auerbach was associated with the Haredi camp in both Germany and later on in Palestine.

Clearly not all books written by the same person are awarded the same degree of legitimacy within different Orthodox settings, notwithstanding the Orthodox affiliation of their authors. In other words, while all the manifestations of Orthodox historiography may indeed share common basic characteristics, the differences and various nuances between them may be, at times, significant.

Conclusion

This preliminary analysis of Auerbach’s book suggests that Leo Jung’s Jewish Library project is an early step in the gradual process of forming an independent genre of Orthodox historiography in America. This genre both reflects and differs from earlier representations in Europe. For example, in the United States there is an absence of a polemic tone toward the historical accounts to which the author is responding. This process ought to be seen in light of a wider trend that American Orthodox immigrant rabbis developed of seeking independence from European Orthodox *halakhic* and homiletic authorities, and traditional genres, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁷⁴

Students of Orthodox historiography barely account for the potential audience or audiences of this literature, both as envisioned by their authors and publishers, as well as those who actually read it. Auerbach’s book provides insight into Jung’s Jewish Library project and its potential audience, and enables us to raise several unresolved questions.

Less than two decades after Auerbach’s book appeared, the initial steps were taken that led to the formation of a self-conscious and defined Modern Orthodox camp in the United States, that was not identical with earlier versions of moderate Orthodoxy. Soon thereafter, around

73. See Moshe Auerbach, *Toldot Am Yisrael: Mitkufat Hurban Bayit Rishon Ad Yameinu*, 3 Vols. (Jerusalem: Nezah, 1944–1946).

74. See Menachem Blondheim, “The Orthodox Rabbinate Discovers America: The Geography of the Mind,” in *Following Columbus: America 1492–1992*, ed. Miriam Eliav-Feldon (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1996) (Hebrew), 483–511.

the mid-twentieth century, an increasing number of Modern Orthodox Jews owned some volumes, or even full sets, of the Jewish Library series. It seems as though the audience of these books in the second half of the 1920s and during the 1930s was not the non-observant Orthodox Jews, or Uptown acculturated Orthodox Jews (some of whom were members of Jung's congregation, although they might have purchased it).⁷⁵

The implications of this may be better understood by comparing this case with that encountered by Rabbi Dr. Mordecai Kaplan (1881–1983). One of Kaplan's central critiques of Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Judaism was that all three denominations were intellectually and religiously incomplete, outdated, inconsistent, and consequently irrelevant to the average young American Jew.⁷⁶ But notwithstanding Kaplan's ongoing connection with rank-and-file Jews as a communal rabbi, his perceptions of the intellectual and religious interests, nature, characteristics, and beliefs of the "typical" or "average" young American Jew in the first decades of the twentieth century, were somewhat inaccurate. This partially explains why Kaplan's approach did not appeal to wide audiences.

Similarly, it is possible that Leo Jung created a certain portrait of the "ideal-type" young American Orthodox Jew, one that may have existed in reality, but did not represent the majority of his or her contemporaries. This portrait was somewhat removed from reality, notwithstanding the fact that Jung, like Kaplan, had strong ties with rank-and-file Jews, saw great importance in serving as a communal rabbi, and was revered by his congregants and others as being aware of the contemporary challenges and encounters that Jews and Judaism faced in America.

Another related issue is the acquaintance of the Orthodox historian with the social, cultural, and religious context of his potential audience. It is unclear why Jung turned to Auerbach, a European Orthodox scholar who never lived in America, in order to write a book for an American Orthodox audience, nor, for that matter, to most of the authors of the Jewish Library booklets who, as mentioned above, never set foot in America. This is especially surprising considering that there were several American Orthodox rabbis associated with moderate Orthodoxy,⁷⁷ such as Bernard Drachman (1861–1945), Haim Hirschenson (1855–1935),

75. See Weissman Joselit, *New York's Jewish Jews*.

76. See Mordecai M. Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization: Toward a Reconstruction of American-Jewish Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1934), 91–170.

77. For the characteristics of this moderate Orthodoxy, see: Louis Bernstein, *Challenge and Mission* (New York: Shengold, 1982); Gurock, *American Jewish Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective*, 1–63, 201–233; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 227–237.

and Bernard Revel (1885–1940), all of whom were well entrenched in the American Orthodox scene and capable of relating to Jewish history in light of the contemporary challenges faced by American Jewish Orthodoxy. In this context, it is instructive to note that Auerbach's book includes one sentence on America, and barely mentions the mass immigration that completely changed the face of American Jewry.⁷⁸

Be it as it may, between two and three decades after its publication, Auerbach's book, as well as others that appeared in the Jewish Library series, was replaced by new Orthodox-oriented publications. For example, during the 1950s and 1960s, Modern Orthodox-affiliated authors with Orthodox rabbinic ordination and doctoral degrees, such as Aron Barth (1890–1957), Eliezer Berkovits (1908–1992), and Isidore Epstein (1894–1962), wrote several "introductions to Judaism."⁷⁹ These publications replaced the previous wave, of which Auerbach was a part, as they addressed a new and different generation of American Orthodox individuals and communities, and represented new trends of Orthodox-oriented history and theology.

78. See: Auerbach, *A Survey of Jewish History*, 55.

79. See Aron Barth, *The Modern Jew Faces Eternal Problems* (Jerusalem: The Zionist Organization, 1956); Eliezer Berkovits, *God, Man and History: A Jewish Interpretation* (New York: Jonathan David, 1959); Isidore Epstein, *The Faith of Judaism: An Interpretation for Our Times* (London: Soncino Press, 1954).